

SAPPHO

THE TENTH MUSE

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In this finely drawn portrait, Sappho of Lesbos narrates her extraordinary life, from her childhood in war-torn Mitylene to her later relentless search for passionate love. Driven by the all-consuming fever of her Muse-inspired poetic gift, Sappho leads the reader on a journey that is at once turbulent and divine, desperate and sensuous. With breathtaking lucidity and great leaps of imagination, Nancy Freedman shows us a Sappho we have never known -- and one we will never forget. The toast of kings for her verse, Sappho was also a shrewd businesswoman, an educator, an advocate of women's equality, and a rebel who was banished from her island home. Remembering her solely as a lesbian icon reveals only one aspect of her multifaceted personality. Here, finally, Nancy Freedman gives us the complete Sappho. She was arguably the most accomplished lyric poet of the ancient world, but her writing was all but destroyed by the early Church. Only in this century have fragments been uncovered, so that we too may glimpse the force of this strangely enigmatic woman. Contradictory in nature, she inspired equally passionate adoration and loathing; her fame brought her a series of obsessive loves. Her relations with women are well known, but it was for the love of a man that she set sail to face her destiny.

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