Two Poems by Asclepiades
Translated by Tanisha Chakma

"For in my arms I hold the Flower of the Ages"

Asclepiades

῾Ηδὺ θέρους διψῶντι χιῶν ποτόν, ἥδυ δὲ ναῦταις
ἐκ χειμώνος ἰδεῖν εἰαρινὸν στέφανον·
ὗτον δ’, ὁπόταν κρύψῃ μία τοὺς φιλέοντας
χλαῖνα καὶ αἰνῆται Κύπρις ύπ’ ἄμφωτέρων. (5.169)

Sweet it is for the thirsty to sip snow in summer; sweet it is for sailors
to see the vernal crown after winter.
Yet sweeter still, when one cloak shrouds two lovers,
and Cypris wins favours from both.

"The grave's a fine and private place"

Asclepiades

Φείδῃ παρθενίης. Καὶ τι πλέον; οὔ γὰρ ἐς Ἅιδην
ἐλθοῦσ’ εὑρήσεις τὸν φιλέοντα, κόρη·
ἐν ζωοῖσι τὰ τερπνὰ τὰ Κύπριδος· ἐν δ’ Ἀχέροντι
ὀστέα καὶ σποδιή,παρθένε, κεισόμεθα. (5.85)

You withhold your maidenhood, but what for? When you have gone down amongst the
shades, you will not find the one that loves you, darling girl.
The raptures of Cypris are reserved for the living;
And in the streams of Acheron, my dear,