

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)]

1. Thasos and Sicily

This wheatless island
stands like a donkey's back. It bristles
with a tangle of wild woodland.

Oh,
there is no country so beautiful,
no sensual earth that keys my passion
as these plains around the river Siris. *001

2. An Island in the North Aigaian

All, O all the calamities of all the Hellenes
are set loose on this battleground in Thasos.

3. The Doublecross *002

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.

4. Paros Figs

Say goodbye to the island Paros,
farewell to its figs and the seafaring life.

5. Threat

Let the stone of Tantalos
no longer overhang this island.

6. War

Look, Glaukos, how heavy seawaves leap skyward!
Over the Gyrai rocks
hangs a black cloud, a signal of winter storm.
From the unforeseen comes fear.

7. A Vessel of Wine

Go take your cup and walk along the timber deck
of our roaming ship; drain the hollow casks
of all their red wine. How can we stay sober
on the watch when all the rest are drunk?

8. A Drowning

They laid down their lives
in the arms of waves.

9. Shipwreck

The vessel wavered on the cutting edge
between the stormwinds and the waves.

10. Prayer at Sea

Often, when their vessel was threatened by the
gray salty sea,
they prayed to Athene of the lovely braids for
sweet return.

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.

12. On the Lack of Proper Burning and Burial For His Brother-in-Law Who Was Shipwrecked

If only his head and handsome limbs
had been wrapped in white burial cloth
and touched by Hephaistos' hand of fire.

13. An Eclipse of the Sun

Nothing in the world can surprise me now. Nothing
is impossible or too wonderful, for Zeus, father

of the Olympians, has turned midday into black night,
by shielding light from the blossoming sun,
and now dark terror hangs over mankind.
Anything
may happen, so do not be amazed if beasts
on dry land seek pasture with dolphins in
the ocean, and those beasts who loved sunny hills
love crashing seawaves more than the warm mainland.

14. Dawn

Dawn was rising full white.

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 of All

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

17. Sudden Love

And to fall upon her heaving belly,
and thrust your groin into her groin,
your thighs between her thighs.

18. On the Male Organ

Feeble now are the muscles in my mushroom.

19. Like a Donkey

His penis is swollen
like a donkey from Priene
taking his fill of barley.

20. Qualities of a Girlfriend

She is a common woman for rent,
but what sensuality and fat ankles.
O fat whore for hire!

21. Riches

Enormous was the gold he amassed
from many years of work,
but all
fell into the luscious arms
of a common whore.

22. Providence

Let the gods take care of everything. Many times

they resurrect a man whom disaster left lying
face down on the black earth. Many times they topple
a man and pin him, back to the soil, though he
was solid on his feet. A multitude of evils
batters him as he wanders hungry and mad.

23. On Dead Animals

Many of them, I hope, will be dried up
by the sharp rays of the sun in its zenith,
by the sun in the time of the Dog Star.

24. Proverb for a Great Scoundrel

The fox knows many tricks,
the hedgehog only one. A good one.

25. His Two Virtues

I am a servant of the kingly wargod Enyalios
and am also skilled in the lovely arts.

26. Wine of Naxos is Like Nectar

But His Javelin is Much More

My javelin is good white bread and Ismarian wine.
When I find rest on my javelin I drink wine.

**27. On the Short-Haired Warriors in the
Lelantine War Between Chalkis and
Eretria Who Agreed Not to Use Missile
Weapons**

Perhaps fewer bows will be stretched and slings hurled
when Ares begins battle on the noisy plain,
but then the mournful labor of the sword is worse.
This is warfare in which the spear-famed islanders
from Euboea are godlike and easily masterful.

28. Aphrodite is Censured

Passionate love relentlessly twists a cord
under my heart and spreads up deep mist on my eyes,
stealing the unguarded brains from my head.

29. On His Shield

Well, what if some barbaric Thracian glories
in the perfect shield I left under a bush?
I was sorry to leave it- but I saved my skin.
Does it matter? O hell, I'll buy a better one.

30. My Kind of General

I don't like a general
who towers over the troops,
lordly with elegant locks
and trim mustachios.
Give me a stumpy soldier
glaringly bowlegged,
yet rockfirm on his feet,
and in his heart a giant.

31. Charon the Carpenter

The gold booty of Gyges means nothing to me.
I don't envy that Lydian king, nor am I jealous
of what gods can do, nor of the tyrants' great
powers. All these are realms beyond my vision.

32. Mercenary Friendship

Glaukos, soldiers of fortune, will be your friend
until he begins to fight.

33. Wedding Dedication

When Alkibia became a married woman, she gave
the holy veil of her hair to Queen Hera.

34. On the Daughter of Lykambes

I pray for one gift: that I might merely touch
Neoboule's hand.

35. Love

I live here miserable and broken with desire,
pierced through to the bones by the bitterness
of this god-given painful love.
O comrade, this passion makes my limbs limp
and tramples over me.

36. Thirst

I want to fight you
just as when I am thirsty I want to drink.

37. On a Hanging

They hung their heads to one side, choking,
and disgorged their remaining arrogance.

38. Quality in Love

How can I like the way she makes love?
Give me sweet figs before sour wild pears.

39. Old Age

A life of doing nothing is good for old men,
especially if they are simple in their ways,
or stupid, or inane in their endless blabber
as old men tend to be.

40. Perikles the Guest

Like the Mykonians, Perikles,
you drink our unmixed wine
and pay for nothing.
You broke into this party, uninvited, and act as if
among old friends.
Your stomach has tricked the brains in your skull
and now you are shameless.

41. On The People's Censure

No man, Aisimides, who bows to the mud-slinging
mob has ever been capable of profound pleasures.

42. On Wrongdoers

One big thing I understand:
I know how to spit back with black venom
against the man who wrongs me.

43. The Robe

Your telltale robe is bulging, you poor tramp,
and the men you love sit beside you.
The ditchdigger is in on your fancy story
and so is your husband Ariphantos.
Lucky Ariphantos didn't catch the fumes
of that stinking billygoat thief,
for while he was staving off the potter Aischylides,
the digger dug out your cherry,
and now your swollen belly tells the tale.

**44. After the Drowning
Of His Sister's Husband**

Now, I have no desire for poetry or joy,
yet I will make nothing better by crying,
nor worse by seeking good foods and pleasure.

45. Moderation

O my soul, my soul- you are mutilated helplessly
by this blade of sorrow. Yet rise and bare your chest,
face those who would attack you, be strong, give no ground
And if you defeat them, do not brag like a loud-mouth,
nor, if they beat you, run home and lie down to cry.
Keep some measure in your joy- or in your sadness during
crisis- that you may understand man's up-and-down life.

46. On the Death of Two Friends *003

Broad earth, now you entomb Megatimos and Aristophon
who were the two tall columns of this island Naxos.

47. On a Lewd Servant

And wandering about the household
was that hateful chattering eunuch.

48. Perikles to Elpinike

Lady, you are much too old
to rub yourself with perfume.

49. An Animal Appeals to Zeus *004

O father Zeus, you who control the cosmos, and
oversee the actions of man,
his criminal and lawful acts, you also judge the
arrogance and trial of wild beasts.

50. Justice

My lord Apollo, single out the guilty ones,
and in your customary way, destroy them all.

51. Perfume

Her breasts and her dark hair
were perfume, and even an old man would love her.

52. To a Girlfriend's Father

Father Lykambes, what is this new silliness?
Are your natural brains
gone wholly bad? The neighbors laugh openly
at your absurd life,
and you persist in chattering like a cricket.

53. On Drowned Bodies

Let us hide the dreadful
gifts of lord Poseidon.

54. Death

When dead no man finds respect or glory from men
of his town. Rather, we hope while alive for some
favor from the living. The dead are always scorned.

Footnotes

*001 These two separate fragments are found together.

*002 This poem is also ascribed to Hipponax.

*003 Ascription to Archilochos is uncertain.

*004 Probably a fox.

(End of Barnstone translation and traditional corpus of Archilochos)

New Fragment: P. Colon. 7511

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[]
Back away from that, [she said]
And steady on []

*Wayward and wildly pounding heart,
There is a girl who lives among us
Who watches you with foolish eyes,*

*A slender, lovely, graceful girl,
Just budding into supple line,
And you scare her and make her shy.*

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

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

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