

Sappho: Fragment 31
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It is still the habit of some commentators to concoct melodramas as background to Sappho's poems. I'm not going to do that here, but I would like to point out a few things before you begin.

First, it is not clear that the "that man" referred to in the first strophe is a particular man. Sappho may well be starting off the poem with a general statement, and given the ὅστις in line two, this is probably the best choice, if not the only one.

Next, the last part of the fourth strophe is completely muddled. I'm not able to choose from the many speculations, so I have omitted what is probably the final word of the strophe. The three words that make up the fifth strophe may not belong in this poem at all, but are included in standard editions.

Sources: Moore's 1947 *Selections from the Greek Elgiac, Iambic and Lyric Poets* and Campbell's 1967 *Greek Lyric Poetry*.

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν' ὄνηρ, ὅστις ἐναντίος τοι
ἰσδάνει, καὶ πλάσιον ἄδῦ φωνεί-
4 σας ὑπακούει

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¹φαίνομαι *seem, appear*. κῆνος = ἐκεῖνος *that*. ἴσος -η -ον *equal*; ἴσος θεοῖσιν is usually taken to mean *equal in luck to, as lucky as the gods*.

²ἔμμεναι = εἶναι *to be*. ὄνηρ = ὁ ἀνὴρ. ὅστις = ὅστις *whoever*. ἐναντίος -α -ον *opposite, facing; reverse, contradictory*. τοι = σοι 2nd person singular dative.

³ἰσδάνει = ἰζάνω *sit*. πλάσιον (πλησίος) *near, close to + genitive*. ἄδῦ = ἡδύς -εἶα -ύ *sweet, lovely, dear*; here adv. φωνέω *speak, sound; cry call*; here an Aeolic present participle, genitive singular feminine, depending on ὑπακούει in the next line. The case has shifted, but the participle refers to the addressee of the poem, the τοι "you" in line 2.

⁴ὑπ-ακούω *listen (to); answer, obey*; governs not only φωνείσας in the previous line, but γελαίσας in the next.

καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μάν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόησεν·
ὡς γὰρ εἰσίδω βροχέως σε, φώνας
8 οὐδὲν ἔτ' ἵκει·

ἀλλὰ καμ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, λέπτον
δ' αὐτίκα χρῶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδὲν ὄρημ', ἐπιρρόμ-
12 βεισι δ' ἄκουαι.

⁵γελάω *laugh, smile*; also a Aeolic present participle, genitive singular feminine. ἰμερόεις -εσσα -εν *lovely; delightful, charming; attractive, attracting*; here adverbial. τό *this* referring to the situation. μ' = μοι *dative of interest*. ἦ μάν = ἦ μὴν *truly*.

⁶καρδία -ας ἡ *heart; mind*. στήθος -εος τό *breast; feeling, understanding* often in pl. πτοέω *tr. frighten, alarm, make tremble, intr. tremble, cower*.

⁷ὡς here *whenever*, with the subjunctive (but note poets often omit ἄν, κε in indefinite clauses). εἰσ-οράω *look (at)*; εἰσίδω *aorist subjunctive*. βροχέως = βραχέως *briefly*. φωνή ἡ *voice, sound; word; language*; here partitive genitive with οὐδὲν in the next line, *nothing of word, no word*

⁸ἵκω *come*.

⁹καμ = κατά, here *entirely*. γλῶσσα ἡ *tongue, mouth; language*. ἄγνυμι, ἄξω, ἔαξα, ἔαγα *break to pieces*; perf. with passive meaning. λεπτός, -ή, -όν - *thin, fine, delicate; narrow, small; clever*.

¹⁰αὐτίκα *immediately, at once*. χρώς, χροός, χροί, χροά, ὀ *flesh; body, person*; χρῶ heterclite *dative*; take it with the ὑπά (ὑπό) *under* of ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν. ὑπο-τρέχω, -δραμέομαι, -έδρακον, -δεδράμηκα *run under*, with Aeolic -ρο- for -ρα-.

¹¹ὄππα = ὄμμα -ατος τό *eye*, here Aeolic *dative plural*. ὄρημι = ὀράω *see*, Aeolic uses -μι conjugation for Attic contract verbs. ἐπιρρόμβέω *whirl, whir, make a whirring noise*; the conjugation -εισι (*-ensi) is 3rd plural.

¹²ἄκουή = ἀκοή ἡ here *ear*.

καδ δέ μ' ἴδρως κακχέεται, τρόμος δέ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω ἴπιδεύης
16 φαίνομαι < ... >.

ἀλλὰ πᾶν τόλματον ...

¹³κακχέεται Moore ψυχρος ἔχει Campbell

¹³καδ = κατά. ἰδρῶς -ῶτος ὁ sweat. κακχέεται = κατα-χέομαι pour down. τρόμος ὁ trembling; fear.

¹⁴παῖσαν = πᾶσαν, wholly. ἄγρῳ take, seize; this is the standard Aeolic word for which Attic-Ionic uses αἰρέω. χλωρός -ά -όν yellow, green; pallid, here comparative. Greeks turned not pale from intense emotion, but yellow-green; cf. Odyssey 12.243 τοὺς δὲ χλωρὸν δέος ἤρειν. ποίη ἢ grass; meadow.

¹⁵ἔμμι = εἰμί I am. τεθνάκην = τεθνάσαι infinitive to die, depending on φαίνομαι in the next line. ἐπιδεύης -ες lacking, in need of + gen; take ὀλίγω ἴπιδεύης as little short of; nearly

¹⁷τολμάω bear, endure; dare; here a verbal adjective in -τος; but all can be dared