



Poems and Fragments

Sappho

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Little remains today of the writings of the archaic Greek poet Sappho (fl. late 7th and early 6th centuries B.C.E.), whose work is said to have filled nine papyrus rolls in the great library at Alexandria some 500 years after her death. The surviving texts consist of a lamentably small and fragmented body of lyric poetry--among them, poems of invocation, desire, spite, celebration, resignation, and remembrance--that nevertheless enables us to hear the living voice of the poet Plato called the tenth Muse.

Stanley Lombardo's translations give us a virtuoso embodiment of Sappho's voice, whose telltale charm, authority, immediacy, directness, intensity, and sudden changes of tone are among the hallmarks of his masterly translation.

Pamela Gordon introduces us to the world of Sappho, discusses questions surrounding the transmission of her manuscripts, offers advice on reading these texts, and concludes with an enlightening discussion of same-sex desire in Sappho.

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