

GREEK LYRIC POETS

ARCHILOCHOS

[The translations below are by Willis Barnstone, Sappho and the Greek Lyric Poets, Schocken Books, 1988. The titles are added by the translator to give the context of the poem (laboriously figured out by scholars across the ages)]

3. The Doublecross

Let brawling waves beat his ship
 against the shore, and have the mop-haired Thracians
 take him naked at Salmydessos,
 and he will suffer a thousand calamities
 as he chews the bread of slaves.
 His body will stiffen in freezing surf
 as he wrestles with slimy seaweed,
 and his teeth will rattle like a helpless dog,
 flopped on his belly in the surge,
 puking out the brine. Let me watch him grovel
 in mud- for the wrong he did me:
 as a traitor he trampled on our good faith,
 he who was once my comrade.

11. On Friends Lost at Sea

If you irritate the wound, Perikles, no man
 in our city will enjoy the festivities.
 These men were washed under by the thudding seawaves,
 and the hearts in our chest are swollen with pain.
 Yet against this incurable misery, the gods
 give us the harsh medicine of endurance.
 Sorrows come and go, friend, and now they strike us
 and we look with horror on the bleeding sores,
 yet tomorrow others will mourn the dead. I tell you,
 hold back your feminine tears and endure.

15. Girl

A spray of myrtle and beauty of a rose
 were happiness in her hands, and her hair
 fell as darkness on her back and shoulders.

16. On Pasiphile, A friend to all

As the figtree on its rock feeds many crows,
 so this simple girl sleeps with strangers.

O daughter of the highborn Amphimedo,
I replied, of the widely remembered
Amphimedo now in the rich earth dead,

There are, do you know, so many pleasures
For young men to choose from
Among the skills of the delicious goddess

It's green to think the holy one's the only.
When the shadows go black and quiet,
Let us, you and I alone, and the gods,

Sort these matters out. Fear nothing:
I shall be tame, I shall behave
And reach, if I reach, with a civil hand.

I shall climb the wall and come to the gate.
You'll not say no, Sweetheart, to this?
I shall come no farther than the garden grass.

Neobulé I have forgotten, believe me, do.
Any man who wants her may have her.
Aiai! She's past her day, ripening rotten.

The petals of her flower are all brown.
The grace that first she had is shot.
Don't you agree that she looks like a boy?

A woman like that would drive a man crazy.
She should get herself a job as a scarecrow.
I'd as soon hump her as [kiss a goat's butt].

A source of joy I'd be to the neighbors
With such a woman as her for a wife!
How could I ever prefer her to you?

You, O innocent, true heart and bold.
Each of her faces is as sharp as the other,
Which way she's turning you never can guess.

She'd whelp like the proverb's luckless bitch
Were I to foster get upon her, throwing
Them blind, and all on the wrongest day.

I said no more, but took her hand,
Laid her down in a thousand flowers,
And put my soft wool cloak around her.

I slid my arm under her neck
To still the fear in her eyes,
For she was trembling like a fawn,

Touched her hot breasts with light fingers,
Spraddled her neatly and pressed
Against her fine, hard, bared crotch.

I caressed the beauty of all her body
And came in a sudden white spurt
While I was stroking her hair.

[Davenport] "... I think it is a comic ode about a biological jumping the gun that transposes an erotically comic poem into a wholly comic one. Its humor is still native to barracks. ..."

Diotima is the online source for this poem plus some additional commentary. Also, there is a good introduction to Archilochus and the poem by Davenport at http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/archiloch_intro.shtml

ANACREON**1.29: fragment 347 PMG**

Athenaeus (12.540e) and Aelian (VH 9.4) record that Anacreon's praise of the boy Smerdis provoked the jealousy of the tyrant Polycrates, who ordered the boy's long hair cut off. The beginning of the fragment is missing.

. . . (you lack) the hair, which once shaded
 Your neck in abundance.
 But now you are smooth-browed,
 And your hair, falling into rough hands,
 Has tumbled down in a heap
 Into the black dust.
 Bravely did it meet the slash of steel.
 But I am wasted away with sorrow.
 For what can one do,
 When one fails even for Thrace?

1.30: fragment 357 PMG

This text is probably a complete poem in the form of a hymn to Dionysus, the god of wine. But the poem functions as a riddle, since the god's identity and relevance are not revealed until the end. Drunkenness will make the boy more receptive.

Lord, with whom Eros the subduer
 And the dark-eyed Nymphs
 And rosy-skinned Aphrodite
 Play, you roam about
 The lofty mountain peaks.
 I beseech you, please come to us
 Well-disposed, and hear
 Our prayer with favor.
 Become a good advisor to Cleobulus,
 That he accept my love,
 O Dionysus.

1.31: fragment 358 PMG

Once again golden-haired Eros,
 Hitting me with a purple ball,
 Calls me out to play
 With a fancy-sandaled maid.
 But she, haling from
 Well-endowed Lesbos, finds fault
 With my hair, for it's white.
 She gapes open-mouthed at another girl.

1.32: fragment 359 PMG

I love Cleobulus,
I am mad for Cleobulus,
I gaze at Cleobulus.

1.33: fragment 360 PMG

Boy with a maiden's glance,
I seek you out, but you hear not,
Unknowing that you are the charioteer
Of my soul.

1.34: fragment 402(c) PMG

Boys would love me for my words,
For I sing graceful things, and I know how to say graceful things.

IBYCUS

1.35: fragment 287 PMG

Eros, melting me once more with his gaze
From under dark lids,
With all manner of charms throws me again
Into the boundless nets of the Love Goddess.
I tremble at him as he comes,
Like an old prize horse who knows the yoke
And unwilling goes into the swift chariot race
One more time.

SOURCE: _____

SAPPHO

[Unless otherwise noted, the translations are by Jane Barnard]

Anactoria

Yes, *Atthis*, you may be sure

Even in Sardis
Anactoria will think often of us

of the life we shared here, when you seemed
the Goddess incarnate
to her and your singing pleased her best

Now among Lydian women she in her
turn stands first as the red-
fingered moon rising at sunset takes

precedence over stars around her;
her light spreads equally
on the salt sea and fields thick with bloom

Delicious dew pours down to freshen
roses, delicate thyme
and blossoming sweet clover; she wanders

aimlessly, thinking of gentle
Atthis, her heart hanging
heavy with longing in her little breast

She shouts aloud, Come! we know it;
thousand-eared night repeats that cry
across the sea shining between us

And their feet move

And their feet move
rhythmically, as tender
feet of Cretan girls
danced once around an

altar of love, crushing
a circle in the soft
smooth flowering grass

Awed by her splendor

Awed by her splendor
stars near the lovely
moon cover their own
bright faces
when she
is roundest and lights
earth with her silver

Blame Aphrodite

It's no use
Mother dear, I
can't finish my
weaving
You may
blame Aphrodite

soft as she is

she has almost
killed me with
love for that boy

Cleis

Sleep, darling
I have a small
daughter called
Cleis, who is

like a golden
flower
I wouldn't
take all Croesus'
kingdom with love
thrown in, for her

Don't ask me what to wear
I have no embroidered
headband from Sardis to
give you, Cleis, such as
I wore
and my mother
always said that in her
day a purple ribbon
looped in the hair was thought

to be high style indeed

but we were dark:
a girl
whose hair is yellower than
torchlight should wear no
headdress but fresh flowers

Cyprian, in my dream

Cyprian, in my dream
the folds of a purple
kerchief shadowed
your cheeks --- the one

Timas one time sent,
a timid gift, all
the way from Phocaea

Dapple-throned Aphrodite

Dapple-throned Aphrodite,
eternal daughter of God,
snare-knitter! Don't, I beg you,

cow my heart with grief! Come,
as once when you heard my far-
off cry and, listening, stepped

from your father's house to your
gold car, to yoke the pair whose
beautiful thick-feathered wings

oaring down mid-air from heaven
carried you to light swiftly
on dark earth; then, blissful one,

smiling your immortal smile
you asked, What ailed me now that
me me call you again? What

was it that my distracted
heart most wanted? "Whom has
Persuasion to bring round now

"to your love? Who, Sappho, is
unfair to you? For, let her
run, she will soon run after;

"if she won't accept gifts, she
will one day give them; and if
she won't love you -- she soon will

"love, although unwillingly..."
If ever -- come now! Relieve
this intolerable pain!

What my heart most hopes will
happen, make happen; you your-
self join forces on my side!

He is more than a hero

He is more than a hero
he is a god in my eyes--
the man who is allowed
to sit beside you -- he

who listens intimately
to the sweet murmur of
your voice, the enticing

laughter that makes my own
heart beat fast. If I meet
you suddenly, I can'

speak -- my tongue is broken;
a thin flame runs under
my skin; seeing nothing,

hearing only my own ears
drumming, I drip with sweat;
trembling shakes my body

and I turn paler than
dry grass. At such times
death isn't far from me

It was you, Atthis, who said

It was you, Atthis, who said

"Sappho, if you will not get
up and let us look at you
I shall never love you again!

"Get up, unleash your suppleness,
lift off your Chian nightdress
and, like a lily leaning into

"a spring, bathe in the water.
Cleis is bringing your best
purple frock and the yellow

"tunic down from the clothes chest;
you will have a cloak thrown over
you and flowers crowning your hair...

"Praxinoa, my child, will you please
roast nuts for our breakfast? One
of the gods is being good to us:

"today we are going at last
into Mitylene, our favorite
city, with Sappho, loveliest

"of its women; she will walk
among us like a mother with
all her daughters around her

"when she comes home from exile..."

But you forget everything

To Andromeda

That country girl has witched your wishes,
all dressed up in her country clothes
and she hasn't got the sense
to hitch her rags above her ankles.

tr Jim Powell

To any army wife

To any army wife, in Sardis:

Some say a cavalry corps,
some infantry, some again,
will maintain that the swift oars

of our fleet are the finest
sight on dark earth; but I say
that whatever one loves, is.

This is easily proved: did
not Helen --- she who had scanned
the flower of the world's manhood ---

choose as first among men one
who laid Troy's honor in ruin?
warped to his will, forgetting

love due her own blood, her own
child, she wandered far with him.
So Anactoria, although you

being far away forget us,
the dear sound of your footstep
and light glancing in your eyes

would move me more than glitter
of Lydian horse or armored
tread of mainland infantry

To Aphrodite

You know the place: then
Leave Crete and come to us
waiting where the grove is
pleasantest, by precincts

sacred to you; incense
smokes on the altar, cold
streams murmur through the

apple branches, a young
rose thicket shades the ground
and quivering leaves pour

down deep sleep; in meadows

where horses have grown sleek
among spring flowers, dill

scents the air. Queen! Cyprian!
Fill our gold cups with love
stirred into clear nectar

Tonight I've watched

Tonight I've watched
the moon and then
the Pleiades
go down

The night is now
half-gone; youth
goes; I am

in bed alone

We put the urn aboard ship

We put the urn aboard ship
with this inscription:

This is the dust of little
Timas who unmarried was led
into Persephone's dark bedroom

And she being far from home, girls
her age took new-edged blades
to cut, in mourning for her,
these curls of their soft hair

With his venom

With his venom
irresistible
and bittersweet

that loosener
of limbs, Love

reptile-like
strikes me down

Without warning

Without warning
as a whirlwind
swoops on an oak
Love shakes my heart

Yes, Atthis, you may be sure

Yes, Atthis, you may be sure

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Anactoria will think often of us

of the life we shared here, when you seemed
the Goddess incarnate
to her and your singing pleased her best

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turn stands first as the red-
fingered moon rising at sunset takes

precedence over stars around her;
her light spreads equally
on the salt sea and fields thick with bloom

Delicious dew purs down to freshen
roses, delicate thyme
and blossoming sweet clover; she wanders

aimlessly, thinking of gentle
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heavy with longing in her little breast

She shouts aloud, Come! we know it;
thousand-eared night repeats that cry
across the sea shining between us

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Leave Crete and come to us
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where horses have grown sleek
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scents the air. Queen! Cyprian!
Fill our gold cups with love
stirred into clear nectar

Source:_____

ERINNAThe Distaff

English translation of fragment by Daniel Haberman:

. . . Deep into the wave you raced,
 Leaping from white horses,
 Whirling the night on running feet.
 But loudly I shouted, "Dearest,
 You're mine!" Then you, the Tortoise,
 Skipping, ran to the rutted garth
 Of the great court. These things I
 Lament and sorrow, sad Baucis.
 These are for me, O Maiden,
 Warm trails back through my heart:
 Joy, once filled, smoulders in ash;
 Young, in rooms without a care,
 We held our miming dolls—girls
 In the pretense of young brides
 (And the toward-dawn-mother
 Lotted wool to tending women,
 Calling Baucis to salt the meat);
 O, what trembling when we were small
 And fear was brought by MORMO—
 Huge of ear up on her head,
 With four feet walking, always
 Changing from face to other.
 But mounted in the bed of
 Your husband, dearest Baucis,
 You forgot things heard from mother,
 While still the littler child.
 Fast Aphrodite set your
 Forgetful heart. So I lament,
 Neglecting though your obsequies:
 Unprofaned, my feet may not leave
 And my naked hair's not loosed abroad,
 No lighted eye may disgrace your corpse
 And in this house, O my Baucis,
 Purpling shame grips me about.
 Wretched Erinna! Nineteen,
 I moan with a blush to grieve. . . .
 Old women voice the mortal bloom. . . .
 One cries out the lamenting flame. . . .
 Hymen! . . . O Hymenaeus! . . .
 While the night whirls unvoiced
 Darkness is on my eyes . . .

Source of the translated text - Daniel Haberman, translator, from *The Norton Book of Classical Literature*, edited by Bernard Knox. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993, pp. 572-573.

<http://bourguignonicon.blogspot.com/2010/05/fragment-from-distaff-by-erinna.html>