English translation

The Moon, White…

The moon, white,
Shines in the trees:
From each bright
Branch a voice flees
Beneath leaves that move,

O well-beloved.

The pools reflect
A mirror's depth,
The silhouette
Of willows' wet
Black where the wind weeps…

Let us dream, time sleeps.

It seems a vast, soothing,
Tender balm
Is falling
From heaven's calm
Empurpled by a star…

It's the exquisite hour.

Mandoline

The courtly serenaders,
The beauteous listeners,
Sit idling 'neath the branches
A balmy zephyr stirs.

It's Tircis and Aminta,
Clitandre,-ever there!-
Damis, of melting sonnets
To many a frosty fair.

Their trailing flowery dresses,
Their fine beflowered coats,
Their elegance and lightness,
And shadows blue,—all floats

And mingles,—circling, wreathing,
In moonlight opaline,
While through the zephyr's harping
Tinkles the mandoline.

En sourdine
Tranquil in the twilight dense
By the spreading branches made,
Let us breathe the influence
Of the silence and the shade.

Let your heart melt into mine,
And your soul reach out to me,
'Mid the languors of the pine
And the sighing arbute-tree.

Close your eyes, your hands let be
Folded on your slumbering heart,
From whose hold all treachery
Drive forever, and all art.

Let us with the hour accord!
Let us let the gentle wind,
Rippling in the sunburnt sward,
Bring us to a patient mind!

And when Night across the air
Shall her solemn shadow fling,
Touching voice of our despair,
Long the nightingale shall sing.

To Clymène
(Fêtes Galants: A Clymène)
Mystical singing-birds,
Romances without words,
Dear, because your eyes
The shade of skies,
Because your voice, strange
Vision that must derange,
Troubling the horizon
Of my reason,
Because the rare perfume
Of your swanlike paleness,
Because the innocence
Of your fragrance,
Ah, because all your being,
Music so piercing,
Clouds of lost angels,
Tones and scents,
Has by soft cadences
With its correspondences,
Lured my subtle heart, Oh

Let it be so!

The Moon, White…
(La Bonne Chanson: VI)
The moon, white,
Shines in the trees:
From each bright
Branch a voice flees
Beneath leaves that move,
O well-beloved.
The pools reflect
A mirror's depth,
The silhouette
Of willows' wet
Black where the wind weeps…
Let us dream, time sleeps.
It seems a vast, soothing,
Tender balm
Is falling
From heaven's calm
Empurpled by a star…
It's the exquisite hour.

I Was Almost Afraid….
(La Bonne Chanson: XV)
I was almost afraid, it's so,
I felt my life so entwined
At the radiance in my mind
That last summer seized my soul,
Your image, forever dear,
So lives in this heart that's yours,
My heart, uniquely jealous, adores
The loving and pleasing you here;
And I tremble, forgive me please
For speaking so freely to you,
To think that a word, a smile or two
From you is now my destiny,
And it only takes a gesture, but one,
Or a sound or your eye blinking,
To set all my being in mourning
With its heavenly deception.
Yet I would rather see you,
Though the future for me prove sombre
Full of miseries without number,
Than in hope's distant view,
Plunged in this joy supreme
Tell myself ever and again,
Despite the return of such pain,

That I love you, that I love thee!

Is It Not So?….
(La Bonne Chanson: XVII)
Is it not so? Despite the fools, the malevolent
Those who'll never fail to envy our happiness,
We will sometimes be proud and forever indulgent.
Is it not so? We'll go, gaily, slowly, on the modest
Road that reveals to us Hope smiling,
Whether we're seen or ignored, ever careless.
Enclosed by love as in a dark wood, exhaling
Our two hearts, their peaceful tenderness,
Will be two nightingales in the dusk singing.
As for the World, let it be angered by us,
Or tender, what can its gestures signify?
Let it make us a target, or let it caress us.
Bound by the strongest and dearest tie,
And more, possessing adamantine armour,
We'll smile and fear nothing that meets the eye.
Un-preoccupied with whatever Fate destines for
Us, marching onwards and in step we'll go,
Hand in hand, with the childlike souls, what's more,
Of those whose love is untainted, is it not so?

It's Languorous Ecstasy
(Romances Sans Paroles: Arriettes Oubliées I)
'The wind, on the heath
Suspends its breath.'
Favart
It's languorous ecstasy,
It's amorous syncope,
It's all the wood's trembling
In the breeze's embrace
It's, in branches grey,
All the small voices singing.
Oh the fresh and frail murmur!
It sighs and it whispers,
Resembling the gentle cry
That the grass breathes when stirred…
Or, in cool water blurred,
Of pebbles mutely rolled by.
The soul that laments
In its hushed complaint,
Is ours, is it not so?
Mine, sung, yours again,
With that humble refrain
In this mild evening, so low?

The Sky's Above The Roof….
(Prison)
(Sagesse: Bk III, VI)
The sky's above the roof
So blue, so calm!
A tree above the roof
Waves its palm.
The bell in the sky you see
Gently rings.
A bird on the tree you see
Sadly sings.
My God, my God, life's there,
Simple and sweet.
A peaceful rumbling there,
The town's at our feet.
– What have you done, O you there
Who endlessly cry,
Say: what have you done there
With Youth gone by?