

# ‘Walking with Jesus in the Garden: Amazing Grace in The Song of Solomon’ by Nahum H. Sennitt

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
i) The Story Behind This Book .....	3
ii) Solomon’s Song in The Life of Israel .....	4
iii) Interpreting The Song .....	6
iv) Challenges and Gardens .....	6
v) Poetic Form & Structure .....	7
vi) The Theology of Erotic Language.....	8
vii) The Purposes of This Book .....	9
viii) Uneasiness About Sex .....	9
ix) A Note on How to Read This Book .....	10
 Act I: A Banquet of Anticipation .....	 11
Act II: Found, Lost, & Re-Discovered .....	13
Act III: Climax & Consummation.....	15
An Interlude .....	19
Act IV: Lost & Found Again.....	20
Act V: Affirmation & Anticipation.....	28
Act VI – The Song of Christ, The Beloved.....	31
Appendix – Standalone Verse Based on Solomon’s Song .....	34
Bibliography .....	36

כַּתְּפוּלַח בְּעֵצֵי הַיָּעַר כֵּן דּוֹדִי בֵּין הַבָּנִים  
בְּצִלּוֹ חֲמֻדָּתִי וַיֵּשְׁבֵתִי וּפְרִיָּו מְתוֹק לְחֻכִּי

*Like an apple tree in the midst of the forest, so is my Beloved among the sons. In His shade I exceedingly delighted and I sat, and His fruit was sweet to my palate. Song of Solomon 2:3.*

I devote this book to Jesus Christ my beloved Saviour, Lord, Brother, King and Friend. I shall dwell in Your shade and enjoy Your fruits to refresh my soul both now and in the age to come.

For 지현, the Shulamite of my youth. May God sustain us (2:5)

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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*“In my youth,” said Wimsey meditatively, “they used to make me read the Bible. Trouble was, the only books I ever took to naturally were the ones they weren’t over and above keen on. But I got to know the Song of Songs pretty well by heart. Look it up, Bunter; at your age it won’t hurt you ...”*<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

### i) The Story Behind This Book

At the end of 2021 I preached my final sermon series at a church I once pastored; the text I chose was The Song of Solomon. It was on that occasion that I discovered its profound use of sense-rich word pictures to describe God’s love for His redeemed people; it moved me in a fresh new. As I meditated on the words of The Song, I found that it helped its audience to *sense* the textures of God’s undeserving grace in a heartfelt way rather than a purely intellectual one. In time, 2:3 of The Song became my all-time favorite Bible verse both in Hebrew and English.

The Song accomplishes this by taking readers deep inside the delight of a marital romance between a Husband, King Solomon and His bride, a woman named The Shulamite. We read of this bride doting on her Beloved, and quickly see that He is not merely her love interest or even her Husband: He is, in fact, her very *identity*. She hangs of everything that He says and does and gives her all to Him. Most of the speech in The Song come from her mouth and are either directed to Him or about Him and the entire book both begins and ends with her speaking.<sup>2</sup> The Beloved, by contrast, only has eyes for her though she is often fickle and distracted. He is faithful and will love her to the end.

Why, you may ask, would I use The Song of Solomon, to write a poem concerning God’s lavish and overwhelming love? Why not choose a New Testament epistle or a Gospel that explicitly mentions Jesus? They too are just as heartfelt, such as Philippians where so much is said about Paul’s joy in the Lord. My primary reason for my doing this is that Jesus He fulfilled all of the Old Testament, including The Song and the more time we invest in understanding the first 39 books of Scripture, the more we will apprehend all that Jesus accomplished. Secondly, the New Testament canon has been such a mainstay in modern preaching and teaching that much of the Old Testament has been dismissed as irrelevant. When Old Testament books are studied it is typically books like Genesis or Isaiah that get a look-in, unlike outliers such as Obadiah or Lamentations. At other times when The Song is taught, preachers get too far ahead of themselves by making The Song sound

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<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Sayer, *The Vindictive Story of the Footsteps That Ran*, Standard Books, accessed 2 February, 2024, <https://standardebooks.org/ebooks/dorothy-l-sayers/lord-peter-views-the-body/text/the-vindictive-story-of-the-footsteps-that-ran>.

<sup>2</sup> Chapters 2:3-10 are spoken by her, as well as the vast majority of 5:2-6:3 and 7:10-8:4. That corresponds to more than half the speeches in The Song.

like a trashy pulp novel. Both problems leave modern Christians bereft of the full counsel of God.

The Song is also not a typical biblical book in the sense that it is mostly meditative, although it does contain narrative passages (e.g. 3:1-4). It is not a pastoral letter and does not discuss theological themes like repentance or justification. It also does not contain prophecies such as those in Jeremiah. To the contrary, it uses imagery that is poetic and even explicitly erotic that can make a seasoned saint shift in his or her chair. Yet making us squirm in our skins is exactly what Scripture is good at doing with almost all of its doctrines! If anything, the difficulty of the text is all the more reason why our efforts to understanding it are essential for our spiritual growth.

Finally, it is worth noting that this sacred text was not named *The Thesis* or *The Systematic Theology of Solomon*; instead, it was named *The Song of Solomon*,<sup>3</sup> for it takes the raw, didactic facts of God's love and uses imagery and poetic license to make them emotional experiences that draw God's people ever closer to Him (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

## ii) Solomon's Song in The Life of Israel

The place that The Song has in Scripture is a matter of historical discussion. In the English canon it has been placed between Ecclesiastes and Isaiah, which makes it the final installment of the Wisdom literature right before the final prophetic section of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew canon, however, The Song was the first of Five Festal Scrolls named the Megillot (מגילות) which the Israelites read at key festivals in their nation's history. These included:

- The Song (celebrating Yahweh's betrothal to Israel);
- Ruth (celebrating redemption);
- Lamentations (commemorating the Temple's destruction);
- Ecclesiastes (meditating on the fleetingness of life); and
- Esther (celebrating salvation).

At the time of Christ, The Song was used for the communal observation of the Passover, where the Jews understood the initiation of God's 'marriage' to His people Israel as occurring at the time of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.<sup>4</sup> In this first Passover event, Moses, in a manner of speaking, was the Master of Ceremonies who brought bride and Groom together. The Song was interpreted this way despite the fact that neither Moses or Yahweh God are not quoted in it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In Hebrew, the title name is literally 'The Song of Songs' but has been more accurately translated as 'The Song of Solomon' (*Sheer Ha-Sheereem L'Shulomoh*) since Solomon is explicitly identified as its author in 1:1. The word for 'song' (*sheer*) can also mean 'poem'.

<sup>4</sup> Barry G. Webb. *Five Festal Garments: Christian Reflections on The Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 10, ed. D.A. Carson. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 28. Emphasis Webb's.

<sup>5</sup> In 8:6 there is a mention of the Flame of Yahweh, but this *describes* God's hot and passionate love, rather than directly quoting Him. It is not a vision, such as the one in Ezekiel 1, or an oracle or prophecy.

This use of The Song was very deliberate as it helped the Israelites to remember that God's redeeming works for Israel were not just some pie-in-the-sky fluff but *real events* that had occurred in their nation's history.<sup>6</sup>

Yet it is all the more noteworthy that Israel used The Song to commemorate the *Passover*, for that event is the one that Jesus Christ directly fulfilled when He atoned for sin.<sup>7</sup> When Christ did this, He demonstrated God's love in ways that far surpassed the old Mosaic covenant and that He is indeed the One who betroths God to His people. He also taught that He is the Groom who will marry His bride the church in eschatological glory (Revelation 22:17). There are other more indirect ways that Christ fulfilled The Song and to really see this, one has to dig around. For instance, one could argue that Jesus' turning water into wine at a *wedding* (John 2:1-12) was a form of fulfilment since it pointed towards His atoning work that fulfilled Passover. We also read in Mark 15:23 that as Jesus was dying on the cross, He was offered wine mingled with myrrh (*smurnizō* in Greek), elements that are replete with significance in The Song (5:1). The vision of Christ knocking at the door of a church – which also symbolises the bride He is about to marry – parallels the Groom in Song of Solomon 5:2. There are many more parallels besides.

As for interpreting The Song there are many different approaches. One view is that it is a literal marriage between Solomon and an unnamed bride. Others see the poem as a description of pagan cults, where sex was used sex to worship idols (see Hosea 4:13-14). Another view is that The Song is a fictional but idyllic drama of how perfect sexual union between two human beings can be without any religious overtones.<sup>8</sup> Finally, many settle for the allegorical approach, where the marriage refers to God making a sacred covenant with Israel or Christ and His church in the life to come.<sup>9</sup> The major drawback with the last model is that when the allegory is misapplied, The Song can all too easily become a ventriloquist doll through which you can make it say anything you want. For instance, some may use it to say that The Song is an allegory of a national alliance between the UK and the US. (Yes, the text has been abused this way before!)

While writing this poem I used the allegorical approach to interpret it as being fulfilled by Jesus Christ.<sup>10</sup> I do not wish to go through an elaborate academic explanation of this except to simply ask: apart from Jesus who else would be the faithful Husband that the bride dotes on and clings to? Who else demonstrates the burning hot passionate love of God the Father for unrighteous sinners like us as in 8:6-7? While on the one hand we do not want to read things into the passage that are not warranted, neither do we want to be so closed minded that we simply refuse to

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<sup>6</sup> Webb: 28-29. Amazingly, The Song's words would eventually be used to foretell God's restoration of Israel (Hosea 14:4-7).

<sup>7</sup> See Matt 26:2; Mark 14:12; John 18:39-40, 19:14.

<sup>8</sup> In this day and age, such a method may even be used to justify perverted sexual behaviours, such as homosexual ones.

<sup>9</sup> God, speaking through Hosea, did just this in 14:4-7 of his prophecy.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Spurgeon interpreted The Song this way and was passionate about sharing its treasured message during his ministry. Almost 5% of his classic devotional book, *Morning & Evening*, reflects exclusively on its verses. He preached 52 sermon alone on The Song which were compiled in a 600+ page book named *The Most Holy Place: Sermons on The Song of Solomon* (see Bibliography).

make legitimate connections. I would say that The Song was based on a literal marriage between Solomon and some bride, but that since it was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it has its ultimate fulfilment in Christ, even though Solomon had no idea how that would eventually happen. This happens in many other parts of Scripture.

The other issue to consider is why there will no more marriage or sexual relations in the age to come (Matt. 22:30). Sex between a man and wife is a gift of God given for mankind to have a foretaste in our flesh of what ultimate fulfillment in God feels like; yet when we eventually enjoy Heaven's unending pleasures then those smaller pleasures of our worldly flesh will pass away. This is important to understand since in The Song the Husband enjoys sexual intimacy with His bride. Does this mean, then, that Jesus will have conjugal relations with His bride the church? Absolutely not: such an interpretation is pagan and even disgusting. Yet although the union between Jesus and His church will not be fulfilled in such a manner, they will eventually be realised, albeit in ways that we have never experienced before. Until then we will be like the Shulamite awaiting her Husband on the mountain of spices and shall enjoy 'intimacy' with Him in the meantime.

### iii) Interpreting The Song

Within the pages of this book, I have aimed to be faithful to Solomon's original text which he wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). As such, my poems are a representation of the text, but they are not the text itself, and as such I strongly urge you to also be diligent by poring over The Song's words in the Bible.<sup>11</sup> To help you do this, I have placed on the left-hand side of each page references to the Bible's chapter and verse. If I have in any way mis-represented the text, I apologise in advance; it was unintentional.

As for why I wrote this as an English poem, I did this because The Song is a Hebraic love poem, and nothing captures the heart like poetry or song. Poetry is the language of the *heart*, and hearts are important since they expose who we really are (Matthew 15:19) and are where we truly worship. Another reason is that we often need to hear the truth being presented afresh and in ways that slow us down, and that is what poetry makes us do. As such it is my prayer that this book will help you to understand God's revelation in ways that help you to walk closer with Him.<sup>12</sup>

### iv) Challenges and Gardens

Writing this book was a delight but it did come, however, with one particular challenge, and that was its original setting. The world at the time of The Song could not have been more different to the one we are living in now! In Solomon's day, life

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<sup>11</sup> The New King James Version (NKJV) and the English Standard Version (ESV) are particularly helpful translations.

<sup>12</sup> Leland Ryken. *Poetry of Redemption: An Illustrated Treasury of Good Friday and Easter Poems*. (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2023), 12, 20.

was comparatively snail-paced since the only thing that was high-speed were horses, rather than Wifi. Work was predominantly labor-intensive and out of doors. People in the Ancient Near East tended to know everyone since they lived in small villages no bigger than a few hundred people, and marriages were typically arranged along family and tribal lines. While writing this book I have attempted to close some of those gaps in order for its readers to appreciate its themes.

Within Solomon's Song, however, the familiar image of the garden (or *gan*, גן) runs throughout. For Christians, this theme has a broader meaning: it was in a garden where Yahweh God first made man and woman, a place devoid of shame and evil (Genesis 2:8, 25). However, from that same garden man was exiled because of sin (3:22-24), which he longs to return to. Hundreds of years later, when God's Son Jesus walked the earth, He taught parables that were predominantly placed in settings similar to a garden, such as farms and vineyards (Luke 13:6-9; Mark 4:1-8; Matt. 20:1-16).<sup>13</sup> More personally though, it was in a garden where He prayed before dying on the cross (Matthew 26:36-46), and it was a symbol of a garden that tortured His head when He died for sin (27:29).

Its theological significance aside, the garden image ideally suits the human soul. Gardens are zones of quietness, relaxation, peace, and contemplation. They take us out of the world to help us cope with the world. Personally speaking, I enjoy visiting the Botanic Gardens in Wollongong,<sup>14</sup> which features rose beds, rich shade, and ideal picnic spots. I wrote much of this book in those gardens. Gardens are also associated with the concept of the inner sanctum, a special place where we can pay close attention to our emotions and thoughts without distraction. There, we celebrate and worship God as creator, while also being in awe of what He created and how He fashioned it.<sup>15</sup>

For countries with a high population density and who live in crowded apartment buildings this image may come across as alien. It may also be difficult to imagine some of the spices and plants mentioned in the poem (4:13-14). If that is the case, then try to look those things up online or maybe even go to a grocer's store and see if you can smell those elements. Engaging your five senses will certainly add richness and texture to your understanding of The Song, which is what God intended.

## v) Poetic Form & Structure

Most of the poetry in this book is written in the ab-ab heroic pattern. However, there are some deviations from this which I included to give readers a break from the heroic's predictability. For instance, in Lines 224-243 are verses in the form of a *rubay'it*. There is a Vietnamese-style *song thất lục bát* is contained in Lines 266-297

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, Old Testament kings had secret gardens with hidden passageways (Jer. 39:4).

<sup>14</sup> A city south of Sydney. This coastal area has picturesque walking tracks and beaches.

<sup>15</sup> This is not the pagan concept of pantheism, which believes that 'God is in the mountains'. No; God maintains distance from His creation, although He created and sustains it. Nature is not for Christians to 'commune with nature' but a place to enjoy God's presence (Gen. 3:8).

and Lines 536-548 feature a *rondel*. While the biblical text of The Song mentions specific geographical locations such as Baal Hamon (8:11), I have generally avoided mentioning them since they are obscure to modern readers; instead, I have alluded to what they symbolise.

In this book, The Song has been broken up into five distinctive movements, or Acts which do not line up with the chapter and verse breaks in our English Bibles. The reason for this is that the scenes in The Song seem to shift whenever there are words of adjuration (see 2:7, 3:5, and 8:4).<sup>16</sup> While 5:1 does not contain any such warning, there is a distinctive shift in the drama right after it occurs. As such, this book is structured as follows:

Chapter	Title	Reference
Act I	A Banquet of Anticipation	1:1 – 2:7
Act II	Found, Lost, & Re-Discovered	2:8 – 3:5
Act III	Climax & Consummation	3:6 – 5:1
An Interlude		*
Act IV	Lost & Found Again	5:2 – 8:4
Act V	Affirmation & Future	8:5 – 8:14
	Anticipation	
Act VI	The Song of Christ, The Beloved	*

Aside from the original content of The Song (Acts I-V), I have included two extra sections. The first is an Interlude between Acts III and IV, which dwells on the union of the mutual affection of the Groom and Bride. The second addition is Act VI, which explores how Jesus Christ fulfils the poem and how Christians are to practically live in light of its truth. At the end I have included a brief Bibliography.

## vi) The Theology of Erotic Language

The Song conveys God's love through a marriage between a man and a woman and because of this the poem contains, by necessity, references to sexual intercourse and human genitalia. Some of is explicit (1:2; 5:3; 7:7), but most are referred to indirectly through a device known as a *double entendre*, which is "a word or phrase that might be understood in two ways, one of which is usually sexual".<sup>17</sup> It is quite similar to a pun. In The Song, for instance, a pomegranate represents not just

<sup>16</sup> G. Lloyd Carr. *Song of Solomon: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 19. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. D.J. Wiseman. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 44-46.

<sup>17</sup> "Double Entendre", Cambridge Dictionary, accessed 23 April, 2023, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/double-entendre>. Compared to American comedies, British comedies such as *Are You Being Served?*, *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em*, *Keeping Up Appearances*, and relied more upon double entendre in their humour. Double entendre allows the speaker to get away with saying something risqué and outlandish without saying it outright, and is often referred to as 'tongue-in-cheek'.



lusciousness but also women's breasts,<sup>18</sup> while the action of the man inserting his hand into a door latch (5:4) has a meaning which you can probably guess at. These are not things that I dreamed up myself, although one's imagination could easily go native. To make sure my imagination did not get the better of me, I read The Song's Hebrew text and consulted commentaries (see Bibliography).

The meaning of Solomon's *double entendre* in this poem have been explored in order to help readers grasp their meaning. While doing this, I was mindful of maintaining the dignity of the text and for human beings who are made in His image. I also wanted to maintain the beauty of sexual relations in marriage between a husband and a wife, which the apostle Paul described as an unfathomable mystery (Ephesians 5:32) which is the foundational truth that a male-female marriage/sexual union parallels the eschatological unity of Jesus Christ and His church (5:22-33; Revelation 19:7).<sup>19</sup>

## **vii) The Purposes of This Book**

Given the above, you must be wondering what the purpose of this book is. It is for you to savour the exquisite goodness of God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. For anyone reading this who is not a Christian, I pray that you will come to salvation and that it will shatter all false and negative allusions that you may have of Jesus; He is no kill-joy, but Joy itself for your heart and soul to feed on.

For those of you who are Christian, I pray that this book will take your walk with Christ so much deeper. Not even the most seasoned saint can say that he has 'arrived' at an adequate knowledge of God, and neither can you or I because we are so sinful and blind in so many parts of our life. I hope that God reveals to you through this book new dimensions of His love and grace to you that you have never ever beheld, that you may "taste and see that Yahweh is good". I have so badly needed that myself that I sometimes wept when I wrote it.

It is also my hope that this book will remind our decaying world of what healthy sex and marriage looks like since God invented them. They are all good things and Satan has been desecrating with fornication, adultery, divorce, pornography, homosexuality, and so on, which have all caused damage. My prayer is that this book I have written will bring purity and beauty to what has been desecrated by the evil one.

## **viii) Uneasiness About Sex**

The woeful tragedy of sexual abuse seems to go on ignored. Perhaps you as a reader have been badly traumatised and damaged by such abuses as these, and if so,

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<sup>18</sup> Pomegranates also symbolize many other things in the poem too, including red cheeks (4:3).

<sup>19</sup> For a thorough and helpful discussion about how Jesus fulfils the role of a bride-groom, as well the motif of Yahweh as a loving Husband married to a faithless bride, read *God's Unfaithful Wife: A Biblical Theology of Spiritual Adultery* by Raymond C. Ortlund Jr, in the NSBT series (see Bibliography). Chapters 6 and 7 of Ortlund's book are particularly insightful.

my heart really goes out to you. I have some understanding of what this is like in my own past. I will inform you here upfront that this book you are about to read does describe sexual imagery and behavior in the context of a marriage. If this does bring up painful things for you, please know that it was not intentional on my part. If this happens, I suggest you talk to God directly and honestly about it, and seek the help of a safe pastor. If you do take the plunge and read this book to the end, I pray that your view of sexual intimacy will be restored. If you are single, I realise that it must be difficult to read a poem about man and wife enjoying sexual relations. Instead of leaving you feeling like you are missing out, I hope this book takes you closer to God as the One who will truly love and fulfil you. May you know it now and rest know that you will enjoy it even more in the life to come.

#### ix) **A Note on How to Read This Book**

Before you read this book, I urge you as much as dear life allows me to, that you read it *aloud*! Perhaps that might not be possible at all for you to do this for various reasons; but I hope you can. Perhaps you can read it with your spouse if you have one. (Maybe do not read it aloud on public transport, but give it a try if you dare.) Please do not read it nearby anyone younger than the age of 21, which was the age at which the Israelites read The Song, since that may not be helpful for younger ears. However, I guarantee that when you read it aloud, you will better grasp its message. If you cannot do this, do not worry, but just know that it helps. I would also recommend against reading it in a short blitz. I earnestly implore you: resist the modern pressure to do things as quickly as possible! Poetry is meditative and you get much more out of it by taking your time with it, just as you wouldn't eat a three-course meal in 10 minutes flat.

As for pronunciation, please note that I am an Australian and we pronounce words here differently than people in Louisiana or in Yorkshire. As such, some of the rhyming may sound a bit unusual to you. Where this happens, do not worry too much. Just read on and it will make sense.

God bless you, Nahum H. Sennitt.

## Act I: A Banquet of Anticipation

- 1:1 With these lines we sing along  
This tune of love by Solomon.
- The Shulamite (The Bride)*
- 1:2 Bees their nectar from flowers sip;  
To drink His love I kiss His lips.
- The virgins love and want You too, 5  
My King whose love do I pursue.  
Your love, my Love, does make me swoon  
Its liquored spice surpasses wine;
- 1:3 Like ointment sweet Your name is fine.  
Come take me now! It's not too soon! 10
- The Daughters of Jerusalem*
- 1:4 After you we run, good neighbour!
- The Shulamite*  
The King has brought me to His chambers!
- The Daughters of Jerusalem*  
We're glad and so rejoice with you!  
Our minds remember your love too.  
Much greater than aged wine it tastes. 15
- The Shulamite*  
Their love for You goes not to waste.
- 1:5 Daughters of Jerusalem – hark!  
I am so lovely yet so dark,  
Like tents the Bedouins use to roam,  
And like the drapes in Solomon's home. 20
- 1:6 Avert from me your precious eyes:  
The sun which burns and surely dries  
Has scorched my skin to darkened black.
- My brothers rage, for I was slack  
To tend the vines they gave to me. 25  
My own I kept not properly.
- 1:7 My Love, Your flocks at noon You feed.  
Please tell me where You cool their throats.

Why should my face be hid and cloaked  
Near Your colleague's sheepish breeds? 30

*The Beloved (the Groom)*

1:8 Fairest woman, if you know not  
Then follow the hooves of My flocks  
And feed your goat babes worn and spent  
Beside the shepherds' shifting tents.  
1:9 You are like Pharaoh's filly, dear, 35  
Drawing chariots, instilling fear.  
1:10 Your cheeks with jewels are finely decked  
With chains of gold around your neck.

*The Daughters of Jerusalem*

1:11 With gold and silver threads and beads  
We'll make you dazzle like a queen. 40  
Our threaded gems are sure to make  
You His queen; make no mistake.

*The Shulamite*

1:12 The King reclines at His table;  
His horses whinny in their stables.  
My nard spreads fragrance all around; 45  
No other scent could there be found.  
1:13 My Love is like a bag of myrrh:  
Between my breasts He rests unstirred.  
1:14 Like henna blooms is He to me,  
Plush orchard rows near wells and streams. 50

*The Beloved*

1:15 Your dove-like eyes I find so fair!  
How fine they are beyond compare!

*The Shulamite*

1:16 You are so handsome, sweet Dodi<sup>20</sup>  
A pleasant sight for eyes to see.  
Our bed with leaves is green and calm 55  
1:17 With cedar beams and fronds of palms.  
The rafters all are made of fir;  
Within Your arms I softly purr.  
2:1 I am the shade of Sharon's rose,  
A lily found in valley groves. 60

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<sup>20</sup> 'Dodi' is a Hebrew pronoun in that means My Love or My Beloved.

*The Beloved*

2:2 Like lilies in thorny quarters  
Is My love among the daughters!  
Compared to other breezes she  
Is honeyed air, the scent I breathe.

*The Shulamite*

2:3 My Man is like the trees of apples 65  
Among the forests wild and dark.  
Erect, He stands festooned and dappled  
Among the sons of flaking bark.  
Relieved, I sat inside His shade  
Atop the soil that housed the roots. 70  
I lingered long and yearned to stay;  
My palate sluiced His juicy fruits.

2:4 He took me to His house to feast  
With flagons full and trays of meat!  
His banquet hall was full of joys 75  
Replete with cymbals, flutes, and noise.  
Above my head a banner stood  
Of love He made with cedar wood.

2:5 No more can I stand or take;  
Sustain me now with raisin cakes! 80  
My strength is sapped; it's all been snaffled.  
Refresh me now with pears and apples!  
My heart with love is weighed right down.  
In love I sink and slowly drown.

2:6 My Love has so much grace to give; 85  
Without His love I cannot live.  
My head He holds in His left hand;  
His right embraces while we dance.

2:7 Daughters of Jerusalem prune  
Not the blooms of love too soon. 90  
By gazelles near trees in fields  
Pluck not love before it yields.

**Act II: Found, Lost, & Re-Discovered***The Shulamite (continued)*

2:8 My Man's voice rings through the valley!  
On wholesome notes His words are carried.

	Upon the mountains goes He leaping, Past meadows where scythes are reaping; Upon the hillsides goes He skipping, His nimble hooves not ever slipping.	95
2:9	My Love stands sure, so proud and tall Who hides behind a latticed wall; He gazes keen with shaded eyes To stare at me, His undressed bride.	100
2:10	With fragrant airs and love He breathes, My Love who trilled His love to me: "Arise, My sweet one! Come away	105
2:11	For winter's gasped his final day! Now spring gives birth and sings her song; The rain has passed; the past has gone.	
2:12	Soil spawns blossoms, flowers, and hues; The time has come to play our tunes With cymbals, lyres, and throbbing drums. Throughout the land the doves do thrum Above the ground where insects hum.	110
2:13	The fig trees make their fine display; With grapes the vines are well-arrayed, Their scents perfuming fruity spray. Arise, My sweet one! Come away!"	115
2:14	My Dove, let's meet in clefts of rock Our hearts as one to link and lock; Please let me see Your rugged face In secret cliffs, our hidden place. Your voice stirs up my soul to life; Come bless me, Lord, Your willing wife. Look on me now with tender grace That shines for me upon Your face.	120      125
2:15	Come now and catch for us the foxes; Their little babes defile our vines. Toss their dead in coffin boxes; Their claws no more to terrorise.	
2:16	Surely, Dodi is all mine And I am His throughout all time! With lily stems He feeds His flocks. My heart with His is linked and locked.	130
2:17	Before the darkened shadows flee And sunshine dawns on land and sea:	135

Turn, Beloved! Ascend the crags!  
 Surmount the peaks like sprinting stags!

- 3:1 On bed at night my Love I sought;  
 For all I looked, He'd not been caught!  
 I searched the room but heaved a sigh: 140  
 My Love I could not grasp or find!
- 3:2 I said, "I'll brave the blackened air!  
 I'll search all night our streets and squares.  
 My safety will I risk to take  
 To comb the place as with a rake". 145  
 For hours I used my precious time  
 Yet He I could not grasp or find.
- 3:3 The city watchmen laughed and shoved;  
 I asked them, "Have you seen my Love?"
- 3:4 Scarcely had I passed them by 150  
 When darkened turned that tortured sky.  
 Then out of nowhere Dodi passed;  
 He passed right then and there at last!
- Then and there His arms I grappled,  
 My Love who smelled like golden apples. 155  
 My Love at last I'd found through trial;  
 The search was worth each step and mile.  
 I found my Love and held no other  
 And took Him where my cherished mother  
 Did slumber in her humble home, 160  
 To walk no more through streets alone.  
 We both at last were well-received;  
 We slept where I was first conceived.
- 3:5 Daughters of Jerusalem prune  
 Not the blooms of love too soon. 165  
 By gazelles near trees in fields  
 Pluck not love before it yields.

### Act III: Climax & Consummation

#### *The Shulamite (continued)*

- 3:6 On paths of yellowed grains of sand,  
 Like smoke that clouds from fiery brands  
 I see a figure. Who is He 170  
 Who passes through these desert seas?  
 With the merchant's fragrant powders  
 Solomon comes with regal power!

3:7	Standing here I cannot slouch To see the King upon His couch. Most valiant men – sixty strong – Surround His palanquin like a throng.	175
3:8	With sweating arms they hold their swords, These valiant men of Israel's lords. These hardened experts with knives on thighs Do guard my King throughout the night.	180
	Like poles of smoke His presence comes Through the pink of sandy suns: With myrrh, perfumes, and frankincense My soul is stirred through every sense. I hear His armoured cavalcade;	185
3:9	By Lebanon was His palanquin made.	
	I smell His fragrance from afar As I see light from moon and star. I see Him ride on shoulders strong Upon that highway straight and long; I taste His kisses on my tongue And sigh so deep with longing lungs; I feel His fingers on my flesh And sense once more His skin so fresh. My flesh and soul were made to join Up with my King, my Love and joy.	190 195
3:10	That caravan makes me quiver Whose pillars He made with silver. With gold He fashioned its supports, Its seat with purple richly wrought. He paved its midst with Heaven's love And now it fits like hands for gloves.	200
3:11	Jerusalem's daughters come and see Such patterns in the tapestry! Go up, you daughters, from Mount Zion: See Him proud like kingly lions! Solomon boldly wears His crown; His mother gave it with a gown For the wedding of her boy, When we become one flesh with joy.	205 210



*The Beloved*

- 4:1 My sister-bride, how fair and fine  
 You are to Me, for you are Mine;  
 How fair and fine is your whole frame;  
 To be with you is love divine. 215  
 Cascading down like black-haired goats  
 With rushing hooves down mountain slopes  
 Are your dark locks from your sweet head,  
 That harp where Heaven plays her notes.
- 4:2 Your teeth, like sheep both washed and shorn, 220  
 Give birth to twins and endless spawn;  
 Your smile festooned with specks of stars  
 Do break the night 'fore morning's dawn.
- 4:3 Your lips and mouth, like scarlet strands,  
 Bind all My heart in mighty bands. 225  
 Behind your veil your temple sits;  
 Like pomegranates ripe they stand.
- Like boysenberries hanging low  
 Is the beauty of your nose,  
 A pendant jewel upon your face. 230  
 Its beauty only I could know.
- 4:4 Where David's shields and swords are decked  
 Is simply like your gorgeous neck,  
 A tower firm with spears and mace  
 Where armoured strength is stored and kept. 235
- 4:5 Upon your dainty, milky chest  
 Sit twin gazelles, two dainty breasts  
 Which feed on lilies green and white  
 Whose nipples give succour and rest.
- 4:6 Until the dawn births brand new days 240  
 And shifting shadows flee away  
 I will to myrrh-drenched mountains go  
 And fjords where frankincense does flow.
- 4:7 My love, in you I find no spot –  
 No blemish has you scarred or blotched. 245
- 4:8 My bride, come now to Lebanon:  
 Let us both stand on Mount Hermon.  
 From lion's dens and leopard's rooms  
 Let us enjoy some mountain views.

4:9	You have ravished all My heart, My sister bride, with just one look. Necklace links pulled Me apart; Now in Me are your tenterhooks.	250
4:10	Sister bride, your love is fair! It far surpasses wine and throne. Perfumed spice cannot compare Against your fragrance in My nose.	255
4:11	Like honeycomb drips your lips; Beneath your tongue is honey milk; When we kiss your love I sip. Come lie with Me 'tween sheets of silk! Cedared scents come from your dress To soothe My head in gentle creep; Covered whole in your caress I lie cocooned ensconced in sleep.	260 265
4:12 - 4:15	Secret garden closed and locked; Bower hidden, sealed in rock; In four walls, chained up spring; Inner fount found within is she, She My love who under trees Sways in gentle evening breeze Where there lies verdant lawns Grown by dew dropped at dawn. I sense Fragrant trees of frankincense, Myrrh, and aloes thick and dense With perfumes deep inside, She My love, She My bride. Such red Pomegranates are your beds Where your fruits and orchards, fed, Offer up juice and flesh Which you yield plump and fresh. Your yard Filled with cinnamon and nard Spread their fragrance wide and far. Calamus' hardened stick Stands erect, hard, and thick. There creeps Saffron's scent as water seeps While chief spices dance and leap From the air to My chest; Now may I find My rest. I count Endless realms of garden founts, Green cascading vales and mounts. Its endless living streams (Crystal blue, chilled, and clean) are yours Kept within your sacred walls	270 275 280 285 290

Waiting for Me when I call. 295  
 My key does turn the latch  
 To make your garden patch unlocked.

*The Shulamite*

4:16 Northern Wind, come blow around!  
 Spread my spice through air and ground!  
 Southern Wind, now blow your breath 300  
 To blow my spice in Dodi's chest.  
 My precious fumes move deep inside  
 That all this world be fortified.

*The Beloved*

5:1 To My garden have I come;  
 Parched with thirst is now My tongue 305  
 For My sister, you My wife  
 You who give your inner life.  
 I have gathered flesh from trees  
 Like old Adam did with Eve.  
 On My couch I eat at home 310  
 Honey gold with honeycomb;  
 Down My throat-pipe milk and wine  
 Mix and make My stomach lined.  
 Feast and eat all you, My friends!  
 Drink and drain unto the dregs! 315

**An Interlude**

*The Shulamite*

Forests dense with pointed spikes of pine  
 At mountains' feet protect my arbor;  
 Upon its seat I cool my ardor  
 After noon when sunlight loses shine.  
 Waiting for my Love I gather fruits 320  
 Like apricots and darkened cherries  
 And blackberries, mulberries, loganberries,  
 Boysenberries, cranberries wild and loose.  
 To the brim my basket overflows  
 And so I sit near rivers roaring 325  
 And close to runnels gently pouring,  
 There a place to picnic in the glow.

He my Love in our gazebo waits,

His tendril curls wear a wreath unthorned,  
 A circlet made from a branch untorn. 330  
 There we dance, His arm around my waist.

Cheek to cheek and under festoon lights  
 We dance inside our secret garden;  
 Our berries soft, no longer hardened,  
 There enjoying afternoon delight. 335

Wisps of appled breath from my Love's lips  
 Relieve my nerves and leave me singing  
 As both our souls continue mingling  
 While we sway together hip to hip.

Fruits of passion perfume passion's day; 340  
 Their sweet and sour gold and purple  
 Refresh the air with lemon myrtle  
 Where unheard breezes spread their spray.

Rows of lavender surround a path  
 Which leads towards a cedar cabin; 345  
 Inside its walls, like drunks in taverns,  
 We downed our love, cuddled, sang, and laughed.

A bathtub full of steaming water  
 With floating petals forming cover  
 Cocooned us safe with one another, 350  
 My Love's embrace our glue and mortar.

Neck-high did its gentle water reach  
 While on my Husband's chest I rested,  
 Curled in His arms, my heart sequestered  
 Inhaling sandalwood and peach. 355

Within my inner sanctum He dwelt  
 And I indwelt His holiest zone.  
 The greatest love I had ever known  
 Was there, all mine, to be known and felt.

#### Act IV: Lost & Found Again

*The Shulamite (continued)*  
 5:2 Dozing grips my wearied eyes 360  
 Yet my heart is all a-quiver  
 For I hear my Dodi's cries;

	In suspense I sigh and shiver. On my door He knocks and says, He my Husband and my Lover, "Open for Me, sister friend! Perfect dove! My head is covered With the dew of inky night; I have walked since hours early To enjoy your sweet delights; Now My hair is moist and curly".	365       370
5:3	Through His moistened cork-screw curls Hungry eyes at me did stare, Sending me to foreign worlds And to realms beyond compare. Off I cast my ivory robe – Dare I slip it on again? I had cleansed my soles and toes – Dare I let them more be stained?	375
5:4	Through the lock He placed His hand In the gap right at my door; Inside thrust deep my Man As I lay upon the floor. Up I stood to key the latch Op'ning wide to let Him in, Op'ning wide my garden patch, Both our spice to mix within. His stamen fills my pistil, Love's pollen in my stigma, His joy as clear as crystal. Long inside He lingered. I could barely stand or walk; I shook, and buzzed, and quivered. I could not speak. Barely talked Once love had been delivered. How my heart yearned and fluttered!	380       385    390   395
5:5	White my hands did slip and slide. White wet myrrh had them buttered; None could grip the lock inside.	
5:6	Then that door I opened wide To let my Dodi come inside Yet my Love had walked away. My silence meant He could not stay! How could I have been so slack? I had to hike another track. How my heart dropped and left	400     405

	When He spoke. I tramped bereft Seeking He who ate my fruits And drank the nectars of my juice; So I yelled His precious name Although no answer rang or came. Many times I fell and tripped To find Him. Then my hemline ripped.	410
5:7	Watchmen in the city square Did steal the veil atop my hair; They who watched the city walls Did take delight to see me crawl. With their hands they struck my face, Each jesting at my cold disgrace.	415
5:8	Sisters, hear my desperate plea! Daughters of Jerusalem, heed! Help me find my Lover lost! Come help me search through night and frost! I am sick with love, my friends! Please help before the evening ends!	420 425
5:9	<i>The Daughters of Jerusalem</i> Is your jewel more precious than The sapphires we possess as men? Does your river swifter go Compared to how our trickles flow That you call us to your aid To help you find what you waylaid?	430
5:10	<i>The Shulamite</i> He is white, tall and ruddy; Yours compared are lank and muddy. Chief is Mine among the crowd; To Him each knee and head are bowed.	435
5:11	Wrought of gold is His bold head While others' skulls are dust and lead. Your loves' locks sink like gravy; Mine's is raven black and wavy.	
5:12	Dodi's eyes sit still like doves As white as clouds which drift above. Calm they sit by rivers cool; Firm set they bathe in milky pools.	440
5:13	Your men's cheeks are caked with grime While Dodi's ones are joy sublime; Rows they are of spicy beds; Full-scented herbs is Dodi's head. Like lilies are His sensual lips:	445

	With liquid myrrh they endless drip.	
	Your men's lips are chapped and cracked	450
	So dry from moisture sorely lacked.	
5:14	Your men's hands are calloused, shod	
	While Dodi's hands are golden rods	
	Set with yellow beryl stones	
	That brightly shine like silver thrones.	455
	Inlaid full with sapphire gems	
	His body is carved ivory stem.	
	Have you found such men as this?	
	I mourn for you, for you have missed.	
	How I love His muscled chest!	460
	A marble marvel is His breast!	
5:15	Marbled pillars staunch and bold	
	Are His firm legs on plinths of gold.	
	Great like Lebanon's cedars	
	Is the countenance of my leader,	465
	He my King and only Lord;	
5:16	For Him I live and have been called	
	By His mouth that tastes so sweet.	
	I love Him down from scalp to feet!	
	Dodi is my soul and life	470
	For me His bride and jealous wife.	
	Lovely all throughout is He,	
	A willow firm in storm and breeze;	
	Others break and fall and bend	
	But not my Love, my Lord, and Friend.	475
	Daughters of Jerusalem:	
	Do you have such beloved men?	
	Can your men even hope to ape	
	He, my Love, who eats my grapes?	
	My soul loves Him, not just my heart,	480
	Not just my head, not just by word.	
	No greater love has else occurred.	
	From Him I cannot live apart.	
	<i>The Daughters of Jerusalem</i>	
6:1	Fairest woman of us all	
	Where has your Beloved gone?	485
	Which paths has He trekked along?	
	We shall help you search and call.	

*The Shulamite*

- 6:2 To His garden He has walked,  
To my patch with beds of spice  
To sustain His precious life 490  
While we've had this lengthy talk.  
There He's gathered lilies lean,  
He my Love so firm and fine.
- 6:3 I am His and He is mine  
And has fed on lilies green. 495

*The Beloved*

- 6:4 My love, at last in reunited flesh  
Our love at last has once again refreshed.  
Like Tirzah's gardens plumed with trellised lawns  
Are you, My queen. See how your beauty spawns!  
As splendid as Jerusalem you are; 500  
No other beauty looks like you by far.
- As fearsome as an army decked with shields  
Are you; at you all mighty men would kneel.
- 6:5 The way you stare at Me with milky eyes  
Does overwhelm Me. Look away, My bride! 505  
Your hair, like goats that sprint down mountains steep
- 6:6 Does shimmer. Yes, your teeth like fresh-washed sheep  
So brighten up this world of death and sin  
And none are barren; each do spawn their twins.
- 6:7 Your temples stand like pomegranates red 510  
Behind the veil that decorates your head.
- 6:8 My throne is wreathed with sixty chosen queens  
And eighty concubines who serve unseen.  
Unnumbered virgins sit before Me too  
Yet none of them, My love, contrast to you. 515  
My dove, you are so perfect when compared;  
You are the only one for Me! I stare  
And cannot draw My hungry gaze away.  
Your splendor could I glance upon all day.
- 6:9 Favoured above her sisters and brothers 520  
Is she by she who bore her, her mother.  
They call her 'Blessed', each girl and daughter.  
'A Jewel', My queens and concubines call her,  
So praising My dove to her face and back;  
Wherever she turns no words are in lack. 525
- 6:10 Who is she who looks on out like morning,  
A source of dawn and radiance pouring?



When darkness descends she shines like the moon  
 And in the daytime fires ablaze at noon.  
 Who is she who shatters swords forged with steel 530  
 As fearsome as soldiers hidden with shields?

My sister-bride you are to Me My friend,  
 The one for whom I serve in sacrifice.  
 My love for you, sister-bride, shall suffice  
 For you I give My life unto the end. 535

*The Shulamite*

6:11 Where the walnut orchard's growing  
 I walked down to find the nuts  
 Near my private garden hut.  
 Had pomegranate blooms been showing?  
 Had buds on vines in soft sun glowing 540  
 Grown in clusters, ripe to cut?

Where the walnut orchard's growing  
 I walked down to find the nuts.  
 Gathered fruits were my hands stowing  
 Well before the gates were shut, 545  
 Near where rivers cool were flowing.  
 Where the walnut orchard's growing  
 I walked down to find the nuts.

6:12 Lo, 'till now my eyes were blind  
 To see my soul grew me in size! 550  
 I'd become within so strong  
 Like the chariots of the throng  
 Of my kin both wise and meek,  
 The noble who in truth do speak.

*The Beloved and His Companions*

6:13 Shulamite, return to us! 555  
 Come! Return and dance with us!  
 How we long to see your face!

*The Shulamite*

What do you see in my face?  
 Is the Shulamite to you,  
 As it were, the dance of two 560  
 Camps of soldiers fighting war?  
 Tell me now, if you be sure.

*The Beloved*

7:1 Let us now dance, royal daughter of a prince!  
 Your feet in sandals awake Mine eyes!

	Like diamonds appear your curvaceous thighs, Twin works of sculptured art evinced.	565
7:2	Your crevice is a goblet deep and round; With spicy mead it swirls elixirs sweet. Your open cleft drips nectars from the heat And oozes honey from its moistened mound.	570
	Like stacks of wheat your waist is taut and trim; With lilies strung round it maintains its form.	
7:3	Like twin gazelles your breasts bounce like two fawns.	
7:4	Your neck's an ivory tower base to brim; Your eyes in which I swim are blue waters Beside Many Daughters' bright whitened gates. Like Lebanon's tower, tall and straight, Is your neck that guards Damascus' quarters.	575
7:5	Like fertile limestone at Mount Carmel's peak Is your head crowned with flows of purple dark, Meandering tresses making their mark On endless kings. I cannot think or speak!	580
7:6	How fair are you, a pleasant bounty full, An endless store of splendour and delight. You are a palm whose stature's grown full height That stands like sentries next to silent pools.	585
7:7	Your dappled breasts with rounded nipples brown Are like the dates that hang on palm tree fronds.	
7:8	I said, "I'll climb its branches tall and long And pluck their dates and pile them on the ground.	590
	Let now your breasts be like a clustered vine, Your breath to smell like apple cider fresh.	
7:9	The roof above your tongue's like ripe grapes pressed; Its taste, My dove, is like a wedding wine.	
	<i>The Shulamite</i>	
	For my Beloved the wine moves smoothly To help His tongue to glide upon my own. Within my heart my love can never slow;	595
7:10	I am His; His desire overwhelms me.	
7:11	Come, Beloved! To the fields Let us travel where the scythes Slay the grass through heat and flies, Harvesting the ripened yield.	600

	Let us lodge, Love, overnight Past the buzz of city rush Where the hamlets sleep and hush Under endless starry light.	605
7:12	Early let us rise and shine Seeing pomegranate blooms, Seeing if they've grown too soon Near the grapes upon the vine.	610
7:13	There my love is Yours to take. At our gates are pleasant fruits New and old from ground to shoot. With aromas of mandrakes. <sup>21</sup>	
	I have laid up all these things, Hungry for Your sensual touch. Now it's getting all too much Waiting for the love You bring.	615
8:1	If You were just like my brother Who dried the feeding chest And drained the milking udders Of our dear mother's breasts Then out in public we could show Affection free of shame!	620
	My kisses on Your cheeks would go; Like torrents unrestrained.	625
8:2	Then I no more would be despised But lead You to my home Where she, my mother, made me wise Throughout the years I'd grown. Then in Your palate You shall swill My warm and spicy mead; With tenderness I'll calm You still And there You'll rest and feed.	630
	On my chest two pomegranates Are filled with juice that's Yours Both as large as distant planets; In them Your drink is poured.	635
8:3	My head He holds in His left hand, A pillow for my soul;	640

<sup>21</sup> A mandrake is a reed plant which, when consumed, has an aphrodisiac affect (Genesis 30:14-16).

His right embraces while we dance  
With the warmth of glowing coals.

8:4 Daughters of Jerusalem, light  
Not love's spark too soon;  
Until it ripens with delight 645  
Pluck not the infant bloom.

### Act V: Affirmation & Anticipation

#### *The Shulamite (continued)*

8:5 There in the desert – who is she  
Who leans upon her Love?

I woke You under apple trees  
Where partridges and doves 650  
Do think to build with twigs a loft  
In spring and times of heat,  
Above the grass so plump and soft  
And Eden underneath.

'Twas there Your mother gave You birth 655  
Upon the soils of sin  
Into this dark and wicked earth,  
Unwelcome in an inn.

With myrrh and frankincense and gold  
They gave You as a gift 660  
Where beasts and sheep rest in their fold  
And shepherds past and drift.

8:6 Seal me on Your tender heart,  
The seat of Heaven's throne;  
May we never walk apart 665  
For I am Yours alone.

Seal me on eternal arms,  
The ones You hold me in,  
Held in Your protective palms,  
My heart no more to sin. 670

Your love holds as strong as graves,  
As fast as jealous fire!  
Endless do its embers blaze:  
It's Yahweh's hot desire.  
Its licking flames burn unquenched 675  
For sinners just like me;  
To save my soul He was sent  
Who died to set me free.

	Endless may I love Him too, My heart to never turn, Not to ever be untrue, Or ever left to burn.	680
8:7	Floods of oceans cannot drown Such love – nor can the sea; If You could buy love with crowns Or coins of treasuries Men would be such utter fools For love cannot be traded Or be used like common tools, Blunted and downgraded.	685      690
	<i>The Shulamite's Brothers</i>	
8:8	We have a breast-less sister Who is a baby fawn. How shall she find a mister, A groom of brain and brawn? What shall we do for our maid When she is spoken for?	695
8:9	A keep of stone thickly laid She'll be if she's a wall. Battlements of silver wrought We'll build around our pearl If she be a castle fort, Our precious sister-girl. If she be a doorway closed With logs of cedar we Shall hem her in enclosed With mighty scented trees.	700       705
	<i>The Shulamite</i>	
8:10	I am a wall of granite; My breasts are towers high. My rounded pomegranates Stand proudly to the sky. In His eyes I had become Like one who had found peace; When His words to me are sung Then all my worries cease.	710
8:11	In His garden bulbous grapes Swing on Solomon's boughs; Purple, red, and greenish drapes Hang bountiful and proud. These He leased to His keepers, His sun-baked rough recruits.	715    720

They gave a thousand pieces  
Of silver for His fruits.

8:12 Solomon, my Beloved:  
I stand before my vines.  
My keepers took two hundred 725  
Who harvested my lines.  
You may take a thousand, Dear;  
I give You so much more.  
Eat my fruits for endless years  
From deep within my stores! 730

Woman, I am made for man,  
His blessed compliment;  
Not another man for man;  
For Dodi was I sent.

*The Beloved*

8:13 In the garden castle you 735  
Dwell near the tendrils moist,  
Next to flowers gold and blue.  
They long to hear your voice:  
Our companions yearn to hear  
The words you are to say; 740  
Speak your voice and bless our ears.  
Please let Me hear, I pray!

*The Shulamite*

8:14 Come, Beloved! Hurry, please!  
Sprint like a fleeing stag.  
Put my aching heart at ease; 745  
Please tarry not or lag.  
Like young gazelles run to me;  
Move quick like flowing founts.  
Land as fast as stormy breeze  
Upon my spicy mount. 750

You shall be my tune and rhyme;  
You're all I'll taste and sense  
Through the years of rolling time,  
My myrrh and frankincense.  
Sweet I'll be a sacrifice 755  
To die each day to self  
Giving You my soul and life  
With all of Heaven's help.

**Act VI – The Song of Christ, The Beloved**  
**(A sonnet corona)**

*~ Atonement ~*

"My Love, you are the one for whom I died  
 Nailed high upon a barren, leafless tree 760  
 Your Husband purging your iniquities.  
 Our Father rejoicing as I ached and cried,  
 His wrath thus poured against a blackened sky.  
 When God forsook not you but punished Me  
 Your sins were flung deep down in distant sea. 765  
 My soul and blood outpoured did drain Me dry  
 And for a crown I wore some garden thorns,  
 The stinging claws of Adam's carnal reign.  
 All your transgressions there at once were borne;  
 There I healed your wounds and removed your pains 770  
 And all the while thought of your dirty face,  
 My arms stretched wide to give you sweet embrace.

*~ Resurrection ~*

My arms stretched wide to give you sweet embrace  
 Across the wooden beams of Roman curse  
 Because not having you, My Love, was worse. 775  
 I swallowed your death to secure your place,  
 To grant you mercy and The Father's grace.  
 Oh, how on that cross did I feel My thirst!  
 The Devil did tempt Me, My bonds to burst  
 But I would not leave you in sin and waste 780  
 So down your Lord lay in an airless tomb  
 Defeated by death and the dreaded grave.  
 But that vault became My life-giving womb  
 When I defeated Hell's murdering knave.  
 On Sunday God's judgement for sin was done. 785  
 See? Satan's victory was lost. I'd won.

*~ New Life ~*

See, Satan's victory was lost. I'd won  
 Round One of the weary and ancient war  
 Which had begun in Eden years before.  
 Now the Father, Holy Spirit, and Son 790  
 Have a banquet of joy for you, not crumbs.  
 A life abundant have We all in store,  
 A life that passes through darkness and more,  
 For you My disciples, My heirs and sons.  
 We have valleys dark to train you to be 795  
 Holy and righteous like I, your Master.

Give your all, not just a head that believes!  
 Come learn from Me, rest, and find your pasture.  
 Seek My face each day in prayerful meeting;  
 Ponder Our Word through the Spirit's teaching. 800

*~ Enjoying The Beloved's Presence ~*

Ponder Our Word through the Spirit's teaching,  
 The rich pomegranate that feeds your soul.  
 Abide in Me so I can make you whole;  
 Seek My shade when snow and heat are beating. 805  
 Like frankincense, may your prayers be greeting  
 My throne before temptation takes its toll.  
 Fight our foe and all My praises extol.  
 Each moment shall I be interceding  
 For you, My Love, who's branded on My arm,  
 Whose gem is notched upon My priestly chest. 810  
 Seek My heart, confessing your doubts and qualms  
 For I alone can give you peace and rest.  
 On your door I knock. Can we sup and drink  
 Together while the stars in night skies blink?"

*~ Daily Life ~*

"Together while the stars in night skies blink 815  
 Or in the day when work and duty call  
 I shall lay down my life, my sins and all.  
 Whether I relax, slumber, talk, or drink,  
 Read books, watch films, wash dishes in the sink  
 I will live for Your glory, standing tall. 820  
 A distinctive gem and fortified wall  
 Am I for You, Lord, when our spirits link.  
 Good Shepherd, True Vine, and my Shining Light  
 Forgive my sins and sanctify Your doer;  
 The Way, my Gate, my Bread and raised up Life 825  
 Keep me anchored when storm and cyclones blow.  
 Till always my garden and grow Your roots:  
 In white roses dress me and grow Your fruits!

*~ Surrender ~*

In white roses dress me and grow Your fruits,  
 My good deeds to bring You praises from men. 830  
 Frankincense, myrrh, spikenard, and cinnamon  
 (Those scents of worship in spirit and truth)  
 And hymns sung boldly with guitars and flutes  
 To keep me for Heaven, never to bend.  
 Humble me, Love, my pride not to distend, 835  
 Kept on the narrow with gracious rebuke.  
 From Hell You've saved me, not destined to burn



And to work in me Your Father's glory.  
 To the right and left, help me not to turn  
 Thank You for placing me in Your story. 840  
 Refresh me with apples and from Your vine!  
 I am Yours, Beloved, and You are mine!"

~ *Eternity* ~

"I am yours, My lady, and you are Mine,  
 The bride with whom I'll spend unending years  
 When the Father will have dried up your tears, 845  
 And diamonds no more be trampled by swine.  
 Before our adversaries we shall dine,  
 Our ears no more to hear their taunting jeers  
 Or be subject to trial and nagging fears.  
 Each day from Me shall endless Son-light shine. 850  
 Grip not your hand on what will fade and burn:  
 Remember you are Heaven's denizen.  
 Get to the end of your weary sojourn  
 And claim your name as Heaven's citizen.  
 My Bride, in Me are all your needs supplied. 855  
 My Love, you are the one for whom I died".

## Appendix – Standalone Verse Based on Solomon's Song

### *"Dwelling In His Shade"* – A Petrarchan sonnet based upon The Song of Solomon 2:3

Grounded, our feet are held to earth; muddled,  
 Mingled with futures uncertain we grope.  
 On sunny days we struggle just to cope  
 Or sleep on mattresses uncuddled.  
 Life inspects our depths in shallow puddles, 5  
 Talking back in metaphor and trope.  
 Poor decisions wind their downward slope;  
 Hiding from the heat in caves we huddle.  
 Amidst a forest sits an apple tree:  
 Beloved He who casts a supple shade 10  
 Whose tender nectar quells a thirsty tongue.  
 "Find your rest My love; find your rest in Me",  
 He coos. "Let me build what the thief unmade".  
 In Jesus Christ the victory was won.

### *"Garden for the Groom"* – ottava rima based upon The Song of Solomon 4:12-16

For my Beloved am I a garden blocked, 15  
 A pomegranate orchard festooned in heat.  
 For my Beloved I sit, a cool spring locked  
 Encircled 'round with rosebush-shaded seats.  
 For my Beloved am I a fount unblocked,  
 Sealed: a place where He may tread His feet. 20  
 My inner sanctum is where He comes to knock,  
 A place of safety where He comes to speak.  
  
 Fragrant henna flows from my choicest spice;  
 For He who bore my sin is kingly nard. 25  
 Rich in small supply is saffron steep in price;  
 Calamus dispenses when health is marred.  
 Cinnamon spreads (he need not be enticed);  
 Frankincense for Christ sprints a race unbarred.  
 Myrrh's analgesic calms pain more than ice; 30  
 'Hello', greets aloe when sunburn scars.

Because of Him am I a fount of fruits,  
 God's Garden River spawning leaf and bloom.  
 Jesus' grace heals all the bitter roots:

Resurrected, He rose from garden tomb! 35  
 I am a well of water living; shoots  
 Within my soul gestate like babes in wombs.  
 North and South: come blow your windy flutes,  
 My pleasant bounty to feed my handsome groom!

Refulgent hues and scents unite us fast; 40  
 Now my Lord delights with me. At last.

*"Flame of Yah"*  
*– ottava rima based upon The Song of Solomon 8:6*

My Father, You my unquenchable flame;  
 You Who keep the promises of Psalms;  
 You Who love me still (although I'm broke and lame);  
 You Who dry my tears with tender palms: 45  
 Unchanging Father, You roam free, untamed;  
 Unearthed, You bear me up with timeless arms.  
 Eternal heartbeats flame Your holy fire  
 Not cooling, aging, or slowing to retire.

Upon Your heart come set me as a seal, 50  
 My life to pulse in beats with Yours as one.  
 I'll be a stamp upon Your arms, to feel  
 Embracing Fatherly strength from moon to sun.  
 My head upon your heart is where I heal;  
 Come listen to my soul: I am Your son. 55  
 Jesus' violent death does prove You're zealous  
 For me, just like a husband hot and jealous.

As cruel as coffins, down to wood and nail  
 Does burn Your love nearby and distance far.  
 A fulsome gust that billows all my sails, 60  
 A light in dark when out blow all the stars  
 Is You whose love shall never dim or quail.  
 A vehement flame is You my God, my Yah.  
 Romance my soul now; stroke my aching head.  
 All other flames die cold. I need Yours instead. 65

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