Song of Solomon

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 at me.
   They forced me to take care
   of their vineyards.
   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.*
   Those horses have beautiful decorations
   at the side of their faces
   and around their necks.†

10–11 Here are the decorations made for you,
    a golden headband*
    and a silver necklace.
    Your cheeks are so beautiful
    decorated with gold.
    Your neck is so beautiful
    laced with silver.

name In Hebrew this word sounds like the word “perfume.”
Kedar and Salma Arabian tribes. For “Salma” the Hebrew has
myself Literally, “my own vineyard.”
hired woman Or, “a woman wearing a veil.” This might mean
   a prostitute.
mare ... stallions Female and male horses. Only male horses
   were used to pull chariots.
My darling ... chariots Literally, “To a mare among Pharaoh’s
   chariots I compare you, my darling.”
headband We don’t know the exact meaning of this Hebrew
   word. It might be a headband with decorations dangling at
   the cheeks.
SONG OF SOLOMON 1:12–2:15

She Speaks
12 The smell of my perfume reaches out
to the king lying on his couch.
13 My lover is like
a small bag of myrrh* around my neck,
lying all night between my breasts.
14 My lover is like
a cluster 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 I am a crocus on the plain,*
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.
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.*

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.
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!”

She Speaks to the Women
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.

myrrh A perfume made from the gum of certain plants.
henna A plant with sweet smelling, blue-yellow flowers that
grow in clusters (groups) like grapes.
fresh and pleasant Or, “lush and green” like a fresh field of grass.
crocus on the plain Or, “a rose of Sharon.”
raisins Or, “raisin cakes.”
I am weak with love Or, “I am lovesick.”

until I am ready Literally, “until it desires.”
lattice A wooden screen over a window.
sing Or, “prune.”
SONG OF SOLOMON 2:16–4:2

16 My lover is mine, and I am his!
My lover feeds among the lilies, 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 mountains!*

She Speaks

3 At night on my bed, I look for the man I love. I looked for him, 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. I would not let him go, while I took him to my mother’s house, to the room of she who bore* me.

He Speaks to Her

4 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.

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.

The dust rises behind them, like clouds of smoke from burning myrrh and frankincense* and other spices.*

She Speaks

7 Look, Solomon’s traveling chair!* There are 60 soldiers guarding it. Strong soldiers of Israel!

8 All of them are trained fighting men; 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, the supports were made from gold. The seat was covered with purple cloth. It was inlaid with love by the women of Jerusalem.

She Speaks to the Women

5 Women of Jerusalem, promise me, by the gazelles and wild deer, don’t wake love, don’t arouse love, until I am ready.*

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!

He and His Bride

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 frankincense* and other spices.*

myrrh and frankincense Expensive spices that smell sweet when burned.
spices Literally, “powders of the trader.” These were imported spices and incense.
traveling chair A kind of chair that rich people traveled in. These chairs were covered and had poles that slaves used to carry them.
crown This might be a wreath of flowers he wore on his head at his wedding.

ewes Female goats.

the cleft mountains Or, “the mountains of Bether” or “the mountains of spice.”
bore Or, “taught.” See 8:2.
until I am ready Literally, “until it desires.”
woman coming from the desert See 8:5.
SONG OF SOLOMON 4:3–5:1

3 Your lips are like a red silk thread.
Your mouth is beautiful.
Your temples* 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.
You have no blemishes* anywhere!
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!

8 You have stolen my heart
with just one of your eyes,
with just one of the jewels
from your necklace.

9 My 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.*

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!
Blow on my garden.
Let my lover enter his garden,
and eat its pleasant fruit.

He Speaks

5 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!

temples The sides of the head.
pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.
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.
fawns Baby deer.
gazelle An animal like a deer or antelope.
myrrh A kind of perfume made from the sap of plants.
frankincense An expensive perfume from Arabia.
blemishes Ugly marks.
Amana The name of a mountain in Lebanon.
Senir The Amorite word for “Snow Mountain.” This means Mount Hermon.
darling Literally, “sister.”

perfume Or, “Lebanon.”
henna A plant with sweet smelling, blue-yellow flowers that grow in clusters (groups) like grapes.
nard A very expensive oil from the root from the nard plant. It was used as a perfume.
saffron A kind of yellow flower used in making perfume.
calamus A kind of reed plant used in making perfume.
cinnamon A kind of plant used as a spice and in making perfume.
aloes Perfume made from a special kind of tree.
SONG OF SOLOMON 5:2–6:1

She Speaks

2 I am asleep,  
but my heart is awake.  
I hear my lover knocking.  
“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.”

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.*

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?  
Is that why you ask us to make this promise?

She Answers the Women of Jerusalem

10 My lover is tanned and radiant (shining).  
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 the most desirable.  
His mouth is the sweetest of all.  
That is my lover, that is my darling.

The Women of Jerusalem Speak to Her

6 Beautiful woman,  
where has your lover gone?  
Which way did your lover go?  
Tell us so we can help you look for him.

I am weak with love  
Literally, “I am lovesick.”

lily  
Kind of flower. Here it is probably a red flower.

myrrh  
A kind of perfume made from the sap of plants.

sapphires  
Blue stones.

darling  
Literally, “sister.”

put his hand through the 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.

I felt sorry for him  
Literally, “My insides stirred for him.”

myrrh  
A kind of perfume made from the sap of plants. Here this is probably a reminder the lover left to show he had come by her house.

I nearly died … went  
Or “My soul left when he spoke.”

robe  
Or, “veil, a piece of cloth used to cover a person’s face.”
She Answers the Women of Jerusalem

2 My lover has gone down to his garden,
to the flower beds of spices.
He went to feed in the gardens,
and gather 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 those fortified cities.*
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 temples* under your veil*
are like slices of pomegranate.*

8 There might be 60 queens
and 80 women servants,*
and young women too many to count,
but there is only one woman for me,*
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 women servants*
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 radiant as the sun,
She is as awesome as those armies in the sky.*

She Speaks

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 Before I realized it,*
my soul had placed me in the chariots* of the king’s people.*

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?*

He Praises Her Beauty

7 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.

Tirzah One of the capitals of northern Israel.
fortified cities We are not sure of the exact meaning of the Hebrew word here and in verse 10.
etes Female goats.
temples The sides of the head.
veil A piece of cloth used to cover a person’s face.
pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.
women servants Or, “concubines,” slave women who were like wives to a man.

before I realized it In Hebrew this verse is very hard to understand.
carriage(s) A small wagon used in war. But here this might mean one of the traveling chairs, as in 3:7.
the king’s people Or, “Amminadib,” or “my kingly people.”
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.”
Mahanaim dance Or, “the victory dance,” or “the dance of the two camps.”
Princess Literally, “Bath Nadib: Daughter of a prince.” This is like the word “Amminadib” in 6:12.
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.
SONG OF SOLOMON 7:3–8:6

Your belly is like a pile of wheat bordered with 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 which 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 and your fragrance* like apples.

9 May your mouth be like the best wine, flowing straight to my love, flowing gently to the sleepers’ 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!
Yes, I have saved many pleasant things for you, my lover.
Pleasant things, new and old!

8 If you were a baby, like my little brother nursing at his mother’s breasts, then if I found you outside, I could kiss you, and no one would say it was wrong! I would lead you into my mother’s house, to the room of she who taught me. 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 wake 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 bore 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!*
SONG OF SOLOMON 8:7–14

He Speaks
11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon.
   He put men in charge of that field of grapes.
   And each man brought in grapes worth 1,000 shekels* of silver.

12 Solomon, you can keep your 1,000 shekels.
   Give 200 shekels to each man for the grapes he brought.
   But I will keep my own field of grapes!

He Speaks to Her
13 There you sit, in the garden, friends are listening to your voice.
   Let me hear it too!

She Speaks to Him
14 Hurry, my lover.
   Be like a gazelle* or a young deer on the mountains of spice!

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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.

he is satisfied with me  Literally, “In his eyes I find peace.” In Hebrew this is also like the names “Solomon” and “Shulamith.”

1,000 shekels  About 25 pounds.
gazelle  An animal like a deer or antelope.
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