Make Your Own Sappho Fragment Guidelines

Have you ever wanted to see if you could mimic the lost voice of Sappho? Now’s your chance! For the outreach event, we are asking students attending the event to participate ahead of time in order to make the experience more engaging and exciting! Using the Survey Monkey link sent out via e-mail, submit your own imitation Sappho fragment.

Guidelines

1. Review real Sappho fragments attached at the end of this document (pages 2-5). These provide translations of Sappho in verse (done by Anne Carson) and prose (done by David A. Campbell). Use these to get an idea of the themes, style, and word choices used by Sappho in her poetry.

2. Using the list of key words and themes below, construct a Sappho fragment that uses at least one of the key terms for your imitative Sappho fragment:

   - Aphrodite/Cypris
   - apples/sweet apples/apple-gatherers
   - Anactoria
   - Helen [of Troy]
   - holy/holiness
   - the gods/blessed gods/the Muses/goddess
   - love[liness]/tender[ness]/long[ing]
   - overcome/overcame
   - violets/robes/myrrh/flowery/flowers/wreath
   - holy song/the lyre

3. The fragment should be no more than 2-3 lines long (approximately 20 words)

4. Be creative! Use dashes, ellipses, mimic editorial conventions. Try your best to make a Sappho fragment that would convince others it is an authentic Sappho papyrus.

5. Submissions must be received by November 27th at 11:59 pm.

Outcome

After we have gone through the submissions, 7 fragments will be chosen to be displayed at the event along with an authentic Sappho fragment. Attendees at the event will then have an opportunity to vote on which fragment is the real Sappho fragment. If the fragment with the most votes is not a real Sappho fragment, the writer of the imitation will receive a prize!
Example Sappho Fragments (translated by Anne Carson)

Fragment 1

Deathless Aphrodite of the spangled mind,  
child of Zeus, who twists lures, I beg you  
do not break with hard pain,  
    O lady, my heart

but come here if ever before  
you caught my voice far off  
and listening left your father’s  
golden house and came,

yoking your car. And fine birds brought you,  
quick sparrows over the black earth  
whipping their wings down the sky  
through midair—

they arrived. But you, O blessed one,  
smiled in your deathless face  
and asked what (now again) I have suffered and why  
    (now again) I am calling out

And what I want to happen most of all  
in my crazy heart. Whom should I persuade (now again)  
to lead you back into her love? Who, O  
    Sappho, is wronging you?

For if she flees, soon she will pursue.  
If she refuses gifts, rather will she give them.  
If she does not love, soon she will love  
    Even unwilling.

Come to me now: loose me from hard  
care and all my heart longs  
to accomplish, accomplish. You  
    be my ally.
Fragment 2

] here to me from Krete to this holy temple
where is your graceful grove
of apple trees and altars smoking
with frankincense.

And in it cold water makes a clear sound through
apple branches and with roses the whole place
is shadowed and down from radiant-shaking leaves
sleep comes dropping.

And in it a horse meadow has come into bloom
with spring flowers and breezes
like honey are blowing
[

In this place you Kypris taking up
in gold cups delicately
nectar mingled with festivities:
pour.
Fragment 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, no—led her astray

...for
...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 footsoldiers in arms.

...not possible to happen...to pray for a share...

...toward...

...out of the unexpected.
Example Sappho Fragments (translated by David A. Campbell)

Fragment 1

Ornate-throned immortal Aphrodite, wile-weaving daughter of Zeus, I entreat you: do not overpower my heart, mistress, with ache and anguish, but come here, if ever in the past you heard my voice from afar and acquiesced and came, leaving your father’s golden house, with chariot yoked: beautiful swift sparrows whirring fast-beating wings brought you above the dark earth down from heaven through the mid-air, and soon they arrived; and you, blessed one, with a smile on your immortal face asked what was the matter with me this time and why I was calling this time and what in my maddened heart I most wished to happen for myself: ‘Whom am I to persuade this time to lead you back to her love? Who wrongs you, Sappho? If she runs away, soon she shall pursue; if she does not accept gifts, why, she shall give them instead; and if she does not love, soon she shall love even against her will.’ Come to me now again and deliver me from oppressive anxieties; fulfil all the my heart longs to fulfil, and you yourself be my fellow-fighter.

Fragment 2

Hither to me from Crete to this holy temple, where if your delightful grove of apple-trees, and altars smoking with incense; therein cold water babbles through apple-branches, and the whole place is shadowed by roses, and from the shimmering leaves the sleep of enchantment comes down; therein too a meadow, where horses graze, blossoms with spring flowers, and the winds blow gently …; there, Cypris, take … and pour gracefully into golden cups nectar that is mingled with our festivities.

Fragment 16

Some say a host of cavalry, others of infantry, and others ships, is the most beautiful thing on the black earth, but I say it is whatsoever a person loves. It is perfectly easy to make this understood by everyone: for she who far surpassed mankind in beauty, Helen, left her most noble husband and went sailing off to Troy with no thought at all for her child or dear parents, but (love) led her astray… lightly… (and she?) has reminded me now of Anactoria who is not here; I would rather see her lovely walk and the bright sparkle of her face than the Lydians’ chariots and armed infantry… impossible to happen… mankind… but to pray to share… unexpectedly.