

Part 10

"In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree"

In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree is a 1905 popular song written by Harry Williams and Egbert Van Alstyne. It was one of the biggest hits of the early decade. The meter of its chorus is in the form of a limerick. As was fashionable at the time, it as a highly sentimental tune. In the 1939 movie The Wizard of Oz, in the scene involving the talking apple trees who become angry with Dorothy for picking apples off them, the strains of this song are heard in the background. The original verses tell the story about a lost love:

"In the shade of the old apple tree, Where the love in your eyes I could see, Where the voice that I heard, Like the song of a bird, Seemed to whisper sweet music to me, I could hear the dull buzz of the bee In the blossoms as you said to me, "With a heart that is true, "I'll be waiting for you, In the shade of the old apple tree."

Mr. Van Alstyne wrote many popular songs during the early years of the 20th century including "Memories." A song like this, dripping with sentiment even by early-1900s standards, lent itself to parodies. Popular recording artist, Billy Murray recorded the most popular one. The verse describes him passing by the house of Maggie Jones, a maiden "homelier than me", who asks him to fetch some apples on the promise of giving him one of the pies she plans to bake:

**"So I climbed up the old apple tree, For a pie was a real thing to me.
She stood down below with her apron spread "so" To catch all the apples, you see. It looked like a picnic for me, But just then the limb broke; holy gee! And I broke seven bones And half-killed Maggie Jones In the shade of the old apple tree."**

("In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree" performed by xxxxx)

"Just the Way you Are"

"Just the Way You Are" is a song by Billy Joel that became Mr. Joel's first US Top 10 (reaching #3) and UK Top 20 single, as well as Joel's first gold single in the US. The song also topped the Billboard Easy Listening Chart for the entire month of January 1978. "Just the Way You Are", which won the 1979 Grammy Awards for Record of the Year and Song of the Year. In an interview 2010, Joel revealed that the inspiration for writing this tune was directly taken from the last line in the Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons song "Rag Doll," which incidentally was also a larger inspiration for Joel's later song, "Uptown Girl". The song, which Joel had written for his first wife Elizabeth Weber, was not liked by either Joel or his band, and Joel had originally decided against recording it. But Linda Ronstadt urged him to record it, so he did. Joel and Weber divorced in 1982 and Joel rarely performed the song live after 1986 until the 2000s, and Joel has publicly stated that he disliked playing the song live in the wake of his divorce from Weber. The saxophone solo was played by jazz musician Phil Woods, a Grammy award winner. Woods was criticized by some purists in the jazz community for playing on a rock session. The performance here on a hit record exposed him to a wider audience and introduced his music to rock fans. Wood laughed all the way to the bank.

"Don't go changing to try and please me You never let me down before Don't imagine you're too familiar And I don't see you anymore. I wouldn't leave you in times of trouble We never could have come this far I took the good times; I'll take the bad times I'll take you just the way you are. Don't go

trying some new fashion Don't change the color of your hair You always have my unspoken passion
Although I might not seem to care. I don't want clever conversation I never want to work that hard I
just want someone that I can talk to I want you just the way you are. I need to know that you will
always be The same old someone that I knew What will it take till you believe in me. The way that I
believe in you? I said I love you and that's forever And this I promise from the heart I could not love
you any better I love you just the way you are."

"Jesus Christ the Apple Tree"

"Jesus Christ the Apple Tree" (also known as "Apple Tree") is a poem, presumably intended for use as a carol, written by an unknown New England poet in the 18th century. It has been set to music by among others, Elizabeth Poston in 1967. The first known publication of "Jesus Christ the Apple Tree" was in London's *Spiritual Magazine* in 1761. The hymn's first known appearance in an American hymnal was in 1784 in *Divine Hymns, or Spiritual Songs: for the use of Religious Assemblies and Private Christians* compiled by Joshua Smith, a lay Baptist minister from New Hampshire. The song may be an allusion to both the apple tree in Song of Songs 2:3 which has been allegorically interpreted as a metaphor representing Christ, and to Jesus' description of his life as a tree of life in Luke 13:18–19 and elsewhere in the New Testament including Revelation 22:1–2. Apple trees were commonly grown in early New England and there was an old English tradition of wassailing or "wishing health" to apple trees on Christmas Eve. Thus, the song is now performed during Advent as a Christmas carol.

"The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit, and always green. The trees of nature, fruitless be, compared with Christ, the apple tree. His beauty doth all things excel by faith I know, but never can tell, the glory, which I now can see in Jesus Christ, the apple tree. For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought, I missed of all, but now I see tis found in Christ, the apple tree. I'm weary with my former toil, here I will sit and rest a while; under the shadow I will be, of Jesus Christ, the apple tree. This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive; which makes my soul in haste to be with Jesus Christ, the apple tree."

"Cherry Pink and Apply Blossom White"

Perez Prado's recording of this 1950 Louiguy/Mack David song, "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White," featuring trumpeter Billy Regis, whose trumpet sound would slide down and up before the melody would resume, was the most popular version in 1955, reaching #1 for 10 weeks on the Billboard.

"It's cherry pink and apple blossom white When your true lover comes your way It's cherry pink and apple blossom white The poets say The story goes that once a cherry tree Beside an apple tree did grow And there a boy once met his bride to be Long long ago The boy looked into her eyes, it was a sight to enthrall The breezes joined in their sighs, the blossoms started to fall And as they gently caressed, the lovers looked up to find The branches of the two trees were intertwined And that is why the poets always write If there's a new moon bright above It's cherry pink and apple blossom white When you're in love."

("Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White" performed by Perez Prado)

Biblical Songbook

"Flowers and Trees"

2:4-7, (She) "He has taken me to the wine room (house of wine) (*bet hayyayin*), and his intent (banner) (*degel*) over me is love. Strengthen me with raisins, refresh (literally = make a bed) (*raphad*) me with apples, for I am lovesick (faint with love) (*holat*). His left arm is under my

head, and his right arm embraces (LXX = caress) (*tehabbeqeni*) me. Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge (urge, adjure) you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse (awaken) (*uwr*) love (sexual desire) (*ahaba*) until it so wants to be (desires pleases, wishes) (*chaphets*)."

Key thought: The woman continues her apple tree soliloquy by saying that her man has "taken her away," and she now finds herself in his "wine room" for love-making (c.f., **Esther 7:8, "banquet hall"; Ecclesiastes 7:2, "house of feasting;" Jeremiah 16:8, "house of feasting"**). The last we heard, they were in the country, under the evergreens. So when did he take her to a wine room (man cave, banquet hall)? Well, he probably didn't, and since the female poet has already established that "wine" and "kissing" are related (c.f., SS 1:2, 4; see also, SS 4:10; 5:1; 7:3; 8:2) maybe the "wine room" is a metaphor for the young man's mouth where the wine is imbibed and his kisses originate.

She asks him for refreshment, specifically "raisins" and "apples." "Raisins" probably refer to small raisin cakes served in celebration for special occasions. These cakes were sweets made from pressed and dried grapes and were a delicacy, an indulgence, maybe like chocolate is to us (c.f., **2 Samuel 6:19, "And when David finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts and distributed among all the people, . . . a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one."**). "Raisin cakes" are mentioned in **Hosea 3:1** in a sexual context, perhaps as an aphrodisiac, but not in our context ("**And the LORD said to me, 'Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.'**"). Douglas Stuart comments on "raisin cakes" in this passage:

"By Hosea's time [raisin cakes] were probably routinely associated with cultic worship, the fitting metaphorical food of the religious nymphomaniac who seeks spiritual and material gratification from other gods than Yahweh." (*Word Bible Commentary: Hosea-Jonah*, 1987).

The connection with "apples" as a nourishing delicacy in ANE love poetry and her man as an "apple tree" (SS 2:3) leads to the thought that she wants to taste her man.

She is "exhausted," she says (lovesick, faint with love) (*holat*) and overwhelmed emotionally and physically just thinking of the desire she has for her shepherd. English poet and Puritan, John Dryden (1631-1700) wrote "Love is a malady without a cure" ("Palamon and Arcite," Book 2, line 720), and our young poetess would agree.

The man "embraces" her to give her strength, but also as foreplay as a prelude to intimacy (c.f., **SS 8:3-4, "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me! I adjure you daughters of Jerusalem, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases."**). Where once the young woman was dizzy and "fainting with love," now she is in the protective but provocative intimate "embrace" or "caress" of her lover (c.f., **Proverbs 5:20, "Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?"**). He gently caresses her and she surrenders to his advances.

In verse 4 we have the Hebrew word (*degel*) sometimes translated "banner" or "standard," as in a military rally (The Hebrew word *degel* appears 17 times in the Old Testament: 11 times in Numbers, 2 times in Psalms, once in Isaiah – all with martial connotations, and 3 times in *Song* – 5:10; 6:4, 10). This translation in the *Song* doesn't easily fit the context of romance, so we look at how a similar word is used in the ANE love poetry and we see a similar Akkadian word (*dagalu*) which means "sight," "appearance," "glance," or by inference, "intention." This makes more sense contextually, as in "his glance towards me is intending to make love." Besides, earlier we get the "glance" or "look" of the sun on her skin, darkening it (SS 1:6), so now there is the contrast between the harsher "glance" of the sun and the softer "glance" of love from her young man. In any case, the teenage passion now dissolves into silence.

The vulnerable young woman then, in verse 7, still in the “embrace” of her young shepherd, turns inward and implores herself, for yet a second time (SS 1:5) – she has an active conscience - with an oath not to “excite” her sexual temptation (“love”) but let romance develop naturally. She must wait for love to bloom. This is not a literal conversation as if the women in the Church were observing (spying on) her in the country under the evergreens. That would be too weird. She tells herself she is not to “arouse” the sensual feelings of love (*ahaba*) until she is ready to meet its physical and emotional demands. She must not let her heart commit her mind and body. But I believe she is still immature, because rather than fleeing temptation and getting out of the situation (c.f., **1 Corinthians 6:18, “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.”**), she is confronting it with an Augustinian teenage prayerful attitude:

“Give me chastity and abstinence (continency), only not yet.” For I feared lest you should hear me soon, and soon cure me of the disease of lust (concupiscence = Latin, “to eagerly desire”), which I wished to have satisfied, rather than extinguished.” (*Confessions*, 8, 7).

Her oath of urging is odd and jolting: **“I urge (charge, adjure) (*shaba*) you by the gazelles and by the does of the field”** (c.f., Hosea 2:18). She will do this urging in the name of gazelles and deer again before marriage in SS 3:5. She could/should have framed the oath to herself by saying, “I urge you in the name of Yahweh,” as the faithful princes of Israel did in **Joshua 9:19, “But the princes said to all the congregation, ‘We have sworn (*shaba*) to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them.’** or as David did in **1 Kings 2:8, “I swear (*shaba*) to him by the LORD”**(cf. Acts 19:13, **“I adjure you by Jesus,”** or **Matthew 26:63, “I adjure you by the living God”** or **Mark 5:7, “I adjure you by God”**) in obedience to what Yahweh had commanded in **Deuteronomy 6:3, “It is the LORD your God you shall fear. You shall serve him and by his name you shall swear (urge) (*shaba*).”** (c.f., Isaiah 19:18, **“and swear allegiance to the LORD of Hosts”**).

But she didn’t. Evangelical scholars have advanced several explanations for this alternative and strange plea: The first explanation is that the Hebrew wording in the girl’s oath is similar to the phrase, “by the LORD of Hosts or by God Almighty,” and it is construed as such by the LXX and the Jewish Midrash. And since there is a studied avoidance of the use of divine names in the *Song*, this is seen as a playfully poetic allusion to insert God’s name in the collection of poems. At the same time, the pastoral setting of the *Song* is kept in tack. But I don’t buy this explanation and no modern translations translate the girl’s oath “by the LORD of Hosts or by God Almighty.” The translators rightly give us the animal names – “deer” and “gazelles”. One non-evangelical German scholar even notes that the gazelle and the deer are animals associated with the goddess of love in Ancient Near East religions. And the same scholar rhetorically asks is this oath really different to swear by created animals than to swear by “heaven” as the throne of God or “earth” as the footstool of God or “Jerusalem” as the city of God? (cf, Matthew 5:33). (Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs*).

Another interpretation of the animal oath is that the young woman is referencing the fact of created order where everything, including the procreation in the animal world, has its proper time of producing (c.f., 2:11-13). These are, after all, wild (*sadeh*) animals and not domesticated, so their mating season is determined by their created order (c.f., **Psalm 29:9, “The voice of the LORD (thunder) makes the deer give birth.”** **Job 39:1, “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?”** **Isaiah 13:14, “And like a hunted (chased) gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather them.”** **Jeremiah 2:23-24, “a restless young camel running here and there, a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind. Who can restrain her lust?”** **Jeremiah 5:24, “Let us fear the LORD our God who gives rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.”**) The LXX translates this phrase, **“by the powers and by the virtues of the field.”** Some; ANE love poetry

references these two animals for their sexual potency. I am indebted to Connie Pfefferle (kickboxer2@gmail.com) for this intriguing suggestion.

I have a different take on this oath, and that is the oath was a mistake on the girl's part. The scriptures record the good, the bad and the ugly and despite all the mental gymnastics that every evangelical scholar I consulted tries to whitewash this strange oath, this is a bad, ugly and immature oath. Indeed, in **Jeremiah 5:7** Yahweh accuses Jerusalem ("women of Jerusalem"?) of the sin of not swearing in His name: **"How can I pardon you? Your children have forsaken me and have sworn (shaba) by those who are no gods."** I think "deer" and "gazelle" would qualify as "no gods." Note in our case that the oath of the young poetess was before her wedding in chapter 4. She gives another similar oath in **SS 8:4** after she has become a mature wife and lover, and the animals have been dropped from her mature swearing or vowing.

This is a very real picture of the allure of sex for the teenage girl and boy, and this young girl is a godly example of how to deal with the very powerful sexual temptations, despite her misguided oath. Our teenagers are on their way to physical communion and consummation, even if it is only fantasy to them at this point in the *Song*.

It very important to note that "love" is portrayed in the *Song* as having a will of its own by having its own pronoun - "it." - **SS 2:7, "do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases"** (c.f., **SS 3:5, "do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases"; SS 8:4, "do not stir up love or awaken until it pleases"**) Furthermore, love is personalized as being a powerful force in the human soul - **SS 2:5, "I am sick with love"** (c.f., **5:8, "I am sick with love"; 8:6, 7, "love is strong as death . . . Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it."**). We will see this all come into focus in the last couple of poems. But right now, the young woman tells us how easily her desire for her man could cause her to slip into immoral behavior. One scholar comments:

"Because unwholesome peer pressure can combine with personal desires to produce moral failure, it is important that friends take seriously their responsibility to encourage others to retain their purity in the face of the powerful temptations to enjoy sexual pleasure before marriage" (Daniel Estes, *Ecclesiastes & The Song of Songs*, 2010).

While the young girl is speaking to herself here, still this is an early plea for accountability groups to encourage chastity in the church: **Proverbs 13:20, "Whoever walks with the wise, becomes wise, but the companion (reya) of fools will suffer harm."** **Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."** **Proverbs 18:24, "A man of many companions (reya) may come to ruin, but there is a friend (ahab) who sticks closer than a brother."** **Malachi 2:15, "So guard yourself in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth."** **1 Corinthians 11:28, "examine yourself," 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'" 2 Corinthians 13:5, "examine yourselves")**

Our young heroine is in great tension at this point. She wants her love to be consummated and she is fighting immoral thoughts fostered in a healthy and normal relationship. But she is saying, "Be cool. Wait for the right time." Her instincts and desire for sex with the man she loves are good and normal and to be celebrated. But she needs to keep those desires in check, and she knows it. This is a young woman that has been raised right by her family (mother and brothers) and by her Church.

How different she is from Amnon, the oldest son of David, who was so attracted to his half-sister, Tamar, that he allowed his passions to overwhelm him. His "love" for her was destroyed by his lust for her. After he indulged himself with her, we read: **"the hatred which he hated her was greater than the love with which he loved her"** (**2 Samuel 3:15**).

Our passionate, love-struck girl, God love her, with all her ardent desires and yearnings, will have to learn to wait. One scholar notes: "it is only in the security of their future marriage that she will

be able to experience the fulfillment of all her deepest longings.” (Tom Gledhill, *The Message of the Song of Songs*, 1994).

“Embraceable You”

"Embraceable You" is a popular 1928 song written by George and Ira Gershwin for the Broadway musical *Girl Crazy* (1930), where it was performed by Ginger Rogers in a song and dance routine choreographed by her future dance partner, Fred Astaire. George Gershwin, of course, is at the head of the class of American popular composers. In 1937, the Gershwin brothers wrote the score for perhaps the best Astaire/Rogers movie, *Shall We Dance*, but before *Shall We Dance* opened Mr. Gershwin died of a brain tumor at 38, shocking the performing arts world. Reflecting the sentiments of many, in 1940, still not reconciled to Mr. Gershwin's death, conservative novelist and writer, John O'Hara told *Newsweek* magazine, "George died on July 11, 1937, but I don't have to believe that if I don't want to." Billie Holiday's 1944 rendition of "Embraceable You" was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2005. I'm in the minority when I say that Ms. Holliday is an acquired taste, but here is one of her best efforts:

"Dozens of girls would storm up; I had to lock my door. Somehow I couldn't warm up to one before. What was it that controlled me? What kept my love-life lean? My intuition told me you'd come on the scene. Lady, listen to the rhythm of my heart beat, and you'll get just what I mean. Embrace me, My sweet embraceable you. Embrace me, You irreplaceable you. Just one look at you -- my heart grew tipsy in me; You and you alone bring out the gipsy in me. I love all the many charms about you; Above all I want my arms about you. Don't be a naughty baby, Come to me -- come to me -- do! My sweet embraceable you. I went about reciting, "Here's one who'll never fall!" But I'm afraid the writing Is on the wall. My nose I used to turn up when you'd besiege my heart; Now I completely burn up when you're slow to start. I'm afraid you'll have to take the consequences; you upset the apple cart. Embrace me, My sweet embraceable you. Embrace me, You irreplaceable you. In your arms I find love so delectable, dear, I'm afraid it isn't quite respectable, dear. But hang it -- Come on, let's glorify love! Ding dang it! You'll shout "Encore!" if I love. Don't be naughty, Come to baby -- come to baby -- do! My sweet embraceable you."

(“Embraceable You” performed by Billie Holiday)(3:15)

“You Do Something to Me”

"You Do Something to Me" is a 1929 song written by Cole Porter. It is notable in that it was the first number in Porter's first fully integrated-book musical *Fifty Million Frenchmen*. The song has been described as "a tender prequel" to "Let's Do It, Let's Fall in Love," Porter's first popular song. The song has been recorded by major artists including Mario Lanza, Bette Midler, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Marlene Dietrich, Doris Day, and Ella Fitzgerald, several times. According to Will Friedwald, the line famous line in the song "the voodoo that you do so well" is quoted in the 1993 Salt-N-Pepa rap song "Shoop": "We don't even need the additional evidence of rock and country artists doing albums of standards that include Porter songs, than the recent rap hit "Shoop" which quotes the phrase "the voodoo that you do so well" from Porter's 1929 'You Do Something To Me.'"

"You do something to me Something that simply mystifies me Tell me, why should it be You have the power to hypnotize me? Let me live 'neath your spell Do, do that voodoo that you do so well For you do something to me That nobody else could do. Let me live 'neath your spell Do, do that voodoo that you do so well For you do something to me That nobody else could do. That nobody else could do."

“Love in Bloom”

"Love in Bloom" is a popular song written by Ralph Rainger and Leo Robin in 1934. It was introduced in the film, *She Loves Me Not* by Bing Crosby and Kitty Carlisle. The song was recorded by Mr. Crosby and it topped the charts for six weeks in 1934. The same year, it was one of the nominees for the inaugural "Best Song" Academy Award when it lost out to "The Continental". Most famously, "Love in Bloom" became the theme song of Jack Benny who was known for playing it off-key on his violin. Ms. Carlisle had hoped to adopt it as her theme song, but its swift association with Mr. Benny spoiled those plans.

"Blue night and you, alone with me My heart has never known such ecstasy Am I on earth, am I in heaven?. Can it be the trees that fill the breeze With rare and magic perfume? Oh, no, it isn't the trees, it's love in bloom Can it be the spring that seems To bring the stars right into this room? Oh, no, it isn't the spring, it's love in bloom. My heart was a desert You planted a seed And this is the flower This hour of sweet fulfillment. Is it all a dream, the joy supreme That came to us in the gloom? You know it isn't a dream, it's love in bloom. My heart was a desert But you planted a seed And this is the flower This hour of sweet fulfillment. Is it all a dream, the joy supreme That came to us in the gloom? You know it isn't a dream, it's love in bloom.

("Love in Bloom" performed by Bing Crosby)

Biblical Songbook

"Come Fly With Me"

2:8-14, the woman continues (She) "The sound of my lover! See, he is coming, leaping over mountains, bounding over hills! My lover is like a gazelle or a young deer (stag). He is now standing behind our wall, staring through the window, peeking through the lattice. My lover spoke and said (answer) (ana) to me, (He) 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me. My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face (form) (mareh), let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your form is lovely."

Key thought: This is a new poem beginning with the excited announcement from the woman that her lover has dramatically arrived (c.f., SS 5:2-6). In the last poem, the young couple was in a fevered "embrace." The unsustainable tension of the previous poems has abated and now calmer thoughts, conversations and events are noted. We have the girl's eager anticipation of the arrival of the boy and the boy's urgent invitational response to her.

Seek and ye shall find. Creation, fall and redemption: Creation: My lover has arrived, Fall: I am inaccessible in rocks and cliffs, Redemption: Arise my darling from your inaccessibility and come out of the mountain-like fortress of your home with me.

The young shepherd is as excited as she is for he is "leaping" and "bounding" to get to her over any obstacles ("mountains" and "hills") (c.f., **2 Samuel 22:30, "With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall."**) (c.f., SS 2:17; 8:14). The Hebrew word for "deer" (*oper*) is found only in the *Song* and always with "gazelle" (*tsebi*) for emphasis (SS 2:9, 17; 4:5; 7:3; 8:14). The girl likens her young man to a "gazelle" three times in the collection – here in this chapter SS 2:9 and 17, and charmingly as an older wife in SS 8:14, thus comparing him to David's mighty Gadite warriors in **1 Chronicles 12:8 ("mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were as swift as gazelles on the mountains.")** and Zeruiah's son and General Joab's brother, Asahel, in **2 Samuel 2:18 (who was "as swift of foot as a wild gazelle").**

The romantic tension is increased when the young man stands quietly "behind the walls"

waiting to be invited by his young woman to join her inside. One gets the sense that the man is going from window to window in order to catch a glimpse of her and get her attention. Ah, teenage love. It is during the warm and dry season, probably May, because the “rainy” season is over, the “flowers” are appearing, the “dove” has returned to the land (c.f., **Jeremiah 8:7, “Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration.”**), the “figs” are ripened, fruit vines are giving off their fragrance, and people feel like “singing” after the rain, after the dreary “winter” months are in the rear view mirror. It is the time for joyous lovemaking. Could the blossoming of spring herald the blossoming of their love? The early fruits are a harbinger of luscious fruit later. The man wants “his” lovely “dove” to come with him out of her house, probably her mother’s house (SS 3:4). The man pleads again with the woman to get up and fly away with him (**“arise my darling my beautiful one and come with me.”**)

He calls her his pet name: “my dove,” a nickname of affection and tenderness. She is figuratively in barren “rocks and cliffs” and not the fruitful pastures and countryside with him where they will make love. Her inaccessibility bothers him and he reminds her that she is physically “lovely to look at” (**Esther 1:11**) and sultry to hear (“cooing of doves”) and he wants to be near her. She is cautious, not wanting her heart to commit her mind and body. So to be safe she now is playing a bit hard to get.

Even at the early stage in the collection of poems we get a sense of a reminiscence, a looking back over the relationship when the young woman was being pursued by the young man as she uses the past tense in “my lover spoke and said to me.” English poet and atheist Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593), wrote in his scandalous but lovely poem, “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”:

“Come live with me and be my love and we will all the pleasures prove, that valleys, groves, or hills, or field, or woods and steepy mountains, yield.”

And we will sit upon the Rocks,
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow Rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing Madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of Roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty Lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and Ivy buds,
With Coral clasps and Amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The Shepherds’ Swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May-morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

"Come Fly with Me"

"Come Fly with Me" is a Tin Pan Alley 1957 song composed by the remarkable Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn as a favor for Frank Sinatra, and was the title track of Mr. Sinatra's 1957 top selling and Grammy nominated album, *Come Fly With Me*. The song lyrics have the singer saying to his lover, come with me to exotic places, such as Bombay, Peru and Acapulco Bay where we can be by ourselves. The song subsequently became part of Mr. Sinatra's concert repertoire, and would be featured in his concert performances and his rendition, backed by the Billy May orchestra, has been used in movies and television shows for the last 60 years.

"Come fly with me! Let's fly, let's fly away If you can use some exotic booze There's a bar in far Bombay Come fly with me! Let's fly, let's fly away Come fly with me! Let's float down to Peru In llama land there's a one-man band and he'll toot his flute for you Come fly with me! Let's take off in the blue Once I get you up there, where the air is rarified. We'll just glide, starry-eyed Once I get you up there, I'll be holding you so near you may hear angels cheer 'cause we're together. Weather-wise, it's such a lovely day. Just say the words and we'll beat the birds Down to Acapulco Bay It's perfect for a flying honeymoon, they say Come fly with me! Let's fly, let's fly away."

("Come Fly With Me" performed by Frank Sinatra)(3:19)

"Ain't No Mountain High Enough"

"Ain't No Mountain High Enough" is an R&B/soul song written by Nickolas Ashford & Valerie Simpson in 1966. The song was a top 20 hit in 1967 by Marvin Gaye, peaking at #19 on the Billboard pop charts, and went to #3 on the R&B charts. The lyrics tell of the commitment to be with the beloved wherever: **"Listen baby, ain't no mountain high, ain't no valley low, ain't no river wide enough, baby. If you need me, call me no matter where you are, no matter how far; don't worry baby just call my name; I'll be there in a hurry. You don't have to worry."** The song became a hit again in 1970 when recorded by Diana Ross. The song became Ross' first solo #1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. In the US, the Ross single sold 1,245,000 copies becoming a gold record, and Ms. Ross received a Grammy nomination for "Best Female Pop Vocal Performance." But it is the Marvin Gaye version that was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999, and is regarded today as one of the most important records ever released by Motown.

"Listen baby, ain't no mountain high, Ain't no valley low, ain't no river wide enough baby If you need me call me no matter where you are, No matter how far; don't worry baby Just call my name; I'll be there in a hurry You don't have to worry, Oh baby there ain't no mountain high enough, Ain't no valley low enough, Ain't no river wide enough To keep me from getting to you babe. Remember the day I set you free I told you you could always count on me darling From that day on, I made a vow, I'll be there when you want me, Some way, some how. Oh baby there ain't no mountain high enough, Ain't no valley low enough, Ain't no river wide enough To keep me from getting to you babe. Oh no darling No wind, no rain Or winters cold can stop me baby, na na baby 'Cause you are my goal If you're ever in trouble; I'll be there on the double Just send for me, oh baby, ha. My love is alive Way down in my heart Although we are miles apart If you ever need a helping hand, I'll be there on the double Just as fast as I can Don't you know that there. Ain't no mountain high enough, Ain't no valley low enough, Ain't no river wide enough To keep me from getting to you babe. Don'tcha know that there Ain't no mountain high enough, Ain't no valley low enough, Ain't no river wide enough Ain't mountain high enough Ain't no valley low enough."

("Ain't No Mountain High Enough" performed by Marvin Gaye)(2:26)

"Come Away to the Skies"

Our church hymnals are sadly void of biblical love songs between a husband and a wife, but *The Southern Harmony hymnal* of 1835 gave us the Charles Wesley hymn "Come Away to the Skies" (#723). It is sad to observe that this beautiful hymn, written by Wesley to his wife, Sally, on her birthday (which he calls a "festival") is now sung largely by women. It ought to be sung by us men, because it is a Christian husband's hymn of love sung to his wife. Here are Mr. Wesley's inspired words:

"Come away to the skies, my beloved, arise, and rejoice in the day thou was born; on this festival day come exulting away. Now with singing and praise, let us spend all the days, by our heavenly father, bestowed. We with thanks do approve the design of that love, which hath joined us to Jesus' dear name; to united in heart, let us never more part, till we meet at the feet of the Lamb."

Here is the Robert Shaw Festival Singers, including female singers, to end the presentation.

("Come Away to the Skies" performed by the Robert Shaw)

"Lovely To Look At"

"Lovely To Look At" is an enchanting tribute to beauty written for the 1935 film *Roberta* by Jerome Kern and Dorothy Fields. It was their first collaboration and the result is this haunting love ballad which Irene Dunne sang first in the movie and then Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers reprised it later in the film. Society pianist Eddie Duchin's 1935 version was #1 on the hit parade and it was nominated for an Oscar that year. As an indication of its popularity, *Roberta* was remade in 1952 and was called "Lovely to Look At." Five time Oscar nominated and devote Catholic, Ms. Dunne said her proudest achievement was having Jerome Kern write this song for her. The lyrics sing that while the lover's beautiful clothes are important, so is an embrace and a kiss and charm and dignity. In fact, the woman is a picture of perfection from top to bottom.

"Clothes must play a part To light an eye, to win a heart; They say a gown can almost speak If it is chic. Should you select the right effect You cannot miss. You may be sure, He will tell you this Lovely to look at, Delightful to know, And heaven to kiss, A combination like this Is quite my most impossible scheme come true, Imagine finding a dream like you! You're lovely to look at, It's thrilling to hold you terribly tight, For we're together, the moon is new, And oh, it's lovely to look at you Tonight! What appeals to me Is just your charm and dignity, Not what you wear, but just an air, Of great repose. You are quite perfect from your head down to your toes. Both night and day. I am moved to say."

(Lovely to Look At" performed by Fred Astaire)

Biblical Songbook

"The Fox in the Hen House"

2:15-17 (She) "Grab the foxes, the little foxes! They are ruining the vineyards, our vineyard [which is] in blossom. My lover is mine and I am his; he grazes (browses, feeds) among the lilies until the day breaks and the shadows flee. Turn (bring around) (*gabab*), my lover, be like a gazelle or a young stag on Bethel (clef) mountains."

Key thought, Three thoughts in this short girlie love song: 1) Be careful about the little distractions in life, 2) We lovers belong to each other, 3) Come quickly to me, my love.

The first thought: A note of wariness and warning here. Nocturnal foxes, full of snake-guile and cunning, in search of food enter into the orchards at night, devouring the fruit of the vine - the grapes - spoiling this year's crop. However, cute "little foxes" are too small to reach the grapes so they chew on

the vines close to the ground, thus killing the whole plant. So, instead of the farmer just losing this year's crop with big foxes, he loses his entire vineyard over time with the little foxes. To her point spiritually, some things we do or allow, that we might think are little or insignificant (c.f., **Zechariah 4:10, "Who despises the day of small things."**) can be disastrous for us (remember the admonition about yeast in the dough from both Jesus and Paul, **Mark 8:15, "Be Careful', Jesus warned them. 'Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.'"**; **1 Corinthians 5:6, "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?"**). Moses tells us that little "worms" will destroy our vineyard due to our disobedience (**Deuteronomy 28:39, "You will plant vineyards and cultivate them but you will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them."**).

One of the most devastating problems that has ensnared many good men and destroyed marriages is the sin of pornography (Job gives us this explicit warning in Job 31, **"covenant with my eyes"**). Many men will testify that they were ensnared with just a "little" peek. This one "little fox," nibbling away, can lead to the destruction of the entire "blooming vineyard" – the marriage (c.f., **1 Corinthians 6:18-20, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body."**) The "vineyard" metaphor also refers to the woman's body (SS 1:6; 8:12; 4:12-5:1), and the violation that pornography visits on the woman's image of her sexual desirability is pronounced. This is one of the devil's tricks to get men ensnared.

But I am putting a negative spin on "little foxes." "Little foxes" can also come in the shape of adorable little two and three year olds who distract mom and dad from desired and required intimacy. Be careful about cute, cuddly little distractions that can take away essential romantic time for each other.

Or a little fox might be the inexorable small duties of life –the thousand cuts - that dilute the delights of intimacy to the point of indifference or insensitivity.

The Fox & the Grapes

A Fox one day spied a beautiful bunch of ripe grapes hanging from a vine trained along the branches of a tree. The grapes seemed ready to burst with juice, and the Fox's mouth watered as he gazed longingly at them.

The bunch hung from a high branch, and the Fox had to jump for it. The first time he jumped he missed it by a long way. So he walked off a short distance and took a running leap at it, only to fall short once more. Again and again he tried, but in vain.

Now he sat down and looked at the grapes in disgust.

"What a fool I am," he said. "Here I am wearing myself out to get a bunch of sour grapes that are not worth gaping for."

And off he walked very, very scornfully.

Moral of the fable: *There are many who pretend to despise and belittle that which is beyond their reach.*

The second thought: The song has the woman using the language of ownership and passion in romance in perhaps the most beautiful line in the entire *Song of Songs*: she belongs to the man and he belongs to her ("He is mine and I am his"). We will see this ownership expressed again in the collection (SS 6:3; 7:10) This is a secular version of the spiritual ownership between Jesus and us: "I am His and He is mine" sung in the great hymn "Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners" (#498). More to our point, Paul affirms this marriage mutuality in **1 Corinthians 7:4, "For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."**

The third thought: In our love song, the woman seems to say that her man will be intimate with her (“grazing among the lilies”) and she is at his pleasure. The woman is to be ready for intimacy. I paraphrase: “Make haste, my beloved, turn and face me to be at my side. We are losing the moonlight” (daybreaks) (cf, **Proverbs 7:18, “Come, let’s drink deep of love till morning; let’s enjoy ourselves with love!”**). We have seen the reference to male “pasturing” earlier in SS 1:7. We will see it repeated in SS 6:2-3, after the marriage. Normally, something needs to be pastured, i.e., the sheep. But he cannot be pasturing his sheep among the “lilies” because sheep are not lily eaters, and he has just described his young woman as “a lily” in a previous poem (SS 2:2). So it seems appropriate to suggest that this is, once again, a metaphor for very intimate behavior between the young man and the young woman, but without intercourse – he is only “browsing” or “grazing.” Anything more than that veers into speculation and fornication which we have no warrant for because it would contradict the immediate text and the rest of biblical teaching.

We get a picture of the man as a “gazelle” whom the woman wants to frolic on “mountains of Bether.” The Hebrew phrase *hare bater* is unique here and comes from the root meaning to “cut in two” (cf, **Genesis 15:10, “And he brought him all these, cut them in half and laid each half over against each other.”** **Jeremiah 34:18-19, “I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its part.”**) interpreted to indicate “hills cut in two by a valley” or “cleft of mountains” or “mountains of separation.” There is no biblical place called “Bether” but ancient translators have seen similarly named places in Joshua 15:59 and 1 Chronicles 6:44, and current commentators point to “En Gadi” (SS 1:14), “Sharon” (SS 2:1), Gilead (SS 4:1), etc. as place names in the *Song*. But most commentators don’t except this interpretation.

Most scholars see this difficult verse referring to the woman’s breasts (SS 4:6, “mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense”; SS 8:14, “mountain of spices”; SS 7:7, “your breasts are like palm tree clusters”).

Thus, through a *double entendre*, the young woman is urging her young man to play or cavort with her, physically, as in SS 4:6. Liberal scholars see the *double entendre* in verse 17 as an invitation from the young woman to the young man to spend the night with her. She tells him to “turn around” and come to bed and have sex. This could make linguistic and poetic sense but not theological sense, so evangelicals reject this meaning and look for another interpretation.

Is she urging the young man to turn away from her as evening approaches and return to his home and wait for another day? The phrase “days breaks” literally mean “day breathes” and can mean afternoon breezes and the lengthening of the shadows as afternoon transitions into night. They have been together all day and it is time to be separate. It is a complicated verse and I choose to believe that the young woman, as much as she wants to sexually play (cavort) with her shepherd, urges him to “turn” and leave her, lest they engage in inappropriate pre-marital intercourse. This is a tortured picture of delayed gratification.

The man apparently accepts her urging for the moment, and goes on his way. Richard Hess comments:

“This is erotic poetry that makes no apology for appealing to all of the senses that God has created. Yet it also affirms that there is an order to this wonderful gift of sex. Its potency and wildness does not mean that there is no restraint” (*Song of Songs*, 2005).

“You Belong To Me”

The American Songbook’s romantic ballad “You Belong to Me” was written in 1952 primarily by Chilton Price about separated lovers. The singer reminds her beloved sweetheart that whatever exotic locales and sights may capture his attention, he belongs to her. Written as a woman’s plea to a sweetheart

travelling the world, the 1952 recording by the wonderful Jo Stafford was a huge hit: **"Fly the ocean in a silver plane, watch the jungle when it's wet with rain, just remember, till you're home again - you belong to me."** The recording became Stafford's biggest hit, topping the charts in both the United States and the United Kingdom. It was the first song by a female singer to ever top the UK Singles Chart. Later in 1952, multiple versions of the song were combined to make the song #1 for more than half a year. In short, the song has been a monster international hit.

"See the pyramids along the Nile. Watch the sun rise on a tropic isle. Just remember, darling, all the while - you belong to me. See the marketplace in old Algiers. Send me photographs and souvenirs. But, remember when a dream appears - you belong to me. I'll be so alone without you. Maybe you'll be lonesome too---and blue. Fly the ocean in a silver plane. Watch the jungle when it's wet with rain. Just remember till you're home again - you belong to me."

("You Belong to Me" performed by Joe Stafford)(3:06)(2:00)

"Turn! Turn! Turn!"

"Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)" — often abbreviated to "Turn! Turn! Turn!" — is a song written by Pete Seeger in the late 1950s. The lyrics, except for the title which is repeated throughout the song, and the final verse of the song, are adapted word-for-word from Chapter 3 of the Book of Ecclesiastes, set to music and recorded in 1962. The song was originally released as "To Everything There Is a Season" on The Limeliter's album *Folk Matinee*. The song became an international hit in late 1965 when it was recorded by the folk rock band The Byrds, reaching #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in December 1965, #3 in Canada, and #26 on the UK Singles Chart. In the U.S., the song holds distinction as the #1 hit with the oldest lyrics - Book of Ecclesiastes. The lyrics are taken almost verbatim from the Book of Ecclesiastes, as found in the King James Version of the Bible. The Biblical text posits there being a time and place for all things: laughter and sorrow, healing and killing, war and peace, and so on. The closing line of the song: "a time for peace, I swear it's not too late." And the title phrase, "Turn! Turn! Turn!" are the only parts of the lyric written by Marxist Seeger. The song is notable for being one of a few instances in popular music in which a large portion of scripture is set to music, other examples being: "Rivers of Babylon" by Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton, Sister Janet Mead's "The Lord's Prayer", and U2's "40". The lyrics for "Rivers of Babylon" are adapted from the texts of Psalms 19 and 137. "Rivers" was popularized in 1978 in Europe by the group Boney M, which was awarded a platinum disc and is one of the top ten all-time best-selling singles in the UK. The popular song, "The Lord's Prayer" is a rock setting of the Lord's Prayer with music by Arnold Strals recorded in 1973 by the Australian nun Sister Janet Mead. Mead's recording could be considered one of the links in the development of what would become known as contemporary Christian music. After reaching #3 on the charts in Australia, it went on to become an international smash, selling nearly three million copies worldwide. In the United States, the song was certified gold for sales of one million copies. The single was on Billboard Hot 100 chart for thirteen weeks and reached a peak of #4 during Holy Week in 1974. The record also reached number two on the Adult Contemporary singles chart. It made Sister Janet the first Roman Catholic nun to have a hit record in the United States since Jeanine Deckers, "the Singing Nun," hit #1 with "Dominique" in 1963. It also became the only song to hit the Top 10, whose entire lyrical content originated from the words of the Bible, and it is the only Top 10 hit whose lyrics were attributed to Jesus Christ. Mead was nominated for a Grammy for Best Inspirational Performance in 1974.

"Since I Fell for You"

"Since I Fell for You" is a blues standard composed by Buddy Johnson in 1945. The song never dies. It was first popularized by Johnson's sister, Ella in 1945. In 1947 a version of the song peaked at number 20 on the Billboard pop charts. The biggest hit version was recorded by Lenny Welch in 1963, reaching number 4 on the Billboard chart. In 1986 a version by Al Jarreau peaked at number 10 on the Billboard chart. The song tells of a jilted lover who leaves a comfortable and safe home to pursue a woman who

throws him aside. The man should have listened to the Proverbs 6 dad.

"When you just give love, and never get love, you'd better let love depart. I know it's so, and yet I know, I can't get you out of my heart. You made me leave my happy home. You took my love, and now you've gone, since I fell for you ... Love brings such misery and pain. I guess I'll never be the same, since I fell for you ... Well it's too bad, and it's too sad, but I'm in love with you ... You love me, then you snub me. But what can I do, I'm still in love with you. Well, I guess I'll never see the light. I get the blues most every night, since I fell for you ... Since I fell for you."

("Since I Fell for You" performed by Lenny Welch)

"You Go to My Head"

"You Go to My Head" is a 1938 Tin Pan Alley song composed by J. Fred Coots and Haven Gillespie. The song was recorded in 1938 by Teddy Wilson and later by Billie Holiday. In 1934 Coots and Gillespie wrote the Christmas classic "Santa Claus is Coming To Town." The lyrics reflect a paean to romantic infatuation packed with similes relating love to champagne, burgundy and mint julep. It has been noted that this song comes the closest of any Songbook song to capturing the feeling of losing control in love: **"You go to my head, and you linger like a hauntin' refrain. And I find you spinning round in my brain Like the bubbles in a glass of champagne."**

Of course, Frank Sinatra recorded it.

"You go to my head And you linger like a hauntin' refrain And I find you spinning round in my brain Like the bubbles in a glass of champagne You go to my head Like a sip of sparkling burgundy brew And I find the very mention of you Like the kicker in a julep or two The thrill of the thought that you might give a thought To my plea, casts a spell over me So, I say to myself get a hold of yourself Can't you see that it never can be? You go to my head With smile that makes my temperature rise Like a summer with a thousand Julys You intoxicate my soul with your eyes Though I'm certain that this heart of mine Hasn't a ghost of a chance with this crazy romance You go to my head The thrill of the thought that you might give a thought To my plea, casts a spell over me So, I say to myself get a hold of yourself Can't you see that it never can be? You go to my head With smile that makes my temperature rise Like a summer with a thousand Julys You intoxicate my soul with your eyes Though I'm certain that this heart of mine Hasn't a ghost of a chance in this crazy romance You go to my head."

"You Go to My Head" performed by Frank Sinatra)

Biblical Songbook

"I am Seeking but not Finding My Lover"

3:1-5, (She) "All night long (literally "night after night") on my bed I sought (looked for) (*baqash*) the one my soul (heart) (*nephesh*) loves; I sought (looked for) him but did not find him. I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my soul loves. So I looked for him but did not find him. The watchmen (protectors, keepers, guards) (*shamar*) found me as they made their rounds in the city. 'Have you seen the one my soul loves?' Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my soul loves. I held him and would not let him go (I will not release him) 'till I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me. I charge (adjure) (*shaba*) you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the deer of the field, not to awaken or arouse love until it desires."

Key thought: In this sad dream (c.f., SS 5:2-8) the woman is nocturnally yearning for her man as she lays

in bed (c.f., Psalm 4:4, **"In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent."**; Psalm 6:6, **"I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood by bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears."**; Psalm 149:5, **"Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds."**). This is a dream sequence and not an account of actual events. The young woman is mulling things over in her mind as David did in **1 Samuel 27:1**, he **"thought to himself,"** and Achish did in **1 Samuel 27:12**, **"So Achish . . . [said] to himself,"** It is poetry after all. But some commentators cite Ruth's night-time wanderings in Ruth 3 to argue that the young lady really did journey into the night. But most think this is very improbable because culturally it would be discouraged and because the narrative is so abrupt and unpoetic. Besides, I think she is dreaming about her lover. Alone at night, she yearns for him.

The word she uses for herself in this poem is "soul" (*nephesh*) meaning not some disembodied love, but the whole person - body and soul (c.f., Psalm 7:2, **"or they will tear me (*nephesh*) like a lion and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me."**; Leviticus 26:11, **"I will put my dwelling place among you and I (*nephesh*) will not abhor you."**). In her dream she sees herself desperately seeking her man and ultimately finding him and then clinging to him. C.S. Lewis cautions,

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken" (*Four Loves*, 1960).

Even if it is only in her dream life, the woman's bold venture into the night tells us that she is ready to take great personal risks on account of her love for her man. In contrast to the earlier poems in SS 1:4 and 2:4, the woman, and not the man, takes the initiative to bring back the lover to her place (literally: "my mother-house" and "room"). However, they are still unmarried so it is doubtful that she means to take the man to her home for sex. If all she wanted to do was to have sex, she could have seduced him in private, in the country, and not in the family home. No, what she wants is to have sex in the appropriate place with the attendant meaning – family heritage and continuity. She wants the next generation of believers to follow in the tradition of her believing family. We have an early example of this with Isaac and Rebekah in Sarah's home in **Genesis 26:67** (**"Then Isaac brought [Rebekah] into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her."**) Some commentators interpret the phrase to mean that "mother-house" means or maternal chamber or womb and that in her mind the young woman wants to bring her young man to her inner-most sanctum of intimacy and love and to end her virginity as her mother did when his "conceived" her. Her dreams have carried her to explicit sexual fantasies without any opportunity for satisfaction at this time. As she contemplates their relationship, she realizes that it is time that her virginity needs to be confronted (her virginity is now preserved by the "watchmen" – that is, religious and social guards). This particular poem may be focusing on virginity and the wedding night – an issue all virginal brides need to face. She wants to hold him near and tightly and never let him go, kind of like God's promise to us in Deuteronomy 31:6-8 (c.f., **Joshua 1:5**, **"No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."**). She is not now saying "turn" away from me, but rather turn towards me and embrace me (c.f., **Ecclesiastes 3:5**, **"a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing."**).

But it is better for her and him not to be aroused at all, so once again she tells herself, "Cool your jets young lady, at least for the time being." In her dream, once again telling herself not to let her get intimately involved too soon so that her sexual passions are aroused prematurely, before marriage. The oath is exactly the same as in SS 2:7 where the oath is implored in the name of "gazelles and deer," and not Yahweh.

In the *Song*, when the woman dreams of her young man, she thinks about his kisses, his caresses and "the tingle generated by the intermingle" ("thanks to Carolyn Leigh's lyrics in "How Little it Matters, How Little We Know,"). The young woman knows the power of sexual temptation because the allure is

intruding into her nighttime rest. This poem illustrates that true love persists until it reaches its goal, which is oneness through physical intimacy. The poem is a cautionary tale for engaged couples to be wise and godly in their physical relationship and follow the example of the young lovers in the *Song of Songs*. These teenagers are surprised and amazed by the power of love and sexual attraction and are constantly fighting it. Yet they remain chaste and exemplary for us. This particular poem gives us a searing look at the real world of sexual temptation by exposing two pains for the young lovers:

- 1) The pain of young godly love with all the frustrated desires and limitations and the forcing of oneself to self-discipline under the pressures of the "watchmen."
- 2) The pain of separation from your loved one, "hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Solomon tells us in Proverbs 13:12)

"Dream Lover"

"Dream Lover" is a song written and recorded by Bobby Darin in 1959 when he was 22. It became a multi-million seller, reaching #2 on the US charts and #4 on the R&B charts. "Dream Lover" (kept from the #1 spot by "The Battle of New Orleans" by Johnny Horton) went to #1 in the UK during the summer of 1959. In addition to Darin's vocal, the song features an almost unknown composer, Neil Sedaka, on piano. Mr. Darin was comfortable with Mr. Sedaka's style, and gave him the leeway to play what he thought was right for the track. Mr. Darin's lyrics tell the story about a guy who wishes and prays for the girl of his dreams to come to him so that he doesn't have to dream any more - or as he puts it, - no more: **"Every night I hope and pray a dream lover will come my way. A girl to hold in my arms and know the magic of her charms. 'Cause I want a girl to call my own, I want a dream lover so I don't have to dream alone. Dream lover, where are you?"** The song is featured in a number of movies (the 1991 movie *Hot Shots!* 1974 movie *Stardust*, 1982 *Diner*, the pilot of the 1987 TV series *Rags to Riches*) In 1994, Darin and Sandra Dee's son, Dodd Darin, co-authored a book about his parents, *Dream Lovers: The Magnificent Shattered Lives of Bobby Darin and Sandra Dee*. Singing the Darin song is the Christian pop/country singer, Sandy Posey. Only Mr. Darin can really sing it, but for our purposes I wanted a female singer.

"Every night I hope and pray A dream lover will come my way A boy to hold in my arms And know the magic of his charms 'Cause I want A boy To call My own I want a dream lover So I don't have to dream alone. Dream lover, where are you With a love, oh, so true And the hand that I can hold To feel you near as I grow old 'Cause I want A boy To call My own I want a dream lover So I don't have to dream alone. Someday, I don't know how I hope he'll hear my plea Some way, I don't know how he'll bring his love to me. Dream lover, until then I'll go to sleep and dream again That's the only thing to do Till all my lover's dreams come true 'Cause I want A boy To call My own. I want a dream lover So I don't have to dream alone. Dream lover, until then I'll go to sleep and dream again That's the only thing to do Till all my lover's dreams come true 'Cause I want A girl To call My own I want a dream lover So I don't have to dream alone. Please don't make me dream alone I beg you don't make me dream alone No, I don't wanna dream."

("Dream Lover" performed by Bobby Darin or Sandy Posey)

"Never Let Him Go"

A song written in 1965 by David Gates of the group, Bread. According to a 1996 article in People, Gates has remained married to high school sweetheart Jo Rita since 1958. Together they raised four children: three lawyers and a cardiothoracic surgeon.

Everybody needs a someone, Waiting to be there when things are looking down Easy, feel a little lonely Go out grab your one and only Somewhere out there, someone will care For you and then never let him go, never let him go You may wonder how you know love When the moment comes that You've been dreaming of True love, takes a little longer Your heart beats

a little stronger You'll know it's real, inside you'll feel Your home at last, then never let him go,
Never let him go Easy, feel a little lonely Go out grab your one and only Open your heart, Give
love a start and watch it grow And never let him go, never let him go Never let him go, never
let him go."

"I Cover the Waterfront"

In 1932, San Diego Sun investigative reporter, Max Miller published his best-selling book *I Cover the Waterfront* detailing his waterfront reporting in the 1920s. In 1933 Miller's book was made into a movie with the same name, and a new song, creatively called "I Cover the Waterfront," was quickly composed for the film. This sad 1933 song of forlorn affection was written by Johnny Green and Edward Heyman. The singer is standing on the dock, gazing out to sea and hoping for a lost love to return. You may remember this song as background to Tom Hanks dancing on a raft in the 1990 film *Joe and the Volcano* or background music to the 1969 dance marathon movie *They Shoot Horses Don't They?* I like the Bill Kenny and The Ink Spots' 1946 version of the song because it has more pathos and besides Hanks danced to this version in the moonlight. Here are The Ink Spots singing "I Cover the Waterfront."

"Away from the city that hurts and mocks, I'm standing alone by the desolate docks, In the still and the chill of the night. I see the horizon, the great unknown, My heart has an ache, it's as heavy as stone. Will the dawn coming on make it light? I cover the waterfront I'm watching the sea Will the one I love Be coming back to me? I cover the waterfront In search of my love And I'm covered by A starless sky above Here am I patiently waiting Hoping and longing oh, how I yearn Where are you? Are you forgetting? Do you remember and will you return? I cover the waterfront And I'm watching the sea For the one I love Must soon come back to me For the one I love Must soon come back to me."

("I Cover the Waterfront" performed by The Ink Spots)

"True Love"

"True Love" is a 1956 song written by Cole Porter for the musical film High Society and sung by Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly. "True Love," Mr. Porter's most popular movie song, was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Song that year and was on "Your Hit Parade" for 22 weeks. The Crosby-Kelly version, accompanied by Johnny Green's MGM studio orchestra using a romantic arrangement by Conrad Salinger, was a hit single, peaking at number 4 in the United States and selling a million copies. The single became Ms Kelly's only gold record; It was Mr. Crosby's 21st. If you saw the movie, "True Love" is the name of a yacht on which Crosby and Kelly sail. Bing Crosby later owned a 55-foot yacht which he named the "True Love". Like most of the classic American Songbook ballads, "True Love" has been recorded by most of the great singers of the last half of the 20th century.

"Suntanned, windblown, honeymooners at last alone. Feeling far above par oh, how lucky we are. While I give to you, would you give to me, true love, true love. So on and on it will always be, true love, true love. For you and I have a guardian angel on high with nothing to do, but to give to you and to give to me love forever true. For you and I have a guardian angel on high with nothing to do but to give you and to give to me love forever true love forever true."

("True Love" performed by Bing Crosby)

Biblical Songbook

"The Wedding Song"

3:6-11, (Narrator) "Who is this coming up from the desert (wilderness) like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense (*labona* = white stuff) made from all the spices of the merchant? Look! It is Solomon's carriage (bed), escorted by sixty mighty men, the mighty men

(warriors) of Israel, all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night. King Solomon made for himself the carriage (chair) of wood from Lebanon: Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold, its seat was upholstered with purple, its interior inlaid – this is love! Daughters of Jerusalem, come out, you daughters of Zion, and look at King Solomon wearing the wreath which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart (*libbo*) rejoiced.”

Key thoughts: This poem is a bit unusual in that it is spoken by a narrator (chorus) about the young couple and not by one of the happy couple. The poem is oddly placed between the girl’s ardent desire for her man and the boy’s wondrous description of his new wife in chapter 4. But it is a prelude to the wedding ceremony and the following wedding night. It is also the most explicit language referencing the person of Solomon.

In the very first sentence we get the importance of sight and smell in the courtship. Here the woman, all “perfumed” (only here in the Old Testament, SS 4:6, 14) and ready for romance is being brought to the man by an escorted caravan from the wilderness or country in regal splendor, protected by his best men (“sixty mighty men”). The “who” is a rhetorical question – we know “who” it is. It is the bride because in the Hebrew the word, “this,” is feminine and myrrh and frankincense describe the woman in SS 4:6 (c.f., SS 6:10; 8:5). The “column of smoke” is the dazzling poetic description of the woman herself, arriving out of someplace unseen by the young man like an ephemeral vision. The English Romantic poet William Wordsworth (1770-1850) gets it right in his poem about his wife, “She was a Phantom of Delight”:

“She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight,
A lovely apparition sent
To be a moment’s ornament.

.....

A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle and waylay...
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel-light.”

“Solomon” is referenced three times in this poem alone but it should be remembered that the references are not to the historical figure of King Solomon but only to him, poetically. Solomon’s name is mentioned 5 times in the *Song* (SS 1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:7, 12). As in the first mention of “Solomon” in SS 1:5, the best interpretation is that the reference is to the awesome beauty and excellence of royalty, as in the “chariot of Pharaoh” in SS 1:9). The context of this poem seems to be contrasting the woman’s beauty with the beauty and magnificence of a royal chariot causing the on-lookers to exclaim, “Oh, look, it’s Solomon’s bed.” This is a parallel song to Psalm 45, the only other royal wedding poem in the Bible. It’s like the reaction to the wedding of Diana and Charles. This is the pageantry of every wedding, which is to be a grand social occasion of extravagance and celebration straining the normal budget. No scrimping allowed for daddy’s daughter. Everybody is invited and tolerated. Solomon would be pleased. The wedding day is a day to anticipate and to fanaticize about. That’s what is happening here.

This glorious wedding entourage is attended to by “60 mighty men of Israel” to protect the young bride from the “terrors of the night” (verse 8). This is the only mention of “Israel” in the entire collection and it is only used to describe the men, not the place. Is this not a wonderful picture of the wedding party itself. The bride is always accompanied by an honor guard of groomsmen who bring her from the back of the crowd to the front for the ceremony. There probably isn’t a married woman in this

room who cannot name some or maybe all of the men who participated in her wedding; men who escorted her and her family and friends into the loving arms of her husband. These symbolic “mighty warrior” friends of her husband protected her on her last journey as a single woman. But the warriors can also be the guards and watchmen who protected the young woman’s virginity during her unmarried years, helping to keep her safe from the “terrors of the night,” which I take to be the ferocious temptations to give in to her sexual instincts.

And to every woman in love, her lover is “King Solomon” and her marriage ceremony is a royal occasion. Here is a model for all men in love as they prepare to honor and provide for their new brides. The man spared no arrangements in this most romantic and public display of his love for his woman in preparation for their wedding - “this is love” - as the narrator sings.

Turning to the man, the “crown” in verse 11 is probably a “garland of favor” for the wedding ceremony (c.f., **Proverbs 4:9, “She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor.”**), with Mom doing the crowning. We probably get a picture of a pre-formal wedding celebratory ceremony with the formal wedding taking place (“day of his wedding” – verse 11) shortly afterwards and with the consummation after that in chapter 4. In any case, it is a very important “day” (*yom*) for him since the occasion is repeated twice in verse 11 (“day of his wedding,” “day of his gladness”).

This is the wedding poem for the entire collection. The poem is a literary record of the happy couple tying the knot in a public ceremony. Married at last, living at last.

In 1946, 10 years after George Gershwin’s death, brother Ira Gershwin and Arthur Schwartz (*The Band Wagon* (1931), *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1951), produced the film musical *Cover Girl* (1944) and *Night and Day* (1946)) presented the musical, *Park Avenue*. Ira Gershwin was convinced that the play would succeed because it was a novelty show poking fun at the divorces and marriages of New York’s smart set. It was his last Broadway show and it flopped. Mr. Gershwin opines that it failed perhaps because it dealt with divorce which was still not a funny subject in the 1940s. One of the songs to come out of the play was a clever and charming duet called “There is Nothing like Marriage for People.” The song was never recorded but we do have the ever intelligent Gershwin lyrics. Mr. Gershwin apparently wrote out of his own experience for he was married to the same woman (Lenore) for 57 years until his death in 1983.

“(She) Imagine living with someone who’s longing to live with you! (He) Imagine signing a lease together; and hanging a Matisse together! (She) Oh, what felicity in domesticity! (He) Let no one disparage marriage! (She) Being alone and breaking bread together—Reading The New Yorker in bed together (He) Starting a family tree together — voting for the G.O.P. together (Both) There’s nothing like marriage for people — It means you’re living at last.”

“The Wedding Song”

The “Wedding Song (There Is Love)” is a song written by evangelical Noel Paul Stookey in 1969 and first performed at the wedding of Peter Yarrow - Stookey’s co-member of Peter, Paul and Mary - to Mary Beth McCarthy at St Mary’s Catholic Church in Willmar, MN: Stookey was best man at the wedding. Shortly after his Christian conversion, Mr. Stookey was asked by Mr. Yarrow to “...bless our wedding with a song”. According to Stookey “the melody and the words of “Wedding Song” arrived simultaneously and in response to a direct prayer asking God how the divine could be present at Peter’s wedding.” Drawing from Matthew 18:20, the original lyric began with God’s voice **“I am now to be among you at the calling of your hearts; rest assured this troubadour is acting on My part. The union of your spirits here has caused Me to remain for whenever two or more of you are gathered in My name, there am I...There is Love.”** Concerned that some of the guests at the wedding might misinterpret the pronoun “I” to refer to Stookey, so “I” was changed to “He” for two decades (eg, **“The union of your spirits, here, has caused Him to remain for whenever two or more of you are gathered in His name, there is love, there is love.”**) until 1990 when “I,” referring to God, was restored. The

second verse is a paraphrase of Genesis 2:24: **"A man shall leave his mother and a woman leave her home. And they shall travel on to where the two shall be as one. As it was in the beginning is now and til the end, woman draws her life from man and gives it back again."** Believing he could not take personal credit for composing biblically-based lyrics of "The Wedding Song," Mr. Stookey has donated the royalties from the song to various charities since 1971.

He is now to be among you at the calling of your hearts Rest assured this troubadour is acting on His part. The union of your spirits, here, has caused Him to remain For whenever two or more of you are gathered in His name There is love, there is love. A man shall leave his mother and a woman leave her home And they shall travel on to where the two shall be as one. As it was in the beginning is now and til the end Woman draws her life from man and gives it back again. And there is love, there is love. Well then what's to be the reason for becoming man and wife? Is it love that brings you here or love that brings you life? And if loving is the answer, then who's the giving for? Do you believe in something that you've never seen before? Oh there's love, there is love. Oh the marriage of your spirits here has caused Him to remain For whenever two or more of you are gathered in His name There is love, there is love.

(The Wedding Song" performed by Paul Stookey)(3:47)