

Praxilla

A lyric poet of the 5th c. BCE from Sicyon.

κάλλιστον μὲν ἐγὼ λείπω φάος ἡελίοιο,
δεύτερον ἄστρο φαεινὰ σεληναίης τε πρόσωπον
ἦδὲ καὶ ὠραίους σικύους καὶ μῆλα καὶ ὄγχνας[.]

The dying Adonis laments the things he will miss. The poem survives because Zenobius (2nd c. C.E.) quotes it in explaining the proverb, ἡλιθιώτερος τοῦ Πραξιλλῆς Ἀδώνιδος (4.21). The poem was famous for its supposed bathos: “more vapid than Praxilla’s Adonis” became proverbial. But one person’s bathos is another’s pathos. Individual details of everyday life make popular songs appealing.

1 φάος ἡελίοιο = φῶς ἡλίου

2 φαεινὰ (φανός) *radiant, shining*

σεληναίης = σελήνης < σελήνη *The moon*
πρόσωπον *face*

3 ὠραῖος *timely, seasonable, ripe*

σίκυος *cucumber*

μῆλον *apple*

ὄγχνη *pear*