

The Eloquent Peasant transcript

Then the peasant came to plead with him for a seventh time, saying, 'High steward, my lord, you are the helm of the entire land, and the land sails in accordance with your command. You are the equal of Thoth, one who judges without being partial. My lord, may you excuse that a man calls upon you concerning his righteous cause. Do not be outraged, it is not for you! He who looks too far ahead will become troubled, so do not dwell on what has not yet befallen, and do not rejoice in what has not yet happened! Patience prolongs friendship – but as for him who neglects a fault which has been committed, there is no one who knows what is in his heart. If law is subverted and integrity destroyed, there is no poor man who will be able to live, for he will be cheated, and justice will not attend to him. Now my body is full of misery and my heart is laden with grief. It has poured from my body of its own accord: there was a break in the dam, its water gushed out, and my mouth opened to speak. So, I have now used my sounding rod and drained off the flood within me, given vent to what was on my mind and washed my dirty linen. My harangue is done, and my misery is fully in your sight, what more do you need? Your neglect will lead you astray, your avarice will deceive you and your greed will increase your enemies. Will you ever again encounter another peasant like me?'

Love poetry transcript

Translated by William Kelly Simpson in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (Yale University Press / New Haven & London, 2003), page 313.

I shall go out to seek my lover.
I yearn for your love,
And my heart stops within me.

To look at a sweet cake
Is like looking at salt;
Sweet pomegranate wine in my mouth
Is like the bitter gall of birds.

The breath of your nostrils
Is the sole thing which can revive my heart,
And I am determined that Amun will grant you to me
For ever and eternity.

Shabaka Stone transcript

It is Ptah, the very great, who has given life to all the gods through the heart and through the tongue.

Sight, hearing, breathing – they report to the heart, and it makes every understanding come forth. As for the tongue, it repeats what the heart has devised. In this way, all the gods were born. For all divine speech – every hieroglyph – came about through what the heart devised and what the tongue commanded.

And so all trades were created, and all arts, and the movements of all limbs, according to this command devised by the heart, that came forth on the tongue, that created everything.

And in this way, Ptah made all and created the gods from whom everything came forth – foods, provisions, divine offerings, and all good things. And so it is recognized and understood that he is the mightiest of the gods. Thus Ptah was satisfied after he had made all things and all hieroglyphs.