

Sappho Fragments was written in 2007 for West Chester, PA, bassist Peter Paulsen, his jazz trio, and his wife, a mezzo-soprano possessed of an unusually wide range. Ancient Greek poet Sappho wrote fearlessly of love, loss, and growing old. These piquant translations are by Mary Barnard and Willis Barnstone.

duration: c. 17:00 (without improv)

I. c. 2:15 (without improv)

II. c. 2:30

III. c. 4:15

IV. c. 3:45

V. c. 4:00

SAPPHO FRAGMENTS

Tell everyone
Now, today, I shall
sing beautifully
for my friends' pleasure.
We shall enjoy it.
As for him who finds
fault, may silliness
and sorrow take him!

Rubbing its wings incessantly,
a cicada pours flaming summer
over the earth
in luminous song.

Like a mountain whirlwind
punishing the oak trees,
love shattered my heart.

Tonight I've watched
the moon and then
the Pleiades
go down.
The night is now
half-gone; youth
goes; I am
in bed alone.

Hesperos, you bring home all the bright dawn scattered,
bring home the sheep
bring home the goat, bring the child
home to its mother.

"Tell Everyone," "We Shall Enjoy It" and "Tonight I've Watched" from *SAPPHO: A NEW TRANSLATION* by Mary Barnard ©1986
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