



Saint Martin's 4 Wishes (13th c.)
Author Unknown
Translated by Ned Dubin

In Normandy there lived a peasant
of whom is told so quaint and pleasant
a fabliau that I've a notion
to tell you. Such was his devotion
to Saint Martin that he'd invoke
him in all things he undertook;
whether elated or depressed,
it was Saint Martin he addressed;
every day he called on Saint Martin.
The peasant set out on a certain
morning, as was his wont, to plow.
He'll not forget Saint Martin now.
"Saint Martin!" he cried out, "giyyup!"
and that's when Saint Martin showed up.
"Peasant," he said, "you have been loyal
to me, and never start to toil,
no matter what your task may be,
without first calling upon me.
You have well earned my special favor.
Now leave your harrow, drop your labor,
and get you home with a light heart,
for I will truly do my part
and herewith promise I will grant
whatever four wishes you want,
but use your wishes wisely, for
once they've been used you'll get no more."
The peasant bowed low to the ground
in reverence, then turned around
and hurried home walking on air.
There's trouble waiting for him there.
His wife, the one who wears the pants,

lit into him: "What evil chance
brings you home now, oaf? Did you quit
work 'cause it's clouded up a bit?
You've hours of daylight left for tilling.
Or is your paunch in need of filling?
Are you afraid you'll miss your chow?
You've never taken to the plow,
No — life for you is one big lark!
We may as well sell off the stock
since you won't work them anyway!
See what you call a working day-
you're back when you have scarcely gone!"
"Don't be upset, my love, keep calm,"
the peasant said. "Our fortune's made!
Henceforth our burdens may be laid
aside, of that much I am certain,
because I met up with Saint Martin.
He gave me four wishes to use
as I thought best. I've yet to choose;
I meant first to consult with you,
and as you advise me to do
I now intend to make my wishes
for gold and silver, land and riches."
When she heard this, the woman reached
to hug him and toned down her speech.
"Husband," she said, "can this be so?"
"Indeed yes, as you soon will know."
"My dearest, sweetest love," said she,
"my heart is yours eternally
to love and serve you hand and foot.
You should repay me good for good.
I ask you, please, to let me have
one of the wishes the saint gave.
You still will have the other three,
and you will have done right by me."
"Hush," he replied, "my darling wife!
I wouldn't, no, not on my life,
for women all have addled brains.
Why, you might ask to have three skeins

of hemp or wool or linen thread!
 I remember Saint Martin said
 that I should wisely use my wishes
 and only wish for something such as
 will benefit us evermore,
 so I intend to use all four.
 Know that I'm mortally afraid,
 if I gave you one, that instead
 you'd wish for something that might do
 untold harm to both me and you.
 If you should wish I was a bear
 or jackass, or a goat or mare,
 I would become one on the spot.
 I know how much you love me: not.
 That's why I fear to let you share
 my wishes." "Sir," she said, "I swear
 in good faith with both hands raised high,
 you'll stay a peasant till you die.
 I'll never wish you other than
 you are, dearer than any man."
 "My dear," he said, "let it be yours.
 By God, when you wish, make a choice
 by which you and I stand to gain!"
 "I wish," she said, "that, in God's name,
 there spring up penises galore
 over your body, aft and fore!
 On face, arms, sides, from head to foot,
 may countless penises take root,
 and let them not be limp or slack:
 let each be furnished with its sack,
 and let them stand stiff and upright!
 Now, won't you be a horny sight!"
 Then, as soon as the woman spoke,
 hundreds of pricks began to poke
 out all over. Penises grew
 around his nose and his mouth, too.
 Some pricks were thick, some oversized,
 some long, some short, some circumcised,
 curved pricks, straight pricks, pointed and hardy...

every bone in the peasant's body
 was miraculously endowed
 and prickled, fully-cocked and proud.
 You've never heard wonders like these!
 Pricks grow out of his ears, and he's
 amidst his forehead, standing tall,
 the most enormous prick of all,
 and right down to his feet he's coated
 with penises erect and bloated.
 From toe to crown he was bedecked
 with antlers, bloated and erect.
 Weighed down by penis upon penis,
 the peasant said, "This wish was heinous!
 Why give me all this finery?
 Better to be stillborn than be
 with pricks so overgrown and cluttered!
 Was ever any man so studded?"
 "Husband," she said, "I'll tell you why.
 Your one prick couldn't satisfy,
 just hanging limply like a fox
 stole, but now I've a wealth of cocks!
 Your lot is likewise much improved
 in that, whenever you are moved
 to travel, you won't be assessed
 tariffs or tolls. All for the best
 I made my wish, so don't resent it.
 There's not a creature half so splendid!"
 The peasant said, "I'm not amused.
 Three wishes more are yet unused.
 I wish," the fellow said at once,
 "that you had just as many cunts
 on you as I have pricks on me.
 May your cunts pop out rapidly!"
 At once the cunts start to arise.
 A pair appears before her eyes,
 four on her forehead in a row,
 and cunts above, and cunts below,
 and cunts behind, and cunts in front,
 every variety of cunt—

bent cunts, straight cunts, cunts gray and hoary,
 cunts without hair, cunts thick and furry,
 and virgin cunts, narrow and tight,
 wide, gaping cunts, and cunts made right,
 cunts large and small, oval and round,
 deep cunts, and cunts raised on a mound,
 cunts on her head, cunts on her feet...
 the peasant's joy is now complete.
 "Husband, what have you done?" said she.
 "Why have you wished this thing on me?"
 The good man said, "One cunt won't do
 for all the pricks I got from you.
 Don't be alarmed, for your condition
 will lead to widespread recognition:
 when you go walking, you'll continue
 to be known for all the cunt in you."
 "Husband," she said, "what can I say?
 That makes two wishes thrown away,
 and now you must use one to fix
 us and remove these cunts and pricks.
 You'll still have one left out of four,
 and we'll be rich forevermore."
 The peasant wishes thereupon
 that all their cunts and pricks were gone,
 but she was anything but cheered
 to find her cunt had disappeared,
 and he, too, had an awful shock
 to find himself without a cock.
 Both of them were extremely wroth.
 "Husband, it's time to make the fourth
 wish we have left to us," said she;
 "one prick for you, one cunt for me.
 We'll return to our former state
 no poorer off, at any rate."
 He wished the wish that still remained;
 and thus he neither lost nor gained:
 he got his prick back at the cost
 of the four wishes, which he lost.



My Language and I (1978)
Ilse Aichinger
 Translated by Uljana Wolf & Christian Hawkey

My language is one that tends towards foreign words. I choose them, I retrieve them from far away. But it is a small language. It doesn't reach far. All around, all around me, always all around and so forth. We advance against our will. To hell with us, I sometimes say to it. It turns, it doesn't answer, it lets us happen. Sometimes Customs officers appear. Your passports? We pass, they let us pass. My language didn't say anything, but I did, I nodded obligingly, I did them this favour. One person, and something around him, unsuspicious. But what was around him? A coiled spring. No, smoke. There is something around everyone, don't you know this? These poor boys, I honestly feel sorry for them. Honestly. Now you're babbling. What do they have or not have that makes you feel sorry? They're young, that's all—what's there to feel sorry about? They'll grow, that's inevitable. They will get powerful and they will become a force. While we remain stuck in the ink, like a farce, slaving away, pretending to be cheerful—while we're losing our cheerfulness. Honestly. Who is that, who says that? Me. This cracks me up. This always reminds me of the one who said Me!, when he arrived too late at his own house and wanted to be let inside. I am reminded of him, what was his profession? Custodian, I believe. Yes, custodian. Are you hungry? Because I definitely am. But I have this habit of always omitting one hunger. First one, then two, then three. But then there will be a meal, I swear, where nothing is omitted, where everything will be on the table, spread out before me. Then they all cavort around, all around me, and then I have it. Sleepy? Well sleep, go ahead and sleep. I'll keep watch for you.

This is where I sit with my language, only 3 metres away from the people who talk like that. But we made it through, we have passed, we can take a rest when we are out of breath. There are plenty of empty spots, put a blanket down, the sun shines everywhere. My language and I, we don't talk to each other, we have nothing to say to each other. I know what I have to know—it likes cold food better than warm food, not even the coffee should be hot. This can really keep you busy. It's a lot of work, laying out the plates, cutting the food, measuring the cold, letting the warmth dissipate. While my language stares out at the sea. It's easy for my language to stare, because I do everything. I don't rush like I used to, I now calmly