

## Of Sound Mind

*I pray to have my hand beneath her cloak  
- Guilhem de Peiteus*

Of sound mind hard body and lustful spirit  
a leader strong in battle and lover gentle in bed  
violent at times passionate at others

yet withal detached, intelligent, ironic,  
aware of his own interests *a man* as he said  
*who desired what I could never have*

never slow to accuse of moral wrong a lady  
who refused her love to her loyal knight  
or complain when he wasn't getting enough

he was they say the first, though no one knows for sure  
and she who would have known kept it to herself  
the counterkey it may be to all the secrets of love

in verse as in life joining together the warrior north  
and southern courtesy, Ovidian clerical meters  
Gregorian chant dance tunes and Arabic music

coarse vernacular and courtly elegance  
scholarly erudition and barracks vulgarity  
upper-crust inflection and arch innuendo

with physical and mystical bodies — the new religion  
of feminine superiority attracting  
his own two wives after his excommunication

for unrepentant adultery with the lady named  
Dangerosa who brought him again youthful joy  
*jovença joia* after his disaster in the First Crusade

a woman-friend of refined manner and taste a lady  
to be grateful for, to cherish, whose reputation to protect,  
her love an inspiration to the height of noble ideals

*her body* — their love their song — *never could anyone*  
he said *imagine it, not by want or wish*  
*not by thought or meditation* its mystery

so far beyond the ken or cunning of loose women,  
crude swordsmen, critical clerics and foppish poets  
going on about love at a distance for cruel ladies

whose haughty unattainability though they swear  
it will be the very death of them is their fondest wish  
their love a masochistic fantasy at best.