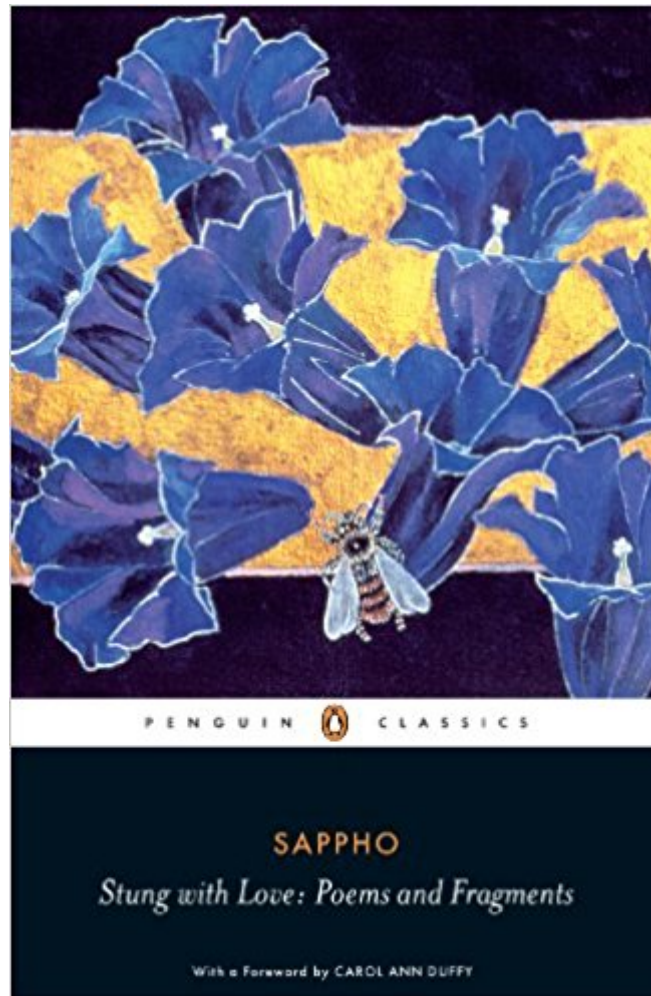




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Stung With Love: Poems And Fragments (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

More or less 150 years after Homer's Iliad, Sappho lived on the island of Lesbos, west off the coast of what is present Turkey. Little remains today of her writings, which are 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. This is a new translation of her surviving poetry. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Sappho was born sometime between 630 and 617 BCE and died around 570. Little of certainty is known about her life. A native of the island of Lesbos, she resided in its largest city, Mytilene. She composed songs for choral and solo performance on a wide range of themes but is best known for amatory songs focusing on adolescent females. She is renowned as the first woman poet in literary history, and her songs have been universally admired throughout antiquity and modernity. Aaron

Poochigian was born in 1973. He was a visiting professor of Classics at the University of Utah and is currently D.L. Jordon Fellow at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia. His poems and translations have appeared in a number of journals, including Chimaera, Classical Journal, and Unsplendid. Carol Ann Duffy's poetry has received every major award in Britain, including the Whitbread and the Forward prized for Mean Time and the T.S. Eliot Award for Rapture. In the United States, she has received the E.M. Forster and Lannan Awards. She has also written extensively for children and has edited many anthologies.

transaction was as planned and announcedThe Penguinbook is very well conceived as it gives an excellent description of the life of Sappho and the society she lived in.The "Further reading " is handy as are the comments which precede every poem or fragment thereof.

Wonderful set of poems, fantastic explanation, but the Kindle layout makes it virtually incomprehensible. The book is designed with poem on right hand page, explanation on left hand page. But Kindle does not preserve that layout, so you never know quite which poem is being discussed in the explanation.

As an amateur scholar of ancient Rome's greatest love-poet, Catullus, I have long looked forward to learning more about one of his major influences, Western antiquity's greatest love-poet, Sappho of Lesbos. I feel fortunate to have chosen as my first (sustained) encounter with Sappho and her work Aaron Poochigian's "Stung with Love: Poems and Fragments".The other 5-star reviews summarize well this book's many strengths: I too find Poochigian's notes wonderfully illuminating. And, his translations also give me pleasure.For example this fragment:" ... as for you girls, the gorgeous ones,There will be no change in my plans." (Oh, my!)Or, this one:"What farm girl, garbed in fashions from the farmAnd witless of the wayA hiked hem would displayHer ankles, captivates you with her charm?" (Meow!)Poochigian's prose is clear as a mountain spring, and just as refreshing in its lack of jargon or 'theory'.Highly recommended.

As Carol Ann Duffy, Britain's poet laureate says, "In these wonderful new translations by Aaron Poochigian we hear the voice of a great and enduring poet. Sappho." I couldn't agree more.I have reread Poochigian's translation several times and I find them more and more beautiful each time through. I was surprised and delighted by the rhythms and his choice of words. Many of the poems struck me as sensual and moving. Sappho must have had an extraordinarily beautiful mind, but I

never appreciated her poems in translation before now. If you don't read Ancient Greek, but you want to know what all the fuss is about, this is a very good translation to choose.

Preface: Carol Ann Duffy has a lot of insight into Sappho. It is worth buying the book just to read what she says.

The Introduction: Probably the weakest part of the whole book, but still filled with useful information and a good list of suggested reading. I would find this book very helpful if I had to write an essay on Sappho.

The Notes: I learned more about Sappho from Poochigian's notes than I did in the class I took on Greek Lyric Poetry. I don't usually read notes, but these held my attention.

The Translation: Poochigian's translation is accurate enough that you get a real sense of what the Greek says. I have read four of her poems in the original Greek; this translation captured both the sense and the beauty of the original. Poochigian is a wonderful poet. He made good choices metrically in this translation. Normally, I am not a fan of translations into verse, but this one has a beauty all its own. I will probably read it out loud many times in the years to come because I love the way the words sound. Although I don't agree with every choice of words he made, Poochigian has produced one of the most readable and skillful translations I have ever read. It is a work of art in itself and there is far more to admire than to forgive in this translation.

In another review I read for this book someone complained that this translation does not provide the original Greek on the facing page, but I did not find this to be a problem since it is very easy to look up the original Greek free on-line if you are interested in comparing it to the translation. I dare say that anyone who could do a meaningful comparison already owns Sappho in Greek.

Another review I read said that Poochigian uses absurdly long and obscure words. To be fair, however, I think that that reviewer should have mentioned that Poochigian always defines the obscure or difficult vocabulary he uses. Certainly, I did not have to look anything up.

This translation also gave me a sense of why Sappho has been loved and respected by many prominent figures- including Plato- since ancient times. Some of the translations were so beautiful I was moved to tears and wanted to read them over and over again. I have never experienced this with any other translation of Sappho.

As Carol Ann Duffy says at the end of her preface, "Aaron Poochigian's translations retain Sappho's intense sense of being singingly alive and of being on the side of youth, and loveliness, and love." I am glad I got the chance to read them.

Book Review--Julie Stoner (in "Able Muse", Winter 2009) What, no Sapphic stanzas? The foxy Sappho didn't always use them herself--no one-trick hedgehog, she--but where are the famous stanzas named in her honor? Aaron P.'s translation does not attempt them. No, instead he reaches for something bolder: namely, Sappho's other renowned inventions--*παῖδες* and

plectrum. Music is the essence of Sappho's magic, argues Aaron P., but her quantitative (length-based) meter changes when English gives it stress-based percussion. Witness this review, with its weakened line-ends. English must demote to a long-short combowhat, in Sappho's Greek, would be mainly long-long, bold and emphatic: - u - x - u u - u - -- u - x - u u - u - -- u - x - u u - u - - - u u - u

Aaron further grieves that, while ancient cultures instantly inferred from the Sapphic stanza this is something songlike, our own thinks this is prosy and awkward. Still, free-verse translations are not the answer: shunning formal elements Sappho valued, these "betray her poems by their very nature." (Thus he condemns them.) What to do, then? Aaron invokes the song-forms English-speakers know from their own tradition. This is something songlike, indeed. Prepare for aural enchantment:

Abanthis, please pick up your lyre,
Praise Gongyla. Your need to sing
Flutters about you in the air--
You gorgeous thing. --

"Abanthis, please pick up your lyre," stanza 1

lamb, standing in for the Sapphic template, dance through three tetrameter lines, one half-line. Rhyme preserves the emphasis Sappho gave her lyrical line-ends:

Because my tongue is shattered.
Gauzy Flame runs radiating under
My skin: all that I see is hazy,
My ears all thunder. Sweat comes quickly, and a shiver
Vibrates my frame. I am more fallow
Than grass, and suffer such a fever
As death should follow. --

"That fellow strikes me as god's double," stanzas 3 and 4

On the whole, I find his approach successful, though his frequent metrical substitutions paired with off-rhymes (stomach/come back, and even dalliance/battalions) sometimes raise my eyebrows. The choice of diction feels contemporary, with few exceptions. (Who, this day and age, says bedizened? Must we dance with the Webster's?)

Subtly bedizened Aphrodite, Deathless daughter of Zeus, Wile-weaver, I beg you, Empress, do not smite me
With anguish and fever [intervening text omitted by reviewer]

Come to me now. Drive off this brutal
Distress. Accomplish what my pride
Demands. Come, please, and in this battle
Stand at my side. --

"Subtly bedizened Aphrodite," stanzas 1 and 7

Wonder how these excerpts have fared with others? Here's the way Anne Carson presents them ('02, Knopf) in *If Not, Winter*, although I'll skip the Greek she puts facing:

I bid you sing of Gongyla,
Abanthis, taking up your lyre as (now again) longing floats around you,
you beauty --

Sappho Fragment 22, first complete stanza plus two words

***no: tongue breaks and thin fire is racing under skin
and in eyes no sight and drumming fills ears
and cold sweat holds me and shaking grips me all,
greener than grass I am and dead--or almost I seem to me. --

Sappho Fragment 31, stanzas 3 and 4

***Deathless Aphrodite of the spangled mind, child of Zeus, who twists lures, I beg you
do not break with hard pains, O lady, my heart [intervening text omitted by reviewer]

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

Sappho Fragment 1, stanzas 1 and 7

Anne's concern for simply transmitting extant text is why her lines have opposing

Greek, and why so many pages contain such random fragments as these three:]]right here]](now again))]]for] --Sappho Fragment 83 (entire)makeup bag --Sappho Fragment 179 (entire)celery --Sappho Fragment 191 (entire)Aaron's goal, instead, is to give the reader pleasure. String too small to be saved is absent. Further, he's reorganized songs by topic, not just by number. Notes (which are detailed, and at times, amusing) face each fragment, rather than lurk as endnotes. Though without the numbers, it's hard to find old favorite pieces,Aaron P.'s achievement in this translation stands. The graceful music of Sappho's pÃfÆ'Ã Â§ctis, plucked by rhyme as if by a skillful plectrum, drowns my objections. "Stung with Love", the subtitle Aaron gives his new translation, comes from the thrilling piece that German scholars found in '04. Another reason to buy this.

LOVED IT!!!!!!

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