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GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE COMPLAINT OF CHAUCER TO HIS PURSE

To you, my purse, and to none other wight,
Complain I, for ye be my lady dear!
I am sorry now that ye be so light,
For certes ye now make me heavy cheer;
Me were as lief be laid upon my bier.
For which unto your mercy thus I cry,
Be heavy again, or elles must I die!
Now vouchesafe this day, ere it be night,
That I of you the blissful sound may hear,
Or see your colour like the sunne bright,
That of yellowness hadde peer.
Ye be my life! Ye be my hearte's steer!* *rudder
Queen of comfort and of good company!
Be heavy again, or elles must I die!
Now, purse! that art to me my life's light
And savour, as down in this worlde here,
Out of this towne help me through your might,
Since that you will not be my treasurere;
For I am shave as nigh as any frere. <1>
But now I pray unto your courtesy,
Be heavy again, or elles must I die!
Chaucer's Envoy to the King.
O conqueror of Brute's Albion, <2>
Which by lineage and free election
Be very king, this song to you I send;
And ye which may all mine harm amend,
Have mind upon my supplication!
Notes to The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse
1. "I am shave as nigh as any frere" i.e. "I am as bare of coin as a friar's tonsure of hair."
2. Brute, or Brutus, was the legendary first king of Britain.