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The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing His Translations And Imitations

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Sappho to Phaon, an Epistle from Ovid

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54928](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54928)

S A P P H O

O T

P H A O N

§ A

S A P P H O
P H A O N I.

ECQUID, ut inspecta est studiosae littera
dextrae,

Protinus est oculis cognita nostra tuis ?
An, nisi legisses auctoris nomina Sapphûs,
Hoc breve nescires unde movetur opus ?
Forfitan et quare mea sint alterna requiras 5
Carmina, cum lyricis sim magis apta modis.
Flendus amor meus est : elegeïa flebile carmen ;
Non facit ad lacrymas barbitos ulla meas.
Uror, ut, indomitis ignem exercentibus Euris,
Fertilis accensis messibus ardet ager. 10
Arva Phaon celebrat diversa Typhoidos Aetnae,
Me calor Aetnaeo non minor igne coquit.
Nec mihi, dispositis quae jungam carmina nervis,
Proveniunt ; vacuae carmina mentis opus.

S A P P H O

T O

P H A O N.

SAY, lovely youth, that do'ft my heart command,
 Can Phaon's eyes forget his Sappho's hand ?
 Must then her name the wretched writer prove,
 To thy remembrance lost, as to thy love ?
 Ask not the cause that I new numbers chuse, 5
 The Lute neglected, and the Lyric muse ;
 Love taught my tears in sadder notes to flow,
 And tun'd my heart to Elegies of woe.
 I burn, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd corn
 By driving winds the spreading flames are born ! 10
 Phaon to Ætna's scorching fields retires,
 While I consume with more than Ætna's fires !
 No more my soul a charm in music finds,
 Music has charms alone for peaceful minds,

4 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Nec me Pyrrhides Methymniadesve puellae, 15

Nec me Lesbium caetera turba juvant.

Vilis Anactorie, vilis mihi candida Cydno :

Non oculis grata est Atthis, ut ante, meis ;

Atque aliae centum, quas non sine crimine amavi :

Improbe, multarum quod fuit, unus habes. 20

Est in te facies, sunt apti lusibus anni.

O facies oculis infidiosa meis !

Sume fidem et pharetram ; fies manifestus Apollo :

Accedant capiti cornua ; Bacchus eris.

Et Phoebus Daphnen, et Gnosida Bacchus amavit ;

Nec norat lyricos illa, vel illa modos. 30

At mihi Pegasides blandissima carmina dicunt ;

Jam canitur toto nomen in orbe meum.

Nec plus Alcaeus, confors patriaeque lyraeque,

Laudis habet, quamvis grandius ille sonet.

Si mihi difficilis formam natura negavit ; 35

Ingenio formae damna rependo meae.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 5

Soft scenes of solitude no more can please, 15

Love enters there, and I'm my own disease.

No more the Lesbian dames my passion move,

Once the dear objects of my guilty love ;

All other loves are lost in only thine,

Ah youth ungrateful to a flame like mine! 20

Whom would not all those blooming charms sur-
prize,

Those heav'nly looks, and dear deluding eyes ?

The harp and bow would you like Phœbus bear,

A brighter Phœbus Phaon might appear ;

Would you with ivy wreath your flowing hair, 25

Not Bacchus' self with Phaon could compare :

Yet Phœbus lov'd, and Bacchus felt the flame,

One Daphne warm'd, and one the Cretan dame,

Nymphs that in verse no more could rival me, 30

Than ev'n those Gods contend in charms with thee.

The Muses teach me all their softest lays,

And the wide world resounds with Sappho's praise,

Tho' great Alcæus more sublimely sings,

And strikes with bolder rage the sounding strings,

No less renown attends the moving lyre, 36

Which Venus tunes, and all her loves inspire ;

To me what nature has in charms deny'd,

Is well by wit's more lasting flames supply'd.

6 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Sum brevis; at nomen, quod terras impleat omnes,
Est mihi; mensuram nominis ipse fero. 40

Candida si non sum, placuit Cepheïa Perseo
Andromede, patriae fusca colore suae:

Et variis albae junguntur saepe columbae,
Et niger a viridi turtur amatur ave.

Si, nisi quae facie poterit te digna videri, 45
Nulla futura tua est; nulla futura tua est.

At me cum legeres, etiam formosa videbar;
Unam jurabas usque decere loqui.

Cantabam; memini; (meminerunt omnia amantes)
Oscula cantanti tu mihi rapta dabas. 50

Haec quoque laudabas; omnique a parte placebam,
Sed tum praecipue, cum fit amoris opus.

Tunc te plus solito lascivia nostra juvabat, 60
Crebraque mobilitas, aptaque verba joco.

Quique, ubi jam amborum fuerat confusa voluptas,
Plurimus in lasso corpore languor erat.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 73

Tho' short my stature, yet my name extends
To heav'n itself, and earth's remotest ends. 40

Brown as I am, an Ethiopian dame
Inspir'd young Perseus with a gen'rous flame;
Turtles and doves of diff'ring hues unite,
And glossy jet is pair'd with shining white.

If to no charms thou wilt thy heart resign, 45
But such as merit, such as equal thine,
By none, alas! by none thou canst be mov'd,
Phaon alone by Phaon must be lov'd!

Yet once thy Sappho could thy cares employ,
Once in her arms you center'd all your joy: 50
No time the dear remembrance can remove,
For oh! how vast a memory has love?

My music, then, you could for ever hear,
And all my words were music to your ear.
You stopp'd with kisses my enchanting tongue, 55
And found my kisses sweeter than my song.

In all I pleas'd, but most in what was best;
And the last joy was dearer than the rest.

Then with each word, each glance, each motion fir'd,
You still enjoy'd, and yet you still desir'd, 60
'Till all dissolving in the trance we lay,
And in tumultuous raptures dy'd away.

8 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Nunc tibi Sicelides veniunt nova praeda puellae ;
 Quid mihi cum Lesbo? Sicelis esse volo.
 At vos erronem tellure remittite nostrum,
 Nifiades matres, Nifiadesque nurus.
 Neu vos decipiant blandae mendacia linguae : 65
 Quae dicit vobis, dixerat ante mihi.
 Tu quoque quae montes celebras, Erycina, Sicanos,
 (Nam tua sum) vati consule, diua, tuae.
 An gravis inceptum peragit fortuna tenorem? 70
 Et manet in cursu semper acerba suo?
 Sex mihi natales ierant, cum lecta parentis
 Ante diem lacrymas ossa bibere meas.
 Arsit inops frater, victus meretricis amore ;
 Mistaque cum turpi damna pudore tulit.
 Factus inops agili peragit freta coerulea remo : 75
 Quasque male amisit, nunc male quaerit opes :
 Me quoque, quod monui bene multa fideliter, odit.
 Hoc mihi libertas, hoc pia lingua dedit.
 Et tanquam defint, quae me sine fine fatigent,
 Accumulat curas filia parva meas.
 Ultima tu nostris accedis causa querelis :
 Non agitur vento nostra carina suo. 80
 Ecce jacent collo sparsi sine lege capilli ;
 Nec premit articulos lucida gemma meos.
 Veste tegor vili: nullum est in crinibus aurum ;
 Non Arabo noster rore capillus olet.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 9

The fair Sicilians now thy soul inflame;
 Why was I born, ye Gods, a Lesbian dame?
 But ah beware, Sicilian nymphs! nor boast
 That wand'ring heart which I so lately lost;
 Nor be with all those tempting words abus'd,
 Those tempting words were all to Sappho us'd.
 And you that rule Sicilia's happy plains,
 Have pity, Venus, on your Poet's pains! 70
 Shall fortune still in one sad tenor run,
 And still increase the woes so soon begun?
 Inur'd to sorrow from my tender years,
 My parent's ashes drank my early tears:
 My brother next, neglecting wealth and fame, 75
 Ignobly burn'd in a destructive flame:
 An infant daughter late my griefs increas'd,
 And all a mother's cares distract my breast.
 Alas, what more could fate itself impose,
 But thee, the last and greatest of my woes? 80
 No more my robes in waving purple flow,
 Nor on my hand the sparkling di'monds glow;
 No more my locks in ringlets curl'd diffuse
 The costly sweetness of Arabian dews,
 Nor braids of gold the varied tresses bind, 85
 That fly disorder'd with the wanton wind:

10 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Cui colar infelix? aut cui placuisse laborem?

Ille mihi cultus unicus auctor abest.

Molle meum levibus cor est violabile telis;

Et semper causa est, cur ego semper amem. 90

Sive ita nascenti legem dixere sorores,

Nec data sunt vitae fila severa meae;

Sive abeunt studia in mores, artesque magistrac,

Ingenium nobis molle Thalia facit.

Quid mirum, si me primae lanuginis aetas

Abstulit, atque anni, quos vir amare potest?

Hunc ne pro Cephalo raperes, Aurora, timebam:

Et faceres; sed te prima rapina tenet.

Hunc si conspiciat, quae conspicit omnia, Phoebæ;

Jussus erit somnos continuare Phaon.

Hunc Venus in coelum curru vexisset eburno;

Sed videt et Marti posse placere suo.

O nec adhuc juvenis, nec jam puer! utilis aetas!

O decus, atque aevi gloria magna tui!

Huc ades, inque sinus, formosæ, relabere nostros: 105

Non ut ames oro, verum ut amare finas.

Scribimus, et lacrymis oculi rorantur obortis:

Aspice, quam sit in hoc multa litura loco.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 11

For whom should Sappho use such arts as these?
 He's gone, whom only she desir'd to please!
 Cupid's light darts my tender bosom move,
 Still is there cause for Sappho still to love: 90
 So from my birth the Sisters fix'd my doom,
 And gave to Venus all my life to come;
 Or while my Muse in melting notes complains,
 My yielding heart keeps measure to my strains. 94
 By charms like thine which all my soul have won,
 Who might not --- ah! who would not be undone?
 For those Aurora Cephalus might scorn,
 And with fresh blushes paint the conscious morn.
 For those might Cynthia lengthen Phaon's sleep,
 And bid Endymion nightly tend his sheep. 100
 Venus for those had rapt thee to the skies,
 But Mars on thee might look with Venus' eyes,
 O scarce a youth, yet scarce a tender boy!
 O useful time for lovers to employ!
 Pride of thy age, and glory of thy race, 105
 Come to these arms, and melt in this embrace!
 The vows you never will return, receive;
 And take at least the love you will not give.
 See, while I write, my words are lost in tears;
 The less my sense, the more my love appears. 110

12 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Si tam certus eras hinc ire, modestius isses, 110

Et modo dixisses: Lesbi puella, vale.

Non tecum lacrymas, non oscula summa tulisti;

Denique non timui, quod dolitura fui.

Nil de te mecum est, nisi tantum injuria: nec tu,

Admoneat quod te, pignus amantis habes.

Non mandata dedi; neque enim mandata dedissem

Ulla, nisi ut nolles immemor esse mei. 120

Per tibi, qui nunquam longe discedat, amorem,

Perque novem juro, numina nostra, Deas;

Cum mihi nescio quis, Fugiunt tua gaudia, dixit:

Nec me flere diu, nec potuisse loqui;

Et lacrymae deerant oculis, et lingua palato:

Astrictum gelido frigore pectus erat.

Postquam se dolor invenit; nec pectora plangi,

Nec puduit scissis exululare comis.

Non aliter quam si nati pia mater adempti

Portet ad extractos corpus inane rogos,

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 13

Sure 'twas not much to bid one kind adieu,
 (At least to feign was never hard to you)
 Farewell my Lesbian love, you might have said,
 Or coldly thus, Farewell oh Lesbian maid!
 No tear did you, no parting kifs receive, 115
 Nor knew I then how much I was to grieve.
 No lover's gift your Sappho could confer,
 And wrongs and woes were all you left with her.
 No charge I gave you, and no charge could give,
 But this, Be mindful of our loves, and live. 120
 Now by the Nine, those pow'rs ador'd by me,
 And Love, the God that ever waits on thee,
 When first I heard (from whom I hardly knew)
 That you were fled, and all my joys with you,
 Like some sad statue, speechless, pale I stood, 125
 Grief chill'd my breast, and stopp'd my freezing
 blood;
 No sigh to rise, no tear had pow'r to flow,
 Fix'd in a stupid lethargy of woe:
 But when its way th'impetuous passion found,
 I rend my tresses, and my breast I wound, 130
 I rave, then weep, I curse, and then complain,
 Now swell to rage, now melt in tears again.
 Not fiercer pangs distract the mournful dame,
 Whose first-born infant feeds the fun'ral flame.

14 S. A P P H O P H A O N I.

Gaudet et e nostro crescit moerore Charaxus 135

Frater; et ante oculos itque reditque meos.

Utque pudenda mei videatur causa doloris;

Quid dolet haec; certe filia vivit, ait.

Non veniunt in idem pudor atque amor: omne

videbat

Vulgus; eram lacero pectus aperta sinu. 140

Tu mihi cura, Phaon; te somnia nostra reducunt;

Somnia formoso candidiora die.

Illic te invenio, quanquam regionibus absis; 145

Sed non longa fatis gaudia somnus habet.

Saepe tuos nostra cervice onerare lacertos,

Saepe tuae videor supposuisse meos. 150

Blandior interdum, verisque fimillima verba

Eloquor; et vigilant sensibus ora meis.

Oscula cognosco; quae tu committere linguae,

Aptaque consueras accipere, apta dare.

Ulteriora pudet narrare; sed omnia fiunt,

Et juvat, et sine te non libet esse mihi.

At cum se Titan ostendit, et omnia secum;

Tam cito me somnos destituisse queror.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 15

My scornful brother with a smile appears, 135
 Insults my woes, and triumphs in my tears,
 His hated image ever haunts my eyes,
 And why this grief? thy daughter lives, he cries.
 Stung with my Love, and furious with despair,
 All torn my garments, and my bosom bare, 140
 My woes, thy crimes, I to the world proclaim;
 Such inconsistent things are love and shame!
 'Tis thou art all my care and my delight,
 My daily longing, and my dream by night: 145
 Oh night more pleasing than the brightest day,
 When fancy gives what absence takes away,
 And, dress'd in all its visionary charms,
 Restores my fair deserter to my arms!
 Then round your neck in wanton wreaths I twine,
 Then you, methinks, as fondly circle mine: 150
 A thousand tender words I hear and speak;
 A thousand melting kisses, give, and take:
 Then fiercer joys, I blush to mention these,
 Yet while I blush, confess how much they please.
 But when, with day, the sweet delusions fly, 155
 And all things wake to life and joy, but I,
 As if once more forsaken, I complain,
 And close my eyes to dream of you again:

16 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Antra nemusque peto, tanquam nemus antraque
 profint, 160
 Conscia deliciis illa fuere tuis.
 Illuc mentis inops, ut quam furialis Erichtho,
 Impulit, in collo crine jacente feror.
 Antra vident oculi scabro pendentia topho,
 Quae mihi Mygdonii marmoris instar erant.
 Invenio sylvam, quae saepe cubilia nobis 166
 Praebuit, et multa textit opaca coma.
 At non invenio dominum sylvaeque, meumque.
 Vile solum locus est: dos erat ille loci.
 Agnovi pressas noti mihi cespitis herbas: 170
 De nostro curvum pondere gramen erat.
 Incubui, tetigique locum qua parte fuisti;
 Grata prius lacrymas combibit herba meas.
 Quinetiam rami positis lugere videntur
 Frondibus; et nullae dulce queruntur aves.
 Sola virum non ultra pie moestissima mater 175
 Concinit Ismarium Daulias ales Ityn.
 Ales Ityn, Sappho desertos cantat amores:
 Haectenus, ut media caetera nocte silent.
 Est nitidus, vitroque magis perlucidus omni, 180
 Fons facer; hunc multi numen habere putant.
 Quem supra ramos expandit aquatica lotos,
 Una nemus; tenero cespite terra viret.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 17

Then frantic rise, and like some Fury rove
 Thro' lonely plains, and thro' the silent grove, 160
 As if the silent grove, and lonely plains,
 That knew my pleasures, could relieve my pains.
 I view the Grotto, once the scene of love,
 The rocks around, the hanging roofs above,
 That charm'd me more, with native moss o'ergrown,
 Than Phrygian marble, or the Parian stone. 166
 I find the shades that veil'd our joys before;
 But, Phaon gone, those shades delight no more.
 Here the press'd herbs with bending tops betray
 Where oft entwin'd in am'rous folds we lay; 170
 I kiss that earth which once was press'd by you,
 And all with tears the with'ring herbs bedew.
 For thee the fading trees appear to mourn,
 And birds defer their songs till thy return:
 Night shades the groves, and all in silence lie, 175
 All but the mournful Philomel and I:
 With mournful Philomel I join my strain,
 Of Tereus she, of Phaon I complain.

A spring there is, whose silver waters show,
 Clear as a glass, the shining sands below: 180
 A flow'ry Lotos spreads its arms above,
 Shades all the banks, and seems itself a grove;

§ B

18 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Hic ego cum lassos posuissem fletibus artus, 185

Constitit ante oculos Naias una meos.

Constitit, et dixit, "Quoniam non ignibus aequis

"Ureris, Ambracias terra petenda tibi.

"Phoebus ab excelso, quantum patet, aspicit aequor:

"Actiacum populi Leucadiumque vocant.

"Hinc se Deucalion Pyrrhae succensus amore

"Misit, et illaeso corpore pressit aquas. 195

"Nec mora: versus Amor tetigit lentissima Pyrrhae

"Pectora; Deucalion igne levatus erat.

"Hanc legem locus ille tenet, pete protinus altam

"Leucada; nec saxo defluisse time."

Ut monuit; cum voce abiit. Ego frigida surgo: 200

Nec gravidae lacrymas continuere genae.

Ibimus, o Nymphae, monstrataque saxa petemus.

Sit procul infano victus amore timor.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 19

Eternal greens the mossy margin grace,
Watch'd by the sylvan Genius of the place.
Here as I lay, and swell'd with tears the flood, 185
Before my sight a wat'ry Virgin stood :
She stood and cry'd, " O you that love in vain!
" Fly hence, and seek the fair Leucadian main ;
" There stands a rock, from whose impending steep
" Apollo's fane surveys the rolling deep ; 190
" There injur'd lovers leaping from above,
" Their flames extinguish, and forget to love.
" Deucalion once with hopeless fury burn'd,
" In vain he lov'd, relentless Pyrrha scorn'd ;
" But when from hence he plung'd into the main,
" Deucalion scorn'd, and Pyrrha lov'd in vain.
" Haste, Sappho, haste, from high Leucadia throw
" Thy wretched weight, nor dread the deeps below !
She spoke, and vanish'd with the voice --- I rise,
And silent tears fall trickling from my eyes. 200
I go, ye Nymphs ! those rocks and seas to prove ;
How much I fear, but ah, how much I love !
I go, ye Nymphs, where furious love inspires ;
Let female fears submit to female fires.
To rocks and seas I fly from Phaon's hate, 205
And hope from seas and rocks a milder fate.

Quicquid erit, melius quam nunc erit: aura subito.

Et mea non magnum corpora pondus habent.

Tu quoque, mollis Amor, pennas suppone cadenti:

Ne sim Leucadiae mortua crimen aquae.

Inde chelyn Phoebos communia munera ponam:

Et sub ea versus unus et alter erunt.

“Grata lyram posui tibi, Phoebe, poëtria Sappho:

“Convenit illa mihi, convenit illa tibi.”

Cur tamen Aëtiacas miseram me mittis ad oras,

Cum profugum possis ipse referre pedem?

Tu mihi Leucadia potes esse salubrior unda: 220

Et forma et meritis tu mihi Phoebus eris.

An potes, o scopulis undaque ferocior illa,

Si moriar, titulum mortis habere meae?

At quanto melius jungi mea pectora tecum,

Quam poterant faxis praecipitanda dari! 225

Haec sunt illa, Phaon, quae tu laudare solebas;

Visaque sunt toties ingeniosa tibi.

Nunc vellem facunda forent: dolor artibus obstat;

Ingeniumque meis substitit omne malis.

Ye gentle gales, beneath my body blow,
 And softly lay me on the waves below!
 And thou, kind Love, my sinking limbs sustain,
 Spread thy soft wings, and waft me o'er the main,
 Nor let a Lover's death the guiltless flood profane!
 On Phœbus' shrine my harp I'll then bestow, 221
 And this Inscription shall be plac'd below.

“ Here she who sung, to him that did inspire,
 “ Sappho to Phœbus consecrates her Lyre; 215
 “ What suits with Sappho, Phœbus, suits with thee;
 “ The Gift, the giver, and the God agree.”

But why, alas, relentless youth, ah why
 To distant seas must tender Sappho fly?
 Thy charms than those may far more pow'rful be,
 And Phœbus' self is less a God to me.
 Ah! can'st thou doom me to the rocks and sea,
 O far more faithless and more hard than they?
 Ah! canst thou rather see this tender breast
 Dash'd on these rocks than to thy bosom prest? 225
 This breast which once, in vain! you lik'd so well;
 Where the Loves play'd, and where the Muses dwell.
 Alas! the Muses now no more inspire,
 Untun'd my lute, and silent is my lyre,

22 S A P P H O P H A O N I.

Non mihi respondent veteres in carmina vires. 230

Plectra dolore tacent: muta dolore lyra est.

Lesbides aequoreae, nupturaque nuptaque proles;

Lesbides, Aeolia nomina dicta lyra;

Lesbides, infamem quae me fecistis amatae;

Definite ad citharas turba venire meas.

Abstulit omne Phaon, quod vobis ante placebat. 235

(Me miseram! dixi quam modo pene, meus!)

Efficite ut redeat: vates quoque vestra redibit.

Ingenio vires ille dat, ille rapit. 240

Ecquid ago precibus? pectusne agreste movetur?

An riget? et Zephyri verba caduca ferunt?

Qui mea verba ferunt, vellem tua vela referrent.

Hoc te, si sciperes, lente decebat opus.

Sive redis, puppique tuae votiva parantur

Munera; quid laceras pectora nostra mora?

Solve ratem: Venus orta mari, mare praestet eunti.

Aura dabit cursum; tu modo solve ratem.

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 23

My languid numbers have forgot to flow, 230

And fancy sinks beneath a weight of woe.

Ye Lesbian virgins, and ye Lesbian dames,

Themes of my verse, and objects of my flames,

No more your groves with my glad songs shall ring,

No more these hands shall touch the trembling

string: 235

My Phaon's fled, and I those arts resign

(Wretch that I am, to call that Phaon mine!)

Return, fair youth, return, and bring along

Joy to my soul, and vigour to my song:

Absent from thee, the Poet's flame expires; 240

But ah! how fiercely burn the Lover's fires?

Gods! can no pray'rs, no sighs, no numbers move

One savage heart, or teach it how to love?

The winds my pray'rs, my sighs, my numbers bear,

The flying winds have lost them all in air! 245

Oh when, alas! shall more auspicious gales

To these fond eyes restore thy welcome sails?

If you return --- ah why these long delays?

Poor Sappho dies while careless Phaon stays.

O launch thy bark, nor fear the wat'ry plain; 250

Venus for thee shall smooth her native main.

§ B 4

Ipse gubernabit residens in puppe Cupido :

Ipse dabit tenera vela legetque manu.

Sive juvat longe fugisse Pelasgida Sappho ;

(Non tamen invenies, cur ego digna fuga.) 255

[O saltem miserae, crudelis, epistola dicat :

Ut mihi Leucadiae fata petantur aquae.]

SAPPHO TO PHAON. 25

O launch thy bark, secure of prosp'rous gales ;
Cupid for thee shall spread the swelling sails.
If you will fly --- (yet ah! what cause can be,
Too cruel youth, that you should fly from me?)
If not from Phaon I must hope for ease, 256
Ah let me seek it from the raging seas:
To raging seas unpity'd I'll remove,
And either cease to live or cease to love!

SARPHO TO PHAON.

O launch thy bark, focus of my eyes,
Cupid for thee shall tread the swelling seas,
If you will fly - (yet ah! what canst thou do)
Too cruel youth, that you should fly from me!
If not from Phoen I must hope for help,
Ah! let me look it from the raging sea,
To raging seas supply I'll remove,

And offer thee to love or else to hate.

TO

ABELLARD.