

Philodemus' Poetry

Post by “Pacatus” of October 29, 2022 at 5:44 PM

This is a loose rendering in my attempt to draft from a couple translations (and my raw grappling with the Greek) a more modern poetic form – with my own interpretive edits, additions and wordplay. Thus, it’s a free rendering, not a translation.

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Lysidikē

- A free rendering from a Greek poem by Philodemus

Your summer’s bloom not yet burst
from naked buds, nor yet dark
the tender virginal grapes
soon to ripen full-fruit charms –

but already in their vigor
plucky impassioned archer-lads
swift-flighting flame-arrows hone
from embers smoldering within.

Let us then fly, dear Lysidikē,
we unlucky lovers, before
the nock is notched on their bowstring:
I fear a lusty wildfire looms.

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Lysidikē ([Λυσιδική](#)) is the name of several women in Greek myth, one of whom “lay” with Heracles and bore him a son, Teles.

“nock”: the notch on the shaft of an arrow to fit it to the bowstring; also the act of fitting.

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Here is the Greek:

οὔπω σοι καλύκων γυμνὸν θέρος οὐδὲ μελαίνει

βότρυς ὁ παρθενίους πρωτοβολῶν χάριτας,

ἀλλ' ἤδη θαὸ τόξα νέοι θήγουσιν Ἔρωτες,
Λυσιδίκη, καὶ πῦρ τύφεται ἐγκρύφιον.
φεύγωμεν, δυσέρωτες, ἕως βέλος οὐκ ἐπὶ νευρῆ·
μάντις ἐγὼ μεγάλης αὐτίκα πυρκαϊῆς.