LENVOY DE CHAUCER A SCOGAN

Tobroken been the statutz hye in hevene
That creat were eternally to dure,
Syth that I see the bryghte goddis sevene
Mowe wepe and wayle, and passioun endure,
As may in erthe a mortal creature.
Alas, fro whennes may thyss thing procede,
Of which errour I deye almost for drede?

By word eterne whilom was it shape
That fro the fyfte sercle, in no manere,
Ne myght a drope of teeres doun escape.
But now so wepith Venus in hir spere
That with hir teeres she wol drenche us here.
Allas! Scogan, this is for thyn offence;
Thow causest this diluge of pestilence.

Hastow not seyd, in blaspheme of the goddis,
Thurgh pride, or thurgh thy grete reknelnesse,
Swich thing as in the lawe of love forbode is,
That, for thy lady sawgh nat thy distresse,
Therfore thow yave hir up at Michelmesse?
Allas! Scogan, of olde folk ne yonge
Was never erst Scogan blamed for his tonge.

Thow drowe in skorn Cupide eke to record
Of thilke rebel word that thow hast spoken,
For which he wol no lenger be thy lord.
And, Scogan, though his bowe be nat broken,
He wol nat with his arwes been ywroken
On the, ne me, ne noon of oure figure;
We shul of him have neyther hurt ne cure.

Now certes, frend, I dreed of thyn unhap,
Lest for thy gilt the wreche of Love procede
On alle hem that ben hoot and rounde of shap,
That ben so lykly folk in love to spede.
Than shal we for oure labour have no mede;
But wel I wot, thow wolt answere and saye,
“Lo, olde Grisel lyst to ryme and playe!”

Nay, Scogan, say not so, for I m’excuse —
God helpe me so! — in no rym, dowteles,
Ne thynke I never of slep to wake my muse,
That rusteth in my shethe stille in pees.
While I was yong, I put hir forth in prees;
But al shal passe that men prose or ryme;
Take every man hys turn, as for his tyme.
[Envoy]

Scogan, that knelest at the stremes bed
Of grace, of alle honour and worthynesse,
In th’ende of which strem I am dul as ded, 45
Forget in solytarie wildernesse —
Yet, Scogan, thenke on Tullius kyndenesse;
Mynne thy frend, there it may fructyfye!
Far-wel, and loke thow never eft Love dyffye.

I statutz: edicts, laws
2 creat: created
3 goddis sevne: the seven planets
4 passioun: suffering
7 errour: confusion
9 fyfte sercle: fifth sphere, that of Venus, counting from the outside inward
14 diluge of pestilence: pestilential deluge
16 rechelesnesse: rashness
19 Michelmesse: September 29, the beginning of the fall business and court term
21 erst: before
22 to record: as a witness
27 of our figure: shaped like us
30 wrecche: vengeance
31 hoot and rounde of shap: gray and chubby
32 so lycly: such likely (i.e., so unlikely)
35 olde Grisiel: the old grey horse (?); see n.
40 in prees: in public
43 stremes bed: the head of the Thames (Windsor castle)
45 th’ende of which strem: the mouth of the Thames (Greenwich)
48 Mynne: remember there it may fructyfye: where it (remembrance of your friend) can bear fruit, be of help
49 dyffye: defy, repudiate