



# Ovid's Heroines: A Verse Translation of the Heroides

*Ovid*

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## **Ovid's Heroines: A Verse Translation of the Heroides** Ovid

The "Heroides", written by Ovid some 2000 years ago, consists of a series of imaginary letters by legendary females of antiquity to their hapless lovers or husbands. The verse letters - purportedly penned by such heroines as Helen, Medea, Penelope, Dido, and Sappho - are the outpourings of women who have been cruelly victimized, yet they are written in the witty and ironic tone for which Ovid is famous. As a source of inspiration for other poets, as a model for the epistolary novel and the dramatic monologue, and as feminine footnotes to Greek prehistory, the letters have fascinated readers from Ovid's time to the present. The "Heroides" is now available in a verse translation written by the poet Daryl Hine. His rhymed couplets convey Ovid's unmistakable voice, by turns frivolous and pathetic, learned and racy. Each of the 21 letters (18 by women and 3 by their lovers) is preceded by a translator's note identifying the writer and her lover and sketching the relevant background. A chronological rearrangement of the poems, to accord with mythological time, is intended to enhance their value as a companion to any reading of classical literature and mythology.

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