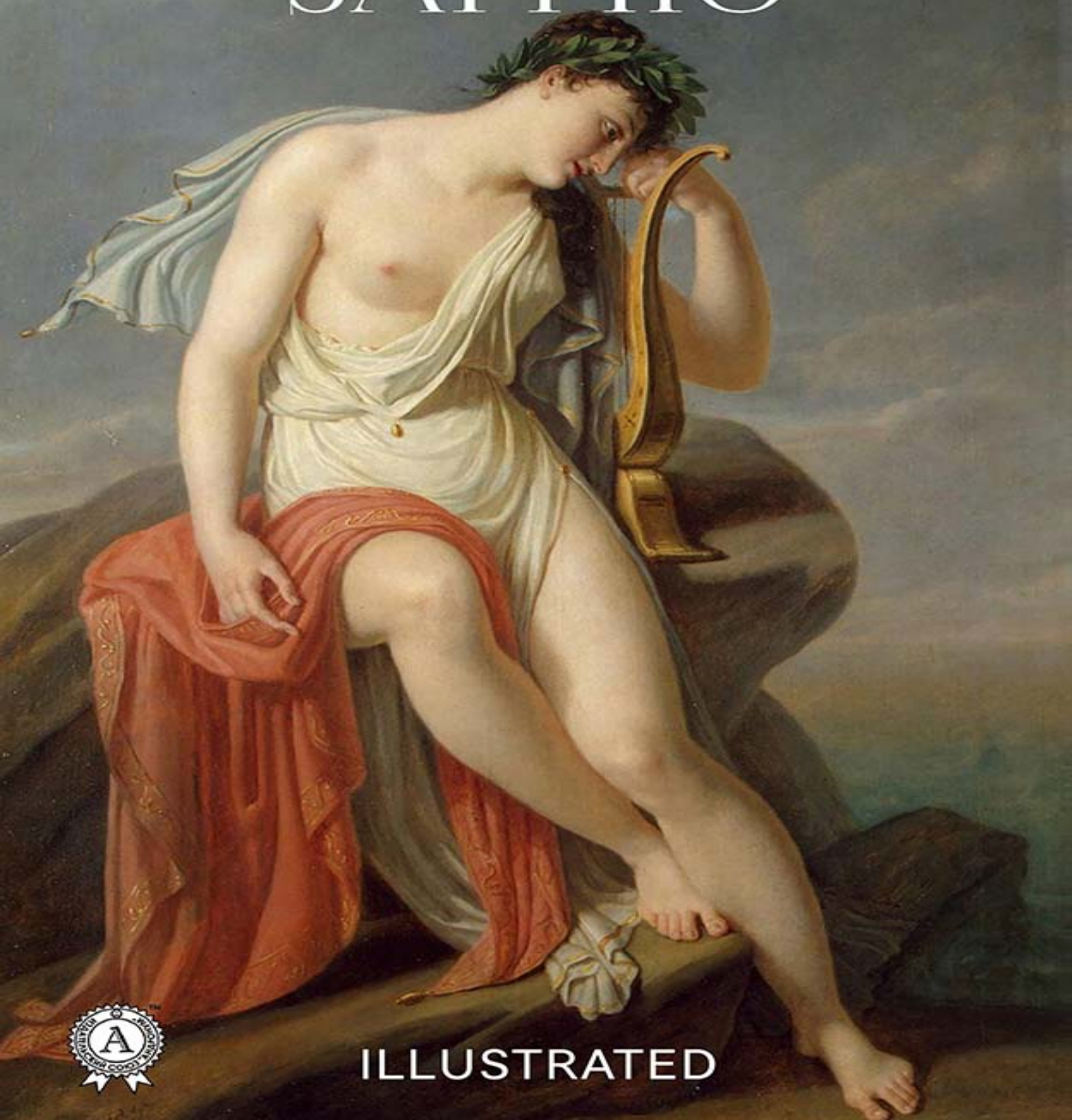


# THE COMPLETE POEMS OF SAPPHO



ILLUSTRATED

# **THE COMPLETE POEMS OF SAPPHO**

**(illustrated)**

*Sappho is widely recognized as one of the great poets of world literature, an author whose works have caused her readers to repeat in many different forms Strabo's amazed epithet when he wrote that she could only be called "a marvel."*

*The reception of Sappho's poetry even through the twentieth century offers a case study of the conflicts induced by the sexual preferences she seemingly alludes to in her verse.*

*Little is known with certainty about the life of Sappho, or Psappha in her native Aeolic dialect. She was born probably about 620 B.C. to an aristocratic family on the island of Lesbos during a great cultural flowering in the area.*

*In antiquity Sappho was regularly counted among the greatest of poets and was often referred to as "the Poetess," just as Homer was called "the Poet."*

# Contents

## SAPPHICS

THE MUSES

MUSAGETES

LOVE'S BANQUET

MOON AND STARS

ODE TO ANACTORIA

THE ROSE

ODE TO APHRODITE

SUMMER

THE GARDEN OF THE NYMPHS

APHRODITE'S DOVES

ANACREON'S SONG

THE DAUGHTER OF CYPRUS

THE DISTAFF

THE SLEEP WIND

THE REPROACH

LONG AGO

## EPITHALAMIA THRENODES

HYMENAIOS

BRIDAL SONG

EPITHALAMIUM

PIERIA'S ROSE

LAMENT FOR ADONIS

THE STRICKEN FLOWER

DEATH

PERSEPHONE

## PARTHENEIA DIDAKTIKA

MAIDENHOOD

EVER MAIDEN

CLĒIS

ASPIRATION

HERO, OF GYARA

COURAGE  
THE BOAST OF ARES  
GOLD  
GNOMICS  
PRIDE  
LETO AND NIOBE  
THE DYE  
EROTIKA DITHYRAMBS  
HYMN TO PAPHIA  
EROS  
PASSION  
APHRODITE'S PRAISE  
THE FIRST KISS  
ODE TO ATTHIS  
COMPARISON  
THE SACRIFICE  
LEDA  
AMŒBEUM: ALCÆUS AND SAPPHO  
THE LOVE OF SELENE  
THE CRETAN DANCE  
TO ALCÆUS  
HYPORCHEME  
LARICHUS  
SPRING  
GIRL FRIENDS  
PRELUDE  
ANDROMEDA  
EUNEICA  
GORGON  
MNASIDICA  
TELESIPPA  
GYRINNO  
MEGARA  
ERINNA  
GONGYLA  
DAMOPHYLA

ANAGORA

PHAON

PHILOMEL

GOLDEN PULSE

THE SWALLOW

TIDINGS

HESPERUS

DAWN

THE FAREWELL

DARK-EYED SLEEP

THE CLIFF OF LEUCAS

EPIGRAMS

THE DUST OF TIMAS

THE PRIESTESS OF ARTEMIS

PELAGON

An Interpretative Rendition into English  
BY JOHN MYERS O'HARA

*Who shall strike the wax of mystery from those priceless amphoræ, and give to the unsophisticated nostrils of the average reader the ravishing bouquet of wine pressed in a garden in Mitylene, twenty-five centuries ago?*

-MAURICE THOMPSON.

*Then to me so lying awake a vision  
Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,  
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips; and I, too,  
Full of the vision,*

*Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,  
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled  
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters;  
Saw the reluctant*

*Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew her,  
Looking always, looking with necks reverted  
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills whereunder  
Shone Mitylene.*

- SWINBURNE.

Ω θεός, πῶς ἄρα Κύπρις, ἥ τίς μέρος  
τοῦδε ξυλήψατο

- SOPHOCLES.

# SAPPHICS

## THE MUSES



Hither now, O Muses, leaving the golden  
House of God unseen in the azure spaces,  
Come and breathe on bosom and brow and kindle  
Song like the sunglow;

Come and lift my shaken soul to the sacred  
Shadow cast by Helicon's rustling forests;  
Sweep on wings of flame from the middle ether,  
Seize and uplift me;

Thrill my heart that throbs with unwonted fervor,  
Chasten mouth and throat with immortal kisses,  
Till I yield on maddening heights the very  
Breath of my body.

## MUSAGETES

Come with Musagetes, ye Hours and Graces,  
Dance around the team of swans that attend him  
Up Parnassian heights, to his holy temple  
High on the hill-top;



Come, ye Muses, too, from the shades of Pindus,  
Let your songs, that echo on winds of rapture,  
Wake the lyre he tunes to the sweet inspiring  
Sound of your voices.

## **LOVE'S BANQUET**

If Panormus, Cyprus or Paphos hold thee,  
Either home of Gods or the island temple,  
Hark again and come at my invocation,  
Goddess benefic;

Come thou, foam-born Kypris, and pour in dainty  
Cups of amber gold thy delicate nectar,  
Subtly mixed with fire that will swiftly kindle  
Love in our bosoms;

Thus the bowl ambrosial was stirred in Paphos  
For the feast, and taking the burnished ladle,  
Hermes poured the wine for the Gods who lifted  
Reverent beakers;



High they held their goblets and made libation,  
Spilling wine as pledge to the Fates and Hades  
Quaffing deep and binding their hearts to Eros,  
Lauding thy servant.

So to me and my Lesbians round me gathered,  
Each made mine, an amphor of love long tasted,  
Bid us drink, who sigh for thy thrill ecstatic,  
Passion's full goblet;

Grant me this, O Kypris, and on thy altar  
Dawn will see a goat of the breed of Naxos,  
Snowy doves from Cos and the drip of rarest  
Lesbian vintage;