

THE VOICE OF THE TENTH MUSE
Poetry by Sappho
Translations by Diane Rayor ©1991 (Permission granted)
Transliterations by Edward J. Vodoklys, S.J.
Music by Patricia VanNess ©1998

Transliteration

English

I.

ahrahmaye...
tootoh...
bohlohmaye...

so I pray...
this...
I want...

II.

De oo-ruh m' ek Kraytahs ep[ih tond]eh nowon
gnon oppa(i) toy kharihen men alsos
malihan, bowmoy deh tethoomihahme
-noy lihbanowtow

Come to me from Krete to this holy
temple, to the apple grove,
the altars smoking
with frankincense

eh d' uhdowr psookhron kelahday dih' oos-down
malihnown, brohdoysih deh pays oh khow-ros
eeskihast, ayethoossohmenown deh phoolown
kowma katerrhay

Cold water ripples through apple
branches, the whole place shadowed
in roses, from the murmuring leaves
deep sleep descends,

en deh laymown eppohbohtos tethahlehn
[ay]rihnoysin anthesin aye d'ahaytaye
mellihkhah pnehoysin

where horses graze, the meadow blooms
spring flowers, the winds
breathe softly...

entha day suh [stemmat'] ehloysa Koopree
khroosihayesin en kuhlihkessin ahbrows
ommehmaykhmehnon thalihaysih nektar
oynohkhohayeson

Here, Krypris, after gathering...
pour into golden cups
nectar lavishly
you pour as wine

III.

Kelomaye s' ahaydayn
[Gon]guhlahn [Ahb]ahnthih laboysahn[...]ah...
pahktin ahs seh day ooteh pohthos t[oy]
amphihpohtahtaye

...I urge you...
...taking...
the lyre, while desire again...
wings round you

IV.

(SUNG IN ENGLISH)

Now she stands out among
Lydian women as after sunset
the rose-fingered moon
exceeds all stars; light
reaches equally over the brine sea
and thick-flowering fields,

a beautiful dew has poured down,
roses bloom, tender parsley
and blossoming honey clover.

Pacing far away, she remembers
gentle Atthis with desire
perhaps...consumes her delicate soul;

to go there...this not
knowing...much
she sings...in the middle.

It is not easy for us to rival
the beautiful form of goddesses,
...you might have...

...
...
And...Aphrodite

...poured nectar from
a golden...
...with her hands Persuasion.

V.

Phayenehtaye moy kaynos ihsos theoysin
emmehn' ownayr, ottis enantihos toy
eesdanay kaye plahsion ahduh phownay
-sahs uhpahkooay
kaye gehlayesahs eemerohen, toh m' ay man
kardihan en staythehsin ehptohayesen
ows gar es s' eedow brokkeh', ows me phownay-
s' ood' en et' aykay,
alla kam mehn glowssa(i) m'chahgeh, lepton
d'owtihtkah khrow(i) poor uhpahdehdromayken,
ohppahtessee d' ood' en oraymm' ehpeerom
-baysih d' ahkooaye,
kad deh m' eedrows kahkhehehtai, trohmos deh
payesahn ahgray, khlowrohtehtah deh poyahs
emmih, tethnahkayn d' olihgow 'pihdehooays
phayenom' em owta(i)

To me it seems
that man has the fortune of gods,
whoever sits beside you, and close,
who listens to you sweetly speaking
and laughing temptingly;
my heart flutters in my breast,
whenever I look quickly, for a moment --
I say nothing,
my tongue broken,
a delicate fire runs under my skin,
my eyes see nothing, my ears roar,
cold sweat rushes down me,
trembling seizes me,
I am greener than grass,
to myself I seem
needing but little to die.

VI.

(SUNG IN ENGLISH)

Some say an army of horsemen, others
say foot-soldiers, still others, a fleet,
is the fairest thing on the dark earth:
I say it is whatever one loves.

Everyone can understand this --
consider that Helen, far surpassing
the beauty of mortals, leaving behind
the best man of all,

sailed away to Troy. She had no
memory of her child or dear parents,
since she was led astray
[by Kypris]...

...lightly
...reminding me now of Anaktoria
being gone,

I would rather see her lovely step
and the radiant sparkle of her face
than all the war-chariots in Lydia
and soldiers battling in shining bronze.

VII.

(SUNG IN ENGLISH)

On the throne of many hues, Immortal Aphrodite,
child of Zeus, weaving wiles -- I beg you
not to subdue 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 am I 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.

VIII.

ahrahmaye...
tootoh...
bohllohmaye...

so I pray...
this...
I want...

IX.

Po[lloys gar stepahn]oys ihown

Many crowns of violets,

kaye broh[down kro]kihown t' uhmoy
...par eh moy pehrethaykahoh
kaye ...thoomihdahs
plek...pahlaye deray
anthehown ...pehpohaymmenayes,
kaye pollow(i)...muhrow(i)
brenthayow(i)[...] roo[doh]n
exahlaypsahoh kaye bahsihlayihow
kaye strowmnahn ehpih mahlthahkahn
ahpahlahn pahr
exeeays pohthon.....nihdown
kowooteh tis..... ooteh ti
eeron ood' uh...
ehplet' oppohthen ahmmes ahpeskomen
ook ahlsos [.....]khoros
.....psophos

roses and crocuses
...together you set before me
and many scented wreaths
made from blossoms
around your soft throat...
...with pure, sweet oil

...you anointed me,
and on a soft, gentle bed...

you quenched your desire

...no holy site...
we left uncovered,
no grove...dance
...sound...