

Jesus, sweet is the love of thee

an anonymous medieval devotional poem (13th-14th century)

translated by ADAM F MCCUNE

Original Middle English

Jhesú, swete is the love of thee,
Noon other thing so swete may be;
No thing that men may heere and see
Hath no swetnesse ayeyns thee.

Jhesú, no song may be swettér,
No thing in hertē blisfullér,
Nought may be feelēd lightsomér,
Than thou, so swete a lovyér.

Jhesú, thi love was us so fre
That it fro hevenē broughtē thee;
For love thou derē boughtēst me,
For love thou heng on roodē tre.

Jhesú, for love thou tholēdest wrong,
Woundēs sore, and peynēs strong;
Thine peynēs reuthful were and long,
No man may hem telle, ne song.

Jhesú, for love thou bood so wo
That bloody stremēs ronne thee fro;
Thi whytē sides woxe blew and blo,
Oure synnes it made so, weylawo!

Jhesú, for love thou stigh on roode,
For love thou yaf thin hertē bloode;
Love thee made my soulēs foode,
Thi love us boughtē til al goode.

Jhesú my love, thou were so fre;
Al that thou didest for love of me;
What shal I for that yeldē thee?
Thou askēst nought but love of me.

Jhesú my God, Jhesú my kyng,
Thou askēst me noon other thing;
But trewē love and hert-yernyng,
And lovē-teeres with swete mournyng.

Modern English Translation

Jesus, sweet is the love of thee;
No other thing so sweet may be.
No thing that men may hear and see
Hath any sweetness like to thee.

Jesus, no song could more sweetly start,
Nothing's more blissful in the heart,
Nothing that may more joy impart,
Than thou, who so sweet a lover art.

Jesus, thy love for us was so free,
That down from heaven it brought thee,
For love thou dearly boughtest me,
For love thou hung upon the tree.

Jesus, for love thou suffered wrong,
Wounds so sore, and pains so strong.
Thy pains were pitiful and long;
No man may tell of them, nor song.

Jesus, for love thou hadst such woe,
That bloody streams from thee did flow.
Thy sides went blue from many a blow.
Alas—that our sins made it so!

Jesus, for love thou rose on rood,
For love thou gavest thy heart's blood.
Love made thee my soul's true food;
Thy love bought us for all that's good.

Jesus my love, thou wert so free;
All that thou didst for love of me;
What shall I, for that, yield unto thee?
Thou askest nought but love from me.

Jesus my God, Jesus my king,
Thou askest me no other thing,
But my true love and heart-yearning,
And tears of love with sweet longing.

Jhesú my love, Jhesú my lyght;
I wol thee love and that is right;
Do me love thee with al my myght,
And for thee mourne bothe day and nyght.

Jhesú, do me so yernē thee
That my thought ever upon thee be;
With thin eyē loke to me,
And myldēly my nedē se.

Jhesú, thi love be al my thought,
of other thing ne recche me nought;
Thanne have I thi wille al wrought,
That havēst me ful derē bought.

Jesus my love, Jesus my light,
I will thee love and that is right;
Make me love thee with all my might,
And for thee long both day and night.

Jesus, please make me yearn for thee
So my thought ever on thee be.
And with thine eye, Lord, look to me,
And mildly may thou all my need see.

Jesus, thy love be all my thought;
Of other things I now care nought.
Then will have I thy will all wrought,
For thee who me so dearly bought.