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## Sappho

**Maura Reilly:** Sappho was a prolific poet of ancient Greece who was proclaimed the Tenth Muse by Plato. Much of Sappho's poetry was composed among a community of women on the Isle of Lesbos. She is known for innovating the form of poetry through her first-person narration (instead of writing from the vantage point of the gods) and by refining the lyric meter. While acclaimed during her lifetime, Sappho's writings were criticized and ultimately destroyed by the church after the fourth century because of their erotic and lesbian imagery. Attempts to revive her poetry began in the Renaissance and have continued throughout history. This place setting incorporates motifs from Greek art and architecture as well as references to Sappho as the "flower of the graces," a name later given to her by contemporary writers. The plate includes an abstracted floral form, with the petals glazed in colors suggestive of the Aegean Sea surrounding the island of Lesbos. Sappho's name on the front of the runner is embroidered in an eruption of color meant to signify her poetry as a burst of female creativity, and the S is illustrated with a lyre, the instrument that often accompanied recitations of Sappho's poetry.