PART ONE
Standing by my bed

In gold sandals
Dawn that very
moment awoke me
I asked myself

What, Sappho, can you give one who has everything, like Aphrodite?

And I said

I shall burn the fat thigh-bones of a white she-goat on her altar
I confess

I love that
which caresses
me. I believe

Love has his
share in the
Sun’s brilliance
and virtue
At noontime

When the earth is bright with flaming heat falling straight down

the cricket sets up a high-pitched singing in his wings
I took my lyre and said:

Come now, my heavenly
tortoise shell: become
a speaking instrument

Although they are

Only breath, words
which I command
are immortal
That afternoon

Girls ripe to marry
wove the flower-
heads into necklaces

We heard them chanting:

**FIRST VOICE**

Young Adonis is
dying! O Cytherea
What shall we do now?

**SECOND VOICE**

Batter your breasts
with your fists, girls—
tatter your dresses!
It's no use

Mother dear, I
can't finish my
weaving
    You may
blame Aphrodite

soft as she is

she has almost
killed me with
love for that boy
People do gossip

And they say about
Leda, that she

once found an egg
hidden under

wild hyacinths
Peace reigned in heaven

Ambrosia stood
already mixed
in the wine bowl

It was Hermes
who took up the
wine jug and poured
wine for the gods

When I saw Eros

On his way down
from heaven, he

wore a soldier’s
cloak dyed purple
You are the herdsman of evening

Hesperus, you herd
homeward whatever
Dawn's light dispersed

You herd sheep—herd
goats—herd children
home to their mothers
Sleep, darling

I have a small
daughter called
Cleis, who is

like a golden
flower

I wouldn’t
take all Croesus’
kingdom with love
thrown in, for her
Although clumsy

Mnasidica has a more shapely figure than our gentle Gyrinno
Tomorrow you had better

Use your soft hands,
Dica, to tear off
dill shoots, to cap
your lovely curls

She who wears flowers
attracts the happy
Graces: they turn
back from a bare head
We put the urn aboard ship with this inscription:

This is the dust of little Timas who unmarried was led into Persephone's dark bedroom

And she being far from home, girls her age took new-edged blades to cut, in mourning for her, these curls of their soft hair
Cyprian, in my dream

The folds of a purple kerchief shadowed your cheeks—the one

Timas one time sent, a timid gift, all the way from Phocaea
In the spring twilight

The full moon is shining:
Girls take their places
as though around an altar