

What Does a Poem Look Like? How Does a Photograph Sound?

Text and Image: Making Meaning and Finding Common Ground between Ancient and Contemporary Greek Poetry and Photographs Made by Cambridge Rindge and Latin Photography Students

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Cambridge Rindge and Latin High
Photography 1,2,3 - Grades 9 – 12
Greek Fellow 2008**

High School Photography students will read poetry from ancient Greek texts, poems by contemporary Greek poets, and poems inspired by ancient and modern Greece. Students will choose poems or passages from poems that they find significant and create photographs to accompany the poems/passages. Each photograph and accompanying poem will be a visual and aural reflective experience, affirming meaning making and conversation back and forth between the two mediums and allowing for a deeper understanding of the poetry of ancient and contemporary Greece as well as a new way to approach content in making photographs.

Aims and Objectives

- **Students will read poetry from ancient Greek texts, poems by contemporary Greek poets, and poems inspired by ancient and modern Greece. Students will be exposed to a great tradition of poetry that is essential to an understanding of Western civilization and thought.**
- **Students will learn about poets whom they have not previously read.**
- **Students will revisit favorite passages from the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* and/or will be exposed to passages from these ancient texts for the first time.**
- **Students will analyze poetry in order to understand it more fully and gain access to the language of poetry in order to develop a deeper understanding and connection to the imagery that poets use.**
- **Students will work within the contemporary art form, Text and Image, pairing poetry and photography. Students will analyze and re-interpret text through creating their own photographic imagery to accompany the poetry.**
- **Students will make photographs using excellent technical skills to express a personal vision and voice through composition and content which adds a new dimension to the interpretation of a poem.**

Assignments

- 1. Students will look at artwork by artist exemplars who have paired text and image.**
- 2. Students will analyze how these artists have successfully paired text with image.**
- 3. Invited Guest Visual Artist will give students an in-depth presentation on text and image and how Artists have used these media together.**
- 4. Students will view a slide show of images of contemporary Greece.**
- 5. Invited Guest English teacher will co-teach a class on methods of reading and analyzing poetry to make it more meaningful and accessible.**
- 6. Students will read a number of poetry books by and about Greece in class and look for poems that interest them.**
- 7. Students will choose three poems by contemporary or ancient Greek poets and/or passages from the Iliad or the Odyssey to work with.**
- 8. Students will present these poems/passages to the class.**
- 9. Students will answer written questions about these passages in order to clarify the imagery and meaning of the poetry.**
- 10. Students will write descriptions of some of their ideas for photographs to accompany the passages.**
- 11. Students will shoot develop black and white film, and print contact sheets of the images that they have chosen.**
- 12. Students will rework their choice of imagery until they are paired intentionally and essentially with the poetry.**
- 13. Students will create high quality black and white photographs of their chosen images.**
- 14. Students will exhibit their chosen passages and poems next to their interpretive images in the 5th floor Photography Gallery of Cambridge Rindge and Latin.**

Materials

- 1. Books of contemporary and ancient Greek poetry**
- 2. Books of poetry about Greece**
- 3. Articles and books about analyzing poetry**
- 4. Examples of art work by artists who have paired Text and Image**
- 5. Photographic images of contemporary Greece**
- 6. Cameras, Film, Developing Chemicals, Printing Paper**

Student Reading List

Parts of the following books:

- Broumas, Olga, "Rave", Copper Canyon Press, Washington, 1999
- Cavafy, C.P., "The Canon", Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 2007
- Elytis, Odysseas, "What I Love", Translated by Olga Broumas, Copper Canyon Press, 1986
- Elytis, Odysseas, "Eros, Eros, Eros", Translated by Olga Broumas, Copper Canyon Press, 1998
- Euripides, "Medea and Other Plays", Translated by Philip Vellacott, London 1963
- Friedlander, Lee, "Apples and Olives", California and Sweden, 2005
- Gilbert, Jack, "Refusing Heaven", New York 2007
- Goldberg, Natalie, "Writing Down the Bones", Boston, 1986
- Hale, William Harlan, "The Horizon Book of Ancient Greece", New York, 1965
- Homer, "Iliad", Translated by Robert Fitzgerald, New York, 2004
- Homer, "Odyssey", Translated by Stanley Lombardo, Indiana, 2000
- "New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology", Introduction by Robert Graves, London, 1978
- Ritsos, Yannis, "The Fourth Dimension", Translated by Peter Green and Beverly Bardsley, Princeton, 1993
- Sachtouris, Miltos, "Poems", Translated by Karen Emmerich, Athens, 2006
- Sappho, "Sappho, A New Translation" by Mary Barnard, California, 1958
- Sappho, "Sweetbitter Love Poems of Sappho", Translated by Willis Barnstone, Boston, 2006
- Seferis, George, "Collected Poems 1924-1955", Princeton, 1967
- Yates, Steve, Editor, "Poetics of Space, A Critical Photographic Anthology" Chapter 16
- Sommer, Frederick and Aldrich, Stephen, "The Poetic Logic of Art and Aesthetics", New Jersey, 1972
- Vanderlip, Dianne Perry, "Poets and Painters", Catalogue from Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado, 1979

Bibliography and background information, articles, information for teacher
Poetry, Photography, Text and Image

- Berger, John, "About Looking", Pantheon Books, 1980
Berger, John, "Another Way of Telling", New York, 1982
Berger, John, "Ways of Seeing", Pelican, London, 1972
Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell", Oxford, 1975
Broumas, Olga, "Rave", Copper Canyon Press, Washington, 1999
Cavafy, C.P., "The Canon", Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 2007
Elytis, Odysseas, "What I Love", Translated by Olga Broumas, Copper Canyon Press, 1986
Elytis, Odysseas, "Eros, Eros, Eros", Translated by Olga Broumas, Copper Canyon Press, 1998
Euripides, "Medea and Other Plays", Translated by Philip Vellacott, London 1963
Fletcher, Harrell, and July, Miranda, "Learning to Love You More", New York, 2007
Friedlander, Lee, "Apples and Olives", California and Sweden, 2005
Gilbert, Jack, "Refusing Heaven", New York 2007
Goldberg, Natalie, "Writing Down the Bones", Boston, 1986
Hale, William Harlan, "The Horizon Book of Ancient Greece", New York, 1965
Homer, "Iliad", Translated by Robert Fitzgerald, New York, 2004
Homer, "Odyssey", Translated by Stanley Lombardo, Indiana, 2000
"New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology", Introduction by Robert Graves, London, 1978
Nims, John Frederick, "Western Wind, An Introduction to Poetry", Random House, NY, 1974, (Chapter 1, "The Image")
Parks Gordon, "Moments Without Proper Names", Viking Press, New York, 1975
Ritsos, Yannis, "The Fourth Dimension", Translated by Peter Green and Beverly Bardsley, Princeton, 1993
Sachtouris, Miltos, "Poems", Translated by Karen Emmerich, Athens, 2006
Sappho, "Sappho, A New Translation" by Mary Barnard, California, 1958
Sappho, "Sweetbitter Love Poems of Sappho", Translated by Willis Barnstone, Boston, 2006
Seferis, George, "Collected Poems 1924-1955", Princeton, 1967
Shahn, Ben, "The Shape of Content", Vintage Books, New York, 1957
Sommer, Frederick and Aldrich, Stephen, "The Poetic Logic of Art and Aesthetics", New Jersey, 1972
Valaoritis, Nanos and Maskaleris, Thanasis, "An Anthology of Modern Greek Poetry", New Jersey, 2003
Vrettakos, Nikiforos, "Thirty Years in the Rain", Translated by Robert Zaller and Lili Bitá, Boston, 2005
Vanderlip, Dianne Perry, "Poets and Painters", Catalogue from Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado, 1979
Yates, Steve, Ed., "Poetics of Space, A Critical Photographic Anthology" Chapter 16, Zaller, Robert, "Islands", Boston, 2006

Lesson Plan – Teach Greece
What Does a Poem Look Like? How Does a Photograph Sound?

Name: *Debi Milligan*

October 6, 2008

Course: *Photo 1,2,3 (Introduction to Photography, Intermediate Photo, Advanced Honors Photo)* Grade: *9-12*

What Does a Poem Look Like? How Does a Photograph Sound? Text and Image:
 Making Meaning and Finding Common Ground between Ancient and Contemporary
 Greek Poetry and Photographs Made by Cambridge Rindge and Latin Photography
 Students

Overarching Understanding Goals/ Essential Questions:

1. *How do we search for and identify insights about what it means to be human through the study of Greek poetry?*
2. *What do poems and photographs have in common? How are they different?*
3. *What part of the Greek poem inspires the momentum for my photographic idea?*
4. *How do I create and express distinctive reciprocity between two languages (poetry and photography)?*
5. *What is the specific relationship between the essential moments in the Greek poem and the essential characteristics of my photograph?*

Understanding Performances: Planned Activities/Lesson Steps

1. Students will view artwork by artist exemplars who have paired text and image. (John Berger, Frederick Sommer (*The Poetic Logic of Art and Aesthetics*), Lou Jones (*Final Exposure*), Frida Kahlo, William Blake, Gordon Parks, Ben Shahn etc.)
2. Students will discuss and analyze how these artists have paired text and image
3. Guest Artist will show and discuss their own work that includes text and image (book artist, photographer, photo-journalist, photo editor, or another visual artist who includes text essentially with her/his imagery)
4. Students will view a slide show of images from the teacher's study tour of Greece so that students understand that the ancient poetry of Greece is related to contemporary Greece in subject matter (i.e. light, landscape, human values, olive trees/olive oil) and that this subject matter has greatly informed contemporary thought around the world
5. Guest Poet/Writer will read from their own work and possibly the work of others in order to introduce listening, analyzing, and discussing the written word, especially poetry, to students
6. Students will read poems by ancient and contemporary Greek poets
7. Students will choose three poems/passages by Greek poets (including the Iliad and the Odyssey) to concentrate on and make photographs about
8. Students will shoot, develop, and print photographs that they have conceived of to accompany their choices of poetry
9. Class Critique. Students will read their chosen poems and exhibit their photographs as they read. Students will discuss their choices and analyze how successfully or not, and the many reasons why, their photographs enlighten the poems and the poems speak to the photographs.

QUESTIONS:

- *What are some similarities and differences between poetry and photography? Both involve search for awareness, opportunity to decipher what is worth knowing, possibility to gain understanding about what it means to be human and gain insight about living, distinguish what is important, attempt to struggle with difficult choices and honor successes, recognize losses)*
- *What do poems and photographs have in common as a language? Both are translating devices for expression, evocations, provocation. We are trying to pinpoint a feeling, reveal and engage something outside of our own experience. Often in both poetry and photography, things are not what they seem on the surface.*
- *How are they different? Photographs are technically mute. Poems resonate with sound. In a poem, reader filters what s/he hears through their own experience. A photographer takes that and makes something else of it; another layer, connection to the poem. To make a photograph with the photographer/student as the filter, the poem as the focus of the lens.*

OFFERING THE VIEWER AN EXPERIENCE:

CHALLENGE/ASSIGNMENT: contrast, calibrate, enlarge one part of detail or idea of the Greek poem – full of detail, without detail, remnant, memory

Student is in control of what part of the poem, what moment the student decides to highlight, call attention to, highlight as a jumping off point.

CRITERIA: What is emerging from the poem for the student? What is emerging from the photograph for the viewer? (These two things must come together toward another sensibility that is particular and peculiar to the student.)

What kind of reciprocity is there between the poem and the photograph? Teaching, learning, reading, writing, seeing, expressing on more than one level in more than one medium (photography and poetry)

PROCESS: Collecting/distilling/editing The process of allowing a conversation between poems and photographs Greek poems are at once foreign and yet totally recognizable. Tension - Students caught between two worlds (one they have been investigating (photography) and the other is the world of Greek poetry.

Looking into the poem and imagining/Relate and echo, literal and figurative/Mirror between two worlds/A response to poem/A portal to remembered space of poem/Translation/Meaning and revealing – decision making/Selective / obsessive/ suggestive

Glimpse – window on the work/Drama – moment chosen from poet or poem/Uncommon things seen in a common way/Not necessarily explicit, linear experience/Plucked – notion of something plucked out of poem and brought to our attention in photos/Transport us/Something beneath notice, innocuous, discreet, sensitive

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC – Text and Image: What Does a Poem Look Like? How Does a Photograph Sound? Making Meaning and Finding Common Ground Between Ancient and Contemporary Greek Poetry and Student Photographs

Levels of Achievement				
CRITERIA	MASTERY	DISTINGUISHED	APPRENTICE	NOVICE
<p>Idea Development and Execution - Essential Connection of Photographic Ideas with Greek Poetry</p>	<p>Photographer has a clear idea that is evident to the viewer and creates a sense of added reflection and connection to the poetry through the images. The two together (text and image) clearly enhance each other's meaning and impact and appear essential to each other for significant meaning making.</p>	<p>Photographer has an idea that carries from the poetry to the photograph and back again. The idea has a clear meaning and there is a connection between the two mediums.</p>	<p>Photographer has ideas that are apparent to the viewer but needs to develop the ideas more completely in order to show a stronger connection between word and image.</p>	<p>Photographer needs to develop a clearer idea of what they are connecting to in the poetry in order for the viewer to understand the significance of these two mediums being brought together.</p>
<p>Creativity – Originality and Innovation of Concept</p>	<p>Work is innovative and unique. Photographer generates ideas and creates unusual combinations demonstrating high level of problem solving skills in choosing meaningful passages from poetry and in creating photographs.</p>	<p>Work is interesting and original and demonstrates attempts at trying several combinations of ideas to connect text and image. Demonstrates problem- solving skills.</p>	<p>Work exhibits some interesting combinations and connections to poetry but shows limited exploration of ideas. Limited exploration of text and/or image making.</p>	<p>Work contains few unique or original ideas and demonstrates conventional and obvious choices with no further exploration. Lack of problem solving skills demonstrated.</p>
<p>Vision and Purpose – Personal Voice and Intent</p>	<p>Demonstrates a strong personal vision and voice. Student revisits solutions to problem and choice of text and image ideas. Student delves deeply into meaning and image possibilities implied by text for understanding. Exceeds the goals of the assignment.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a personal vision and solution. Meaning and intent sufficiently conveyed. Student understands meaning of text. Meets goals of assignment.</p>	<p>Unclear vision and personal voice demonstrated in choice of what to photograph in order to accompany and enhance chosen text. Student demonstrates a limited understanding of text.</p>	<p>Little or no demonstration of understanding of text. Photographic content is vague and intent of student is not understood. Fails to address major goals of task.</p>
<p>Photography Technique - Photographing, Developing and Printing Skills, Proper Use of Tools and Materials, Employment of 2D Composition and Content</p>	<p>Exhibits a high level of skill in photographing, developing, and printing in the darkroom.. Demonstrates a mastery of tools and materials. Prints convey excellent sense of composition and essential content.</p>	<p>Exhibits a moderate level of skill and craftsmanship in photographing, developing and printing. Demonstrates a consistent level of success with tools and materials. Conveys good control of composition and content.</p>	<p>Exhibits uneven and inconsistent skill in photographing, developing and printing. Exhibits a limited level of success with tools and materials. Does not show an understanding of the principles of 2D composition. Content unclear.</p>	<p>Exhibits little understanding of technique and work shows many technical mistakes; improper and/or incorrect use of tools and materials. Little attempt to consider composition and/or content in photographs.</p>

Text and Image Assignment 2

**WHAT DOES A POEM LOOK LIKE?
HOW DOES A PHOTOGRAPH SOUND?**

Write a poem and pair it with a photograph or series of photographs you have brought to final critiques.

Use text to bring more 'light' to a photograph from a different medium. The poem you write should enlighten the viewer further about what is in the photograph.

Poetry can clarify an idea, explain an emotion, and express a particular viewpoint. It can ask questions and bring another way of thinking to a visual image as well as highlight what you have already brought to light in your photograph or photographs.

Ἐν Σπάρτῃ

Δὲν ᾔξερεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Κλεομένης, δὲν τολμοῦσε —
δὲν ᾔξερε ἕναν τέτοιον λόγο πῶς νὰ πεῖ
πρὸς τὴν μητέρα του: ὅτι ἀπαιτοῦσε ὁ Πτολεμαῖος
γιὰ ἐγγύησιν τῆς συμφωνίας των ἑ ἀποσταλεῖ κι αὐτὴ
εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ νὰ φυλάττεται
λίαν ταπεινωτικόν, ἀνοίκειον πράγμα.
Κι ὄλο ἤρχονταν γιὰ νὰ μιλήσει κι ὄλο δίσταζε.
Κι ὄλο ἄρχιζε νὰ λέγει· κι ὄλο σταματοῦσε.

Μὰ ἡ ὑπέροχη γυναικα τὸν κατάλαβε
(εἶχεν ἀκούσει κιόλα κάτι διαδόσεις σχετικές),
καὶ τὸν ἐνθάρρυνε νὰ ἐξηγηθεῖ.
Καὶ γέλασε· κ' εἶπε βεβαίως παινέει.
Καὶ μάλιστα χαίρονταν πὺν μποροῦσε νᾶναι
στὸ γῆρας τῆς ὠφέλιμη στὴν Σπάρτη ἀκόμη.

Ὅσο γιὰ τὴν ταπεινώσι — μὰ ἀδιαφοροῦσε.
Τὸ φρόνημα τῆς Σπάρτης ἀσφαλῶς δὲν ἦταν ἰκανὸς
νὰ νοιώσει ἕνας Λαγίδης χθεσινός
ὅθεν κ' ἡ ἀπαίτησις του δὲν μποροῦσε
πραγματικῶς νὰ ταπεινώσει Δέσποιναν
Ἐπιφανῆ ὡς αὐτὴν· Σπαρτιάτου βασιλέως μητέρα.

In Sparta

King Kleomenes didn't know, he hardly dared,
he just didn't know how to go about telling his mother
such a thing: to explain to her Ptolemy's demand
that she too would be sent to Egypt, that she would be
held a hostage there in order to guarantee their agreement
such an inappropriate and embarrassing demand.
And so he was always about to say something, but he
always stopped himself. And he would make a start
at telling her, but each time he couldn't finish.

But this remarkable woman knew what was happening
(she'd already, after all, heard rumors to the effect),
so she encouraged him to say what was on his mind.
And when he did she laughed, saying of course she'd go.
She was even pleased that at her advanced age
she could still be of so much use to Sparta.

As for the humiliation, it mattered not at all to her.
It went without saying that the naïve Lagides was
in no way capable of appreciating Spartan pride;
and as a result his demand could hardly
result in the humiliation of a remarkable
woman like her, she the mother of a Spartan king.

From C.P. Cavafy
The Canon

Trans. Stratis Haviaras

ΜΟΝΟΤΟΝΙΑ

Τὴν μιὰ μονότονην ἡμέραν ἄλλη
 μονότονη, ἀπαράλλακτη ἀκολουθεῖ. Θὰ γίνου
 τὰ ἴδια πράγματα, θὰ ξαναγίνου πάλι —
 ἢ ὅμοιες στιγμῆς μᾶς βρίσκουε καὶ μᾶς ἀφίνου.

Μῆνας περνᾶ καὶ φέρνει ἄλλον μῆνα.
 Αὐτὰ πού ἔρχονται κανεὶς εὐκόλα τὰ εἰκάζει·
 εἶναι τὰ χθεσινὰ τὰ βαρετὰ ἐκεῖνα.
 Καὶ καταντᾶ τὸ αὖριο πιά σὰν αὖριο νὰ μὴ μοιάζει.

Tedium

One tedious day leads to another
 that's just as tedious. The same events
 will occur over and over again—
 identical moments find us, then are gone.

A month passes, yielding to another month.
 It's not hard to guess what's coming:
 just more of yesterday's tedium.
 And then tomorrow is tomorrow no more.

From C.P. Cavafy
 The Canon

Trans. Stratis Kavianas

74a (lines 2, 4), 74b (line 2), 74c (line 2)

ἰαυτόλι

]

ἰ βροδο

ἰ ποθο.

ἰ ας ἰδρω

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οὐκ οἶδ' ὅτι θέω διχα μοι τὰ νοήματα

46

ἔγω δ' ἐπὶ μολθάκαν

τύλαν κασπολέω τμέλεα κἄν μὲν τε τύλαγκας
ἀσπόλεα†

Goatberd

Goatberd

a rose

longing

sweat

Shall I?

I don't know what to do.

I think yes—and then no.

Pleasure

On a soft pillow

I will lay down my limbs

From: *Sweetbitter Love*

Poems of Sappho

Trans. Willis Barnstone

ἰ ἔρωτος ἠλπι
 ἰ
 ὡς γὰρ ἄνθρωπον εἰσὶδω σφε.
 φαίνεται μὴ οὐδ' Ἑρμιόνα τεαυτρα
 ἔμμεναι, ξάνθαι δ' Ἑλένας σ' εἰσέλθην
 οὐδ' ἐν ἀεικέσ

ἰ ἰς θνάταις, τότε δ' ἰσθλι, τὰί σαί
 ἰπαίσαν κέ με τὰν μερμήναν
 ἰλαῖσ' ἀντιδί . ἰ . ἰαθοῖς δέ.
 ἰ
 ἰροσσοέντρας ὄχθοις
 ἰταιν
 ἰπανλυχίσθλην

You Can Free Me

I hoped for love

When I look at you face to face
not even Hermioni
seems to be your equal.

I compare you to blond Helen
among mortal women.

Know that you can free me
from every care,

and stay awake all night long
on dewy riverbanks

From: Sweet Bitter Love
Poems of Sappho
Trans. Willis Barnstone

58b

CAMPBELL (lines 11-12)

MARTIN WEST (TLLS 6.24.05)

from a Cologne papyrus

Ἰμιμες πεδὰ Μοῖσαν ἰοικ[ο]λιτων κάλα δώρα, παῖδες,
σπουδάσετε καὶ τὰν φιλάοιδον λιγύραν χελύνναν

ἔμοι δ' ἄπαλον πρῖν] ποτ' [ἔ]γοντα χροά γῆρας ἦδη
ἐπέλλαβε, λευκαὶ δ' ἐγ]ένοντο τρίχες ἐκ μελαίναν

βάφους δέ μ' ὁ [θ]ῦμος πετόρηται, γόνα δ' [ο]ῦ φέροισι,
τὰ δὴ ποτα λάψῃρ' ἔον ὄρχησθ' ἴσα νεβροῖσι.

τὰ <μὲν> στεναχίσδω θαμέως· ἀλλὰ τί κεν ποεῖην;
ἀγήραον ἀνθρωπων ἔοντ' οὐ δύνατον γένεσθαι.

καὶ γὰρ π[ο]τα Τίθωνον ἔφαντο βροδόπαχυν Αὔων
ἔρωι φ. ἀθεισαν βάμεν' εἰς ἔσχατα γᾶς φέροισα[ν],

ἔοντα [κ]άλιον καὶ νέον, ἀλλ' αὐτον ὕμως ἔμαρψε
χρόνῳ πτόλιον γῆρας, ἐχ[ο]ντ' ἀθανάταν ἀκοιτιν.

*Growing Old**

Those lovely gifts of the fragrant-breasted Muses,
girls, seek them eagerly in thrilling song of the lyre.

Old age has grasped my earlier delicate skin
and my black hair has become white,

my spirit turned heavy, my knees no longer
carry me nimble for dancing like a fawn.

About these things I groan. What can I do?
For a human not to grow old is impossible.

They say Dawn, dazzled by love, took Tithonos
in her rose arms to the utter end of the earth.

Once beautiful and young, time seized him
into gray old age, husband of a deathless wife.

*From Sweetbitter love
Poems of Sappho*

* Translated by Willis Barnstone and William McCulloh.

Πλάσιον δὴ μὲν εὐχομένηναι φρανεῖη
 πόντι Ἥρα σὰ χλαρίεσσα μόρφα κλη-
 τὰν ἀράταν Ἀτρείδαι
 τοι βασιλῆες·

ἐκετέεσαντες μάλα πόλλ' ἄεθλα
 πρῶτα μὲν πῆρ Ἴλιον, ἔν τε πόντωι,
 τυῖδ' ἀπορμάθεν[τες ὄδον περατίνην
 οὐκ ἐδύναντο,

πρὶν σέ καὶ Δῖ' ἀντιῖαιον κάλεσσαι
 καὶ Θυώνας ἰμεῖρόεντα παῖδα·
 νῦν δὲ κίχμοι προῦμένης ἀρηξον
 κατὰ τὸ πάλ[αιον.

ἀγνα καὶ κάμλα
 π[αρθ]ειν
 ἀμφοι ἰ

ἔμμενα[μ]
 ἤρ' ἀπίκεσθαι

To Lady Hera

Be near me Lady Hera while I pray
 for your graceful form to appear,
 to which the sons of Atreus prayed,
 those dazzling kings

who did bountiful deeds,
 first at Troy, then on the sea,
 but sailing the road to this island,
 they could not reach it

till they called on you and Zeus god of suppliants,
 and Dionysos lovely son of Thyoni.
 Now be gentle and help me too
 as in old days,

holy and beautiful
 virgin
 in circles

to sail safely
 to the shrine

From Sweetbitter Love
 Poems of Sappho
 Trans by Willis Barnstone

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παρακαλειοιτασε Ι
ἦταν οὐκεχηλ
εἰς ἑορταν

ἴμαν ἸἩραι τελει
ἰωνέμι
ἰ. ἄς ἄ. Ι
ἴσαι Ι

40 INCERT. 13

σοι δ' ἔγω λέύκας τετιδωμοντ αἶγος
κάπτλεψω τοι

Invitation

Invitation for one
not all
to come to a feast

for Hera accomplishing
as long
as
I am alive

Sacrifice

To you I will pour wine
over flesh of a white goat

*From Sweet Bitter Love
Poems of Sappho*

Trans. by Willis Barnstone

MCKENZIE

THE DINOSAURS

Around us only iron and cement, the bare bones
of the soul. The shining, the precious
passed through the gates like a line of refugees.
I saw the vision of love drown in lakes of blood.
I beat the drum in vain on the corner,
spoke only wind to the wind.
The streets were all marked: Road closed.
Herds of monsters roam the earth,
the heavy guns storm the redoubts of the masses,
crush the philosophers, silence the poets.
The new dinosaurs drive out man
as man once drove out the dinosaurs.
But a ray of light must
have stayed with us from the precious morning
dreamt of by saints.
Perhaps, anyway, God excuses everything
but the poet who deserts his post—
 May the sun never see
that last turret strike its guns.

LIBERATION

My soul dances today, winged,
looking to alight on a branch
of light, to hear, see, say
whatever can be heard, seen, said.
It's good to know, and know well,
that the thing you are
was hatched out of darkness.

A. Christie

*From 30 years in the Rain
Poetry by Nikiforos Vrettakos
Trans. Robert Zaller & Lil. Bita*

TIME'S RETREAT

The sun cleft me today,
time fell back, my road to the horizon
opened again.

I will mount stone by stone
the peak I never scaled
because the snow, the wind,
the night all barred me.
And from there I'll see
the sun shine brighter
than I've ever seen before,
the man stand taller
than I've ever seen before.
I'll hear the river of life
descend with sweeter music
than I've ever heard before.

Meanwhile another stream of life
will leap from me dancing:
a red light like the dawn's—
a world of piping angels and their flutes.

82

ACCOMPLISHED

When I go, I'll know well
what I've left behind. On one hand,
a scatter of praise for the joy
I've felt at the world's wonders.
On the other my grief, a garland
for earth's trembling tumultus,
that heaves with its victims.

With Christina

*From 30 Years in the Rain
poetry by Nikiforos Vrettakos*

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*Trans. Robert Zaller and
Lili Bita*

THE FAMILY GATHERING

Here, where are you going, it's winter already.
You're soaked through. Your clothes must be tattered
with the years, and lightning's singed your hair—

Here, where the lantern shines, here
is home. More to the right—more to the left!
Cleave to the stone, sit by the hearth
as you used to, father sorting the mail,
mother with her cares, let me rest my hand
on your damp knees, let the fire burn
and don't be in such a hurry to die again.
The world is beautiful, and we've left
so much undone. We'll prune the trees,
prop up the dreams, make so many
worlds yet—

Let's close the doors now
and cry.

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THE OLIVE PICKER

Her ghost moved through the olive grove,
a ladder on its shoulder. I recognized
my mother from the hanging kerchief,
from the hands, from the brightness of her smile.
The time, the place, the familiar contour of the earth
all proclaimed her presence. I called out
confidently. She acknowledged me
with an airy nod. Then she rose on tiptoe
and began to ascend. She mounted the sky
as she was, with her ladder.

(Each year at this time she spreads sheeting under
the olives
and collects them. She comes to help the earth.)



*From 30 years in the Rain
Selected Poetry of Niki Foros Vrothakos*

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*Trans. Robert Callen and Hil
Bita*

TREES AND CONSCIENCE

Tomorrow, I say, or the day after, as long
as there's time to climb my hill and plant
those trees of mine on the terraces of creation.
So much sun I gathered and yet I couldn't
contain him in words, he the lordly, the eternal,
couldn't weave the scripture of his beauty,
a shining necklace for souls.
Those trees, that move like conscience
with the moving earth, will fix
the wandering sun in their course,
and justify my own.

(I see them already, strong, evergreen,
blossoming from top to bottom, stirring
in every direction, murmuringly offering
the fruits of their peace.)

Tomorrow, I say, or the day after, as long
as there's time to plant myself in those trees.

THE PEACE OF CREATION

The wind, sun, water, earth are woven
and silently weave
the branches of trees.

Dream, sorrow, light, life are woven
and silently weave
poetry within me.

Today, I feel something
stir precociously. This year
I will blossom before the trees.

From 30 years in the Rain
Poetry by Nikiforos Vrettakos
Trans. Robert Zaller and Lili B.itz



And their feet move
Rhythmically, as tender
feet of Cretan girls
danced once around an
altar of love, crushing
a circle in the soft
smooth flowering grass

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Cambridge Rindge and Latin

Poem: Sappho, A New Translation by Mary Barnard
University of California Press 1958



In Sparta

King Kleomenes didn't know, he hardly dared,
he just didn't know how to go about telling his mother
such a thing; to explain to her Ptolemy's demand
that she too would be sent to Egypt, that she would be
held a hostage there in order to guarantee their agreement;
such an inappropriate and embarrassing demand.
And so he was always about to say something, but he
always stopped himself. And he would make a start
at telling her, but each time he couldn't finish.

But this remarkable woman knew what was happening
(she'd already, after all, heard rumors to the effect),
so she encouraged him to say what was on his mind.
And when he did she laughed, saying of course she'd go.
She was even pleased that at her advanced age
she could still be of so much use to Sparta.

As for the humiliation, it mattered not at all to her.
It went without saying that the naive Lagides was
in no way capable of appreciating Spartan pride;
and as a result his demand could hardly
result in the humiliation of a remarkable
woman like her, she the mother of a Spartan king.



Now as he scanned across the Trojan plain,
Agamemnon marveled in horror at those fires,
a thousand fires blazing against the walls of Troy,
and the shrill of pipes and flutes and low roar of men.

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Poem: Iliad, Fagles, 10. 13-16