

Song of Songs

1

¹ Solomon's Most Wonderful Song.

The Woman to the Man She Loves

² Cover me with kisses,
for your love is better than wine.

³ Your perfume smells wonderful,
but your name* is sweeter than the best perfume.
That is why the young women love you.

⁴ Take me with you.
Let's run away.

The king took me into his room.

The Women of Jerusalem to the Man

We will rejoice and be happy for you.
Remember, your love is better than wine.
With good reason, the young women love you.

She Speaks to the Women

⁵ Daughters of Jerusalem,
I am dark and beautiful,
as black as the tents of Kedar and Salma.†

⁶ Don't look at how dark I am,
at how dark the sun has made me.
My brothers were angry with me.
They forced me to take care of their vineyards,

* 1:3 name In Hebrew this word sounds like the word "perfume." † 1:5 Kedar and Salma Arabian tribes. For "Salma" the standard Hebrew text has "Solomon," but compare "Salma, Salmon" in Ruth 4:20-21.

so I could not take care of myself.‡

She Speaks to Him

7 I love you with all my soul!

Tell me, where do you feed your sheep?

Where do you lay them down at noon?

I should come to be with you

or I will be like a hired woman[§] caring for the sheep
of your friends.

He Speaks to Her

8 You are such a beautiful woman.

Surely you know what to do.

Go, follow the sheep.

Feed your young goats near the shepherds' tents.

9 My darling, you are more exciting to me

than any mare among the stallions* pulling

Pharaoh's chariots.†

10 Your cheeks are so beautiful

with those ornaments hanging beside them.

Your neck is so lovely

under that beautiful string of jewels.

11 Let's make you some more gold jewelry

and decorate it with silver.

She Speaks

12 The smell of my perfume reaches out

to the king lying on his couch.

13 My lover is like the small bag of myrrh *around my neck,*

‡ 1:6 myself Literally, "my own vineyard." § 1:7 hired woman Or
"a woman wearing a veil." This might mean a prostitute. * 1:9 mare
... stallions Female and male horses. Only male horses were used to pull
chariots. † 1:9 Literally, "To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots I compare
you, my darling."

lying all night between my breasts.

¹⁴ My lover is like a bunch of henna flowers
near the vineyards of En Gedi.

He Speaks

¹⁵ My darling, you are so beautiful!
Oh, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves.

She Speaks

¹⁶ You are so handsome, my lover!
Yes, and so charming!

Our bed is so fresh and pleasant.‡

¹⁷ The beams of our house are cedar.
The rafters are fir.

2

¹ I am a rose on the plain of Sharon,*
a lily† in the valleys.

He Speaks

² My darling, among other women,
you are like a lily among thorns!

She Speaks

³ My lover, among other men,
you are an apple tree among the wild trees in the
forest!

She Speaks to the Women

I enjoy sitting in my lover's shadow;
his fruit is so sweet to my taste.

‡ 1:16 fresh and pleasant Or "lush and green" like a fresh field of grass.

* 2:1 rose ... Sharon Or "a crocus on the plain." † 2:1 lily A kind of
flower. Here, it is probably a red flower.

- 4 My lover took me to the wine house;
his intent toward me was love.
- 5 Strengthen me with raisins[‡];
refresh me with apples, because I am weak with
love.[§]
- 6 My lover's left arm is under my head,
and his right arm holds me.
- 7 Women of Jerusalem, promise me by the gazelles and
wild deer,
don't awaken love,
don't arouse love, until I am ready.*

She Speaks Again

- 8 I hear my lover's voice.
Here it comes, jumping over the mountains,
skipping over the hills.
- 9 My lover is like a gazelle
or a young deer.
Look at him standing behind our wall,
staring out the window,
looking through the lattice.[†]
- 10 My lover speaks to me,
"Get up, my darling, my beautiful one.
Let's go away!"
- 11 Look, winter is past,
the rains have come and gone.
- 12 The flowers are blooming in the fields.
It's time to sing![‡]
Listen, the doves have returned.

‡ 2:5 raisins Or "raisin cakes." § 2:5 I am weak with love Or "I am lovesick." * 2:7 until I am ready Literally, "until it desires." † 2:9 lattice A wooden screen over a window. ‡ 2:12 sing Or "prune."

13 Young figs are growing on the fig trees.
 Smell the vines in bloom.
 Get up, my darling, my beautiful one.
 Let's go away!"

He Speaks

14 My dove, hiding in the caves high on the cliff,
 hidden here on the mountain,
 let me see you,
 let me hear your voice.
 Your voice is so pleasant,
 and you are so beautiful!

She Speaks to the Women

15 Catch the foxes for us—
 the little foxes
 that spoil the vineyard.
 Our vineyard is now in bloom.

16 My lover is mine,
 and I am his!
 My lover feeds among the lilies,
 17 while the day breathes its last breath
 and the shadows run away.
 Turn, my lover,
 be like a gazelle or a young deer on the cleft moun-
 tains!§

3

She Speaks

1 At night on my bed,
 I look for the man I love.
 I looked for him,

§ 2:17 the cleft mountains Or "the mountains of Bethel" or "the mountains of spice."

but I could not find him.
² I will get up now!
 I will go around the city.
 In the streets and squares,
 I will look for the man I love.

I looked for him,
 but I could not find him.
³ The guards patrolling the city found me.
 I asked them, "Have you seen the man I love?"

⁴ I had just left the guards
 when I found the man I love!
 I held him and would not let him go,
 while I took him to my mother's house,
 to the room of one who bore* me.

She Speaks to the Women

⁵ Women of Jerusalem, promise me
 by the gazelles and wild deer,
 don't awaken love,
 don't arouse love, until I am ready.†

The Women of Jerusalem Speak

⁶ Who is this woman
 coming from the desert‡
 with this large group of people?
 The dust rises behind them
 like clouds of smoke from burning myrrh and frank-
 incense and other spices.§

* 3:4 bore Or "taught." See 8:2. † 3:5 until I am ready Literally, "until it desires." ‡ 3:6 woman coming from the desert See 8:5. § 3:6 spices Literally, "powders of the trader." These were imported spices and incense.

⁷ Look, Solomon's traveling chair.*

There are 60 soldiers guarding it,
strong soldiers of Israel.

⁸ All of them are trained fighting men
with their swords at their side,
ready for any danger of the night.

⁹ King Solomon made a traveling chair for himself.

The wood came from Lebanon.

¹⁰ The poles were made from silver,
and the supports were made from gold.

The seat was covered with purple cloth.

It was inlaid with love by the women of Jerusalem.

¹¹ Women of Zion, come out
and see King Solomon.

See the crown[†] his mother put on him
the day he was married,
the day he was so happy!

4

He Speaks to Her

¹ My darling, you are so beautiful!

Oh, you are beautiful!

Your eyes are like doves
under your veil.

Your hair is long and flowing,
like little goats dancing down the slopes of Mount
Gilead.

* 3:7 traveling chair A kind of chair that the rich traveled in. These chairs were covered and had poles that slaves used to carry them. Also in verse 9.

† 3:11 crown This might be a wreath of flowers he wore on his head at his wedding.

- 2 Your teeth are white like ewes*
 just coming from their bath.
 They all give birth to twins;
 not one of them has lost a baby.
- 3 Your lips are like a red silk thread.
 Your mouth is beautiful.
 Your cheeks under your veil
 are like two slices of pomegranate.
- 4 Your neck is long and thin
 like David's tower.
 That tower was built to be decorated†
 with a thousand shields on its walls,
 with the shields of powerful soldiers.
- 5 Your breasts are like twin fawns,
 like twins of a gazelle,
 feeding among the lilies.
- 6 I will go to that mountain of myrrh
 and to that hill of frankincense
 while the day breathes its last breath,
 and the shadows run away.
- 7 My darling, you are beautiful all over.
 Every part of you is perfect.
- 8 Come with me, my bride, from Lebanon.
 Come with me from Lebanon.
 Come from the peak of Amana,‡
 from the top of Senir§ and Hermon,
 from the lion's caves,
 from the mountain of the leopards.

* 4:2 ewes Female goats. † 4:4 Your neck ... decorated Or "Your neck is like David's tower, built with rows of stone." This would mean she wore many necklaces, one above the other, which looked like rows of stone in a tower. ‡ 4:8 Amana The name of a mountain in Lebanon. § 4:8 Senir The Amorite word for "Snow Mountain." This means Mount Hermon.

- 9 My darling,^{*} my bride, you excite me!
 You have stolen my heart with just one quick look
 from your eyes,
 with just one of the jewels from your necklace.
- 10 Your love is so beautiful, my darling, my bride!
 Your love is better than wine.
 The smell of your perfume
 is better than any kind of spice!
- 11 My bride, your lips drip honey.
 Honey and milk are under your tongue.
 Your clothes smell as sweet as perfume.[†]
- 12 My darling, my bride,
 you are pure like a locked garden.
 You are like a locked pool,
 a closed fountain.
- 13 Your limbs are like a garden
 filled with pomegranates and other pleasant fruit,
 with all the best spices:
 henna,[‡] ¹⁴ nard, saffron,[§] calamus,^{*} and cinnamon.[†]
 Your limbs are like a garden
 filled with trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloe.
- 15 You are like a garden fountain—
 a well of fresh water—
 flowing down from the mountains of Lebanon.

She Speaks

- 16 Wake up, north wind.
 Come, south wind.

^{*} 4:9 darling Literally, “sister.” Also in verses 10, 11; 5:1, 2. [†] 4:11 perfume Or “Lebanon.” [‡] 4:13 henna A plant with sweet-smelling, blue-yellow flowers that grows in clusters (groups) like grapes. [§] 4:14 saffron A kind of yellow flower used in making perfume. ^{*} 4:14 calamus A kind of reed plant used in making perfume. [†] 4:14 cinnamon A kind of plant used as a spice and in making perfume.

Blow on my garden.
 Spread its sweet smell.
Let my lover enter his garden
 and eat its pleasant fruit.

5

He Speaks

¹ My darling my bride, I have entered my garden.
 I have gathered my myrrh and spice.
I have eaten my honey and honeycomb.
 I have drunk my wine and milk.

The Women Speak to the Lovers

Dearest friends, eat, drink!
 Be drunk with love!

She Speaks

² I am asleep,
 but my heart is awake.
I hear my lover knocking, saying,
 “Open to me, my darling, my love,
 my dove, my perfect one!
My head is soaked with dew.
 My hair is wet with the mist of the night.”

³ “I have taken off my robe.*
 I don’t want to put it on again.
I have washed my feet.
 I don’t want to get them dirty again.”

* 5:3 robe Or “veil,” a piece of cloth used to cover a person’s face. Also in verse 7.

4 But my lover put his hand through the opening,[†]
and I felt sorry for him.[‡]

5 I got up to open for my lover,
myrrh dripping from my hands,
myrrh scented lotion dripped from my fingers
onto the handles of the lock.

6 I opened for my lover,
but my lover had turned away and was gone!
I nearly died
when he came and went.[§]

I looked for him,
but I couldn't find him.

I called for him,
but he didn't answer me.

7 The guards patrolling the city found me.
They hit me.
They hurt me.

The guards on the wall
took my robe from me.

8 I tell you, women of Jerusalem,
if you find my lover, tell him I am weak with love.*

The Women of Jerusalem Answer Her

9 Beautiful woman,
how is your lover different from other lovers?
Is your lover better than other lovers?

[†] 5:4 put ... opening Or "pulled his hand from the opening." In one sense, this might refer to a lock and key. Some ancient keys were shaped like a hand. The key was inserted through a hole in the door, and the "fingers" fit into special holes that allowed the bolt to slide, locking and unlocking the door.

[‡] 5:4 I felt sorry for him Literally, "My insides stirred for him." [§] 5:6 I nearly died ... went Or "My soul left when he spoke." * 5:8 I am weak with love Or "I am lovesick."

Is that why you ask us to make this promise?

She Answers the Women of Jerusalem

- ¹⁰ My lover is tanned and radiant.
He would stand out among 10,000 men.
- ¹¹ His head is like the purest gold.
His hair is curly and as black as a raven.
- ¹² His eyes are like doves by a stream,
like doves in a pool of milk,
like a jewel in its setting.
- ¹³ His cheeks are like a garden of spices,
like flowers used for perfume.
His lips are like lilies,[†]
dripping with liquid myrrh.
- ¹⁴ His arms are like gold rods,
filled with jewels.
His body is like smooth ivory
with sapphires set in it.
- ¹⁵ His legs are like marble pillars
on bases of fine gold.
He stands tall
like the finest cedar tree in Lebanon!
- ¹⁶ Yes, women of Jerusalem, my lover is everything I
desire.
His mouth is the sweetest of all.
This is my lover;
this is my darling.

6

The Women of Jerusalem Speak to Her

- ¹ Beautiful woman,
where has your lover gone?

[†] 5:13 lily A kind of flower. Here, it is probably a red flower.

Which way did your lover go?

Tell us so that we can help you look for him.

She Answers the Women of Jerusalem

² My lover has gone down to his garden,
where sweet-smelling spices grow.
There, like a sheep, he will eat the grass,
and he will enjoy the lilies.

³ I belong to my lover, and my lover belongs to me.
He is the one feeding among the lilies.

He Speaks to Her

⁴ My darling, you are as beautiful as Tirzah,*
as pleasant as Jerusalem,
as awesome as the stars in the sky.†

⁵ Don't look at me!
Your eyes excite me too much!
And your hair is long and flowing,
like little goats dancing down the slopes of Mount
Gilead.

⁶ Your teeth are white like ewes‡
just coming from their bath.
They all give birth to twins.

Not one of them has lost a baby.

⁷ Your cheeks under your veil
are like slices of pomegranate.

⁸ There might be 60 queens
and 80 slave women,
and young women too many to count,

⁹ but there is only one woman for me,

* 6:4 Tirzah One of the capital cities of northern Israel. † 6:4 the stars in the sky Or "an army ready for war." The meaning of the Hebrew word here and in verse 10 is uncertain. ‡ 6:6 ewes Female goats.

my dove, my perfect one.
 She is the favorite of her mother,
 her mother's favorite child.
 The young women see her and praise her.
 Even the queens and slave women praise her.

The Women Praise Her

¹⁰ Who is that young woman?
 She shines out like the dawn.
 She is as pretty as the moon.
 She is as bright as the sun.
 She is as awesome
 as the stars in the sky.

He Speaks to Her

¹¹ I went down to the grove of walnut trees,
 to see the fruit of the valley,
 to see if the vines were in bloom,
 to see if the pomegranates had budded.
¹² I was so excited
 when she put me in the royal chariot. §

The Women of Jerusalem Call to Her

¹³ Come back, come back, Shulamith*!
 Come back, come back, so we may look at you.

Why are you staring at Shulamith,
 as she dances the Mahanaim dance †?

§ 6:12 the royal chariot Or “the chariots of my noble people.” See “chariot” in the Word List. * 6:13 Shulamith Or “Shulamite.” The word might be the feminine form of the name “Solomon.” This could mean she was or would become the bride of Solomon. This name might also mean “perfect,” “at peace,” or “woman from Shunem.” † 6:13 Mahanaim dance Or “the victory dance” or “the dance of the two camps.”

7

He Praises Her Beauty

- ¹ Princess,* your feet are beautiful in those sandals.
 The curves of your thighs are like jewelry made by
 an artist.
- ² Your navel is like a round cup†;
 may it never be without wine.
 Your belly is like a pile of wheat
 surrounded by lilies.
- ³ Your breasts are like twin fawns
 of a young gazelle.
- ⁴ Your neck is like an ivory tower.
 Your eyes are like the pools in Heshbon
 near the gate of Bath Rabbim.
 Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
 that looks toward Damascus.
- ⁵ Your head is like Carmel,
 and the hair on your head is like silk.
 Your long flowing hair
 captures even a king.
- ⁶ You are so beautiful and so pleasant,
 a lovely, delightful young woman!
- ⁷ You are tall—
 as tall as a palm tree.
 And your breasts are like
 the clusters of fruit on that tree.
- ⁸ I would love to climb that tree
 and take hold of its branches.

May your breasts be like clusters of grapes

* 7:1 Princess Literally, “Daughter of a prince.” † 7:2 round cup Or
 “turned bowl,” a stone bowl made on a lathe and used for mixing wine before
 it is poured into cups. This might also mean a bowl shaped like a crescent or
 half-moon.

and your fragrance[‡] like apples.

- ⁹ May your mouth be like the best wine,
flowing straight to my love,
flowing gently to the sleeper's lips.

She Speaks to Him

- ¹⁰ I belong to my lover,
and he wants me.
¹¹ Come, my lover,
let's go out into the field;
let's spend the night in the villages.
¹² Let's get up early and go to the vineyards.
Let's see if the vines are in bloom.
Let's see if the blossoms have opened
and if the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.

- ¹³ Smell the mandrakes[§]
and all the pleasant flowers by our door.
I have saved many pleasant things for you, my lover,
pleasant things, new and old.

8

- ¹ If you were a baby, like my little brother nursing at his
mother's breasts,
and if I found you outside,
I could kiss you,
and no one would say it was wrong.
² I would lead you into my mother's house,
to the room of she who taught me.

[‡] 7:8 fragrance Literally, "breath of your nose." [§] 7:13 mandrakes Plants with roots that look like people. People thought these plants had the power to make people fall in love.

I would give you spiced wine
squeezed from my pomegranate.

She Speaks to the Women

³ His left arm is under my head,
and his right hand holds me.

⁴ Women of Jerusalem, promise me,
don't awaken love,
don't arouse love, until I am ready.*

The Women of Jerusalem Speak

⁵ Who is this woman
coming from the desert, leaning on her lover?

She Speaks to Him

I woke you under the apple tree,
where your mother gave birth to you,
where you were born.

⁶ Keep me near you like a seal you wear over your heart,
like a signet ring you wear on your hand.

Love is as strong as death.

Passion is as strong as the grave.†

Its sparks become a flame,
and it grows to become a great fire‡!

⁷ A flood cannot put out love.

Rivers cannot drown love.

Would people despise a man for giving
everything he owns for love?

Her Brothers Speak

⁸ We have a little sister,

* 8:4 until I am ready Literally, "until it desires." † 8:6 the grave Or "Sheol," the place where dead people go. ‡ 8:6 great fire Or "the flame of the LORD."

and her breasts are not yet grown.
 What should we do for our sister
 when a man comes asking to marry her?

⁹ If she were a wall,
 we would put silver trim[§] around her.
 If she were a door,
 we would put a cedar board around her.

She Answers Her Brothers

¹⁰ I am a wall,
 and my breasts are my towers.
 And he is satisfied with me!*

He Speaks

¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon.
 He put men in charge of the vineyard.
 Each man brought in grapes
 worth 1000 shekels[†] of silver.

¹² Solomon, you can keep your 1000 shekels.
 Give 200 shekels to each man for the grapes he
 brought.
 But I will keep my own vineyard.

He Speaks to Her

¹³ There you are, sitting in the garden.
 Friends are listening to your voice.
 Let me hear it too!

She Speaks to Him

[§] 8:9 trim Or “supports.” Often horizontal beams and towers were built into walls to strengthen and support them. But here, this seems to be a decoration. * 8:10 he is satisfied with me Literally, “in his eyes I find peace.” In Hebrew this is also like the names “Solomon” and “Shulamith.”

[†] 8:11 1000 shekels About 25 pounds (11.5 kg). Also in verse 12.

Song of Songs 8:14

19

Song of Songs 8:14

¹⁴ Hurry, my lover!

Be like a gazelle or a young deer on the mountains of
spice.

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