

Egyptian Love Poetry

The Beginning of the Song That Diverts the Heart (Girl) How beautiful is your beloved, the one adored of your heart, when she has returned from the meadow! My beloved, my darling, my heart longs for your love— all that you created! I say to you: See what happened! I came ready to trap birds, my snare in one hand, my cage in the other, together with my mat. All the birds of the land Punt have descended on Egypt, anointed with myrrh. The first to come takes my bait. Its fragrance comes from Punt, its claws full of balm. My heart desires you. Let us release it together. I am with you, I alone, to let you hear the sound of my call, for my lovely myrrh-anointed one. You are here with me, as I set the snare. Going to the field is pleasant (indeed) for one who loves it.

Egyptian Love Poetry (cont)

I wish I were her Nubian maid (Boy) I wish I were her Nubian maid, her attendant in secret, as she brings her a bowl of mandragoras. It is in her hand, while she gives pleasure. In other words: she would grant me the hue of her body. (Boy) I wish I were the laundryman of my beloved's clothes, for even just a month! I would be strengthened by grasping the garments that touch her body. For I would be washing out the moringa oils that are in her kerchief. Then I'd rub my body with her castoff garments, and she . . . O how would I be in joy and delight, My body vigorous! (Boy) I wish I were her little signet ring, the keeper of her finger! I would see her love each and every day, And I would steal her heart.

Egyptian Love Poetry (cont)

I passed close by his house (Girl) I passed close by his house, and found his door ajar. My beloved was standing beside his mother, and with him all his brothers and sisters. Love of him captures the heart of all who walk along the way— a precious youth without peer, a lover excellent of character! He gazed at me when I passed by, but I must exult alone. How joyfully does my heart rejoice, my beloved, since I first saw you! If only mother knew my heart she would go inside for a while. O Golden One, put that in her heart! Then I could hurry to my beloved and kiss him in front of everyone, and not be ashamed because of anyone. I would be happy to have them see that you know me, and would hold festival to my Goddess. My heart leaps up to go forth that I may gaze on my beloved. How lovely it is to pass by!

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Egyptian Love Poetry (cont)

Am I not here with you? Then why have you set your heart to leave? Why don't you embrace me? Has my deed come back upon me? If you seek to caress my thighs. Is it because you are thinking of food that you would go away? Or because you are a slave to your belly? Is it because you care about clothes? Well, I have a bedsheet! Is it because you are hungry that you would leave? Then take my breasts that their gift may flow forth to you. Better a day in the embrace of my beloved than thousands on thousands anywhere else!

Sappho

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) left her fine husband behind and went sailing to Troy. Not for her children nor her dear parents had she a thought, nor led her astray for I lightly reminded me now of Anaktoria who is gone. I would rather see her lovely step and the motion of light on her face than chariots of Lydians or ranks of foot soldiers in arms.

Sappho (cont)

Poem 31 He seems to me equal to gods that man whoever he is who opposite you sits and listen close to your sweet speaking and lovely laughing-- oh it puts the heart in my chest on wings for when I look at you, even a moment, no speaking is left in me no tongue breaks and thin fire is racing under skin and in eyes no sight and drumming fills ears and cold sweat holds me shaking grips me all, greener than grass I am dead--or almost I seem to me. But all is to be dared, because even a person of poverty

Fragment 51 I don't know what to do two states of mind in me

Fragment 105A as the sweet apple reddens on a high branch high on the highest branch and the applepickers forgot--no, not forgot: were unable to reach

Fragment 105B like the hyacinth in the mountains that shepherd men with their feet trample down and on the ground the purple flower

Poem 168B Moon has set and Pleiades: middle night, the hour goes by, alone I lie.

Catullus

Poem 5 Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love, and let us judge all the rumors of the old men to be worth just one penny! The suns are able to fall and rise: When that brief light has fallen for us, we must sleep a never ending night. Give me a thousand kisses, then another hundred, then another thousand, then a second hundred, then yet another thousand more, then another hundred. Then, when we have made many thousands, we will mix them all up so that we don't know, and so that no one can be jealous of us when he finds out how many kisses we have shared.

Catullus (cont)

Poem 11 Furius and Aurelius, companions of Catullus, whether he penetrates the furthest of the Indies, or the shore where the beating of the eastern waves resonates far and wide, whether he penetrates into the Hyrcanos or the gentle Arabs, or the arrow-carrying Parthians, or the seven fold Nile which colors the plains, whether he will go across the great Alps, intending to see the great monument to Caesar, or the Gallic Rhine or the horribly distant Britain, you who are prepared to try all these things, and whatever else the will of the gods will bring, announce to my girl a few nasty words. Let her live and let her flourish with her adulterers, whom having embraced 300 of them at the same time, she owns and keeps them, truly loving none of them, but repeatedly breaking the groins of all of them; nor, let her no longer look back for my love as before, which by her fault, has fallen, just like the farthest flower of the field has been killed by a passing plow.

Catullus (cont)

Poem 51 He seems to me the equal of a god, he seems, if that may be, the gods' superior who sits face to face with you and again and again watches and hears you sweetly laughing, an experience which robs me poor wretch, of all my senses; for the moment I set eyes on you, Lesbia, there remains not a whisper of voice on my lips, but my tongue is paralyzed, a subtle flame courses through my limbs, with sound self-caused my two ears ring, and my eyes are covered in darkness. Idleness, Catullus, is your trouble; idleness is what delights you and moves you to passion; idleness has proved ere now the ruin of kings and prosperous cities.

Poem 93 I am not really keen, Caesar, to wish to pander to you, Nor to know whether you are a hero or a villain.

Poem 101 Through many peoples and many seas have I travelled to thee, brother, and these wretched rites of death I bring a last gift but can speak only to ashes Since Fortune has taken you from me Poor brother! stolen you away from me leaving me only ancient custom to honour you as it has been from generation to generation Take from my hands these sad gifts covered in tears Now and forever, brother, Hail and farewell.

Chinese Classical Poetry

1. *Fishhawk* The fishhawks sing gwan gwan on sandbars of the stream. Gentle maiden, pure and fair, fit pair for a prince. Watercress grows here and there, right and left we gather it. Gentle maiden, pure and fair, wanted waking and asleep. Wanting, sought her, had her not, waking, sleeping, thought of her, on and on he thought of her, he tossed from one side to another. Watercress grows here and there, right and left we pull it. Gentle maiden, pure and fair, with harps we bring her company. Watercress grows here and there, right and left we pick it out. Gentle maiden, pure and fair, with bells and drums do her delight.

Chinese Classical Poetry (cont)

VI. *Peach Tree Soft and Tender* Peach tree soft and tender, how your blossoms glow! The bride is going to her home, she well befits this house. Peach tree soft and tender, plump, the ripening fruit. The bride is going to her home, she well befits this house. Peach tree soft and tender, its leaves spread thick and full. The bride is going to her home, she well befits these folk

XX. *Plums Are Falling* Plums are falling, seven are the fruits; many men want me, let me have a fine one. Plums are falling, three are the fruits; many men want me, let me have a steady one. Plums are falling, catch them in the basket; many men want me, let me be bride of one.

