

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/3

Sappho -- Poem and Fragments

transduced by J. M. Wilcox

1

Sea-Foam Maiden, deathless goddess, parti-
colored-throne queen,

Sky-Bright's daughter, trick-entwiner, I be-
seech, bow down to you.

Do not vanquish with your pain or batter me
with anguish,

do not crush my heart, queen,

come here, come now, if ever before in another place

you heard my voice in far-off space, or if at another time

you saw my face in another clime

and listened, acquiesced, and leaving your father's golden house

you subito came

with your harnessed revved-up silver car; and beautiful high-speed spar-
rows

drew you over the blackening twilight earth,

whirring piston-beating wings, straight from the radiant sky

through the storm-riddled middle air,

and soon they arrived and landed; however, you, blessed mistress,

with your winsome smile brightly charming your immortal face,

asked what truly ailed me now, pressed me here, and why

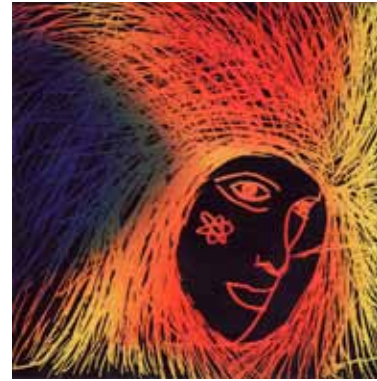
indeed I called this time, this place,

and what I especially wished to occur

in my crazed disheveled heart: 'Now whom, indeed, must
I entice

to lead and bring you back to her love? Who

has hurt you, Sappho?



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For if she avoids you, she will soon overwhelm you,
and if she shuns your gifts, she will soon enshower you,
and if she does not show her love, she will soon enshine with love
even against her countered will.

Come to me now again, and disengage my anxious
thoughts; from my torments, hack the chains, and please, for my sake,
cheer-fulfill,
charm-perform, superorn, sense-quench all
my heart desires, yearns for, burns to fulfill, and you yourself
be my co-combatant.

2

Drive your car through the crystal sky, as dawn
unscrews her colors, and ocean surges while the earth
revolves for you, radiant, dark, descending
from the upper air;

come to me, from Krete, to this moon-cut temple,
sacred, lit with grace, where your lovely grove
of apple-trees, fragrant, gorgeous, grows, and red-scarred altars
reek and whirl with gum of frankincense;

here the water, blown to ice, brushes through the branches
of the brilliant apple-trees, and with roses, iridescent, all around the
ground
is shadowed, and from quartzlike quivering leaves
sleep swoops, dreamdrops;

here a mustang-grazing meadow bursts and abounds
with blooms of spring, and breezes
sweet, unbracing, blow
below the burning stars;

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here, indeed, Copper Queen, take and pour
in golden cups, graced in splendor,
—fizz and swell—fragrant nectar, mixed
with radiant swizzle sticks and fruity party favors.

3

Copper Queen and ocean teens, daughters supreme of Nereus, let
my brother come unharmed, arrive unhindered here,
and what he wishes, winsome-yens, craves in his ravishing heart,
grant it be wholly accomplished,

and let him make up for missing the mark many a time
and be a delight to his friends
and distress to his enemies, and, to us, may nobody ever be
a bane,

and grant him be willing bring honor, endue, his sister enteeem
with esteem, but acute sore sorrow
...previous grieving...

4

Go...
so we may see...
Dawn Queen, colorquick...
goldenthighed, silverbosomed...
death-goddess, doom-done...

5

What a wonder, Aphrodite,
Gold-Crowned, Silver-Bangled,
Sea-Suffused, Foam-Formed
passion-reeking Love-Mist,
if only to obtain by lot,
strike luck, desire, stoke,—
shaken helmet, counter cast—
to hear the hopper's bright click!



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6

Stars enbeam the beautiful moon
And blot their brilliant forms
when her single swelling sphere enshines
the world.

7

Love knocked my
heart like a storm
ball-wrecking mountain oaks.

8

With outstretched arms I burn to embrace
but can't come close to even brush
the beauty pulsing outer space.

9

Mnasidika more double-bell-curved,
more shod with shape
than tender Gurinno, pulped and pouty.

10

As the hanging honey-apple turns to red on the tiptop branch,
solar-charmed, on the tip of the toppest branch, the apple-pluckers, un-
aware,
seem to have let it high-up shine, for they could not with hammered lad-
ders reach it.

11

Like the lovely hyacinth, which shepherds, shadow-sandaled, tread,
unobtrusive, in the mountains, on the ground, the surreptitious purple
flower down below pokes out her petaled face...

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12

Here and now, tender Graces, rhythm-twirling, traced in light, colored
garments slowly swaying,
and kindled Muses, dream creatures, swinging beaded iridescent light-
some lovely locks.

13

You have let me escape your notice.

14

Or some other man you have a thing for more than me.

15

Love, again, limb-unloosening, shimmies me, quakes my pulse,
The bittersweet, torch-blown, charmed, magnetic creature.

16

At this, the blink of me abominates you,
and you fly off to Andromeda,
still left stunned by Medusa's skyhigh
moonbreathing dragon-beads.

17

Andromeda has a beautiful payback.

18

Sappho, why do you call, invoke, implore parti-jeweled Aphrodite, surf-
sprung crest-cranked
trough-torn?

19

I spoke with you in a dream, goddess, Copperland-Born—marmairous
word balloon.

20

Spring's sonic winged being, passion-singing messenger, the radiant-
tuned nightingale.

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21

Stand before me, debonair,
precious, bright-pervade,
unscrew your eyes, and iris out the colors of your grace.

22

It is not right for dirges to dwell in the home
of the Rhythm-Rangers, Tune-Wardens, fire-dreaming creatures,
for shineless shrieking, that would be far from beseeching.

23

Parti-mixed with prism-cones.

24

Violet of the lovely uvula.

25

The moon was moving, lucent-swelling, sliding to a tonic swoon,
And when the women wound around the immolated flowered tomb
...

26

Down, down, slides the moon,
gone, gone, the seven stars; and night
splits, time parts
and I alone lie down to dream, dream.

