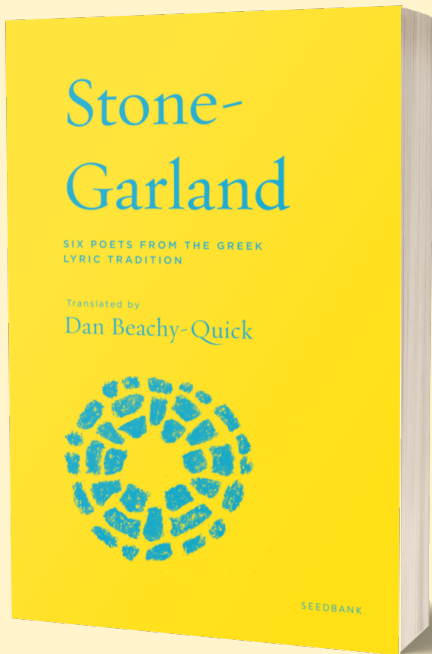


# STONE-GARLAND SIX POETS FROM THE GREEK LYRIC TRADITION

## BY DAN BEACHY-QUICK

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. The opening poem from Simonides section, “Fragment on Orpheus,” circles back to Dan Beachy-Quick’s introduction and the connection that song has to poetry. How do these opening lines orient the rest of the selections? What is the function of song throughout the poems?
2. In Anacreon’s section are the lines: “If the sting / of the bees works such / suffering, how much do you / think they suffer, Love, / those ones in pain, you strike?” (29). The power—and pain—of love is a recurring theme throughout each of the poets’ work. How do lines like these, and others, affect your perception of the human condition and love?
3. The title *Stone-Garland* evokes a sense of weaving together the writing of these different ancient Greek poets. How does Beachy-Quick accomplish this in his translation? How do you see the works of the poets interacting with each other?
4. In many of the selections, we see the role of fate and the gods as the ultimate deciders in the eyes of the six poets. How does this transfer to today, and how have these roles been exchanged for other determinants?
5. Beachy-Quick ends each of the sections with sepulchral lines about the poet whose work has just been read. What does this structure reiterate about the cycle of life? What do you reflect on as you read the sepulchral poems?
6. Beachy-Quick states that “*Stone-Garland* is simply a selection of lyric poems and fragments from ancient Greek poets that I’ve long loved and admired.” What selections do you most admire and resonate with?
7. Humility is central to the works within *Stone-Garland* and was critical in Beachy-Quick’s vision for the book. How does Beachy-Quick achieve this humility in his craft? How are the selected poems a reminder of humility for you?
8. It is difficult to categorize this book—it is not simply Greek poetry, or love poetry, or lyric poetry. *Stone-Garland* is transcendent in its structure and content. How would you explain this resistance to category?
9. Though the poetry within *Stone-Garland* is centuries old, Beachy-Quick’s translation has made it accessible to all readers. How does the language bring the poems and their poets back to life? How is the content still relevant to the topics of today?
10. As part of the Seedbank series *Stone-Garland* can be regarded as a guide for reflection on our relationship to the world around us. In what ways does this book challenge and broaden your perception of the world and humanity?

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## SYNOPSIS

*Stone-Garland* is a lyrical wandering through the past of six ancient Greek poets; it is a collection of human sentiments and pleasures. It emerged through Dan Beachy-Quick's years studying ancient Greek and his aspiration to get closer to the roots of lyric imagination. Throughout the selections, we meet six poets: Simonides, Anacreon, Archilochus, Theognis, Alcman, and Callimachus. We learn about Simonides' view of wealth versus wisdom, Archilochus's revenge against Lycambes, Callimachus's position as head librarian of the Great Library, and more. Their lives and work are a refreshing glimpse into ancient Greek poetry and offer many points of reflection for readers.

*Stone-Garland's* structure—six sections beginning with brief essays introducing each poet followed by complete and partial poems from their work—embodies the garland imagery of piecing together their stories and the lessons learned over time. There are no barriers to these lessons—from love to war, freedom and death—the poems are more of a journey, with each section ending in a sepulchral poem about the poet whose work has just been read. Beachy-Quick does a marvelous job in his translations, bringing the words to today's context; the poetry is not just appealing for the scholiast or historian, but for everyday readers seeking a reminder that we are all human.

There is an overarching sense of humility in the content of the poems and the language Beachy-Quick uses. *Stone-Garland* is a pathway into the deepest parts of ourselves—it cannot be summed up into one category, as it explores all of the characteristics that make us human. The nature of this work seeks to carry on the lives of the six poets and the universality that their words have on humanity.

## ABOUT THE SEEDBANK SERIES

This new series of world literature expands Milkweed's publishing program to bring ancient, historical, and contemporary works from cultures from around the world to American readers. Just as repositories around the world gather seeds to ensure biodiversity in the future, Seedbank gathers works of literature from around the world that foster conversation and reflection on the human relationship to place and the natural world—exposing readers to new, endangered, and forgotten ways of seeing the world.