

# Sappho

born on the Island of Lesbos (Greece), around 615 B.C.E.

## Poem 1

Deathless Aphrodite of the spangled mind,<sup>2</sup>  
child of Zeus, who twists lures, I beg you  
do not break with hard pains,  
O lady, my heart

but come here if ever before  
you caught my voice far off  
and listening left your father's  
golden house and came,

yoking your car. And fine birds brought you,  
quick sparrows<sup>3</sup> over the black earth  
whipping their wings down the sky  
through midair—

they arrived. But you, O blessed one,  
smiled in your deathless face  
and asked what (now again) I have suffered and why  
(now again) I am calling out

and what I want to happen most of all  
in my crazy heart. Whom should I persuade (now again)  
to lead you back into her love? Who, O  
Sappho, is wronging you?

For if she flees, soon she will pursue.  
If she refuses gifts, rather will she give them.  
If she does not love, soon she will love  
even unwilling.

Come to me now: loose me from hard  
care and all my heart longs  
to accomplish, accomplish. You  
be my ally.

## Poem 16

Some men say an army of horse and some men say an army on foot  
and some men say an army of ships is the most beautiful thing  
on the black earth. But I say it is  
what you love.

Easy to make this understood by all.  
For she who overcame everyone  
in beauty (Helen)<sup>4</sup>  
left her fine husband

behind and went sailing to Troy.  
Not for her children nor her dear parents  
had she a thought, no—  
possession, led her astray

] for  
] lightly  
] reminded me now of Anaktoria<sup>5</sup>  
who is gone.  
I would rather see her lovely step  
and the motion of light on her face  
than chariots of Lydians<sup>7</sup> or ranks  
of footsoldiers in arms.<sup>8</sup>

*this is a love poem of  
need to add page*