

γάλακτος λευκότερα ... WHITER THAN MILK

ὑδάτος ἀτταλότερα ... SMOOTHER THAN WATER

πηκτίδων ἐμμελεστέρα ... MORE MELODIOUS THAN A ZITHER

ἵππου γαυροτέρα ... WILDER THAN A HORSE

ρόδιον ἀβροτέρα ... MORE TENDER THAN A ROSE

ἱμαθίου ἑανοῦ μαλακωτέρα ... SILKIER THAN A DRESS

χρυσοῦ τιμιωτέρα ... MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

ἀερίων ἐπέων ἄρχομαι

ἀλλ' ὀνάτων

...I DRAW FORM FROM

AIR...

LYRICAL CHARMS

Ἔρος δαύτ' ἐτίναξεν ἔμοι φρένας,
ἄνεμος κατ' ὄρος δρύσιν ἐμπέσων.

Γλύκεια μάτερ, οὔτοι δύναμαι
κρέκην τὸν ἴστον,
πόθῳ δάμεισα παῖδος βραδίναν δι' Ἀφροδίταν.

Στάθι κἀντα φίλος ...
καὶ τὰν ἐπ' ὄσσοις ἀμπέτασον χάριν.

ἦλθες, καλ' ἐπόησας, ἔγω δέ σ' ἐμαιόμαν,
ὄν δ' ἔψυξας ἔμαν φρένα καιομένην πόθῳ.

EROS SHOOTS UNDER MY SKIN NOW,
A MOUNTAIN WIND CRASHING THROUGH OAKS.

SWEET MOTHER, I CAN'T WEAVE NO MORE CLOTH
'CAUSE PRETTY APHRODITE FILLS MY HEAD OUT
WITH WANTING THAT GIRL.

FACE ME, FRIEND
AND LET YOUR BRIGHT LIGHT DAZZLE ME.

YOU'RE HERE AGAIN – I'M GLAD. BECAUSE I'VE HAD
THE LONESOME BLUES.
AND NOW YOU'RE HERE YOU CHASE THOSE BLUES
AWAY.

CRAVE

Δέδυκε μὲν ἅ σελάννα καὶ Πληΐαδες,
μέσαι δέ νύκτες, πάρα δ' ἔρχετ' ὥρα,
ἔγω δέ μόνα κατεύδω

MOON AND PLEIADES
VANISHED. TIME STREAMS IN SILENCE
ROUND MY EMPTY BED

QUESTING GATHERERS

Οἷον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὕσδῳ
ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ· λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπης
οὐ μὰν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐπίκεισθαι

AS THE BEST APPLE REDDENS AT THE TIP OF THE BRANCH
AT THE TOPMOST TIP OF THE TREE
LEFT BEHIND BY THE GATHERING HORDE
SEEN BY THEIR EYES, OUT OF REACH OF THEIR HANDS

APHRODITE

Ποικιλόθρον', άθανάτ' Αφρόδιτα,
παῖ Δίος, δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε
μή μ' άσαισι μήτ' όνίαισι δάμνα,
πότνια, θύμον·

άλλά τυῖδ' έλθ', αίποτα κάτέρωτα
τάς έμας αύδως αίοισα πήλυι
έκλυες, πάτρος δε δόμον λίποισα
χρύσιον ήλθες

άρμ' ύποζεύξαισα· κάλοι δε σ' άγον
ώκεες στρουόθοι περί γάς μελαίνας
πόκνα δινεύντες πτέρ' άπ' ώράνω
αίθερας διά μέσσω.

αῖψα δ' έξίκοντο· τυ δ', ώ μάκαιρα,
μειδιάσαισ' άθανάτω προσώπω,
ήρε', όττι δηύτε πέπονθα κώπτι
δηύτε κάλημι,

κώπτι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μαινόλα θύμω· τίνα δηύτε Πείθω
μαῖς άγην ές σάν φιλότατα, τίς σ', ώ
Ψάκφ', άδικήεις;

καί γάρ αί φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
αί δε δώρα μη δέκετ' άλλά δώσει,
αί δε μη φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
κωύκ έθέλοισα.

έλθε μοι και νυν, χαλεπών δε λύσον
έκ μεριμνά, όσσα δε μοι τελέσσαι
θύμος ήμέρρει, τέλεσον· συ δ' αύτα
σύμμαχος έσσο.

ON THE THRONE OF MANY HUES, IMMORTAL APHRODITE,
CHILD OF ZEUS, WEAVING WILES -- I BEG YOU
NOT TO SUBDUCE MY SPIRIT, QUEEN,
WITH PAIN OR SORROW,

BUT COME -- IF EVER BEFORE
HAVING HEARD MY VOICE FROM FAR AWAY
YOU LISTENED, AND LEAVING YOUR FATHER'S
GOLDEN HOME YOU CAME

IN YOUR CHARIOT YOKED WITH SWIFT, LOVELY
SPARROWS BRINGING YOU OVER THE DARK EARTH,
THICK-FEATHERED WINGS SWIRLING DOWN
FROM THE SKY THROUGH MID-AIR,

ARRIVING QUICKLY -- YOU, BLESSED ONE,
WITH A SMILE ON YOUR UNAGING FACE
ASKING AGAIN WHAT I HAVE SUFFERED
AND WHY I AM CALLING AGAIN

AND IN MY WILD HEART WHAT DID I MOST WISH
TO HAPPEN TO ME: "AGAIN WHOM MUST I PERSUADE
BACK INTO THE HARNESS OF YOUR LOVE?
SAPPHO, WHO WRONGS YOU?"

FOR IF SHE FLEES, SOON SHE'LL PURSUE;
SHE DOESN'T ACCEPT GIFTS, BUT SHE'LL GIVE;
IF NOT NOW LOVING, SOON SHE'LL LOVE
EVEN AGAINST HER WILL."

COME TO ME NOW AGAIN, RELEASE ME FROM
THIS PAIN, EVERYTHING MY SPIRIT LONGS
TO HAVE FULFILLED, FULFILL, AND YOU
BE MY ALLY.

PLEASURE

I

Οἳ μὲν ἰππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπὶ γᾶν μέλαιναν
ἔμμεναι κάλλιστον ἔγω δὲ κῆν'
ὄττω τις ἔραται.

II

πάγχνυ δ' εὐμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
πάντι τ[οῦ]τ'. ἄ γὰρ πόλυ περσκόπεισα
κάλλος ἀνθρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
[κρίνεν ἄρ]ιστον

III

ὅς τὸ πᾶν] σέβας Τροία[ς ὄ]λεσσε,
οὐδὲ παῖδος οὐδὲ [φίλ]ων το[κ]ήων
οὐδεν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀ[λλὰ] παράγαγ' αὐτὰν
Κύπρις ἔραι]σαν,

IV

ἢ μάλ' εὐκ]αμπτον γαρ [ἔφ]υ βρότων κῆρ]
καὶ μάτει] κούφως τ[ὸ]δ', ὃ κε ν]οήση.
ἀλλά νῦν, Ἀνακτορ[ί]ας γε] μάμναι-
μ' οὐ] παρεοίσας,

V

τᾶ]ς τε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κ]άμάρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
πεσομ]άχεντας

VI

εὐ] μὲν ἴδ]μεν οὐ δύνατον γένεσθαι
λῶστ'] ὄν' ἀνθρώποις, πεδέχην δ' ἄρασθαι

SOME FIND THE CAVALRY MOST BEAUTIFUL
OTHERS THE INFANTRY AND OTHERS THE SHIPS
BUT I THINK THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING ON THIS DARK EARTH
IS WHATEVER YOU LOVE MOST DEAR.

THE POINT IS PLAIN TO SEE,
HELENA, WHOSE BEAUTY SURPASSED THAT
OF ALL OTHER WOMEN
QUIT HER PERFECT HUSBAND

WHO CRASHED DOWN TROY IN ALL ITS MAJESTY.
NOT A THOUGHT FOR HER CHILDREN OR DEAR PARENTS
DID SHE HAVE. APHRODITE LED HER DOWN
THE WINDING PATH OF LOVE.

THE HUMAN HEART IS SOFT; NATURE MAKES IT SO,
AND THE HEART WILL HAVE ON THE INSTANT
WHATEVER HAS ROOTED IN THE HEAD. THIS PUTS ME IN MIND
OF ANAKTORIA⁽¹⁾ WHO HAS LEFT FOR THE MOMENT.

AND HOW I WOULD RATHER SEE HER DARLING STEP
AND THE JOY OF HER SMILE
THAN ALL OF LYDIA'S ARMIES DECKED OUT FOR BATTLE.

I KNOW TOO WELL THAT THE BEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL
IS ALWAYS OUT OF HUMAN REACH
AND THAT WE MUST LEARN TO BE CONTENT
WITH A MORE MODEST SHARE.

⁽¹⁾ ANAKTORIA, SAPPHO'S LOVER.