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Brain Dump: *If Not, Winter*

Carson translates, “Someone will remember us/ I say/even in another time” (147). These words, believed to be from Sappho’s writings, summarize the thoughts that this week’s text and lecture have evoked from me. I have found myself wondering what my meaning in life will be. Will I be remembered for anything? I find myself romanticizing Sappho’s words and her existence, finding beauty in her sadness. This week’s content has brought me to wonder what it means to be remembered and what the true feeling of love is.

The concept of permanence is one of deep complexity. In a way, we are all seeking a sense of permanence. We all strive to make a difference in our world in some way, but in reality, in 100 years, we will most likely not be in existence. Our names will likely be seldom uttered, and this thought is a bit haunting. We can spend the entirety of our lives attempting to exert good in the world and make a name for ourselves, but for what purpose? Simply to be forgotten? On this thought, Chuck Palahniuk says, “We all die. The goal is not to live forever; the goal is to create something that will.” This thought to me is beautiful, and is exactly what we see in Sappho’s works. Thousands of years after Sappho’s death, her name is remembered because of the work that she left on Earth. By creating, Sappho achieved immortality. Sappho’s name will never be lost because the remnants of her works have been saved and remembered for all of eternity. To me, this is utterly beautiful that one’s words can ensure that their thoughts and their

being as a whole have a place here in our modern world. We can see the thoughts that Sappho had when she lived, which is almost as if she were still here today. I find a great amount of beauty in this, because I am able to find solace in knowing that in some way, my life will be remembered, just as Sappho believed hers would be. My writings, my thoughts, my deepest feelings might be remembered by someone, somewhere, one day. A struggle that I often find myself battling is the thought that I might not make a difference in this world. I am haunted by the idea that I will simply float through my life in a zombie-like state, not living by any matter and substance. However, if I am able to create something that ensures that my name and what I stood for will not be forgotten with the passing years, then I am comforted and more motivated to be what I want to be. It is so interesting to me that we remember Sappho by her words and feelings, as we find ourselves able to relate to them. We find ourselves experiencing the same feelings now as Sappho might have had thousands of years ago, and that shows me that humans are innately the same internal beings, despite the passing of immense amounts of time. These feelings that we experience bring me to my next thought when exploring this week's content: love.

How beautiful and tragic is it that with the passing of thousands of years, the common unifier is the feeling of love? This is beautiful because love in itself is a thing of true magnificence. Love has more power than most forces brought upon man. Love has the ability to control one's thoughts, actions, and existence as a whole. How beautiful is it that we are able to understand the human situation through the exact same feeling that we can never truly describe? Though we can not perfectly describe it, we can connect ourselves as humans, despite the passing of time. We understand that we are capable of sharing the same experiences that make us

undoubtedly human. However, this concept is also tragic because pain is what unifies us as a human society, as well. Love brings pain, which all humans experience. We can not in any situation find love with an absence of pain. We feel pain because we care enough to love. We give pain power through the acceptance of love. Once we love someone, which can be the most fulfilling feeling, we give them the power to hurt us, and this hurt is inevitable. However, we often decide that this pain is worth the love, because that person is worth it to us. It is beautiful that love can be so selfish and selfless at the same time. It is selfish because we allow ourselves to hurt another because we love them, but it is selfless, as we allow ourselves to be hurt for this same reason. Anyone who has experienced love will understand the sense of pain that comes with the most ardent love. We often see this in Sappho's works, with powerful words such as, "you burn me" (38). To burn is to have a fiery, sharp pain. The only power that can claim this kind of pain is that of love. Love. The common unifier of all human civilization. The basic human emotion, yet the most powerful human emotion. Love. That which has the power to build us up to feel almost as if we are a greater being, but also which has the power to destroy us, to burn us, to make us feel in ways we have never felt. Love.

Overall, it is beautiful to me how closely we can relate to Sappho's works, despite the amount of time that has passed. Despite the evolution of the physical and technological world around us, humans have ultimately and internally remained a constant. Although in Sappho's works, we do not often see so much as a complete thought, let alone a full understanding of her mind, we are able to relate to her words in ways that we might not even understand. Internally, reading or hearing her words cause us to feel a certain way immediately, based solely on our own human intuition; the very same intuition that connects us with past human beings, as part of the

human situation as a whole. Sappho's desire to be remembered is a wish that we all desire, as we strive in our day to day lives, working toward a goal. Sappho's joy and pain due to love is something that we can also identify with, as we see ourselves manipulated by love each day we breathe. How beautiful is it that in this way, we might achieve a sense of permanence? By continuing to have these senses of human emotion that tie us to human beings thousands of years our elder, a part of us lives on forever. That, to me, is the essence of beauty in the human condition.