



## Les Amours

*Pierre de Ronsard , Vasco Graça Moura (Tradução)*

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Divin troupeau, qui sur les rives molles Du fleuve Eurote, ou sur le mont natal, Ou sur le bord du chevalin crystal, Assis, tenez vos plus saintes escolles-: Si quelque foys aux saultz de vos carolles M'avez receu par ung astre fatal, Plus dur qu'en fer, qu'en cuivre ou qu'en metal, Dans vostre temple engravez ces paroles-: Ronsard, affin que le siecle a venir, De pere en filz se puisse souvenir, D'une beaute qui sagement affole, De la main dextre append a nostre autel, L'humble discours de son livre immortel, Son cuoeur de l'autre, aux piedz de ceste idole.

## Les Amours Details

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## From Reader Review Les Amours for online ebook

### Daniel says

Uma imagética preexcelsa:

«O tempo vos arranque a máscara da tez/e eu cisne me farei em vez de um corvo preto.»

Ronsard, ‘Se vós sois velha já e eu o sou também’, in *Algums Amores de Ronsard*, trad. Vasco Graça Moura.

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### Warwick says

Soon after I moved to Paris, I read an interesting article about *Lolita* in *Le Monde* which touched on some of the reaction the book had had in France. One particular photo intrigued me. It was from 5 July 1960 and showed a group of actresses protesting in front of the Académie Française – not about the book's content but about a linguistic point. Their banner reads:

**NON MONSIEUR NABOKOV  
NYMPHETTE  
EST FRANÇAIS DEPUIS RONSAR**

What they were so annoyed about was the fact that Nabokov claimed to have coined the word ‘nymphet’ for his novel. Not so for the French equivalent, the Académie's supporters insisted. (The *Monde* journalist, not a big *Lolita* fan, calls ‘nymphette’ a *diminutif répugnant*, on what appear to be moral rather than linguistic grounds.) The ‘Ronsar’ this banner refers to is Pierre de Ronsard, a member of the 16th-century *Pléiade* group of writers.

So I went out and bought a book of his verse in an attempt to find this point of vocabulary. Eventually, after about four and a half hours of reading in the Luxembourg Gardens, and with a rapidly developing appreciation for this poet, I finally found sonnet CXIV of the *Amours*. I'll just quote the relevant sestet:

Quand ma Nymphette en simple verdugade  
Cueillant des fleurs, des raiz de son œillade  
Essuya l'air grelleux & pluvieux,  
Des ventz sortiz remprisonna les tropes,  
Et ralenta les marteaux des Cyclopes,  
Et de Jupin rasserena les yeulx.

Which is something like:

*When my nymphet, in just her underwear,  
goes picking flowers, her flirtatious stare*

*clears the rain and hail from above –  
she returns the loosed wind's moan to peace  
and makes the Cyclops' hammers cease,  
and calms the eyes of Jove.*

(This was before I had kids, and before Hannah had come out to join me in France. The idea of spending all day in the park reading Middle French poetry now is like the stuff of a madman's dream.)

Now to defend Nabokov, I'd point out that here the word is really used (albeit somewhat figuratively) in its general sense of 'small or young nymph', a sense in which it already existed in English. While the OED's entry does give *Lolita* as the earliest quotation for the sense of 'sexually attractive young girl', it also records several 'small nymph' citations going back to 1612. The earliest citation in French is from 1512, so arguably they could still win if it came to a stand-up fight about precedence.

Given Nabokov's predilection for dictionaries, I would say the odds are considerably against his not knowing all of the above. The more so when, as I later discovered, Ronsard is actually referenced in *Lolita*. Quoting Nabokov is always a delight, so:

I now refused to be diverted by the feeling of well-being that my walk had engendered – by the young summer breeze that enveloped the nape of my neck, the giving crunch of the damn gravel, the juicy tidbit I had sucked out at last from a hollowy tooth, and even the comfortable weight of my provisions which the general condition of my heart should not have allowed me to carry; but even that miserable pump of mine seemed to be working sweetly, and I felt *adolori d'amoureuse langueur*, to quote dear old Ronsard, as I reached the cottage where I had left my Dolores.

I thought it was rather brilliant of him to have found a Ronsard quote which puns on Lolita's name – but in the back of my *Annotated Lolita* I read: 'The phrase "d'amoureuse langueur" appears several times, with slight variations, in Ronsard's *Amours*. "Adolori" [...] is, of course, HH.'s addition.'

Of course.

Anyway: read some Ronsard. You never know which postmodern novelist is going to appropriate his stuff next, and it's always good to be prepared.

[Nov 2013]

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**Jennifer says**

Read in one of my French lit classes in college.

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## **Markus says**

### **RONSARD**

Les Amours et Les Folastries – published (1552/1553)

Reading these poems requires a first effort, to overcome the difficulty of the ancient vocabulary of the French language. You first read the poem, then the footnotes and then the poem again, to try to understand the meaning. It seems like reading without your glasses first. But by the end of the book, you have learned the vocabulary and reading gets more fluent.

It really helps to have read the ‘Canzoniere’ by Petrarque, (1374) which is considered an inspiration for Ronsard, and also ‘Le Roman de la Rose’ started by Guillaume de Lorris likely around (1200/30) and finished by Jean de Meun (1269/78). As early as (1170 to 1185) Chretien de Troyes with his novels around King Arthur and his knights has developed the same theme.

The common subject of these poems is the sudden appearance of young love. The falling in love with absolute submission of a young gentleman, or knight, with a sublime, beautiful, faultless, chaste and goddess like young lady or princess. The poems then develop into the difficulties of communication by the lovers and the resulting extremes in pleasures and sufferings, which can be one sided or shared, depending if the goddess is receptive or repulsive to the prayers of the suitor.

In Ronsard Amours, the name of the young lady is Cassandre, which gives room for comparison with the unfortunate Cassandra, daughter of Priam, in the epic of Illiad, and the conquest of Troy.

Ronsard also makes often reference to other events of mythology, referring to Virgil, Horace, Ovide, Catullus, Lucretius and other writings.

To me, this book is another important cornerstone of early French Poetry.

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## **Laurence R. says**

J'ai été agréablement surprise!

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