



# Helen in Egypt: Poetry (New Directions Paperbook)

*Hilda Doolittle*

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A fifty-line fragment by the poet Stesichorus of Sicily (c. 640-555 B.C.), what survives of his Pallinode, tells us almost all we know of this other Helen, and from it H. D. wove her book-length poem.

The fabulous beauty of Helen of Troy is legendary. But some say that Helen was never in Troy, that she had been conveyed by Zeus to Egypt, and that Greeks and Trojans alike fought for an illusion. A fifty-line fragment by the poet Stesichorus of Sicily (c. 640-555 B.C.), what survives of his Pallinode, tells us almost all we know of this other Helen, and from it H. D. wove her book-length poem. Yet *Helen in Egypt* is not a simple retelling of the Egyptian legend but a recreation of the many myths surrounding Helen, Paris, Achilles, Theseus, and other figures of Greek tradition, fused with the mysteries of Egyptian hermeticism.

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