The Norton Anthology of World Literature

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“Son of Laërtès and the gods of old, Odysseus, master of land ways and sea ways, command yourself. Call off this battle now, or Zeus who views the wide world may be angry.”

He yielded to her, and his heart was glad. Both parties later swore to terms of peace set by their arbiter, Athena, daughter of Zeus who bears the stormcloud as a shield—though still she kept the form and voice of Mentor.

SAPPHO OF LESBOS
born ca. 630 B.C.

About Sappho’s life we know very little: she was born about 630 B.C. on the fertile island of Lesbos off the coast of Asia Minor and spent most of her life there; she was married and had a daughter. Her lyric poems (poems sung to the accompaniment of the lyre) were so admired in the ancient world that a later poet called her the tenth Muse. In the third century B.C. scholars at the great library in Alexandria arranged her poems in nine books, of which the first contained more than a thousand lines. But what we have now is a pitiful remnant: one (or possibly two) complete, short poems, and a collection of quotations from her work by ancient writers, supplemented by bits and pieces written on ancient scraps of papyrus found in excavations in Egypt. Yet these remnants fully justify the enthusiasm of the ancient critics; Sappho’s poems (insofar as we can guess at their nature from the fragments) give us the most vivid evocation of the joys and sorrows of love in all Greek literature.

Her themes are those of a Greek woman’s world—girlhood, marriage, and love, especially the love of young women for each other and the poignancy of their parting as they leave to assume the responsibilities of a wife. About the social context of these songs we can only guess; all that can be said is that they reflect a world in which women, at least women of the aristocracy, lived an intense communal life of their own, one of female occasions, functions, and festivities, in which their young passionate natures were fully engaged with each other; to most of them, presumably, this was a stage preliminary to their later career in that world as wife and mother.

The first two poems printed here were quoted in their entirety by ancient critics (though it is possible that there was another stanza at the end of the second); their text is not a problem. But the important recent additions to our knowledge of Sappho’s poetry, the pieces of ancient books found in Egypt, are difficult to read and usually full of gaps. Our third selection, in fact, comes from the municipal rubbish heap of the Egyptian village Oxyrhyncus. Most of the gaps in the text are due to holes or tears in the papyrus and can easily be filled in from our knowledge of Sappho’s dialect and the strict meter in which she wrote, but the end of the third stanza and the whole of the fourth are imaginative reconstructions by the translator. The papyrus, for instance, tells us only that someone or something led Helen astray; Lattimore’s “Queen of Cyprus” (the love goddess, Aphrodite) may well be right but is not certain. In the next stanza all that we have is part of a word that means something like “flexible” (Lattimore’s “hearts that can be persuaded”); an adverb, lightly; and “remembering Anaktoria who is not here.” As a matter of fact we don’t have that all-important not, but the sense demands it. Fortunately, the final stanza, with its telling echo of the opening theme, is almost intact.

[LYRICS]

[Throned in splendor, deathless, O Aphrodite]¹

Throned in splendor, deathless, O Aphrodite,² child of Zeus, charm-fishioner, I entreat you not with griefs and bitternesses to break my spirit, O goddess:

standing by me rather, if once before now far away you heard, when I called upon you, left your father's dwelling place and descended, yoking the golden chariot to sparrows,³ who fairly drew you down in speed aslant the black world, the bright air trembling at the heart to the pulse of countless fluttering wingbeats.

Swiftly then they came, and you, blessed lady, smiling on me out of immortal beauty, asked me what affliction was on me, why I called thus upon you,

what beyond all else I would have befall my tortured heart: "Whom then would you have Persuasion force to serve desire in your heart? Who is it, Sappho, that hurt you?"

Though she now escape, she soon will follow; though she take not gifts from you, she will give them: though she love not, yet she will surely love you even unwilling."

In such guise come even again and set me free from doubt and sorrow; accomplish all those

1. All selections translated by Richmond Lattimore. 2. A prayer to the goddess of love, Aphrodite. The translator has skillfully reproduced the metrical form of the Greek, the "Sapphic" stanza. 3. Aphrodite's sacred birds.
things my heart desires to be done; appear and stand at my shoulder.

[Like the very gods in my sight is he]

Like the very gods in my sight is he who sits where he can look in your eyes, who listens close to you, to hear the soft voice, its sweetness murmur in love and laughter, all for him. But it breaks my spirit; underneath my breast all the heart is shaken. Let me only glance where you are, the voice dies, I can say nothing,

but my lips are stricken to silence, underneath my skin the tenuous flame suffuses; nothing shows in front of my eyes, my ears are muted in thunder.

And the sweat breaks running upon me, fever shakes my body, paler I turn than grass is; I can feel that I have been changed, I feel that death has come near me.

[Some there are who say that the fairest thing seen]

Some there are who say that the fairest thing seen on the black earth is an array of horsemen; some, men marching; some would say ships; but I say she whom one loves best is the loveliest. Light were the work to make this plain to all, since she, who surpassed in beauty all mortality, Helen, once forsaking her lordly husband,

fled away to Troy—land across the water. Not the thought of child nor beloved parents was remembered, after the Queen of Cyprus won her at first sight.

Since young brides have hearts that can be persuaded easily, light things, palpitant to passion as am I, remembering Anaktória who has gone from me

1. Aphrodite.
and whose lovely walk and the shining pallor of her face I would rather see before my eyes than Lydia's chariots in all their glory armored for battle.

Aeschylus

524?-456 B.C.

The earliest documents in the history of the Western theater are the seven plays of Aeschylus that have come down to us through the more than twenty-four hundred years since his death. When he produced his first play in the opening years of the fifth century B.C., the performance that we know as drama was still less than half a century old, still open to innovation—and Aeschylus, in fact, made such significant contributions to its development that he has been called "the creator of tragedy."

The origins of the theatrical contests in Athens are obscure; they were a puzzle even for Aristotle, who in the fourth century B.C. wrote a famous treatise on tragedy. All that we know for certain is that the drama began as a religious celebration that took the form of song and dance.

Such ceremonies are of course to be found in the communal life of many early cultures, but it was in Athens, and in Athens alone, that the ceremony gave rise to what we know as tragedy and comedy and produced dramatic masterpieces that are still admired, read, and performed.

At some time in the late sixth century B.C. the Athenians converted what seems to have been a rural celebration of Dionysus, a vegetation deity especially associated with the vine, into an annual city festival at which dancing choruses, competing for prizes, sang hymns of praise to the god. It was from this choral performance that tragedy and comedy developed. Some unknown innovator (his name was probably Thespis) combined the choral song with the speech of a masked actor, who, playing a god or hero, engaged the chorus in dialogue. It was Aeschylus who added a second actor and so created the possibility of conflict and the prototype of the drama as we know it.

After the defeat of the Persian invaders (480-479 B.C.), as Athens with its fleets and empire moved toward supremacy in the Greek world, this spring festival became a splendid occasion. The Dionysia, as it was now called, lasted for four or five days, during which public business (except in emergencies) was suspended and prisoners were released on bail for the duration of the festival. In an open-air theater that could seat seventeen thousand spectators, tragic and comic poets competed for the prizes offered by the city. Poets in each genre had been selected by the magistrates for the year. On each of three days of the festival, a tragic poet presented three tragedies and a satyr play (a burlesque on a mythic theme), and a comic poet produced one comedy.

The three tragedies could deal with quite separate stories or, as in the case of Aeschylus's Oresteia, with the successive stages of one extended action. By the time this trilogy was produced (458 B.C.) the number of actors had been raised to three; the spoken part of the performance became steadily more important. In the Oresteia an equilibrium between the two elements of the performance has been established. The actors, with their speeches, create the dramatic situation and its movement, the plot; the chorus, while contributing to dramatic suspense and illusion, ranges free of the immediate situation in its odes, which extend and amplify the significance of the action.
Gaius Valerius Catullus, born in the northern Italian city of Verona, lived out his short life in the last violent century of the Roman republic, but his poetry gives little hint that it was produced amid political upheaval. The 116 poems by him that have come down to us present a rich variety: imitations of Greek poets, long poems on Greek mythological themes, scurrilous personal attacks on contemporary politicians and private individuals, lighthearted verses designed to amuse his friends, and a magnificent marriage hymn. He also wrote a series of poems about his love affair with a Roman woman he calls Lesbia but who may have been Clodia, the enchanting but complex sister of one of Rome's most violent aristocrats turned political gangster. These poems, from which our selection is taken, present all the phases of the liaison, from the unalloyed happiness of the first encounters through doubt and hesitation to despair and virulent accusation, ending in heartbroken resignation to the bitter fact of Lesbia's betrayal.

Their tone ranges from the heights of joy at passionate love requited through the torments of simultaneous love and hate to the depths of morbid self-pity. Their direct and simple language seems to give readers immediate access to the experience of desire and betrayal and the feelings it arouses. In one sense, this impression is surely correct. But the poems are exceedingly complex. The passion is joined with considerable learning, and it is one of the remarkable characteristics of Catullus's poetry that strong emotion and sophistication are not at odds with each other but complementary. Poem 51, for example, powerfully describes the physical symptoms of love in the speaker; it is a translation into Latin of one of Sappho's most passionate Greek lyrics. Or consider poem 2, on Lesbia's pet sparrow: scholars have long suspected, probably correctly, an obscene double meaning in this pet.

There are further complexities. Many of the poems are addressed to someone—Lesbia, Catullus himself, or some third party—and the reader is a privileged audience to this communication. Who the addressee is and the relation between that person and the poet subtly shape the reader's view of the situation described in each poem. In poem 83, for example, when Lesbia seems to abuse "Catullus" in the presence of her husband, the speaker interprets this as a sign of love to which the husband is obtusely oblivious. Perhaps. Or is this a wishful interpretation? Who really is the dupe? Does the reader ever get access to Lesbia's feelings? Catullus's poetry is not simply a spontaneous outpouring of emotion, but a carefully meditated portrayal of a love affair in which the poet's persona as well as his mistress is a character; and that gives depth and range to its passion.

The best general introduction to Catullus, with essential background and perceptive discussion of the poetry, is Charles Martin, Catullus (1992). For more detailed but highly readable discussions of contemporary culture and society, Clodia and her circle, and the poems' relation to this context, T. P. Wiseman, Catullus and His World: A Reappraisal (1985), is excellent. Two older books are still valuable: A. L. Wheeler, Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry (1934), and E. A. Havelock, The Lyric Genius of Catullus (1964). The first puts Catullus in his cultural and literary context; the second translates selected poems and offers a sensitive appreciation of them. Kenneth Quinn, Catullus: An Interpretation (1973), gives an interesting if idiosyncratic view of the poetry. For a depiction of Catullus as well as Lesbia/Clodia and her circle in a carefully researched historical detective novel, see Steven Saylor, The Venus Throw (1995).

**PRONOUNCING GLOSSARY**

The following list uses common English syllables and stress accents to provide rough equivalents of selected words whose pronunciation may be unfamiliar to the general reader.
Lesbia, let us live only for loving,
and let us value at a single penny
all the loose flap of senile busybodies!
Suns when they set are capable of rising,
but at the setting of our own brief light
night is one sleep from which we never waken.
Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred,
another thousand next, another hundred,
a thousand without pause & then a hundred,
until when we have run up our thousands
we will cry bankrupt, hiding our assets
from ourselves & any who would harm us,
knowing the volume of our trade in kisses.

Sparrow, you darling pet of my beloved,
which she caresses, presses to her body
or teases with the tip of one sly finger
until you peck at it in tiny outrage!
—for there are times when my desired, shining
lady is moved to turn to you for comfort,
to find (as I imagine) ease for ardor,
solace, a little respite from her sorrow—
if I could only play with you as she does,
and be relieved of my tormenting passion!

To me that man seems like a god in heaven,
seems—may I say it?—greater than all gods are,
who sits by you & without interruption
watches you, listens

1. All selections translated by Charles Martin. The order of the poems in this anthology is the logical one
determined by the progress of Catullus’s love affair with Lesbia. The numbers, however, refer to the order
of the poems in the manuscripts. 2. A translation into Latin of Sappho’s Greek poem Like the very gods
in my sight is he (see above, p. 532), that reproduces Sappho’s metrical scheme (imitated in the English
translation).
to your light laughter, which casts such confusion
onto my senses, Lesbia, that when I
gaze at you merely, all of my well-chosen
words are forgotten.

as my tongue thickens & a subtle fire
runs through my body while my ears are deafened
by their own ringing & at once my eyes are
covered in darkness!

Leisure, Catullus. More than just a nuisance,
leisure: you riot, overmuch enthusing.
Fabulous cities & their sometime kings have
died of such leisure.

Many find Quintia stunning. I find her attractive:
tall, "regal," fair in complexion—these points are granted.
But stunning? No, I deny it: the woman is scarcely venerious,
there's no spice at all in all the length of her body!
Now Lesbia is stunning, for Lesbia's beauty is total:
and by that sum all other women are diminished.

No other woman can truthfully say she was cherished
as much as Lesbia was when I was her lover.
Never, in any such bond, was fidelity greater
than mine, in my love for you, ever discovered.

Darling, we'll both have equal shares in the sweet love you offer,
and it will endure forever—you assure me.
O heaven, see to it that she can truly keep this promise,
that it came from her heart & was sincerely given,
so that we may spend the rest of our days in this lifelong
union, this undying compact of holy friendship.

3. All...forgotten is a guess at the sense of a line missing in the original.
4. The final stanza may not belong to this poem; if it does, it is Catullus's addition to his Sapphic original.
Lesbia hurls abuse at me in front of her husband:
that fatuous person finds it highly amusing!
Nothing gets through to you, jackass—for silence would signal
that she'd been cured of me, but her barking & bitching
show that not only [have] I not been forgotten,
—but that this burns her: and so she rants & rages.

My woman says there is no one whom she'd rather marry
than me, not even Jupiter,⁶ if he came courting.
That's what she says—but what a woman says to a passionate lover
ought to be scribbled on wind, on running water.

You used to say that you wished to know only Catullus,
Lesbia, and wouldn't take even Jove before me!
I didn't regard you just as my mistress then: I cherished you
as a father does his sons or his daughters' husbands.
Now that I know you, I burn for you even more fiercely,
though I regard you as almost utterly worthless.
How can that be, you ask? It's because such cruelty forces
lust to assume the shrunken place of affection.

I hate & love. And if you should ask how I can do both,
I couldn't say; but I feel it, and it shivers me.

To such a state have I been brought by your mischief, my Lesbia,
and so completely ruined by my devotion,
that I couldn't think kindly of you if you did the best only,
nor cease to love, even if you should do—everything.

⁵. Editorial substitution for the translator's haven't.
⁶. Jupiter (or Jove) was the supreme god of the
Roman pantheon, corresponding to the Greek Zeus.
Wretched Catullus! You have to stop this nonsense, admit that what you see has ended is over!
Once there were days which shone for you with rare brightness, when you would follow wherever your lady led you, the one we once loved as we will love no other; there was no end in those days to our pleasures, when what you wished for was what she also wanted.
Yes, there were days which shone for you with rare brightness. Now she no longer wishes; you mustn't want it, you've got to stop chasing her now—cut your losses, harden your heart & hold out firmly against her.
Goodbye now, lady. Catullus' heart is hardened, he will not look to you nor call against your wishes—how you'll regret it when nobody comes calling!
So much for you, bitch—your life is all behind you!
Now who will come to see you, thinking you lovely? Whom will you love now, and whom will you belong to? Whom will you kiss? And whose lips will you nibble?
But you, Catullus! You must hold out now, firmly!

Lesbia, Caelius?—yes, our darling, yes, Lesbia, the Lesbia Catullus
once loved uniquely, more than any other!
—now on streetcorners & in wretched alleys
she shucks the offspring of greathearted Remus.

Aurelius & Furius, true comrades,
whether Catullus penetrates to where in outermost India booms the eastern ocean's wonderful thunder;

whether he stops with Arabs or Hyrcani, Parthian bowmen or nomadic Sagae;
or goes to Egypt, which the Nile so richly dyes, overflowing;

even if he should scale the lofty Alps, or summon to mind the mightiness of Caesar

7. Perhaps the Marcus Caelius Rufus who was one of Clodia's lovers and whom the statesman and orator Cicero defended when she sued him for trying to poison her. 8. Brother of Romulus, founder of Rome; symbol of Rome's greatness. 9. Like poem 51, also in Sapphic meter. 10. These are all peoples on the fringes of the Roman empire (and so in Roman eyes exotic and menacing).
viewing the Gallic Rhine, the dreadful Britons²
at the world's far end—

you're both prepared to share in my adventures,
and any others which the gods may send me.
Back to my girl then, carry her this bitter
message, these spare words:

May she have joy & profit from her cocksmen,
go down embracing hundreds all together,
ever with love, but without interruption
wringing their balls dry;

nor look to my affection as she used to,
for she has left it broken, like a flower
at the edge of a field after the plowshare brushes it, passing.

If any pleasure can come to a man through recalling
decent behavior in his relations with others,
not breaking his word, and never, in any agreement,
deceiving men by abusing vows sworn to heaven,
then countless joys will await you in old age; Catullus,
as a reward for this unrequited passion!
For all of those things which a man could possibly say or do have all been said & done by you already,
and none of them counted for anything, thanks to her viliness!

Then why endure your self-torment any longer?
Why not abandon this wretched affair altogether,
spare yourself pain the gods don't intend you to suffer!
It's hard to break off with someone you've loved such a long time:
it's hard, but you have to do it, somehow or other.
Your only chance is to get out from under this sickness,
no matter whether or not you think you're able.
O gods, if pity is yours, or if ever to any
who lay near death you offered the gift of your mercy,
look on my suffering; if my life seems to you decent,
then tear from within me this devouring cancer,
this heavy dullness wasting the joints of my body,
completely driving every joy from my spirit!
Now I no longer ask that she love me as I love her,
or—even less likely—that she give up the others:
all that I ask for is health, an end to this foul sickness!

O gods, grant me this in exchange for my worship.

2. Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.) began the conquest of Gaul in 58 B.C. and in 55 B.C. made an expedition to Britain.
THE TAMIL ANTHOLOGIES
ca. 100–250

The poems of the Eight Anthologies and the Ten Songs are the earliest literary works extant in classical Tamil. While most of the poems in the Eight Anthologies range in length from four to forty lines, the poems of the Ten Songs run to hundreds of lines. Of the 2,381 poems, 102 are by anonymous authors, and the 473 named poets include 12 women (3 of whom are represented here). The ancient Tamil poets called themselves pulavams ("scholars, learned persons"), in contrast to the many kinds of anonymous bards and other professional performers they mention in their poems. Later legends speak of the pulavams as members of an academy of scholars (caṅkam); the poetry is itself styled caṅkam poetry. Whatever we may make of this claim, the poems are manifestly complex, classical literary works that are unrelated to poetic traditions in Sanskrit and that make selective use of stylistic elements (such as formulaic phrases) from earlier Tamil oral poetry. The sophisticated poeticities of caṅkam literature are explained in a text on grammar and rhetoric called Tolkieniyam (Old Composition; ca. fourth century A.D.), which inaugurates a long tradition of scholarly commentary.

For the caṅkam poets, the two great themes of poetry are love and war, expressions of the "inner" and "outer" lives of the kings and local chiefs who are the patrons and heroes of the poems. The multiple connotations of akam and puram, the ancient Tamil words used to identify love and war poetry, respectively, suggest that they are fundamental conceptual categories that apply not just to poetry but to life itself. Akam means, among other things, "inner part," "inside," "home," "heart," and "love," while puram connotes the opposite values: "outer part," "outside," "public life," and "war." And the two words have retained some of these meanings in modern Tamil as well. Some poets specialized in one or the other genre, and a focus on akam or puram themes is one of the principles around which the Tamil poems are organized.

In puram poems the poet sings the praise of his or her patron, glorifying his exploits in war, and his generosity to poets and suppliants in peace. The best poems, like Kapilar's poem on Pāri (included here), manage to capture both sides of the hero in a single description. Many puram poems are in praise of the kings of the Cōla, Pāntiya, and Čēra dynasties. The poems dedicated to these kings paint vivid pictures of sieges and of a prosperous, cosmopolitan urban civilization, especially in Pandyan Maturai and seaports such as the Cōla city of Pukār or Kāvīrīp pattinam (Ptolemy's Khaberis) on the east coast. But like Pāri, whose rule extended over nothing greater than a few villages and a hill called Parampu, many of the patrons of the Tamil poets were minor chiefs who ruled over small tracts of land and perpetually engaged in skirmishes with their neighbors and with the three great kings. In the stirring poems of the pulavams, however, these petty chieftains emerge as heroes of epic stature.

Adopting the voices of a nameless hero (talaivas), heroine (talaivai), and the heroine's girlfriend (tōḻi)—who acts as her confidante and go-between—akam poems focus on particular moments in an intimate relationship, exploring the emotional and psychological nuances of love. Whereas puram poems celebrate individual heroes, the anonymity of the characters in the love poems preserves the privacy of the inner world while evoking its universality. Just as men and public affairs dominate puram poems, women's points of view are primary to poetry of the inner part; the majority of the poems in the akam collection Anthology of Short Poems are spoken by the heroine and her girlfriend. Interestingly, there is no systematic correlation between the author's gender and the gender of the speaker in the poems. The celebrated male poet Kapilar wrote some of the finest love poems in female voices in the anthologies, and the female poet Auvaiyar is renowned for her puram poems (both poets are represented here).
Unlike the early Sanskrit poets, the cañkam poets are not interested in philosophical abstractions, moral lessons, or mythology. Theirs is a profoundly anthropocentric poetry, a passionate celebration of life in this world and of human emotions and acts. The aesthetic of cañkam poetry is founded on deeply felt resonances between the human and natural worlds; yet even here the poets are not interested in the natural world for its own sake but rather for what it can reveal about human experience.

At the center of classical Tamil poetics is a scheme of five conventional "landscapes." In this scheme each of the actual landscape types of the Tamil countryside connotes both a natural phenomenon and, in precise correlation with it, an aspect of love between a man and a woman. Each landscape is named after a flower or plant characteristic of it. Thus the hill landscape is called kurűcį, for the kurűcį (mountain conehead) flower; the pasture is named mulai, for jasmine; the field is marutam, for the queen's flower; the seashore is neytal, for the blue water lily; and the wasteland is pālai, for the ivorywood, an evergreen tree that grows in the desert.

Poems that are set in a hill landscape (or allude to some of its features) immediately signal lovers' meetings. Pastoral poems are about domestic happiness or marriage. Field poems evoke the married hero's infidelity (usually with courtesans) and lover's quarrels. Seashore poems evoke separation and anxious waiting; and the wasteland suggests elopement, hardship, or the hero's journey across the desert or drought-parched wilderness in search of wealth. Though each element of a particular landscape—an animal, tribe or occupation (all of these elements are codified)—is by itself capable of evoking the specific phase of love that is correlated with that landscape, the skillful poet will bring together elements from different landscapes to effect tension and contrast. The cañkam poets use the schematic landscapes as a language of symbols to create intricately designed, richly suggestive poems. Some poets of the anthologies, like the Poet of the Long White Moonlight, are known simply by an arresting nature image in their poems.

Despite differences in technique and mood, the five landscapes, both real and conventional, bind the love and war poems together in a single universe of discourse. Kapilār's keenly observed, sensuous description of the landscape of Pārī's hill in His Hill (a puram poem, included here) is by implication a description of the chieftain himself, a hero ferocious in combat but also generous to a fault. The sensitive lover of the akam poems is identical to the brave warrior whose mother proudly declares, in a typical puram poem: "This womb was once a lair for that tiger; You can see him now: only on battlefields." The categories akam and puram are the two faces of the Tamil warrior-hero, the two halves of the idealized ancient Tamil heroic world evoked in cañkam poetry. Much in that world is alien to modern sensibilities. Yet in their powerful concrete images and spare design the love poems in particular are remarkably close to modern poetry, and like Sappho's voice, the voices of the anonymous lovers in these ancient poems speak to us with an astonishing immediacy.

THE AKAVAL METER

Classical Tamil meter recognizes two kinds of metrical units: nēr (here represented by N), a single syllable that can be long (have a long vowel) (−) or short (−); and nirai (here represented by nn), two syllables in the sequence short-short (−−) or short-long (−−). Two metrical units make a basic foot. Thus the standard four-foot line of the akaval meter contains eight metrical units. In What She Said [1] the line scans as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N N</th>
<th>N N</th>
<th>nn nn</th>
<th>N N</th>
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<tr>
<td>kwu-ruhk</td>
<td>kai-kai</td>
<td>kula-rigr</td>
<td>muno-tit</td>
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<tr>
<td>(koon'-ruhk)</td>
<td>(koo'-hyc)</td>
<td>(koo'-zuh)</td>
<td>(moon'-reer)</td>
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Varying combinations of nēr and nirai result in lines of varying rhythm.

PRONOUNCING GLOSSARY

The following list uses common English syllables and stress accents to provide rough equivalents of selected words whose pronunciation may be unfamiliar to the general reader.

- akam: uh’-huhm
- Atiyamā Neṭumāṇ Aṇi: uh’-dee-yuh-mahn neh’-doo-mahnuhn’-jee
- Auvaivāyār: au’-vai-yahr
- caṅkam: suhn’-guhm
- Cērā: say’-ruh
- Cōla: soh’-luh
- Kapīlar: kuh’-bee-luhr
- kurīnci: koo-reen’-jee
- Kuruntokai: koo-room’-do-hai
- marutam: muh’-roo-duhm
- mullai: moo’-lai
- Paṇṭiya: pahn’-dee-yuh
- Parampu: puh-ruhm’-boo
- Pāri: pah’-ree
- Pulār: poo’-hahr’
- Pulavan: poo’-luh-vuhn
- Puranāṇūr: poh’-ruh-nah-noo’-roo
- Talaivan: tuhl-ai’-vuhn
- Tolkappiyam: tol-hahp’-pee-yuhm

THE TAMIL ANTHOLOGIES

What She Said [1]

Once: if an owl hooted on the hill,
if a male ape leaped and loped
out there on the jackfruit bough in our yard
my poor heart would melt for fear. But now
in the difficult dark of night
nothing can stay its wandering
on the longsloping mountain-ways
of his coming.

Kapīlar
Kuruntokai 153

1. 'Translated by A. K. Ramanujan.' 2. Poem 153 from the Kuruntokai collection. Kapīlar was the most famous of the caṅkam poets, was a friend of several kings, and wrote many fine akam and puram poems.
What She Said [2]

Only the thief was there, no one else.
And if he should lie, what can I do?

There was only
a thin-legged heron standing
on legs yellow as millet stems
and looking
for lampreys
in the running water
when he took me.

Kapilar
Kuruntokai 25

What She Said [3]

When my lover is by my side
I am happy
as a city
in the rapture of a carnival,
and when he is gone
I grieve like a deserted house
in a little hamlet
of the wastelands
where the squirrel plays
in the front yard.

Apilatu Munrilar
Kuruntokai 41

What She Said [4]

Don't they really have
in the land where he has gone
such things
as house sparrows
dense-feathered, the color of fading water lilies,
pecking at grain drying on yards,

3. Suggests the clandestine nature of the affair and the heroine's fear that her lover is not trustworthy; however, the word was also used as a term of endearment. 4. We infer the "landscape" from component elements such as the "deserted house" and "the squirrel." 5. The Poet of the Squirrel Playing in the Front Yard; nothing else is known of this poet.
playing with the scatter of the fine dust
of the streets' manure
and living with their nestlings
in the angles of the penthouse
and miserable evenings,
and loneliness?

Māmalāṭan
Kuruntokai 46

What She Said [5]

I am here. My virtue
lies in grief
in the groves near the sea.
My lover
is back in his hometown. And our secret
is with the gossips
in public places.

Venpūti
Kuruntokai 97

What Her Girl-Friend Said

In the seaside grove
where he drove back in his chariot
the neytañ6 flowers are on the ground,
some of their thick petals plowed in
and their stalks broken
by the knife-edge of his wheels' golden rims
furrowing the earth.

Ōta Ėññi
Kuruntokai 227

What the Concubine Said

You know he comes from
where the fresh-water shark in the pools
catch with their mouths

6. Water lily. The seashore landscape is the setting for separation and grief.
the mangoes as they fall, ripe
from the trees on the edge of the field.?

At our place
he talked big.

Now, back in his own,
when others raise their hands
and feet,
he will raise his too:

like a doll
in a mirror
he will shadow
every last wish
of his son's dear mother.

Āḷaṅkuṭi Vaṅkaṇār
Kuruntokai 8

What She Said [6]

Bless you, my heart.
The shell bangles slip
from my wasting hands.
My eyes, sleepless for days,
are muddied.

Get up, let's go, let's get out
of this loneliness here.

Let's go
where the tribes wear
the narcotic wreaths of cannabis
beyond the land of Katți,
the chieftain with many spears,
let's go, I say,
to where my man is,
enduring even
alien languages.8

Māmulaṇār
Kuruntokai 11

What He Said [1]

The heart, knowing
no fear,

7. The field landscape is the setting of infidelity and lover's quarrels. 8. Exotic tribes and alien languages suggest perilous journeys through barren lands. Cannabis: marijuana.
has left me
to go and hold my love.
but my arms,
left behind,
cannot take hold.

So what's the use?

In the space between us,
murderous tigers
roar like dark ocean waves,
circling
in O how many woods
between us
and our arms' embrace?

Allūr Naṟnūḷḷai[^2]
*Kuruntokai* 237

What He Said [^2]

My love is a two-faced thief.
In the dead of night
she comes like the fragrance
of the Red-Speared Chieftain's^4 forest hills,
to be one with me.

And then, she sheds the petals
of night's several flowers,
and does her hair again
with new perfumes and oils,
to be one with her family at dawn
with a stranger's different face.

Kapilar
*Kuruntokai* 312

A Chariot Wheel

Enemies,
take care
when you enter
the field of battle
and face
our warrior

---

[^2]: A female poet.
[^4]: Murukan, Tamil god of the hills.
who is like a chariot wheel
made thoughtfully over a month
by a carpenter
who tosses off eight chariots
in a day.

Auvaiyār
on Atiyamān Neṭumān Aṇci
Puranāṇūru 87

His Hill

Pārī’s Pāṟampu hill is quite a place.

Even if all three of you kings should surround it with your great drums of war, remember it has four things not grown under the plows of plowmen:

one, wild rice grows in the tiny-leaved bamboos;
two, ripening jackfruit, crammed with segments of sweet flesh;
three, down below grow sweet potatoes under fat creepers;
four, beehives break as their colors ripen to a purple, and the rich tall hill drips with honey.

The hill is wide as the sky, the pools flash like stars.

Even if you have elephants tied to every tree there, and chariots standing in every field, you will never take the hill. He will not give in to the sword.

2. That is, poem 87 of the Puranāṇūru collection of four hundred puram poems; this poem belongs to the subgenre “pitched battle.” Auvaiyār was a famous female poet, whose friendship with the Cēra king Aṇci is the subject of many legends. 3. The site of a fort from which the chieftain Pārī ruled his three hundred villages. 4. The kings of the Cēra, Pāṇṭiya, and Cōḷa dynasties have besieged the hill.
But I know a way
to take it:

    pick carefully
your lute-strings, string little lutes,
and with your dancing women
    with dense fragrant hair
behind you,

go singing and dancing
to Pāri,
and he'll give you
both hill and country.

Kapilar
on Pāri
Purāṇānṛtu 109

Mothers

You stand against the pillar
of my hut and ask:
    Where is your son?
I don't really know.
This womb was once
a lair
for that tiger.
You can see him now
only on battlefields.

Kāvarpeṇṭu
Purāṇānṛtu 86

Earth’s Bounty

Bless you, earth:
    field,
    forest,
    valley,
or hill,

5. The warrior-hero’s mother is conventionally portrayed as rejoicing in her son’s valor. 6. A female poet.
you are only
as good
as the good young men
in each place.

Auvaiyar
Puranānāru 187
Chinese Poetry

The Solitude of Night
By Li Po
Translated By Shigeyoshi Obata

It was at a wine party—
I lay in a drowse, knowing it not.
The blown flowers fell and filled my lap.
When I arose, still drunken,
The birds had all gone to their nests,
And there remained but few of my comrades.
I went along the river—alone in the moonlight.

(circa 750)

Zazen on Ching-t’ing Mountain
By Li Po
Translated By Sam Hamill

The birds have vanished down the sky.
Now the last cloud drains away.
We sit together, the mountain and me,
until only the mountain remains.

A Poem of Changgan
By Li Po

My hair had hardly covered my forehead.
I was picking flowers, playing by my door,
When you, my lover, on a bamboo horse,
Came trotting in circles and throwing green plums.
We lived near together on a lane in Ch’ang-kan,
Both of us young and happy-hearted.

...At fourteen I became your wife,
So bashful that I dared not smile,
And I lowered my head toward a dark corner
And would not turn to your thousand calls;
But at fifteen I straightened my brows and laughed,
Learning that no dust could ever seal our love,
That even unto death I would await you by my post
And would never lose heart in the tower of silent watching.

...Then when I was sixteen, you left on a long journey
Through the Gorges of Ch’u-t’ang, of rock and whirling water.
And then came the Fifth-month, more than I could bear,
And I tried to hear the monkeys in your lofty far-off sky.
Your footprints by our door, where I had watched you go,
Were hidden, every one of them, under green moss,
Hidden under moss too deep to sweep away.
And the first autumn wind added fallen leaves.
And now, in the Eighth-month, yellowing butterflies
Hover, two by two, in our west-garden grasses
And, because of all this, my heart is breaking
And I fear for my bright cheeks, lest they fade.

...Oh, at last, when you return through the three Pa districts,
Send me a message home ahead!
And I will come and meet you and will never mind the distance,
All the way to Chang-feng Sha.

Po Chu i
(all circa 800)

Madly Singing in the Mountains

There is no one among men that has not a special failin
And my failing consists in writing verses.
I have broken away from the thousand ties of life;
But this infirmity still remains behind.
Each time that I look at a fine landscape,
Each time that I meet a loved friend,
I raise my voice and recite a stanza of poetry
And marvel as though a god had crossed my path.
Ever since the day I was banished to Hsün-yang
Half my time I have lived among the hills.
And often, when I have finished a new poem,
Alone I climb the road to the Eastern Rock.
I lean my body on the banks of white Stone;
I pull down with my hands a green cassia branch.
My mad singing startles the valley and hills;
The apes and birds all come to peep.
Fearing to become a laughing-stock to the world,
I choose a place that is unfrequented by men.

Rising Late
Translated by David Hinton

Birds are calling in courtyard trees
and sunlight’s bright in the eaves,
but I’m old, my laziness perfected,
and now it’s cold I rise even later.

It’s my nature: quilts thick or thin,
pillows high or low. They suit me:

spirit at peace, body safe and warm
How many can savor such things?

Once I’ve slept enough, I just sit
looking up, no thoughts anywhere-
as if our senses had never opened
and our limbs were long forgotten.
I think back to someone up early
in Ch’ang-an, clothes frost-stained.

He and I, each whole and sufficient-
who can say which is nothing now?

Writing Again On The Same Theme
Translated by Arthur Waley

The sun’s high
I’ve slept enough
still too lazy to get up;
in a little room
quilts piled on
I’m not afraid of the cold.
The bell of the Temple of Bequeathed Love
I prop up my pillow to listen;
snow on Incense Burner Peak
rolling up the blind, I look at it.
K’uang’s Mount Lu
a place for running away from fame;
marshal
a fitting post to spend old age in.
Mind peaceful
body at rest
this is where I belong.
Why should I always think of Ch’ang-an as home?

After Getting Drunk, Becoming Sober in the Night

Our party scattered at yellow dusk and I came home to bed;
I woke at midnight and went for a walk, leaning heavily on a friend.
As I lay on my pillow my vinous complexion, soothed by sleep, grew sober;
In front of the tower the ocean moon, accompanying the tide, had risen.
The swallows, about to return to the beams, went back to roost again;
The candle at my window, just going out, suddenly revived its light.
All the time till dawn came, still my thoughts were muddled;
And in my ears something sounded like the music of flutes and strings.

PRUNING TREES

Trees growing — right in front of my window:
The trees are high and the leaves grow thick.
Sad alas! the distant mountain view
Obscured by this, dimly shows between.
One morning I took knife and axe;
With my own hand I lopped the branches off.
Ten thousand leaves fall about my head;
A thousand hills came before my eyes.
Suddenly, as when clouds or mists break
And straight through, the blue sky appears.
Again, like the face of a friend one has loved
Seen at last after an age of parting.
First there came a gentle wind blowing;
One by one the birds flew back to the tree.
To ease my mind I gazed to the South East;
As my eyes wandered, my thoughts went far away.
Of men there is none that has not some preference:
Of things there is none but mixes good with ill.
It was not that I did not love the tender branches;
But better still,—to see the green hills!

———

Buson

on the one ton temple bell
a moon-moth, folded into sleep,
sits still.

———

Japan
By Billy Collins

Today I pass the time reading
a favorite haiku,
saying the few words over and over.
It feels like eating
the same small, perfect grape
again and again.
I walk through the house reciting it
and leave its letters falling
through the air of every room.
I stand by the big silence of the piano and say it.
I say it in front of a painting of the sea.
I tap out its rhythm on an empty shelf.
I listen to myself saying it,
then I say it without listening,
then I hear it without saying it.
And when the dog looks up at me,
I kneel down on the floor
and whisper it into each of his long white ears.
It's the one about the one-ton temple bell
with the moth sleeping on its surface,
and every time I say it, I feel the excruciating
pressure of the moth
on the surface of the iron bell.
When I say it at the window,
the bell is the world
and I am the moth resting there.
When I say it at the mirror,
I am the heavy bell
and the moth is life with its papery wings.
And later, when I say it to you in the dark,
you are the bell,
and I am the tongue of the bell, ringing you,
and the moth has flown
from its line
and moves like a hinge in the air above our bed.
Exploratory expeditions to the New World quickly led to colonial settlements, as the major European countries vied with each other for a portion of the western hemisphere's riches. Early voyages by Columbus for Spain, Cabot for England, and Vespucci and Cabral for Portugal mapped and claimed large areas for later colonies. The Portuguese settled in eastern Brazil, the French along the St. Lawrence River in present-day Canada, first explored by Jacques Cartier and then settled sixty years later by Samuel de Champlain. The English came to the New World late, after several failed expeditions by Walter Raleigh, Humphrey Gilbert, and Martin Frobisher.