


Verses to move you, lines you'll love, from old favorites to modern classics, here are...

THE 100
BEST
POEMS
OF ALL
TIME



Edited by LESLIE POCKELL

From *The Iliad*

HOMER
(9TH–8TH CENTURY B.C.E.?)

This version of Homer's great epic of wounded honor and vengeance was translated into English by George Chapman (1559?–1634), a contemporary of both Shakespeare and John Donne.



Achilles' banefull wrath resound, O Goddess, that
 imposd
Infinite sorrowes on the Greekes, and many brave
 soules losd
From breasts Heroique—sent them farre, to that
 invisible cave
That no light comforts; and their lims to dogs and
 vultures gave.
To all which Jove's will gave effect; from whom
 first strife begunne
Betwixt Atrides, king of men, and Thetis' godlike
 Sonne.

He Is More Than a Hero

SAPPHO
(7TH CENTURY B.C.E.)

Only fragments remain of the lyrical work of this legendary poet, many of them poems of friendship and love of other women.



He is a god in my eyes—
the man who is allowed
to sit beside you—he

who listens intimately
to the sweet murmur of
your voice, the enticing

laughter that makes my own
heart beat fast. If I meet
you suddenly, I can't

speak—my tongue is broken;
a thin flame runs under
my skin; seeing nothing,

hearing only my own ears
drumming, I drip with sweat;
trembling shakes my body

and I turn paler than
dry grass. At such times
death isn't far from me.

Psalm 23

THE PSALMIST
(6TH CENTURY B.C.E.?)

While the original Hebrew text of the twenty-third Psalm is usually ascribed to the biblical King David, this familiar English rendition is that of the King James Version of the Old Testament. The translation was the work of scholars who were contemporaries of Shakespeare, and almost his equal in the expressiveness and beauty of their language.



The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth
me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of
righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine
enemies: thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of
my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
for ever.

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