Sappho

1 Abandoned (Edm 83, 216, 96D)

I want to die honestly rather than be abandoned tearfully

Well, I was told all sorts of things such as, "Oh, dear, dear Sappho, what awful things we must endure! Truly, I'm leaving you against my will."

To which I replied,
"All right, then, go ahead, abandon me
be happy!
But
remember me because I cared for no one else.

Because if you forget, I'll remind you of the good things we lived through together.

Remember the many garlands of violets and roses I placed next to you and the many flower necklaces I weaved around your soft skin

and spread bountiful myrrh [.....]* fit for a queen

and upon the gentle mattress, [.....]* the passion you exuded

and neither the [.....]*
nor the singly sacred [.....]*
did we weave [.....]*
from which we stayed away.

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2 And as for me (Edm.118a)

And as for me, listen to this, I love luxury: the bright love, the sun and beauty are of one lot.

3 But I sleep Alone (Edm. 62)

Midnight! And like the hour, The moon and the Pleiades have gone

And I, I sleep alone.

4 It Seems to me (Edm 2)

It seems to me he's equal to the gods, the man who sits within the scope of your sweet voice and of your laughter, which stirs the heart within my breast

Seeing you like this, even for a second, stops the sighs within me.

Yet my tongue freezes and beneath my skin a fire rages and... my eyes are empty but my ears are full.

A torrent of sweat and a wild tremor overwhelm me and,

I've turned the colour of drying grass just before death.

5 Eros again! (204, 42B, 50D)

Eros again! He shook my mind Like the mountain winds shake The Oaks!

6 *Ode to Aphrodite*(Edm. 1)

Immortal Aphrodite of the splendid throne
Daughter of Zeus, weaver of snares,
Great Woman, grant me this:
Let not my spirit be harnessed by this anguish,
This affliction
But come here, to me, as you did once before.

On that day, you heard my distant voice and, nodding, you left your father's golden chambers and yoked your two swift companion birds to your glittering chariot.

They fluttered through the spreading sky and brought you hurriedly down here, next to me, here, upon the black soil.

Great woman!

With a smile on your immortal face you had asked me then about my sighs, what was it that made me call you yet again?

What was it that my despairing heart wanted you to do this time?

You asked,

"Who is it this time, Sappho? Whom do you want me to bring to you? Who, Sappho is hurting you now?"

And,
at that time, you offered, "Tell me
Sappho who she is and if she turns from you now,
soon,
by my urgings,
she'll be turning towards you;
and if she's not close to you now,
soon,
by my urgings, she will be willingly or not!"

Come to me again now, Great Woman and release me from this great woe; grant me this, my heart's greatest desire! Against all these pains, Great Woman, be my ally.

7 To Her Lyre (Ed80)

Come to me, my Lyre, Sing Loudly! Sing Divinely!

8 *On Eros* (238, 40-41B, 137D)

a)
Again it is Eros! He, the
sweet and
bitter God who unfastens the limbs!

Again, omnipotent Eros, shakes me like a snake, b) And you, Atthis, you've learnt to hate me and run off to Andromeda

9 *The stars around the moon* (Edm 3)

And again when the moon casts her brilliance all over earth The stars soften the blaze of their beauty

10 *Sweet Apple* (B93,B94)

Ι

You're
Just like the sweet apple reddening at the highest branch, missed by the apple pickers No,
They did not miss you!
They just couldn't reach so high.

II
And
You're just like the mountain
Hyacinth,
trodden by the shepherds
next to the purple
blossoms

11 A company of soldiers (27aD, 195P)

Some say that the most beautiful sight upon earth's Dark soil

Is a company of soldiers on horse.

Others think that this honour belongs to

A line of soldiers on foot.

And still others to a fleet of ships.

Ah, but for me

This honour belongs to whoever one loves.

It's easy to see why.

Look!

The most gorgeous woman on earth,

Helen,

Abandoned her man,

Most excellent of all men!

And made sails for Troy!

Not a thought for her daughter

Nor her dear parents.

That was Cypris' fault!

Aphrodite!

It was this goddess who had led her so far astray.

So suddenly.

So easily.

So gently.

Ah!

This reminds me of Anactoria who is very far away.

How I'd much rather look upon her charming step

And

Upon the dazzling beauty of her face

Than

Upon all the glittering chariots of the Lydia

And all of her foot soldiers

Clad in their weighty armour!

12 The Handsome and the Pure (49D, 207P)

The handsome man is handsome only In looks.
The Pure man pure as well as Handsome

13 *You shall die!* (58D, 211P)

You shall die
And you shall lie there!
You shall lie there
And no one will remember you
Nor
Long for you
Because you have none
Of the roses
Of the Muses
Of Pieria
And you shall wander
Among the shadows of the dead
In the Halls of Hades
Ignored.

14 Atthis (L 96, V 96, D 98))

Oh, Atthis!
Once she saw you as a famous goddess
And
Loved the sound of your voice!

But now! Look at her, now! Now she's matchless among the Lydian women!

She is the rosy-fingered moon after the sun has set!

Supreme among the stars!
A light that shines equally over the salty sea
And,
Over the flower-covered fields!

And so,

The gorgeous dew falls

And

The roses bloom

And so does

The tender chervil

And the flowering honey clover.

And

She takes these walks –

This way and that-

And

With longing in her heart,

She remembers our gentle Atthis.

And

Her soul!

Her soul is consumed by this longing!

15 *Gongyla* (217, L95, D 97)

"And so"

Gongyla asked me,

"How can you be so sure? Have you seen some sign of it?"

And I replied,

"Well, let me tell you, Gongyla.

I saw Hermes in my dream and I said to him,

'Lord,' I said, 'Lord, I am lost!

I am lost and, I swear to you, Lord!

In the name of the blessed goddess,

I swear, I no longer care for wealth and riches!

I just want to die!

I want to die and I want to see the dew-covered lotus

On the banks of the Acheron'"

16 Hesperus (trans. "Evening") (223, 95B, 120D)

Hesperus!

You always bring back all those things which

The brilliant Dawn has scattered!

You bring back

The sheep,

The goats

And

The child, back to its mother!

17 *To Dika* (80D)

Come, Dika!

With your gentle fingers weave

For your lovely hair

Α

Garland of anise.

The blessed Graces prefer-

By far-

To gaze upon a garlanded head

Than one bereft of flowers, from which

They turn away.

18 *Sweet Mother* (L102, D114, B90)

Sweet mother!

How can I weave my web now?

Dazzling Aphrodite tamed my desire

For a boy!

19 *Leave Crete* (192, 4-5B, Suppl. p 30D)

Leave Crete

And

Come here!

Come to this pure temple,

To this charming apple grove

And

To these altars scented with

Burned frankincense.

Icy water sings through the branches of the Apple trees

And

The shadows of roses cover the ground

And

Up from the trembling leaves flows down Sweet sleep.

And

On this horse-nurturing valley
The flowers of Spring bloom
And

The gentle breezes sigh sweetly

Come Kypris!
Gracefully pour nectar
Into these golden wine cups
And
Make it one with our festivities.

20 *To Hera (196 28D)*

To Hera

Come,

Blessed Hera, when I pray for your Charming form to appear.
Come beside me!

Yours is the form to which The sons of Atreus, kings both, Also prayed.

They accomplished many great deeds
First at Troy
And then on the seas
But were lost and couldn't make their way here
Until they called on you, Hera
And on Zeus
And on Thyoni's charming boy,
Dionysus.

Come then goddess

And help me as you've done in the past.

21 Virginity! (230, 109B, 131 D)

Virginity you've abandoned me! Where have you gone? *I'll never return to you, no, I never shall!*

22 Kleis, My Daughter (239, 85B, 152 D)

I have a daughter, Gorgeous like a golden flower And I love her more than all of Lydia More even than...

23 Honey or Bee (146)

I need neither The Honey nor The

Bee

24 I was in love with you Atthis (206, 33-34B, 40-41D)

I was in love with you Atthis, Once, a long time ago! I used to think you were a clumsy Little child.

25 The sky (209, 37B, 47D)

I don't think I can touch the sky with my hands.

26 Wealth (249, 80B, 92D)

Wealth without virtue is not an innocent neighbour But, mix them together and you have the very best of fortunes!