

## Sappho, fragment 31

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν  
ἔμμεν' ὄνηρ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι  
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδου φωνεί-  
σας ὑπακούει

καὶ γελαίσας ἡμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν  
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·  
ὡς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε', ὡς με φώναι-  
σ' οὐδ' ἐν ἔτ' εἴκει,

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### VOCABULARY

ἄδου (*Aeol.*) < ἦδου: sweet  
βρόχε' < (*Ion.*) βραχύς, -έα, ύ: short, brief  
γελαίσας (*Aeol.*) < γελάω: laugh; smile  
εἴκει: *see commentary*  
ἔμμεναι (*Aeol.*) < εἶναι  
ἐν (*Aeol.*) < ἐν: one (*neut.*)  
ἐνάντιος, -α, -ον: opposite  
ἐπτόαισεν < (*Ep.*) πτοίεω < πτοέω: (*intrans.*) take  
fright; cower; shy away, duck away; (*trans.*)  
frighten; make cower *etc.*  
ἡμερόεις, -εσσα, -εν (*Aeol.*): charming

ἰσδάνω (*Aeol.*) < ἰζάνω: sit  
ἴσος: equal to (+ *dat.*)  
καρδία: heart  
κῆνος (*Aeol.*) < ἐκεῖνος: (*demonstr. pron.*) that (one)  
μὰν (*Dor. and Ep.*) < μήν  
ὅττις (*Aeol.*) < ὅστις  
πλάσιον < πλήσιον: near, close by  
στήθος, στήθεος, τό: chest  
ὑπακούω: listen (+ *genitive of person*)  
φαίνομαι: seem  
φωνέω: speak

### COMMENTARY

TEXT: Page (1955)

METRE: Sapphic stanzas: each stanza has 3 vv. of  
hendecasyllables ( - υ - x - υ υ - υ - - ) followed  
by an adonean ( - υ υ - - ).

1. κῆνος: *demonstr. pron.* with ὄνηρ in v. 2.
2. ὄνηρ = ὄνηρ (*crasis*) < ὁ ἀνήρ (with κῆνος in v. 1)  
τοῖ = σοῖ: 2 *s. pers. pron.* ('you').
3. ἄδου: adverbial (*i.e.*, 'sweetly').
4. ὑπακούω: construe with both genitives, *i.e.* the  
*fem. s. gen. partic.* φωνείσας (3-4) and γελαίσας  
(5)
5. γελαίσας (*Aeol.*): *pt. f. gen. s.*  
ἡμέροεν: adverbial (*i.e.*, 'charmingly')  
μ' (*elision*) = μοι  
ἦ μὰν: 'now for sure'

6. The object of the transitive verb ἐπτόαισεν is  
contained in τό (*def. art. used as a rel. pron. i.e.* =  
ὅ), which refers to the whole situation described  
in the preceding verses: '... which surely makes  
my heart cower in my chest.'

7. ὡς... ὡς: 'when... then...'

Note the subjunctive ἴδω in an indefinite clause  
*without* the expected particle κε: *i.e.*, 'whenever I  
see...'

φώναισ' = φώναισαι (*aor. infin.* < φωνέω)

8. εἴκει: the root \*εἴκω (usually found in the form  
ἔοικα) means 'seem,' but the impersonal usage  
here (εἴκει + *acc. με* + *infin.*) is not easy to  
parallel. The most common solution is to assume  
that it means 'it is possible' (on the analogy of  
παρεῖκει): *i.e.* '... it is not possible for me to say  
even one thing anymore.'

ἀλλ' ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα †ἔαγε†, λέπτον  
δ' αὐτικά χρῶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,  
ὀπάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἐν ὄρρημ', ἐπιρρόμ-  
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,

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κάδ δέ μ' ἴδρωσ ψῦχρος ἔχει, τρόμος δὲ  
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας  
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω ἴπιδεύης  
φαίνομαι...†

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ἀλλὰ πᾶν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ...†

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#### VOCABULARY

ἀγρέω (*Aeol.*) < αἰρέω: take hold of, seize

ἄκαν < ἀκήν: silently, in silence

ἄκουα (*Aeol.*) < ἀκουή, ἦ: ear

ἔμμι (*Aeol.*) < εἰμί ('I am')

ἐν < ἐν: one (*neut.*)

ἐπιρρομβέω: hum, ring (of hearing / the ears)

ἴδρωσ < ἴδρωσ, ὄ: sweat

κάδ (*Ep.*) < κατά: down (*see commentary*)

λέπτος < λεπτός, -ή, -όν: delicate, subtle

ὀλίγω < ὀλίγου (*see commentary*)

ὄππα (*Aeol.*) < ὄμμα: eye

ὄρρημι (*Aeol.*) < ὄραω: see

παῖσαν (*Aeol.*) < πᾶσαν (*see commentary*)

ἴπιδεύης (*prodelision*) < ἐπιδευής, -ές: in need of;  
(*here*) falling short of

ποία < πόα, ἦ: grass

πῦρ, πυρός, τό: fire

τεθνάκην (*Aeol.*) *pf. inf.* < τεθνάναι < θνήσκω: to die

τόλματος < τολμητός, -ή, -όν: bearable, to be endured

τρόμος, ὄ: trembling

ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν *pf.* < ὑποτρέχω: run under; steal upon /  
into

χλωρός < χλωρός, -ά, -όν: green

χρώσ, χρωτός, ὄ: flesh

ψῦχρος -α, -ον: cold

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#### COMMENTARY

9. γλῶσσα †ἔαγε†: a well-known textual crux. One suggestion is to read γλῶσσα μ' ἔαγε (μ' = μοι): *i.e.*, 'my tongue is broken', but the idiom cannot be paralleled in Sappho and the sense is difficult. For the purpose of the intermediate reader, the general meaning is clear enough: *i.e.*, 'My tongue cannot speak and I am silent.'

10. χρῶ (*Attic*) < χρωτί (flesh): local dative with ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν (*i.e.* 'a delicate fire has stolen over my flesh').

13. κάδ...μ<ε> ἔχει: (*tnesis*) < κατέχει με (*i.e.*, 'covers me'; *lit.* 'holds me').

14. παῖσαν (*Aeol.*) < πᾶσαν (*supply με*): *i.e.*, 'trembling seizes me *all over*.'

ποίας: genitive of comparison after χλωροτέρα (*i.e.* 'greener *than* grass').

15. ὀλίγω: genitive of separation ('by a little'), *i.e.* 'I seem to myself to be <just> a little <way> short of dying.'

16. φαίνομ' = φαίνομαι (*i.e.* 'I seem').