

Ianthe's POEMS OF THE WEEK, 20th May.

Some voices of the Ancients this week...

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* Anacreon (Asia Minor, 570?-485 B.C.) 'O Pretty Child (Girls)
* Theognis of Megara (Ancient Greece, mid-600's B.C.)
from 'The Second Book' (Boys)
* Samuel Ibn Nagrillah (Hebrew Spain, 933-1056 A.D.)
'Where Is The Stuttering Boy ?' (Boys)
* Asklepiades (Ancient Greece, 4th Century B.C. ?) 12 (Girls)

O Pretty Child...

O pretty child,
your little heart will tremble before many men...

Your grandmother thinks
she is raising you among the lilies
as a sensible girl, but you have slipped down

to the flood-fields of hyacinth
where Kypris has unharnessed
her horses, and hitched them on a rope.

And you have burst, little foal, into the middle
of summer, exciting the hearts
of many idle poets,

Herotima, whom all men would ride.

Anacreon.

from 'The Second Book', lines 1249-1256.

Boy, you're like a horse. Just now sated with seed,
you've come back to my stable,
yearning for a good rider, fine meadow,
an icy spring, shady groves.

The man who doesn't love boys and single-foot horses
and dogs, his heart will never know pleasure.

Happy the man who's got boys for loving and single-foot horses,
hunting dogs and friends in foreign lands.

Theognis of Megara.

Where Is The Stuttering Boy ?

Where is the stuttering boy, where has he gone,
gazelle perfumed with pure myrrh and frankincense ?
The moon has concealed the light of the stars -
the graceful beloved conceals the light of the moon !
He chirped with soft speech and relied upon
Him who gave voice to the turtle-dove and swallow at their time.
The letter 'r' cannot hope for union with him, nor can I:
Avoidance includes us both and makes us equal in misfortune !
When I am alone, I write 'r' on the palm of my hand,
I weep lamenting, and so does the letter 'r'.

Samuel Ibn Nagrillah

12

Dorkion, sweet little tomboy,
Knows Cupid's every trick:
Arrows of desire - those eyes! -
Tiptilted cap, short skirt, no knickers...

Asklediades

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ends.