

# Ja nuns hons pris ne dira sa raison

to Marie de Champagne

Richard I the Lionheart of England (1157-1199), during his imprisonment at Dürnstein Castle, 1192



Ja nuns hons pris ne di - ra sa rai - son  
Mais par es - fort puet il fai - re chançon.



A droi - te - ment, se do - lan - te - ment non:  
Mout ai a - mis, mais po - vre sunt li don.



Hon - te i a - vront, se por ma re - an - çon



Sui ça deus y - vers pris.

1. Ja nuns hons pris ne dira sa raison  
A droitement, se dolantement non:  
Mais par effort puet il faire chançon.  
Mout ai amis, mais povre sunt li don.  
Honte i avront, se por ma reançon  
Sui ça deus yvers pris.

2. Ce sevent bien mi home e mi baron,  
Ynglois, Normanz, Poitevin et Gascon  
Que je n'ai nul si povre compaignon  
Que je lessaisse, por avoir, en prison.  
Je nou di mie por nule reançon,  
Car encor sui pris.

3. Or sai je bien de voir certainement  
Que morz ne pris n'a ami ne parent,  
Quant on me faut por or ne por argent.  
Mout m'est de moi, mes plus m'est de ma gent,  
Qu'après ma mort avront reprochement  
Se longuement sui pris.

4. N'est pas mervoille se j'ai le cuer dolant,  
Quant mes sires met ma terre en torment.  
S'il li membrast de nostre soirement  
Quo nos feïsmes andui communement,  
Je sai de voir que ja trop longuement  
Ne seroie ça pris.

5. Ce sevent bien Angevin et Torai  
Cil bacheler qui or sont riche et sain  
Qu'encombrez sui loing d'aus en autre main.  
Forment m'amoient, mais or ne m'ainment grain.  
De beles armes sont ore vuit li plain,  
Por ce que je sui pris

6. Mes compaignons que j'amoie et que j'ain  
Ces de Cahen et ces de Percherain  
Di lor, chançon, qu'il ne sunt pas certain,  
C'onques vers aus ne oi faus cuer ne vain;  
S'il me guerroient, il feront que vilain  
Tant con je serai pris.

7. Contesse suer, vostre pris souverain  
Vos saut et gart cil a cui je m'en clain  
Et por cui je sui pris.

8. Je ne di mie a cele de Chartain,  
La mere Loës.

**Trans. Carol Anne Perry Lagemann**

1. A prisoner can't say what's on his mind  
Without converting bitter tears to lines,  
But if he tries, a song he'll surely find  
My friends are many, but they're all unkind.  
and shame on them if I unransomed pine:  
I am a prisoner.

2. My barons and my vassals aren't blind  
The Englis, Normans, Gascons know my mind  
I'd never leave the least of mine behind.  
I say this not to guild them or to whine  
They'll pay in Hell for leaving me confined  
I'm still a prisoner.

3. For friends and family I feel only cold,  
Since they abandoned me for want of gold.  
My fate is comfortless, my life is sold  
But worse awaits my friends, both new and old:  
It's their fault if I perish in this hold  
For I'm a prisoner.

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4. No wonder that I weep here uncontrolled,  
 For all I own my lord, my leader, stole.  
 If he recalledd what we each other told,  
 The vows we swore each other from the soul,  
 I wouldn't be here, suffering and cold.  
 Ever a prisoner.

5. My knights the young and healthy, rich and free,  
 In Tours and Anjou know assuredly  
 That far from them my foe oppresses me.  
 They loved me once, but love no more, I see.  
 No more will valor their protector be,  
 Since I'm a prisoner.

6. With friends I loved and still do love, I plead  
 De Cahen and de Perche rain, take heed.  
 So fly to them, my song, and make them see  
 That they've betrayed a faithful friend indeed,  
 And they are false if they make war on me  
 While I'm a prisoner.

7. My sister, Countess, may you guarded be  
 By God whose help I beg on bended knees,  
 For I'm your prisoner.

8. Not sister Alix, mother of Louis,  
 I'm not addressing her.