

Two Poems by Asclepiades

Translated by Tanisha Chakma

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

Asclepiades

Ἡδὺ θέρους διψῶντι χιῶν ποτόν, ἠδὺ δὲ ναύταις
ἐκ χειμῶνος ἰδεῖν εἰαρινὸν στέφανον·
ἦδιον δ' ὅπταν κρύψῃ μία τοὺς φιλέοντας
γλαῖνα καὶ αἰνῆται Κύπρις ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων. (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

Φείδη παρθενίης. Καὶ τί πλέον; οὐ γὰρ ἐς Ἄϊδην
ἐλθοῦς' εὐρήσεις τὸν φιλέοντα, κόρη·
ἐν ζωῶσι τὰ τερπνὰ τὰ Κύπριδος· ἐν δ' Ἀχέροντι
ὄστέα 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,