TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

by

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Book V
Book V

1. APPROACHEN gan the fatal destiny
   That Jovē hath in disposition,
   And to you, angry Parcae, sisters three,
   Commiteth to do execution,\(^1\)
   For which Criseydé must out of the town,
   And Troilus shall dwellen forth in pine
   Till Lachesis his thread no longer twine.

2. The golden tressèd Phoebus high aloft
   Thrice had allè with his beamès clean
   The snows melted,\(^2\) and Zephirus as oft
   Y-brought again the tender leavès green
   Since that the son of Hecuba the Queen
   Began to love her first for whom his sorrow
   Was all that she departen should a-morrow.

3. Full ready was at primè Diomede \(^3\)
   Criseyde unto the Greekès' host to lead;
   For sorrow of which she felt her hearté bleed,
   As she that n'isté what was best to rede.
   And truly, as men in bookès read,
   Men wistè never woman have the care,
   Nor was so loath out of a town to fare.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) 1.1-4: "There began to approach the fatal destiny which Jove has control of, and which he delegates to the three Fates to carry out (to do execution)." The three Parcae or Fates -- Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos -- spin (twine) the thread of human life and decide when it is to be cut.

\(^2\) 2.1-5: A roundabout way of saying that it has been three years since Troilus fell in love with Criseyde whose impending departure was causing his present pain.

\(^3\) 3.1: Diomede, a prominent Greek warrior, and the fourth major character in the story, arrives early in the morning (at prime) to escort Criseyde to the Greek camp.

\(^4\) 3.6-7: "No one ever knew a woman who had so much sorrow (care) or was so reluctant to leave the town."
4. This Troilus withouten rede or lore,
As man that hath his joyès eke forlore,
Was waiting on his lady evermore,
As she that was the soothfast crop and more
Of all his lust or joyès herebefore;
But Troilus, now farewell all thy joy!
For shalt thou never see her eft in Troy.

plot or plan
lost

root & branch
desire

5. Sooth is, that while he bode in this mannér
He gan his woe full manly for to hide,
That well unneth it seen was in his cheer,¹
But at the gat where she should out ride
With certain folk he hoved, her to abide,
So woe-begone, al would he not complain,
That on his horse unneth he sat for pain.

waited
scarcely / behavior
 lingered to wait for her
although he could barely sit

6. For ire he quoke, so gan his hearté gnaw,
When Diomede on horse gan him to dress,
And said unto himself this ilké saw:
"Alas! " quod he, "thus foul a wretchedness
Why suffer I it? why n'ill I it redress?
Were it not better at oncé for to die
Than evermore in languor thus to drye?

w. anger he shook
to mount
these words
he = Troilus
why don't I put it right?
to suffer

7. "Why n'ill I make at oncé rich and poor
To have enough to do ere that she go?
Why n'ill I bring all Troy upon a roar?
Why n'ill I slay this Diomede also?
Why n'ill I rather with a man or two
Steal her away? why will I this endure?
Why n'ill I helpen to mine owné cure?"

Why don't I

8. But why he would not do so fell a deed
That shall I say, and why him list it spare:
He had in heart always a manner dread
Lest that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,
Should have been slain. Lo! this was all his care,

terrible
he chose to refrain

in chaos of the disturbance
concern

¹ 5.3: "So that it was scarcely perceptible in his behavior."
And elsè, certain, as I saidè yore,  
He had it done withouten wordès more.  

9. Criseyéd, when she ready was to ride,  
Full sorrowfully she sighed, and said "Alas!"  
But forth she must for aught that may betide:¹  
There is no other remedy in this case.  
And forth she rode full sorrowfully a pace;  
What wonder is though that her sorè smart  
When she forgoes her ownè dearè heart.  

10. This Troilus in wise of courtesy,  
With hawk on hand, and with a hugè rout  
Of knightès, rode and did her company,  
Passing all the valley far without,  
And farther would have ridden out of doubt  
Full fain, and woe was him to go so soon,  
But turn he must, and it was eke to doon.²  

11. And right with that was Antenor y-come  
Out of the Greekès' host, and every wight  
Was of it glad, and said he was welcome;  
And Troilus, al n'ere his heartè light,  
He painèd him with all his fullè might  
Him to withhold of weeping at the least,  
And Antenor he kissed and made great feast.  

12. And therewithal he must his leavè take,  
And cast his eye upon her piteously,  
And near he rode, his causè for to make,  
To take her by the hand all soberly;  
And Lord! so she gan weepen tenderly,  
And he full soft and sily gan her say:  
"Now hold your day, and do me not to die."  

13. With that his courser turnèd he about  

¹ 9.3: "But forth she must (go), no matter what happens."  
² 10.5-7: "And he would very gladly (full fain) have ridden further -- no doubt about that -- and sad he was (woe was him) to go so soon, but he had to turn back; there was no way out of that."
With facè pale, and unto Diomede  
No word he spoke, nor none of all his rout,  
Of which the son of Tydeus took heed,  
As he that couldè morè than the creed  
In such a craft,¹ and by the rein her hent;  
And Troilus to Troy homeward he went.

14. This Diomede, that led her by the bridle,  
When that he saw the folk of Troy away,  
Thought: "All my labour shall not be on idle  
If that I may, for somewhat shall I say,  
For at the worst it may yet short our way;  
I have heard said eke timès twicè twelve,  
He is a fool that will forget himself."

15. But natheless this thought he well enough:  
"That certainly I am abouten naught  
If that I speak of love, or make it tough,  
For doubtèless if she have in her thought  
Him that I guess, he may not be y-brought  
So soon away; but I shall find a mean  
That she not wit as yet shall what I mean."

16. This Diomede, as he that could his good,  
When timè was, gan fallen forth in speech  
Of this and that,² and asken why she stood  
In such dis-ease, and gan her eke beseech,  
That if that he increasen might or eche  
With any thing her easè, that she should  
Command it him, and said he do it would.

17. For truly he swore her as a knight  
That there n'as thing with which he might her please  
That he n'ould do his pain and all his might  
there was nothing ...  
... he wouldn’t take pains

¹ 13.5-6: "Like a man that knew (could) more than the elementary stages (creed) in this business (craft) [of love]." That is, he was a practiced lover.

² 16.1-3: "like a man who knew what was best for himself, when the opportunity arose, he began to chat about one thing and another."
To do it, for to do her heart an ease,  
And prayed her she would her sorrow appease,  
And said: "Iwis we Greekès can have joy  
To honour you as well as folk of Troy."

18. He said eke thus: "I wot you thinketh strange  
(No wonder is) for it is to you new,  
Th'acquaintance of these Trojans for to change  
For folk of Greece, which that you never knew,  
But wouldè never God, but if as true  
A Greek you should among us allè find  
As any Trojan is, and eke as kind.

19. "And by the cause I swore you, lo! right now  
To be your friend, and help you to my might,  
And for that more acquaintance eke of you  
Have I had than another stranger wight,  
So from this forth I pray you day and night  
Commandeth me, how sore so that me smart,  
To do all that may like unto your heart:

20. "And that you me would as your brother treat,  
And taketh not my friendship in despite;  
And though your sorrows be for thingès great --  
N'ot I not why but out of more respite  
Mine heart hath for t'amend it great delight,  
And if I may your harmès not redress  
I am right sorry for your heaviness.

21. "For though you Trojans with us Greekès wroth  
Have many a day been, always yet pardee  
One god of Love in sooth we serven both:  
And for the love of God, my lady free,  
Whom so you hate, as be not wroth with me,  
For truly there can no wight you serve

1 20.4-7: "I don't know why (N'ot I not why), but out of high regard (more respite), I would be heartily pleased to improve things, and if I cannot cure your troubles, I am at least sorry for your sadness."
That half so loath your wrathè would deserve.¹

22. "And n'ere it that we be so near the tent
Of Calchas, which that see us bothè may,
I would of this you tell all mine intent,
But this ensealed is till another day.
Give me your hand; I am and shall be ay,
God help me so, while that my life may dure,
Your own, aboven every creature.

23. "Thus said I ne'er ere now to woman born,
For, God my heart as wisly gladden so,²
I lovèd never woman herebeforn
As paramour, ne never shall no mo',
And, for the love of God, be not my foe,
Al' can I not to you, my lady dear,
Complain aright, for I am yet to lere.³

24. "And wonder naught, mine own lady bright,
Though that I speak of love to you thus blive,
For I have heard ere this of many a wight
That lovèd thing he never saw his life;
Eke I am not of power for to strive
Against the god of Love, but him obey
I will always, and mercy I you pray.

25. "There be so worthy knightès in this place,
And you so fair, that ever each of them all
Will painè him to standen in your grace;
But might to me so fair a grace befall
That me as for your servant you would call,
So lowly nor so truly you serve
Will none of them as I shall till I starve."

¹ 21.5-7: "And whomsoever you hate, do not be angry with me, because no one who wants to serve you would be half so unwilling as I to earn your anger."

² 23.2: "For, as surely as I hope God may gladden my heart, ..."

³ 23.6-7: "although I cannot make my (love) complaint to you properly, my dear lady, because I am only a learner." Diomede, the practiced seducer, pretends he is a clumsy amateur.
26. Criseyde unto that purpose lite answered, As she that was with sorrow oppresséd so, That in effect she naught his talés heard, But here and there, now here a word or two; Her thought her sorrowful hearté burst a-two, For when she gan her father far espy Well nigh down off her horse she gan to sye.

27. But natheless she thankéd Diomede Of all his trávail and of his goodé cheer, And that him list his friendship to her bid, And she accepted it in good mannér, And would do fain that is him lief and dear, And trusten him she would, and well she might, As saidé she, and from her horse she 'light.

28. Her father hath her in his armés nome, And twenty times he kissed his daughter sweet, And said: "O dear daughter mine, welcome." She said eke she was fain with him to meet, And stood forth muté, mild, and mansuete. But here I leave her with her father dwell, And forth I will of Troilus you tell.

29. To Troy is come this woeful Troilus In sorrow aboven all sorrows smart, With felon look and with face despiteous, Tho suddenly down from his horse he start, And through his palace with a swollen heart To chamber went; of no wight took he heed, Ne none to him dare speak a word for dread.

30. And there his sorrows that he sparèd had He gave an issue large, and "Death!" he cried, And in his throés frénetic and mad He curseth Jove, Apollo, and Cupid, He curseth Bacchus, Ceres, and Cyprid, His birth, himself, his fate, and eke Natûre, And, save his lady, every créature.
31. To bed he goes, and wallows there and turneth
In fury as does Ixion in hell,
And in this wise he nigh till day sojourneth,
But then began his hearté a lite unswell
Through tearés which that gonnen up to well,
And piteously he cried upon Criseyde,
And to himself right thus he spoke and said:

32. "Where is mine owné lady lief and dear?
Where is her whité breast? Where is it? Where?
Where be her armés and her eyen clear
That yesternight this timé with me were?
Now may I weep alone many a tear,
And grasp about I may, but in this place
Save a pillow naught find I to embrace.

33. "How shall I do? When shall she come again?
I n'ot, alas! Why let I her to go?
As woulde God I had as then been slain!
O hearté mine, Criseyde! O sweeté foe!
O lady mine! That I love and no mo',
To whom for evermore mine heart I dow,
See how I die; you n'll me not rescue!

34. "Who sees you now, my righté lodéstar?
Who sits right now or stands in your présénce?
Who can comfórten now your hearté's war,
Now I am gone? whom give you audience?
Who speaks for me right now in my absénce?
Alas! no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wot I, as ill as I you fare.

35. "How should I thus ten dayés full endure
When I the firsté night have all this teen?
How shall she do eke, sorrowful créature,
For tenderness how shall she eke sustain
Such woe for me? O! piteous, pale, and green,
Shall be your freshe womanlíce face
For languor ere you turn unto this place."

1 34.7: "I know well you are as badly off as I am."
36. And when he fell in any slumberings
Anon begin he wouldē for to groan,
And dreamen of the dreadfullest things
That mightē be: as mette he were alone
In place horrible, making aye his moan,
Or meten that he was amongēs all
His enemies, and in their handēs fall.

37. And therewithal his body wouldē start,
And with the start all suddenly awake,
And such a tremor feel about his heart,
That of the fear his body wouldē quake,
And therewithal he wouldē a noisē make,
And seem as though he wouldē fallē deep,
From high aloft; and then he wouldē weep,

38. And ruen on himself so piteously,
That wonder was to hear his fantasy;
Another time he wouldē mightēly
Comfórēt himself, and say it was folly
So causēless such dread and woe to drie,
And eft begin his asper sorrows new,
That every man mightē on his painēs rue.

39. Who couldē tell aright, or full descrive
His woe, his plaint, his languor, and his pain?
Not all the men that have or be alive:
Thou, Reader, mayēst thyself full well divine
That such a woe my wit cannot define;
On idle for to write it should I swink
When that my wit is weary it to think.

40. On heaven yet the starrēs werē seen,
Although full pale y-waxen was the moon,
And whiten gan the horizontē sheen
All eastwards, as it is wont to do,
And Phoebus with his rosy cartē soon
Gan after that to dress him up to fare,
When Troilus hath sent after Pandare.
41. This Pandare, that of all the day before
Ne might have comen Troilus to see,
Although he on his head it had y-sworn,
For with King Priam all the day was he,
So that it lay not in his liberty
Nowhere to go, but on the morrow he went
To Troilus, when that he for him sent;

42. For in his hearte he could well divine
That Troilus all night for sorrow woke,
And that he would tell him of his pine;
This knew he well enough withouten book,
For which to chamber straight the way he took,
And Troilus then soberly he gret,
And on the bed full soon he gan him set.

43. "My Pandarus!" quod Troilus, "the sorrow
Which that I drye I may not long endure;
I trow I shall not liven till to-morrow;
For which I would always on aventure
To thee devisen of my sepulture
The form, and of my meuble thou dispone
Right as thee seemeth best is for to done:

44. "But of the fire and flame funereal
In which my body burn shall into gleed,
And of the feast and playes palestral
At my vigil I pray thee take good heed
That all be well, and offer Mars my steed,
My sword, my helm, and, levé brother dear,
My shield to Pallas give, that shineth clear.

45. "The powder to which my hearté burned shall turn,
That pray I thee thou take, and it conserve
In a vessel that men clepe an urn
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus piteously I starve,
So give it her, and do me this pleasánce
To pray her keep it for a rémembrance.

46. "For well I feelé by my malady,
And by my dreamés now and yore ago, in the past
All certainly that I must needés die;
The owl eke, which that hight Ascalapho, which is called
Hath shriekéd after me these nightés two.
And, god Mercury, of me now woeful wretch
The soulé guide, and when thee list, it fetch."1

47. Pandáre answered and saidé: "Troilus, in the past
My dearé friend, as have I told thee yore
That it is folly for to sorrow thus,
And causéless, for which I can no more.
But whoso will not trowen redde nor lore
I cannot see in him no remedy,
But let him worthen with his fantasy.

48. "But, Troilus, I pray thee tell me now
If that thou trow ere this that any wight
Hath lovéd paramours as well as thou?
Yea, God wot, and from many a worthy knight
Hath his lady gone a forténight
two weeks
And he not yet made halvendel the fare.
What need is thee to maken all this care?

49. “Since day by day thou mayst thyselven see
That from his lover or else from his wife
A man must twinnen of necessity.
must part
Yea, though he love her as as his owné life,
Yet n’ill he with himself thus maken strife;
For well thou wost, my levé brother dear,
you know
That always friendés may not been y-fere.
together

50. "How do these folk that see their lovers wedded
By friendés' might, as it betides full oft
And see them in their spouses' bed y-bedded?
God wot, they take it, wisly, fair and soft.
For-why good hope holds up their heart aloft
Because
And for they can a time of sorrow endure;
As time them hurt, a timé doth them cure.

1 46.6: Mercury assigned spirits their place after death. See below 261.7.
51. "So shouldest thou endure, and letten slide
The time, and fonden to be glad and light.
Ten days is not so long for to abide.
And since she thee to comen has behight
She will her hest not breaken for no wight;
For dread thee not that she n'ill finden way
To come again; my life that durst I lay.

52. "Thy swevens eke and all such fantasy
Drive out, and let them faren to mischance;
For they proceed of thy meláncholy.
That doth thee feel in sleep all this penánce.
A straw for all swevens' significance!
God help me so, I count them not a bean;
There wot no man aright what dreamés mean.

53. "For priestès of the temple telden this,
That dreamés be the revelations
Of gods; and as well they tell, iwis,
That they be infernál illusions.
And leeches ween that of complexïons
Proceeden they, or fast, or gluttony. ¹
Who wot in sooth thus what they signify?

54. "Eke others say that through impressions
(As if a wight has fast a thing in mind),
That thereof cometh such avisïons;
And others say, as they in bookês find,
That after timês of the year by kind
Men dream, and that th' effect goes by the moon.
But 'lieve no dream, for it is nought to do.

55. "Well worth of dreamês aye these oldë wives,
And truly eke augury of these fowls;
For fear of which men weenen lose their lives,

¹ 53: Medieval thinkers explained dreams in different ways. Clerical commentators acknowledged that dreams could be of divine origin, as with the Josephs of the Old and New Testaments, but warned that they could also be of diabolical origin. Physicians (leeches) held that dreams often came from the body's predominant "complexxion" or "humor" of the moment, in this case melancholy; or that they came from eating or drinking too much or too little.
As raven’s qualm or shrieking of these owls.  
To trowen on it bothè false and foul is.  
Alas! Alas! So noble a creâtúre  
As is a man, shall dreadé such ordúre!  

56. “For which with all my heart I thee beseech  
Unto thyself that all this thou forgive;  
And rise up now withouten moré speech,  
And let us cast how forth may best be drive  
This time, and eke how freshly we may live  
When that she comes, the which shall be right soon.  
God help me so, the best is thus to do.  

57. "Rise, let us speak of lusty life in Troy  
That we have led, and forth the timé drive,  
And eke of timé coming us rejoice,  
That bringen shall our blisse now so blive,  
And languor of these twicé dayés five  
We shall therewith so forget or oppress,  
That well unneth it do shall us duress.  

58. "This town is full of lordès all about,  
And trucé lasteth all this meané while;  
Go we play us in some lusty rout,  
To Sarpedon, not hencé but a mile,  
And thus thou shalt the time well beguile,  
That thou her see that cause is of thy sorrow.  

59. "Now rise, my dearé brother Troilus!  
For certès it no honour is to thee  
To weep, and in thy bed to jouken thus,  
For truly, of one thing trust to me,  
If thou thus lie a day or two or three,  
The folk will say that thou for cowardice  
Thee feignest sick, and that thou dar'st not rise."  

60. This Troilus answer'd; "O brother dear!  
This knownen folk that have y-suffered pain,  

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1 58.3: “Let’s go amuse ourselves in some lively company.”
That though he weep and makè sorrowful cheer
That feeleth harm and smart in every vein
No wonder is; and though I ever 'plain
Or always weep, I am nothing to blame,
Since I have lost the cause of all my game.

61. "But since of finè force I must arise,
I shall arise as soon as e'er I may,
And God, to whom mine heart I sacrifice,
So send us hastily the tenthè day,
For was there never fowl so fain of May
As I shall be when that she comes in Troy
That cause is of my torment and my joy.

62. "But whither is thy redde," quod Troilus,
"That we may play us best in all this town?"
"By God, my counsel is," quod Pandarus
"To ride and play us with King Sarpedoun."
So long of this they speaken up and down
Till Troilus gan at the last assent
To rise; and forth to Sarpedoun they went.

63. This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
Was e'er his life, and full of high largesse
With all that might y-servèd be on table
That dainty was, all cost it great riches,
He fed them day by day, that such noblesse --
As saiden both the most and eke the least --
Was ne'er ere that day wist at any feast.

64. Nor in this world there is no instrument
Delicious through wind or touch of chord,
As far as any wight hath ever went,¹
That tonguè tell or heartè may record
But at that feast it was well heard accord;
Nor of ladies eke so fair a company
On dance ere then was never seen with eye.

65. But what availeth this to Troilus,

¹ 64: Went might be the past participle of either wenen: think or wenden: go.
That for his sorrow nothing of it raught, But continually
But ever in one his heartë piteous
Full busily Criseyde, his lady, sought?
On her was ever all that his heartë thought,
Now this, now that so fast imagining
That glad iwis can him no festying.

66. These ladies eke that at this feastë be,
Since that he saw his lady was away,
It was his sorrow on them for to see,
Or for to hear on instruments so play:
For she that of his heartë bore the key
Was absent, lo! this was his fantasy,
That no wight shouldë maken melody.

67. Nor there n’as hour in all the day or night,
When he was there as no man might him hear,
That he ne said, "O lovesome lady bright!
How have you farëd since that you were here?
Welcome iwis, mine ownë lady dear!"
But welaway! All this n’as but a maze;
Fortune his houve intended but to glaze.

68. The letters eke that she of oldë time
Had him y-sent he would alonë read
A hundred sithe atwixen noon and prime,
Refiguring her shape, her womanhood
Within his heart, and every word or deed
That passëd was; and thus he drove to an end
The fourthë day, and said that he would wend;

69. And saidë: "Levë brother, Pandarus!
Intendest thou that we shall herë bleve
Dear brother

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1 65.2: ‘who because of his sorrow, cared nothing about it.”
2 66.5-7: Since his beloved was absent, he had the idea that nobody should make music.
3 67.7: Fortune just intended to give him a glass hood, i.e. to delude him.
4 68.3: *Betwixt noon and prime* could be a kind of inversion meaning "between about 9 a.m. and noon", or it could be literally between noon one day and 9 a.m. the next day, hence most of any 24-hour day.
Till Sarpedoun will forth congeyen us? throw us out
Yet were it fairer that we took our leave;
For God's love, now let us soon at eve
Our leavè take, and homeward let us turn,
For truly I will not thus sojourn."

70. Pandarus answered: "Be we comen hither
To fetchen fire and runnen home again?
God help me so I can not tellen whither
We mighten go, if I shall soothly sayn,
Where any wight is of us morè fain
Than Sarpedoun; and if we hencê hie
Thus suddenly, I hold it villainy,
more glad of us hurry
71. "Since that we saiden that we wouldé bleve
With him a week, and now thus suddenly
The fourthê day to take of him our leave!
He wouldé wonder on it truly.
Let us hold forth our purpose firmlîn,
And since that you behighten him to bide
Hold forward now, and after let us ride."
72. This Pandarus with allê pain and woe
Made him to dwell; and at the weekê's end
Of Sarpedoun they took their leavè tho,
And on their way they speden them to wend.
Quod Troilus: "Now, Lord, me gracê send
That I may finde at my home-coming
Criseydê come." And therewith gan he sing.
73. "Yea, hazelwoodê!" thoughtê this Pandare,
And to himself full soberly he said:
"God wot, refreyden may this hot fare
t. hot affair will cool
Ere Calchas send to Troilus Criseyde!"
joked
But natheless he japêd thus and played,
And swore iwis his heart him well behight
indeed / told him
She wouldê come as soon as e'er she might.
74. When they unto the palace were y-come
taken
Of Troilus, they down off horse alight,
And to the chamber their way then have they nome,
And until time that it began to night
They speaken of Criseyde the bright,
And after this, when that them bothè lest,
They speed them from the supper unto rest.

75. On morrow, as soon as day began to clear,
This Troilus gan of his sleep t'abraid,
And to Pandárus, his own brother dear,
"For love of God," full piteously he said,
"As go we see the palace of Criseyde,
"For since we yet may have no other feast,
So let us see her palace at the least!"

76. And therewithal his meinie for to blind
A cause he found into the town to go,
And to Criseyde’s palace they gan wend;
But Lord! this silly Troilus was woe,
Him thought his sorrowful hearté burst a-two
For when he saw her dooré sparrèd all
Well nigh for sorrow down he gan to fall.

77. Therewith when he was ‘ware, and gan behold
How shut was every window of the place,
As frost him thought his hearté gan to cold,
For which with changèd deadly palè face
Withouten word he forth began to pace,
And, as God would, he gan so fast to ride
That no wight of his countenance espied.

78. Then said he thus: "O palace desolate! ¹
O house of houses whilom best y-hight!
O palace empty and disconsolate!
O thou lantern, of which quenched is the light!
O palace whilom day, that now art night!
Well oughtest thou to fall and I to die,
Since she is went that wont was us to gie.

¹ 78-9: Troilus's address is known as a "paraclausithyron", a convention of classical love poetry where the desolate lover addresses the beloved's house, especially the door. It extends to other places that bring up memories of the beloved. See M. Bloomfield's article in NM 73 (1972), 15-24.
79. "O palace whilom crown of houses all!
Enlumined with the sun of allé bliss,
O ring from which the ruby is out fall!
O cause of woe that cause hast been of liss!
Yet since I may no bet, fain would I kiss
Thy coldé doors, if I durst for this rout;¹
And farewell shrine of which the saint is out!"

80. Therewith he cast on Pandarus his eye
With changèd face, and piteous to behold,
And when he might his time aright espy,
Aye as he rode to Pandarus he told
His newè sorrow, and his joyès old
So piteously, and with so dead a hue,
That every wight might on his sorrow rue.

81. From thencè forth he rideth up and down,
And every thing came him to rémembrance
As he rode forth by places of the town
In which he whilom had all his pleasánce:
"Lo! yonder saw I last my lady dance,
And in that temple with her eyen clear
Me caughtè first my rightè lady dear.²"

82. "And yonder have I heard full lustily
My dearè heartè laugh, and yonder play
Saw I her oncè eke full blissfully,
And yonder oncè to me gan she say:
`Now goodè sweet, love me well, I pray,,'
And yon so goodly gan she me behold
That to the death my heart is to her hold.

83. "And at the corner in the yonder house
Heard I mine alderlevest lady dear
So womanly with voice melodious
Singen so well, so goodly and so clear,

¹ 79.6: "If I dared in front of this crowd." No crowd has been mentioned. Perhaps it simply means "in public".

² 81.6-7: "My very dear lady first caught me with her bright eyes."
That in my soul methinketh yet I hear
The blissful sound. And in that yonder place
My lady first me took unto her grace."  

84. Then thought he thus: "O blissful lord, Cupid,
When I the process have in memory
How thou me hast werreyed on every side,
Men might a book make of it like a story.
What need is thee to seek on me victory,
Since I am thine and wholly at thy will?
What joy hast thou thine own folk to spill?

85. "Well hast thou, lord, y-wroke on me thine ire,
Thou mighty God, and dreadful for to grieve,
Now mercy, lord, thou wost well I desire
Thy grac most of all lustes leve.¹
And live and die I will in thy belief;
For which I n'ax in guerdon but a boon,
That thou me send again Criseyde soon.

86. “Distreyn her heart as fast to return
As thou dost mine to longen her to see;
Then wot I well that she will not sojourn.
Now, blissful lord, so cruel thou ne be
Unto the blood of Troy I praye thee
As Juno was unto the blood Thebans,²
For which the folk of Thebæ caught their bane. ”

87. And after this he to the gatés went
There as Criseyde out rode a full good pace,
And up and down there made he many a went,
And to himself full oft he said: "Alas!
From hencé rode my bliss and my solace;
As wouldé blissful God now for his joy
I might her see again come into Troy!

¹ 85.3-4:  _thou wost ... leve:_ "You know well that of all my deepest desires (_lustes leve_) I want thy favor most."

² Juno was hostile to the people of Thebes because of Jove’s infidelities with Theban women.
88. "And to the yonder hill I gan her guide, escorted her
Alas! and there I took of her my leave, yonder
And yond I saw her to her father ride, split apart
For sorrow of which my hearté shall to-cleave, again
And hither home I came when it was eve,
And here I dwell, out cast from every joy,
And shall, till I may see her eft in Troy."

89. And of himself imaginèd he oft
to be defet and pale and waxen less
disfigured / become thinner
Than he was wont, and that men saiden soft, quietly
"What may it be? Who can the sooth guess
Why Troilus hath all this heaviness?"
and all this n'as but his melânholy,
That he had of himself such fantasy.

90. Another time imaginèn he would
every person
That every wight that wentè by the way Had of him ruth, and that they sayen should:
"I am right sorry Troilus will die;"
And thus he drove a day yet forth or tway, day or two
As you have heard; such life right gan he lead
As he that stood betwixen hope and dread;

91. For which he likèd in his songs to show
The reason
Th' encheason of his woe as he best might,
And made a song of wordès but a few,
lighten
Somewhat his woeful hearté for to light,
And when he was from every mannè's sight,
With softé voice he of his lady dear,
That absent was, gan sing as you may hear:

Canticus Troili  II

92. "O star! of which I lost have all the light,
With hearté sore well ought I to bewail
That ever dark in torment, night by night,
Toward my death with wind in steer I sail,
For which the tenthé night, if that I fail

wind astern

---

1 “Song of Troilus”: For Troilus's earlier songwriting see Bk. I, 58 ff
The guiding to thy beamès bright an hour,
My ship and me Charybdis will devour." ¹

93. This song when he thus sungen haddè, soon
He fell again into his sighès old,
And every night, as was his wont to do,
He stood the brightë moon for to behold,
And all his sorrow to the moon he told,
And said: "Iwis, when thou art hornéd new ²
I shall be glad, if all the world be true.

94. "I saw thine hornès old eke by that morrow
When hencè rode my rightë lady dear,
That cause is of my torment and my sorrow,
For which, O brightë Lucina the clear!
For love of God run fast about thy sphere,
Then shall she come that may my blissë bring."

95. The dayès more, and longer every night,
Than they be wont to be, him thoughto,
And that the sunnë went his course unright,
By longer way than it was wont to go;
And said: "Iwis, me dredeth evermo’
The sunnë’s son, Phaethon, be alive,
And that his father’s cart amiss he drives."

96. Upon the wallès fast eke would he walk,
And on the Greekës host eke would he see,
And to himself right thus then would he talk:
"Lo! yonder is mine ownë lady free."
Or elsë: "Yonder there the tentës be,
And thencë comes this air that is so soot,
That in my soul I feel it does me boote.

¹ 92.7: Charybdis was the name of a monster and her whirlpool that Odysseus’s ship had to avoid in order to survive.

² 93.6: "In truth, when there is a new moon". The crescent moon, waxing or waning (hornes old), is thought of as having horns. See also two references in the next stanza.
97. "And hardily this wind that more and more surely
Thus stoundémeal encreaseth in my face hour by hour
Is of my lady's deepè sighès sore;
I prove it thus: for in no other space
Of all this town, save only in this place,
Feel I no wind that soundeth so like pain.
It says: 'Alas! why twinnèd be we twain?' " separated are we two

98. This longé time he driveth forth right thus,
Till fully passèd was the ninthè night,
And ay beside him was this Pandarus,
That busily did all his fullè might
Him to comfórt and make his heartè light,
Giving him hope always the tenthè morrow day
That she shall come and stinten all his sorrow.

99. Upon that other side eke was Criseyde stop
With women few among the Greekès strong,
For which full oft a-day "Alas!" she said,
"That I was born! Well may mine heartè long 'long' is a verb
After my death, for now live I too long; For death
Alas! and I ne may it not amend,
For now is worse than ever yet I wend.
I thought (it would be)

100. "My father n'ill for nothing do me grace won't allow me
to go again for aught I can him queme, do to please him
And if so be that I my termè pace miss the agreed day
My Troilus shall in his heartè deem think
That I am false, and so it may well seem,
Thus shall I have unthank on every side. blame
That I was born so welaway the tide! alas the hour!

101. "And if that I me put in jeopardy me = myself
To steal away by night, and it befall some ruffian
That I be caught, I shall be held a spy, I'm as good as lost, although
Or elsè, lo! this dread I most of all, take pity
If in the handès of some wretch I fall
I n'am but lost, al' be mine heartè true.
Now mighty God thou on my sorrow rue!"

102. Full pale y-waxen was her brightè face, had become v. pale
Her limbs lean, as she that all the day
Stood when she durst, and lookèd on the place
dared
Where she was born, and where she dwelled had ay;
always
And all the night weeping, alas! she lay.
And thus despairèd out of allè cure,
She led her life, this woeful créature.

103. Full oft a-day she sighed eke for distress,
picturing
And in herself she went aye portraying
Of Troilus the greatè worthiness,
And all his goodly wordès récording
Since first that day her love began to spring;
And thus she set her woeful heart afire
Through rémembránce of that she gan desire.
of what

104. In all this world there n’is so cruel heart,
wept
That her had heard complainen in her sorrow,
That n’ould have wopen for her pain
So tenderly she wept both eve and morrow.
Her neededè no tearès for to borrow.
And this was yet the worst of all her pain,
There was no wight to whom she durst her ’plain.
no one / dared

105. Full ruefully she lookèd upon Troy,
into bitterness
Beheld the towers high and eke the halls;
"Alas!" quod she, "the pleasance and the joy,
The which that now all turnèd into gall’s,
Have I had oft within those yonder walls!"
O Troilus! what dost thou now?" she said;
"Lord, whether thou yet think upon Criseyde?
do you think?

106. "Alas! I ne had trowèd on your lore,
trusted your judgement
And went with you, as you me redde ere this,
advised
Then had I now not sighèd half so sore:
Who might have said that I had done amiss
To steal away with such one as he is?
But all too late cometh the letuary
medicine
When men the corpse unto the gravè carry.

1 105.2-5: The original rhyming forms are: halles / gall is / wallæs.
107. "Too late is now to speak of this mattér.
Prudence, alas, one of thine eyen three
Me lackèd always ere that I came here;¹
On time y-passèd, well remembered me;
And present time eke could I well y-see;
But future time, ere I was in the snare,
Could I not see. That causeth all my care.

108. "But natheless, betide what may betide,
I shall to-morrow at night, by east or west,
Out of this host steal on some manner side,
And go with Troilus where as him lest;
This purpose will I hold, and this is best;
No force of wicked tonguês' janglerly,
For e'er on love have wretches had envy:"²

109. "For whoso will of every word take heed,
Or rulen him by every wightês wit,
Ne shall he never thriven, out of dread,
For that that some men blamen ever yet,
Lo, other manner folk commenden it;
And as for me, for all such variance
Felicity clepe I my suffisance.

110. "For which, withouten any wordes mo'
To Troy I will, as for conclusion."
But God it wot, ere fully monthês two
She was full far from that intention,
For bothé Troilus and Troyê town
Shall knotèless throughout her heartê slide,³
For she will take a purpose to abide.

111. This Diomede of whom you tell I 'gan,
Goes now within himself ay arguing,

¹ 107.2-3: Prudence has an eye on the future as well as the past and present. Criseyde has always lacked the ability to look at the future, she says.

² 108.7: "For wretched people have always shown envy of lovers."

³ 110.6: knotless: like a thread that has no knot, and so slips out of a needle.
112. But nathless well in his heart he thought
That she was not without a love in Troy,
For never sithen he her thencé brought,
Ne could he see her laugh or maken joy;
He n'ist how best her heart for to accoy;
"But for t' essay," he said, "it naught ne grieveth.
"For he that naught assayeth, naught achieveth."
But for t' essay," he said, "it naught ne grieveth.
"For he that naught assayeth, naught achieveth."

113. Yet said he to himself upon a night:
"Now, am I not a fool, that wot well how
Her woe for love is of another wight,
And hereupon to go essay her now?
I may well wit it will not be my prow,
For wisé folk in bookés it express:
`Men shall not woo a wight in heaviness.'

114. "But whoso mighté winnen such a flower
From him for whom she mourneth night and day,
He might well say he were a conqueror";
And right anon, as he that bold was ay,
Thought in his heart: "Happen what happen may,
Al' should I die, I will her hearté seek,
I shall no moré losen but my speech."

115. This Diomede, as bookés us declare,
Was in his needés prest and courageous,
With sterné voice, and mighty limbs square,
Hardy and testive, strong and chivalrous
Of deedés like his father Tydeus;
And some men say he was of tongué large,
And heir he was of Calydon and Arge.

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1 112.6-7: "It doesn't hurt to try (to essay); he who attempts nothing achieves nothing."

2 113.5: "I have good reason to think that it will not do me any good."
116. Criseydē meanē was of her statūre. Thereto so shaped of face, and eke of cheer, There mighten be no fairer créature; And often timēs this was her mannēr To go y-tressēd with her hairēs clear Down by her collar, at her back behind, Which, with a thread of goldē, she would bind.

117. And, save her browēs joinēden ifere,1 There was no lack in aught I can espys; But for to speaken of her eyen clear, Lo! truly, they written that her saw, That paradise stood formēd in her eye, And with her richē beauty evermore Strove love in her ay which of them was more.

118. She sober was, simple, and wise withal, The best y-nourishēd eke that might be, And goodly of her speech in general, Charitable, stately, lusty, free, 2 Ne nevermore ne lackēd her pity, Tender-heartēd, sliding of courāge; But truly, I cannot tell her age.

119. And Troilus well waxen was in height, And cómplete, formēd by proportïon So well, that Kind it naught amenden might, Young, fresh, and strong, and hardy as lion, And true as steel in each conditïon, One of the best entechēd créätūre That is or shall while that the world may dure.

120. And certainly in story it is found That Troilus was never to no wight, As in his time, in no degree secónd In derring-do that longeth to a knight;

1 117.1: "And, except that her eyebrows were joined together" -- presumably a feature considered less than perfect.

2 118.4: "Loving (?), dignified, cheerful, generous."
Al’ might a giant passen him of might 1
His heart aye with the first and with the best
Stood peregal to dare do what him lest.2

121. But for to tellen forth of Diomede,
It fell that after on the tenthè day
Since that Criseyde out of the city yede,
This Diomede, as fresh as branch in May,
Came to the tenté there as Calchas lay,
And feignèd him with Calchas have to doon,
But what he meant I shall you tellen soon.

122. Criseyde, at shortè wordès for to tellé,
Welcomed him, and down him by her set,
As he was ethe enough to maken dwell;3
And after this, withouten longer let,
The spices and the wine men forth them fet,
And forth they speak of this and that y-fere,
As friendès do, of which some shall you hear.

123. He gan first fallen of the war in speech
Betwixen them and folk of Troyè town,
And of the siege he gan eke her beseech
To tell him what was her opinïon;
From that demand he so descended down
To asken her if that her strang though
The Greekès’ guise and workès that they wrought,

124. And why her father tarrieth so long
To wedden her unto some worthy wight.
Criseydè, that was in her painès strong
For love of Troilus her ownè knight,
So farforth as she cunning had or might,
Answered him then, but as of his intent

1 120.5: “Although a giant might surpass him in strength.” The triple negative in 2-3, “never...no wight...no degree” is acceptable emphasis in Chaucer’s English.

2 120.7: “Stood fully equal to dare do what he needed to do.”

3 122.3: “It was easy enough to get him to stay.”
It seemèd that she wist not what he meant.

125. But natheless this ilk Diomede
Gan in himself assure, and thus he said:
"If I aright have taken on you heed,\(^1\)
Me thinketh thus, O lady mine Criseyde,
That, since I first hand on your bridle laid,
When I came out of Troyè by the morrow,
Ne might I never see you but in sorrow.

126. "I can not say what may the causè be,
But if for love of some Trojan it were,
The which right sorè would a-thinken me,
That you for any wight that dwelleth there
Shoulden spill a quarter of a tear,
Or piteously your selfen so beguile,
For dreadèless it is not worth the while.

127. "The folk of Troy, as who saith all and some,
In prison be, as you your selfen see,
From thencè shall not one alivè come
For all the gold atwixen sun and sea;
Trusteth well this, and understandeth me,
There shall not one to mercy go alive,
Al' were he lord of worldès twicè five.\(^2\)

128. "Such wreak on them, for fetching of Elaine,
There shall be take, ere that we hencè wend,
That Manes, which that goddès be of pain,
Shall be aghast that Greekes will them shend;
And men shall dread unto the worldè's end
From hencéforth to ravish any queen,
So cruel shall our wreak on them be seen.

129. "And, but if Calchas lead us with ambáges,

\(^1\) 125.3: "If I have read you correctly."

\(^2\) 127-133: “Even if he were master of ten worlds.” In this speech Diomede makes at greater length and much more forcefully Troilus's point of IV, st. 212-13, but the effect of Diomede’s speech on Criseyde is strikingly different.
That is to say, with double wordès sly,
Such as men clepe a word with two viságes,
You shall well known that I naught ne lie,
And all this thing right see it with your eye,
And that anon, you will not trow how soon;
Now taketh heed, for it is for to doon.

130. "What! weenen you that your wise father would
Have given Antenor for you anon,
If he ne wist that the city should
Destroyèd be? Why, nay, so may I gon.
He knew full well there shall not 'scapen one
That Trojan is, and for the greaté fear,
He durst not that you dwelléd longer there.

131. "What will you more, O lovesome lady dear!
Let Troy and Trojans from your hearté pace;
Drive out the bitter hope, and make good cheer,
And clepe again the beauty of your face
That you with salté tearés so deface,
For Troy is brought in such a jeopardy
That it to save is now no remedy.

132. "And thinketh well you shall in Greekès find
A moré perfect love, ere it be night,
Than any Trojan is, and moré kind,
And bet to serven you will do his might;
And if that you vouchsafe, my lady bright,
I will be he to serven you myself,
Yea, lever than be king of Greeces twelve."

133. And with that word he gan to waxen red,
And in his speech a little while he quoke,
And cast aside a little with his head,
And stint a while, and afterwards he woke,
And soberly on her he threw his look,
And said: "I am, al’ be it you no joy,
As gentle man as any wight in Troy.

134. "For if my father, Tydeus," he said,
Y-livèd had, then I had been ere this
Of Calydon and Arge a king, Criseyde,
And so I hope that I shall yet, y-wis
But he was slain, alas! the more harm is,
Unhappily at Thebès all too rathe,
Polynices and many a man to scathe. ¹

134. "But hearté mine! since that I am your man,
And be the first of whom I seeké grace
To serven you as heartily as I can,
And ever shall while I to live have space,
So that, ere I depart out of this place,
You will me granten that I may to-morrow
At better leisure tell you of my sorrow."

He spoke enough for one day at the most;
It provéd well; he spoke so that Criseyde
Granted on the morrow at his request
For to speaken with him at the least,
So that he would not speak of such mattér;
And thus she to him said, as you may hear,

135. "But hearté mine! since that I am your man,
And be the first of whom I seeké grace
To serven you as heartily as I can,
And ever shall while I to live have space,
So that, ere I depart out of this place,
You will me granten that I may to-morrow
At better leisure tell you of my sorrow."

How should I tell his wordès that he said?
He spoke enough for one day at the most;
It provéd well; he spoke so that Criseyde
Granted on the morrow at his request
For to speaken with him at the least,
So that he would not speak of such mattér;
And thus she to him said, as you may hear,

136. How should I tell his wordès that he said?
He spoke enough for one day at the most;
It provéd well; he spoke so that Criseyde
Granted on the morrow at his request
For to speaken with him at the least,
So that he would not speak of such mattér;
And thus she to him said, as you may hear,

137. As she that had her heart on Troilus
So fast y-set that none might it arace,
And strangèly she spoke, and saidè thus:
"O Diomede! I love that ilkè place
Where I was born, and Jové, of thy grace
Deliver it soon of all that doth it care!
God, for thy might so leave it well to fare!

138. "That Greekès would their wrath on Troyé wreak,
If that they might, I know it well iwis;
But it shall not befallen as you speak,
And God toforn! And further over this
I wot my father wise and ready is,
And that he me hath bought, as you me told,
So dear I am the more unto him hold.

¹ 134: Tydeus supported the cause of Polynices against his brother Eteocles for control of Thebes. His death was a blow (scathe) to Polynices and many another man.
139. "That Greekês be of high conditïon I wot eke well, but certain, men shall find
As worthy folk withinnê Troyê town,
As cunning, and as perfect, and as kind,
As be betwixen Orcades and Inde;
And that you couldê well your lady serve
I trow eke well, her thanks for to deserve.

140. "But as to speak of love, iwis," she said,
"I had a lord to whom I wedded was,
The whose mine heart was all till that he died;
And other love, as help me now Pallas,
There in my heartê n'is ne never was;
And that you be of noble and high kindred
I have well heard it tellen, out of dread.

141. "And that doth me to have so great a wonder
That you will scornen any woman so;
Eke, God wot, love and I be far asunder;
I am disposêd bet, so may I go,
Unto my death to 'plain and maken woe:¹
What I shall after do I cannot say,
But truly, as yet me list not play.

142. "My heart is now in tribulatïon,
And you in armês busy day by day;
Hereafter, when you wonnen have the town,
Paraunter then so it happen may
That when I see what never yet I saw,
Then will I workê what I never wrought;
This word to you enough sufficen ought.

143. "To-morrow eke will I speaken with you fain,
So that you touchen naught of this mattër,
And when you list you may come here again;
And ere you go, thus much I say you here,
As help me Pallas with her hairês clear,
If that I should of any Greek have ruth,
It shouldê be your selfen by my truth.

¹ 141.4-5: "I am more disposed, I promise you, to complain and lament until my dying day."
144. "I say not therefore that I will you love,
Ne say not nay, but, in conclusion,
I meané well, by God that sits above."
And therewithal she cast her eyen down,
And gan to sigh, and said: "O Troyé town!
Yet bid I God in quiet and in rest
I may thee see, or do my hearté breste."

145. But in effect, and shortly for to say,
This Diomede all freshly new again
Gan pressen on, and fast her mercy pray;
And after this—the soothè to say--
Her glove he took, of which he was full fain,
And, finally, when it was waxen eve,
And all was well, he rose and took his leave.

146. The brighté Venus followed and aye taught
The way where broadé Phoebus down alight,
And Cytherea her car-horse overwraught
To whirl into the Lion if she might,
And Signifer his candles showeth bright,
When that Criseyde unto her beddè went
Within her father's fairé brighté tent;

147. Returning in her soul ay up and down
The wordé of this sudden Diomede,
His great estate, and peril of the town,
And that she was alone, and haddè need
Of friendé's help, and thus began to breed
The causes why—the soothè for to tell—
That she took fully purpose for to dwell.

148. The morrow came, and ghostly for to speak,
This Diomede is come unto Criseyde;
And, shortly, lest that you my talé break,

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1 146: This is a roundabout way, dear to Chaucer, of saying that the evening star (Venus) had gone down after the Sun, and the moon (Cytherea) and the stars had risen full when Criseyde went to bed.

2 148.1: ghostly for to speak: Different editors and glossators explain this phrase with differences in detail but agreeing that it seems to mean "to tell the truth".
According to Benoit, Diomede had captured a horse from Troilus in battle, had presented it to Briseyda / Criseyde, and had asked for it back when he in turn lost his own horse.

The brooch is, presumably, the one mentioned below (V, St. 238) where we are told that Troilus had given it to her on the morning she left Troy. Earlier, there is mention of a brooch which Criseyde gave to Troilus on their last night together. (III, st. 196.)
Throughout the worldé shall my bell be rung, ¹
And women most will haten me of all;
Alas, that such a case me should befall!

153. "They will say, inasmuch as in me is,
I have them done dishonour, welaway!
Al' be I not the first that did amiss,
What helpeth that to do my blame away?
But since I see there is no better way,
And that too late is now for me to rue,
To Diomede algate I will be true. ²

154. "But Troilus, since I no better may,
And since that thus departen you and I,
Yet pray I God so give you right good day,
As for the gentilest — truly —
That e'er I saw to serven faithfully,
And best can ay his lady's honour keep,"
(And with that word she burst anon to weep).

155. "And certés you ne haten shall I never, ³
And friendé's love that shall you have of me,
And my good word, all should I liven ever;
And, truly, I would right sorry be
For to see you in adversity;
And guiltéless I wot well I you leave,³
And all shall pass, and thus I take my leave."

156. But truly how long it was between
That she forsook him for this Diomede,
There is no author telleth it I ween,
Take every man now to his bookés heed,
He shall no termé finden, out of dread,

¹ 152.1: The meaning of the line seems clear enough, even if it is hard to translate into modern English. The ringing of the bell may signify a number of negative things: the knell for one who has died or the bell rung to excommunicate by "bell, book and candle", or, stretching a little more, even the outcast leper's bell, which figures so strongly in Henryson's sequel.

² 155.1: "And certainly I shall never hate you."

³ 155.6: Presumably guiltless applies to Troilus, though its placing makes that uncertain.
For though that he began to woo her soon,
Ere he her won yet was there more to doon.

157. Ne me not list this silly woman chide,
Farther than that the story will devise;
Her name, alas! is publishèd so wide,
That for her guilt it ought enough suffice;
And if I might excuse her in some wise,
For she so sorry was for her untruth,
Iwis, I would excuse her yet for ruth.

158. This Troilus, as I before have told,
Thus driveth forth as well as he hath might,
But often was his heartè hot and cold,
And namely that ilkè ninthè night
Which on the morrow she had him behight
To come again; God wot full little rest
Had he that night; nothing to sleep him lest.

159. The laurel-crownèd Phoebus with his heat
Gan in his course, ay upward as he went,
To warm of the east sea the wavès wet,
And Nisus' daughter sung with fresh intent,¹
When Troilus his Pandare after sent,
And on the wallès of the town they played,
To look if they can see aught of Criseyde.

160. Till it was noon they stooden for to see
Who that there came; and every manner wight
That came from far they saiden it was she,
Till that they couldè knownen him aright:²
Now was his heartè dull, now was it light;
And thus bejapèd, stooden for to stare
Aboutè naught, this Troilus and Pandare.

¹ 159.4: The allusion is apt: the daughter of Nisus looking down from the walls of her father's fortress, fell in love with the enemy Minos, and betrayed the city to him. She was turned into the bird here mentioned. A version of the story is in Chaucer's Legend of Good Women, 1894 ff.

² 160.4: They think that everyone they see moving is Criseyde until they can see the person more closely. Troilus's spirits go up and down with every hope and disappointment.
161. To Pandarus this Troilus then said:
"For aught I wot before noon sikerly
Into this town ne cometh not Criseyde,
She hath enough to do hardily
To twinnen from her father, so trow I;
Her oldé father will yet make her dine
Ere that she go; God give his hearté pine!"

162. Pandare answered: "It may well be, certáin,
And forthy let us dine, I thee beseech,
And after noon then may'st thou come again."
And home they go withouten moré speech,
And came again; but longé may they seek
Ere that they finden what they after gape;
Fortune them both y-thinketh for to jape.

163. Quod Troilus: "I see well now that she
Is tarried with her oldé father so
That ere she come it will nigh even be.
Come forth, I will unto the gaté go;
These porters be uncunning evermo',
And I will do them holden up the gate
As naught ne were, although that she come late."¹

164. The day goes fast, and after that came eve,
And yet came not to Troilus Criseyde.
He looketh forth by hedge, by tree, by greve,
And far his head over the wall he laid,
And at the last he turnéd him, and said:
"By God I wot her meaning now, Pandare;
Almost iwis all newé was my care."²

165. "Now doubtélss this lady can her good;
I wot she means to riden privily;
I commend her wisdom, by my hood;
She will not maken people nicélly

¹ 163.7: *As naught ne were*: A difficult phrase which may mean "as if there were no reason not to keep it open," or "as if there were no war on." Neither seems altogether satisfactory.

² 164.7: "Indeed my worries almost came back."
Gaure on her when she comes, but softely
By night into the town she thinketh ride;
And, dear brother! think not long t'abide.

166. "We have naught elsé for to do iwis;
And Pandarus, now wilt thou trowen me,
Have here my truth, I see her! Yond she is!
Heave up thine eyen man. May'st thou not see?"
Pandárus answered: "Nay, so may I thee;
All wrong by God: what say'st thou man, where art?
What I see yond afar is but a cart."

167. "Alas ! thou sayst right sooth," quod Troilus,
"But hardly it is not all for naught
That in mine heart I now rejoicè thus;
It is against some good, I have a thought,
Wot I not how, but since that I was wrought
Ne felt I such a comfort dare I say.
She comes to-night, my life that durst I lay."

168. Pandarus answered: "It may be, well enough."
And held with him of all that e'er he said,
But in his heart he thought, and soft he laughed,
And to himself full soberly he said:
"From hazelwood, where Jolly Robin played
Shall come all that that thou abidest here;
Yea, farewell all the snow of ferné year."

169. The warden of the gates began to call
The folk which that without the gatés were,
And bade them driven in their beastès all,
Or all the night they must bieven there;
And far within the night, with many a tear,
This Troilus gan homeward for to ride,
For well he sees it helpeth not t' abide.

170. But natheless he gladded him in this:
He thought he mis-accounted had his day,
And said: "I understood have all amiss,
For thilkè night I last Criseydé saw
She said: 'I shall be here, if that I may,
Ere that the moon, O my dear hearté sweet,
The Lion pass out of this Ariete,"  

171. "For which she may yet hold all her behest."
And on the morrow to the gate he went,
And up and down, by east and eke by west,
Upon the wallés made he many a went;
But all for naught; his hope always him blent,
For which at night in sorrow and sighs sore
He went him home withouten any more.

172. His hope all clean out of his hearté fled,
He n'as whereon now longer for to hang,
But for the pain him thought his hearté bled,
So were his throés sharp and wonder strong;
For when he saw that she abode so long
He wist not what he judgen of it might,
Since she hath broken what she him behight.

173. The third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixthé day
After those dayés ten of which I told,
Betwixen hope and dread his hearté lay,
Yet somewhat trusting on her hestés old;
But when he saw she would her term not hold,
He can now see no other remedy
But for to shape him sooné for to die.

174. Therewith the wicked spirit, (God us bless!)
Which that men clepe the woodé Jealousy,
Gan in him creep in all this heaviness,
For which, because he wouldé sooné die,
He n' ate nor drank for his melâncholy,
And eke from every company he fled;
This was the life that all this time he led.

175. He so defet was that no manner man

----

1 170.6-7: "Before the moon, leaving Aries, passes into Leo." These were in fact her words in IV, st 228. He thinks he might have miscalculated by a day.

2 173.5: "But when he saw she was not going to keep her promise."
Unnethès might him knowen where he went, 
So was he lean and thereto pale and wan, 
And feeble, that he walkèd by potent, 
And with his ire he thus himselfen shent; 
But whoso askéd him whereof him smart, 
He said his harm was all about his heart.

176. Priam full oft, and eke his mother dear, 
His brethren and his sisters, gan him frayn 
Why he so woeful was in all his cheer, 
And what thing was the cause of all his pain. 
But all for naught; he n'ould his cause explain, 
About his heart, and fainè would he die.

177. So, on a day he laid him down to sleep, 
And so befell it that in sleep him thought 
That in a forest fast he walked to weep 
For love of her that him those pain wrought, 
And up and down as he that forest sought, 
He mett he saw a boar with tuskès great 
That slept against the bright sunnè's heat;

178. And by this boar, fast in her armès fold, 
Lay kissing ay his lady bright Criseyde, 
For sorrow of which, when he it gan behold, 
And for despite, out of his sleep he braid, 
And loud he cried on Pandarus, and said: 
"O Pandarus! now know I crop and root; 
I n'am but dead; there is no other boote.

179. "My lady bright, Criseyde, has me betrayed, 
In whom I trusted most of any wight; 
She elsewhere hath now her heart apaid; 
The blissful goddès thorough their greatè might 
Have in my dream y-showéd it full right: 
Thus in my dream Criseyde have I behold;"
And all this thing to Pandarus he told.

---

1 176.1: Priam, king of Troy, was Troilus's father.
180. "O my Criseyde! alas! what subtlety, trickery
What newé lust, what beauty, what science, knowledge
What wrath, of justé cause, have you to me? what just anger
What guilt of me, what fell experience, bad
Hath from me reft, alas! thine âdverténce? robber / love
O trust! O faith! O deepé assurance!
Who hath me reft Criseyde, all my pleasance?

181. "Alas ! why let I you from hencé go? went
For which well nigh out of my wit I braid;
Who shall now trow on any oathés mo'? trust any oaths more
God wot I weened, O lady bright Criseyde,
That every word was gospel that you said:
God knows I thought
But who may bet beguile, if that him list,
better / he chooses
Than he on whom men weenen best to trist? think most trustworthy

182. "What shall I do, my Pandarus? Alas! I destroy
I feelé now so sharp a newé pain,
Since that there is no remedy in this case,
better / two
That bet were it I with mine handés twain
My selfen slew than alway thus to 'plain,
For through the death my woe should have an end,
Where every day with life myself I shend."

183. Pandarus answered and said: "Alas the while
many kinds of men
That I was born! Have I not said ere this
That dreamés many a manner man beguile?
And why? For folk expounden them amiss.
For any dream, right for thine owné dread?
Let be this thought: thou cans't no dreamés read."

184. “Paraunter where thou dreames of this boar,
Perhaps
It may so be that it may signify

---

1 180: The syntax of this stanza is a little confusing. The first two lines "O my Criseyde ... science" and line 4 go with line 5 thus: "O my Criseyde! Alas! what subtlety / What new lust, what beauty, what knowledge (science) / ... What guilt of mine, what bad experience,... Has robbed (refit) me alas! of thy loving attention (advertence)?" Line 3 interrupts the normal order; it means "What real cause have you to be angry with me?"

2 181.6-7: "Who can better betray people, if he wants, than the one whom people think most trustworthy?"
Her father, which that old is and eke hoar, 
Against the sunne lies, on point to die, 
And she for sorrow 'ginneth weep and cry, 
And kisseth him, where he lies on the ground:
Thus shouldest thou thy dream aright expound."

185. "How mighte I then do," quod Troilus, 
"To know of this, yea, were it ne'er so lite?" ¹ 
"Now says't thou wisely," quod this Pandarus. 
"My rede is this, since thou cans't well endite, 
That hastily a letter thou her write, 
Through which thou shalt well bringen it about 
To know a sooth where thou art now in doubt."

187. "Thou hast not written her since that she went, 
Nor she to thee; and this I durst lay, 
There may such causé be in her intent, 
That hardely thou wilt thyselfen say 
That her abode the best is for you tway. 
Now write her then, and thou shalt feel soon 
A sooth of all. There is no more to do."

188. Accorded be to this conclusïon (And that anon) these ilk lord two, 
And hastily sits Troilus adown 
And rolleth in his hearté to and fro 
How he may best describen her his woe, 
And to Criseydé, his own lady dear, 
He wrote right thus and said as you may hear:

**TROILUS'S LETTER**

189. "Right freshé flower, whose I have been and shall 
Withouten part of elséwhere service, ²

---

¹ 184.1-2: "What can I do, then, to find out even a little about this?"

² 189.2: "Without serving any other lady."
With heart and body, life, lust, thought, and all,
I woeful wight, in every humble wise
That tongue can tell or hearté may devise,
As oft as matter occupieth place,
Me recommend unto your noble grace.

190. "Liketh it you to witen, sweeté heart! \(^1\)
As you well know, how longé time agone
That you me left in asper painés smart,
When that you went, of which yet booté none
Have I none had, but ever worse begone
From day to day am I, and so must dwell
While it you list, of weal and woe my well.\(^2\)

191. "For which to you with dreadful hearté true
I write, as he that sorrow drives to write
My woe, that every hour encreaseth new,
Complaining as I dare or can indite
And that defacéd is, that may you wite
That tearés which that from mine eyen rain,\(^3\)
That woulden speak if that they could, and ’plain.

192. "You first beseech I, that your eyen clear
To look on this defouléd you not hold,\(^4\)
And o’er all this that you, my lady dear
Will vouchésafe this letter to behold,
And by the cause eke of my carés cold,
That slays my wit, if aught amiss m’astart,
Forgive it me, mine owné sweeté heart!

193. "If any servant dares or ought of right
Upon his lady piteously complain,
Then ween I that I ought to be that wight,

---

\(^1\) 190.1: “May it please you to hear ...” Standard opening for a letter in Chaucer’s day. Apparently much of the rest of the letter also contains conventional tropes.

\(^2\) 190.7: “While it pleases you, O my source (well) of joy and pain.”

\(^3\) 191.5: Presumably it is the letter that is “defaced” with the rain of tears.

\(^4\) 192.1-2: “I first beg you not to consider your bright eyes clouded (befouled) by seeing this (letter)”
Considered this, that you these monthes twain
Have tarried where you said, sooth to sayn,
But ten days that you would in host sojourn.
But in two monthes yet you not return.

194. "But for as much as me must needes like
All that you list,¹ I dare not plain no more,
But humbly, with sorrowful sighes sick,
You write I mine unresty sorrows sore,
From day to day desiring evermore
To knownen fully, if your will it were,
How you have fared and done while you be there.

195. "The whose welfare, and heal eke, God encrease
In honour such, that upward in degree
It grow always so that it never cease;
Right as your heart ay can, my lady free,
Devise, I pray to God so may it be.
And grant it that you soon upon me rue
As wisly as in all I am you true.

196. "And if you liketh knownen of the fare
Of me, whose woe there may no wight descrive,
I can no more, but chest of every care,²
At writing of this letter I was alive,
All ready out my woeful ghost to drive,
Which I delay and hold him yet in hand
Upon the sight of matter of your send.

197. "Mine eyen two, in vain with which I see,
Of sorrowful tear&lt;es salt are waxen wells;
My song in plaint of mine adversity,
My good in harm, mine ease eke waxen hell's,
My joy in woe, I can say now naught else
But turned is (for which my life I wary)

¹ 194.1-2: "But because I am obliged to be pleased by (me must needs like) all that you like (list)..."
² 196: This stanzas is, apparently, a tissue of medieval letter-writing conventions. chest of: container of, i.e. full of.
Every joy or ease in his contráry. 1

198. "Which with your coming home again to Troy
You may redress, and more a thousand sithe,
Than e'er I had, increasen in me joy;
For was there never hearté yet so blithe
To have his life as I shall be, as swithe
As I you see, and though no manner ruth
Commoven you,— yet thinketh on your truth.

199. "And if so be my guilt has death deserved,
Or if you list no more upon me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served
Beseech I you, mine owné lady free,
That hereupon you wouldé write to me
For love of God, my righté lodé-star,
That death may make an end of all my war.

200. "If other cause aught doth you for to dwell,
That with your letter you me recomfórt,2
For though to me your absence is a hell,
With patience I will my woe comport,
And with your letter of hope I will disport:
Now writeth, sweet! and let me thus not 'plain;
With hope or death deliver me from pain.

201. "Iwis, mine owné dearé hearté true!
I wot that when you next upon me see,
So lost have I my heal and eke my hue,
Criseyde shall not can knownen me;
Iwis, mine hearté’s day, my lady free!
So thirseth aye mine hearté to behold
Your beauty, that unneth my life I hold.

202. "I say no more, al have I for to say

---

1 197.4-7: "My good (is turned) into harm, my ease into hell. ... Every joy and ease is turned into its opposite—for which I curse my life." The ME spelling of rhyme words for lines 2, 4, 5 was: welles, helle is, ellis

2 200.1-2: "If any other reason makes you stay, assure me in your letter."
To you well morë than I tellen may;
But whether that you do me live or die,
Yet pray I God as give you right good day.
And fareth well, O goodly fair fresh May! ¹
As you that life or death me may command,
And to your truth ay I me recommend.

203. "With healë such, that but you given me
The samë heal I shall no healë have:
In you lies, when you list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shall my grave;
In you my life, in you might for to save
Me from dis-ease of all my paines smart:
And fare now well, my ownë sweetë heart!"

le vostre T."  Yours, Troilus

204. This letter forth was sent unto Criseyde,
Of which her answer in effect was this:
Full piteously she wrote again, and said
That all so soon as that she might iwës
She wouldë come, and mend what was amiss;
And, finally, she wrote and said him then
She wouldë come, yes, but she n'istë when.

205. But in her letter maden she such feast
That wonder was, and swore she loved him best,
Of which he found but bottomless behests.
But, Troilus, thou mayst now east and west
Pipe in an ivy leaf if that thee lest:
Thus goes the world. God shield us from mischance,
And every wight that meaneth truth advance! ²

206. Increasen gan the woe from day to night
Of Troilus for tarrying of Criseyde,
And lessen gan his hope and eke his might,

¹ 202.5:  may: perhaps here means "maiden", hardly appropriate in any strict sense for a widow who has also been Troilus's lover for three years. It may mean just "young woman" or possibly the month of May, a metaphor for her youthful freshness.

² 205.7  "And every person who wishes to advance the truth."
For which all down he in his bed him laid;  
He n'ate, nor drank, nor slept, nor word he said,  
Imagining ay that she was unkind,  
For which well nigh he waxed out of his mind.  

Thinking always / unfaithful  
nearly went mad

207. This dream, of which I told have eke before,  
May never come out of his remembrance;  
He thought ay well he had his lady lorn,  
And that Jove of his high provision  
Him show had in sleep the significance  
Of her untruth and his disadventure,  
And that the boar was shown him in figure;

had indeed lost his l.  
providence  
bad fortune  
as metaphor

208. For which he for his sister Sibyl sent,  
That calleth was Cassandra all about,  
And all his dream he told her ere he stent,  
And her besought assuage him the doubt  
Of the strong boar with tuskès stout;  
And, finally, within a little stound  
Cassandra gan him thus his dream expound.

S = the prophetess  
finished  
asked her to resolve  
time

209. She gan first smile, and said: 'O brother dear,  
If thou a sooth of this desirest know,  
Thou must a few of old stories hear,  
To purpose, how that Fortune overthrown  
Hath lord's old; through which, within a throw,  
Thou well this boar shalt know, and of what kind  
He comen is, as men in books find.

the truth  
short time  
what family

210 'Diana, which that wroth was and in ire  
For Greekes n'ould do her sacrifice,  
Ne incense upon her altar set afire,  
She, for that Greekes gan her so to despise,  
Wreaked her in a wonder cruel wise.  
For with a boar as great as ox in stall  
She made up-fret their corn and vinès all.

angry & furious  
Because

Avenged herself  
tear up

211. 'To slay this boar was all the country raised,  
Amonges which there came this boar to see,  
A maid, one of this world the best y-praised;  
And Meleager, lord of that country,
He lovèd so this freshè maiden free,
That with his manhoođ, ere he wouldè stent,
This boar he slew, and her the head he sent;

212. ‘Of which, as oldè bookès tellen us,
There rose a contek and and a great envy.  
And of this lord descended Tydeus
By line, or elsè oldè bookès lie,
But how this Meleager gan to die
Through his mother, will I you not tell,
For all too longè it were for to dwell.” ¹

213. She told eke how Tydeus — ere she stent —
Unto the strongè city of Thebes,
To claimè kingdom of the city went,
For his fellow, daun Polynices,
Of which the brother, daun Eteocles, ²
Full wrongfully of Thebes held the strength;
This toldè she by process, all by length.

214. She told eke how Hemonides astart
When Tydeus slew fifty knightès stout;
She told eke all the prophecies by heart,
And how that seven kingès with their rout
Besiegeden the city all about,
And of the holy serpent, and the well,
And of the furies, all she gan him tell. ³

215. Of Archemoris’ burying, and the plays,
And how Amphiorax fell through the ground,
How Tydeus was slain, lord of Argayes,
And how Ypomedon in little stound

¹ Chaucer might well have exercised the same discretion by omitting the following stanzas (and a paraphrase, which has been moved to an appendix); they “dwell” too long on material largely irrelevant to the story of T&C, and serve to slow up the progress of his own tale.

² 213: Eteocles refused to let his brother Polynices take his turn as ruler of Thebes. Polynices and his six allies, including Tydeus, attacked: the Seven against Thebes.

³ 214: At this point in most manuscripts there is a Latin paraphrase of the Thebaid, book by book. See Appendix.
Was drowned, and dead Parthenope — of wounds,
And also how Capaneus, the proud,
With thunder-dint was slain, that crièd loud.

216. She gan eke tell him how that either brother,
Eteocles and Polynices also,
At a skirmish each of them slew other,
And of Argia’s weeping and her woe,
And how the town was burnt she told eke tho;
And so descended down from gestes old
To Diomede, and thus she spoke and told:

217. "This ilkè boar betokens Diomede,
Tydeus’ son, that down descended is
From Meleager, that made the boar to bleed,
And thy lady, where so she be iwis,
This Diomede her heart has and she his.
Weep if thou wilt, or leave, for out of doubt,
This Diomede is in and thou art out."

218. "Thou sayst not sooth," quod he, "thou sorceress,
With all thy falsè ghost of prophesy!
Thou weenest been a great divineress;
Now see’est thou not this fool of fantasy
Paineth her on ladies for to lie? ¹
Away!" quod he, "there Jovè give thee sorrow!
Thou shalt be false, paraunter, yet to-morrow. ²

219. “As well thou mightest lien on Alceste
That was of creaturès, but men lie,
That ever were, [the] kindest and the best,
For when her husband was in jeopardy
To die himself but if she wouldè die, ³

¹ 218.4-5: Troilus turns from Cassandra to rebuke himself for even consulting her, and then returns to accuse her of lying about ladies. *thou* in line 4 refers to Troilus himself while *thou* in .3 referred to Cassandra.

² 218.7: "You’ll be (proved) wrong by the outcome tomorrow."

³ 219: Admetus, husband of Alceste, would escape death if either of his parents or his wife was willing to die for him.
She chose to die for him and go to hell
And starved anon, as us the bookes tell.”

220. Cassandra goes; and he with cruel heart
Forgot his woe for anger of her speech,
And from his bed all suddenly he start,
As though all whole him had y-made a leech
And day by day he gan enquire and seek
A sooth of this with all his fullè cure;
And thus he driveth forth his áventure.

221. Fortune, which that permutation
Of thingès hath (as it is her committed
Through purveyance and disposition
Of highè Jove,3 as regnès shall ben flitted
From folk to folk, or when they shall be smitted),
’Gan pull away the feathers bright of Troy
From day to day, till they be bare of joy.

222. Among all this, the fine of the paródie
Of Hector gan approachen wonder blive;
The Fatè would his soule should ún-body,
And shapen had a means it out to drive;
Against which Fate him helpeth not to strive;
But on a day to fighten gan he wend,
At which, alas! he caught his lifè’s end.

223. For which methinketh every manner wight
That haunteth armès oughtè to bewail
The death of him that was so noble a knight.

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1 220.4: "As if a physician (leech) had cured him."

2 220.7: Either "he endures (ME drieth) his fate” or "he pursues (ME driveth) his business.” The same line occurs at the end of Book I.

3 221.1-5: Jove (Jupiter) has given to Fortune, under Providence, control over worldly change such as the transfer of kingdoms (regnes) from one people to another, or their destruction. The subject of ’ gan (.6) is Fortune (.1) which was earlier portrayed as spinning a wheel but is here seen as plucking off the victim’s feathers.

4 222.1: parodie is the French "periode", in this case the period or extent appointed by Fortune or one of the Fates for someone's life, here that of Hector, the major Trojan hero.
For as he drew a king by th'aventail,  
Unware of this, Achilles through the mail  
And through the body gan him for to rive;  
And thus this worthy knight was brought of live.  

224. For whom, as olden bookês tellen us,  
Was made such woe, that tongue it may not tell;  
And namély the sorrow of Troilus,  
That next him was of worthiness the well.  
And in this woe gan Troilus to dwell,  
That, what for sorrow and love and for unrest,  
Full oft a day he bade his hearté brest.  

225. But natheless though he gan him despair  
And dread ay that his lady was untrue.  
Yet ay on her his hearté gan repair,  
And, as these lovers do, he sought ay new  
To get again Criseyde bright of hue,  
And in his heart he went her excusing,  
That Calchas causèd all her tarrying.  

226. And often times he was in purpose great  
Him selfen like a pilgrim to disguise  
To see her; but he may not counterfeit  
To be unknown of folké that were wise,  
Nor find excuse aright that may suffice,  
If he among the Greekês knowen were,  
For which he wept full often many a tear.  

227. To her he wrote yet often times all new  
Full piteously — he left it not for sloth —  
Beseeching her, that since that he was true,  
That she would come again and hold her troth:  
For which Criseyde upon a day for ruth,  
(I take it so) touching all this matérr  
Wrote him again, and said as you may hear:  

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1 226.3-6: He could not disguise himself well enough to deceive perceptive people, or think up a good enough story if he were to be caught in disguise among the Greeks.
Criseyde's Letter

228. "Cupid's son, example of goodlihead, O sword of knighthood, source of gentleness!
How might a wight in torment and in dread
And heal-less, as send you yet gladness?
I heartless, I sick, I in distress
Since you with me nor I with you may deal,
You neither may I send nor heart nor heal.¹

229. "Your letters full, the paper all y-plainted
Conceivèd hath my hearté's pietee;
I have eke seen with tearès all depainted
Your letter, and how you requiren me
To come again, which yet ne may not be,
But why, lest that this letter founden were,
No mention ne make I now for fear.²

230. "Grievous to me, God wot, is your unrest,
Your haste, and that the goddês' ordinance
It seemeth not you take it for the best,
Nor other thing is in your rémembrance,
As thinketh me, but only your pleasance;
But be not wroth, and that I you beseech,
For that I tarry is all for wicked speech.

231. "For I have heard well moré than I wend
Touching us two, how thingès have y-stood,
Which I shall with dissimuling amend;³
And, be not wroth, I have eke understood
How you ne do but holden me in hand;
But now no force; I cannot in you guess
But allé truth and allé gentleness.

¹ 228.7: "I can send you neither comfort (heart) nor cure (heal)" since, as she has said, she herself is heartless and sick.

² 229.6-7: She says she cannot give the reason for her delay lest the letter be incepted.

³ 231-3: Having accused Troilus of thinking only of his own pleasure, she uses her real obsession with malicious rumor to pretend that she has heard stories about them both that she will have to put right by lying (dissumuling), and has even heard stories about his infidelity.
232. "Comen I will, but yet in such disjoint
difficulty
I stand as now, that what year or what day
I cannot say
That this shall be, that can I not appoint;
always
But in effect I pray you as I may
may last
Of your good word and of your friendship ay,
For truly while that my life may dure
As for a friend you may in me assure.

233. "Yet pray I you on evil you ne take
don't be offended
That it is short which that I to you write;
write
I dare not where I am well letters make,
Ne never yet ne could I well endite.
great matter / little space
Eke great effect men write in place lite.
length
Th' intent is all, and not the letter's space,
And fare now well; God have you in his grace!
yours, C.

234. This Troilus the letter thought all strange
could not fully believe
When he it saw, and sorrowfully he sighed;
keep / promised
Him thought it like the kalends of a change;¹
But finally he full ne trowen might
could not fully believe
That she ne would him holden what she hight,²
keep / promised
For with full evil will list him to leave ³
For truly while that my life may dure
That loveth well, in such case, though him grieve.

235. But natheless, men say that at the last,
in spite of everything / truth
For any thing men shall the sooth see,
happened
And such a case betid, and that as fast,
That Troilus well understood that she
Was not so kind as that her ought to be;
And, finally, he wot now out of doubt
knows

¹ 234.3: Kalends was the beginning of the month in the ancient Roman calendar. Hence her letter seems to mark the beginning of a change.

² 234.4-5: Probably the meaning is: “he couldn’t really believe that she would break her promise.” The double negative (ne ... ne) is a little ambiguous here.

³ 234.6: Any of the three modern equivalents of ME leve will make some sense here. The meaning of the couplet appears to be that only with reluctance (evil will) will someone who deeply loves (another) believe / grant / leave in such a case, although it hurts him.
That all is lost that he has been about.

236. Stood on a day in his meláncholy
This Troilus, and in suspicïon
Of her for whom he weenéd for to die,
And so befell that throughout Troyë town,
As was the guise, y-borne was up and down
A manner coat armóur, as says the story,
Before Deiphebe, in sign of his victóry.¹

237. The whichè coat, as telleth Lollius,²
Deiphebe it had y-rent from Diomede
The samè day; and when this Troilus
It saw, he gan to taken of it heed,
Avising of the length and of the breadth,
And all the work; but as he gan behold,
Full suddenly his hearté gan to cold,

238. As he that on the collar found within
A brooch that he Criseyd gave that morrow
That she from Troyë mustë needës twin,³
In rémembrance of him and of his sorrow,
And she him laid again her faith to borrow
To keep it ay; but now full well he wist
His lady was no longer on to trist.

239. He goes him home, and gan full soonë send
For Pandarus. And all this newë chance
And of this brooch he told him ord and end,
Complaining of her heartë's variance,
His longë love, his truth, and his penance;
And after Death, withouten wordës more,
Full fast he cried, his rest him to restore.

¹ 236.6: "coat armor" like that captured by Deiphebus, was a cloth garment, often decorative, worn over armor.

² 237.1: Lollius is the author from whom Chaucer says he got the story of Troilus & Criseyde. No such author has been found.

³ 238.2-3: "A brooch that he had given to Criseyde on the morning she had to leave Troy." No such gift is mentioned in the account of that morning earlier in Book V. But see V, 149.
240. Then spoke he thus: "O lady mine, Criseyde!
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?
Where is your love? Where is your truth?" he said.
"Of Diomede have you now all this feast?
Alas! I would have trowèd at the least
That since you would in truth not to me stand,
That you thus n'ould have holden me in hand.

241. "Who shall now trow on any oathés mo'?
Alas! I never would have weened ere this
That you, Criseydé, could have changèd so,
Ne but I had a-guilt and done amiss.
So cruel weened I not your heartè iwis
To slay me thus. Alas, your name of truth
Is now fordone, and that is all my ruth.

242. "Was there no other brooch you list to let
To feoffè with your newè love," quod he,
"But thilkè brooch that I with teares wet
You gave as for a rémembrance of me?
No other cause, alas! ne hadden ye
But for despite, and eke for that you meant
All utterly to showen your intent,

243. "Through which I see that clean out of your mind
You have me cast, and I ne can nor may
For all this world within mine heartè find
To unlove you a quarter of a day.
In cursed time I born was, welaway!
That you that do me all this woe endure,
Yet love I best of any créature.

244. "Now God," quod he, "me senden yet the grace
That I may meeten with his Diomede,
And truly, if I have might and space,
Yet shall I make, I hope, his sidès bleed:
Now God," quod he, "that oughtest taken heed
To further truth, and wrongès to punice,
Why n'ilt thou do a vengeance of this vice?

1 241.5: "I had not thought (weened) your heart was indeed so cruel."
245. "O Pandarus! that in dreams for to trust
Me blaméd hast, and wont art oft t’upbraid,
Now may’st thou see thyself, if that thee list,
How true is now thy niecè, bright Criseyde.
In sundry formès, God it wot,” he said,
“The goddès showen bothè joy and teen
In sleep, and by my dream it is now seen.

246. "And certainly, withouten morè speech,
From hencéforth, as farforth as I may,
Mine owné death in armès will I seek,
I recké not how sooné be the day;
But truly, Crisyédé, my sweet may!
Whom I have ay with all my might y-served,
That you do thus I have it not deserved."

247. This Pandarus, that all these thingès heard,
And wisté well he said a sooth of this,
He not a word again to him answered
For sorry of his friend’s sorrow he is,
And shaméd for his niece hath done amiss,
And stood astonéd of these causes tway
As still as stone; one word ne could he say.

248. But at the lastè, thus he spoke and said:
"My brother dear! I may do thee no more;
What should I say? I hate iwis Crisyédè,
And God wot I will hate her evermore;
And that thou me besoughtest do of yore,
Having unto mine honour nor my rest
Right no regard, I did all that thee lest.

249. "If I did aught that mighté liken thee
It is me lief, and of this treason now,
God wot that it a sorrow is to me,
And dreadéless, for heartès ease of you,
Right fain I would amend it, wist I how.
And from this world Almighty God I pray,
Deliver her soon! I can no moré say."
250. Great was the sorrow and plaint of Troilus,  
But forth her coursé Fortune ay gan to hold,  
Criseydé loves the son of Tydeus,  
And Troilus must weep in carés cold:  
Such is this world, who so it can behold;  
In each estate is little hearté's rest;  
God leve us for to take it for the best !  

251. In many a cruel battle, out of dread,  
Of Troilus this ilk noble knight  
(As men may in these oldé bookés read)  
Was seen his knighthood and his greaté might,  
And dreadéless his ire both day and night  
Full cruelly the Greekés ay a-bought,  
And always most this Diomede he sought.  

252. And often times I findé that they met  
With bloody strokés and with wordés great,  
Essaying how their spearés weren whet;  
And God it wot with many a cruel heat  
Gan Troilus upon his helm to beat:  
But natheless Fortúne it naught ne would  
Of other's hand that either dien should.  

253. And if I had y-taken for to write  
The armés of this ilké worthy man,  
Then would I of his battailés endite.  
But for that I to writé first began  
Of his love, I have said as I can.  
His worthy deedés, whoso list them hear,  
Read Dares: he can tell them all y-fere.  

254. Beseeching every lady bright of hue,  
And every gentil woman, what she be,  
That, al be that Criseydé was untrue,  
That for that guilt she be not wroth with me.  
You may her guilt in other bookés see;  
And gladlier I will writen, if you lest,  
Penelope’s truth and good Alceste.  

255. I say not this all-only for these men,
But most for women that betrayèd be
Through falsè folk. God give them sorrow, Amen!
That with their greatè wit and subtlety
Betrayen you. And this commeveth me
To speak, and in effect you all I pray,
Beware of men and hearken what I say.

256. Go, little book, go little my tragedy,
Where God thy maker yet ere that he die
So send me might to make some comedy.¹
But, little book, no making thou n'envy,
But subject be to allè poesy,
And kiss the steps where as thou seest pace
Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace.²

257. And, for there is so great diversity
In English, and in writing of our tongue,
So pray I God that none miswrithe thee,
Nor thee mis-meter for default of tongue;³
And read where so thou be, or elsè sung,
That thou be understood, God I beseech;
But yet to purpose of my rather speech.⁴

258. The wrath, as I began you for to say,
Of Troilus the Greekès boughten dear,
For thousandès his handès maden die,
As he that was withouten any peer,
Save Hector in his time, as I can hear;
But welaway! (save only Goddë's will)
Despitously him slew the fierce Achil.

259. And when that he was slain in this manør
His lightë ghost full blissfully is went
Up to the hollowness of the eighthë sphere,
In converse letting every element,¹
And there he saw, with full avisëment,
Th'erratic stars, hearkening harmony,²
With soundës full of heavenish melody.

260. And down from thencë fast he gan avise
This little spot of earth that with the sea
Embracëd is, and fully gan despise
This wretched world, and held all vanity
In rëspect of the plain felicity
That is in heaven above; and at the last
Where he was slain his looking down he cast.

261. And in himself he laughed right at the woe
Of them that wepten for his death so fast,
And dannëd all our works that follow so
The blindë lust the which that may not last,
And shoulden all our heart on heaven cast;
And forth he wentë, shortly for to tell,
Where as Mercúry sorted him to dwell.

262. Such fine hath, lo! this Troilus for love,
Such fine hath all his greatë worthiness,
Such fine hath his estate royál above,
Such fine his lust, such fine hath his noblesse.
Such fine hath this false worldë's brittleness!

¹ 259.4:  Troilus's soul is taken up to the heaven of the eighth sphere. *in converse letting*: the meaning of this phrase is obscure; it is generally glossed: "leaving below" or "leaving behind".

² 259.6: The *erratic stars* are the planets, and Troilus is listening to the music (*hearkening harmony*) of the spheres, in which the planets revolve.
And thus began his loving of Criseyde
As I have told, and in this wise he died.

263. O youngé, freshé folkés, he or she!
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repaireth home from worldly vanity,
And of your hearts up casteth the visage
To thilké God that after his image
You made, and thinketh all is but a fair
This world that passeth soon as flowers fair,

264. And loveth Him, the which that right for love
Upon a cross, our soulés for to buy,
First starved, and rose, and sits in heaven above;
For He n'ill falsen no wight, dare I say,
That will his heart all wholly on Him lay,
And since He best to love is, and most meek,
What needeth feignéd lovés for to seek?

265. Lo here, of pagans’ cursed oldé rites;
Lo here, what all their goddés may avail;
Lo here, this wretched worldé’s appetites;
Lo here, the fine and guerdon of travail
Of Jove, Apollo, Mars, of such rascaill;
Lo here, the form of oldé clerkés’ speech
In poetry, if you their bookés seek.

266. O moral Gower, this book I direct
To thee, and to thee, philosophical Strode,¹
To vouchésafe, where need is, to correct,
Of your benignity and zealés good.
And to that soothfast Christ, that starved on rood,
With all my heart of mercy ever I pray;
And to the Lord right thus I speak and say:

¹ 266.1-2: The poet Gower, and Strode, an Oxford philosopher, were friends of Chaucer. The request to correct his copy is probably a conventional compliment, but in the days before a writer had the opportunity to correct the final printer’s page proofs, his work was at the mercy of every scribe who chose or was employed to copy it, so the request might not have been a mere gesture. For Chaucer’s awareness of this, see stanza 257 just above, and for his exasperation at his own scribe Adam, see his short comic poem execrating Adam’s errors.
267. Thou one and two and three, etern alive
That reignest ay in three and two and one,
Uncircumscribed, and all may'st circumscribe,
Us from visible and invisible foes
Defend; and to Thy mercy everyone
So make us, Jesus, for thy mercy digne
For love of Maid and Mother thine benign.
Amen.

Here ends the book of Troilus and Criseyde

For appendix, see next page

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1 267: The prayer is to the Holy Trinity, the three persons of the one God who reigns eternally: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The first three of these lines are a translation of Dante’s *Paradiso* 14.28-30.

2 267.7: "Make us worthy of thy mercy, for love of your benign maiden-mother," the Virgin Mary. *Digne* can be pronounced “dine”.
Appendix

In most manuscripts the following summary of the Thebaid occurs after stanza 214 above

ARGUMENT OF THE TWELVE BOOKS OF STATIUS’S THEBAID

Associat profugum Tideo primus Polynicen.
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque secundus.
Tertius Hemoniden canit et vates latitantes.
Quartus havet reges ineuntes proelia septem.
Mox furie Lenne quinto narratur et anguis.
Archemori bustum sexto ludique leguntur.
Dat Graios Thebes, et vatem septimus umbris
Octavo cecidit Tideo, spes, vita Pelasgis.
Ypomedon nono moritur cum Parthenopeo.
Fulmine percussus decimo Capaneus superatur.
Undecimo sese perimunt per vulnera frates.
Argeiam flentem narrat duodenus et ignem.

Translation -

Book I associates Tydeus and the exiled Polynices.
Book II: Tydeus as ambassador and the ambush [intended by Eteocles to kill him].
Book III: Hemonides (Maeon) and the prophecies of doom.
Book IV: The seven kings going into battle.
Then in Book V we are told about the Lemnian furies and the serpent
Book VI: We read of the cremation and funeral games of Archemorus.
Book VII delivers the Greeks to Thebes and the prophet (Amphiaraus) to the shades.
Book VIII: Tydeus falls, the hope and life of the Pelasgians.
Book IX: Hippomedon dies with Parthenopaeus.
Book X: Capaneus, struck by a thunderbolt, is destroyed.
Book XI: The brothers [Eteocles and Polynices] fatally wound each other.
Book XII describes the grief of Argia and the funeral pyre [of Polynices].