

Prologue

Writing verse is a business which demands
wisdom, so he who would be a trovador
must have it and intelligence in good measure
so that he can understand, and be able to express
what he understands and what he would say --
that is how the good trovador must work.

And though I have neither of these gifts
as much I would wish to have, nevertheless I will try
to display a little of what I know of them
putting my trust in God, the source of all knowledge
for I hold that by his power I will be able
to show some small amount of what I wish to show.

And what I mean to do is praise
the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Our Lord,
Holy Mary, who is the best
of all he created; and for that reason
I would be her trovador from this day forth
and I pray to her that she may accept me

as her trovador, and hear my verses,
for in them I mean to reveal some of
the miracles she performed; what is more
I will cease from composing poetry
for any other lady; for I mean to regain
through her all that I lost in wooing the others.

For the love of this lady is so wondrous
that whosoever owns it is more worthy thereby,
and when a man has won her love, it does not fail him,
save by his own grievous fault
if he turns away from good and does wrong --
thus and only thus is her love lost.

And so I will not forsake her
for I know surely that if I serve her truly
with her good will I will not fail
to have her love, for none have failed
to have it who have beseeched her to give it:
such a request she has always granted.

And so I implore her, if she will,
to be pleased with what I say about her
in my songs, and, if it is acceptable to her,
to give me the reward that she gives
to those she loves. Whoever knows he has her favour
will then the more willingly be her trovador.