

SONG OF SONGS 5:2 - 6:3

She remembers (5:2-8)

²I was sleeping, but my heart was awake. Listen! my lover is knocking.

“Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one;

for my head is wet with dew, my hair with the moisture of the night.”

³I had taken off my clothes; am I to put them on again? I had washed my feet; am I then to soil them?

⁴My lover put his hand into the opening, and my inmost being yearned for him.

⁵I arose to open to my lover, and my hands dripped myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. ⁶I opened to my lover, but my lover had turned away, gone! My soul fainted within me. I sought him, but did not find him; I called him, but he gave no answer.

⁷Making their rounds in the city the sentinels found me; they struck me, they wounded me, they took away my mantle, those sentinels of the walls.

⁸I adjure you, O Daughters of Jerusalem: if you find my beloved, tell him this: I am faint with love.

She expresses her longing and anticipation: 'I slept ... I arose ... I opened ... I sought ... I called ... I am faint with love.'

She imagines that she hears her lover knocking (see 2:8 - 3:5). We hear the words of the Risen Christ:

Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.

– Revelation 3:5

He is wet and cold from the night air and wants to come in to her.

Naked and with her 'feet' washed ('feet' is a euphemism, as often in the Bible), she is ready for bed (and love). She relives the experience of sexual union. 'Hand' is a euphemism, as is 'opening'. Her sexual desire is stirred. She opens herself to his love. The 'hands' dripping with myrrh speak of sexual arousal.

Her memories and her longing are such that she rushes to open the door. But he is not there.

Bewildered and with an aching heart she goes into the night in search of him. To no avail. Once again she meets up with the sentinels (see 3:3), but this time they attack her. She is wearing a 'mantle', a luxury covering associated with seduction (see Isaiah 3:23).

Once again (see 2:7 and 3:5), she addresses the chorus. She begs them to intervene on her behalf and tells him of her yearning for him (compare 2:5).

The Chorus (5:9)

What is so special about her lover?

She speaks of her lover (5:10-16)

The response of the chorus provides her with the opportunity to describe how wonderful her beloved is. We recall his earlier description of her (see 4:1-7). He is 'radiant': his inner and outer beauty radiates from him and lights up everything around him. He is 'ruddy' (like David, see 1Samuel 16:12): strong, healthy, youthful. No one can compare to him.

Like the heads of the statues of gods, his head is of finest gold. He is 'divine'. He has thick, wavy, dark hair. His eyes brimming over with love, and his constancy, evoke the image of doves.

The description of his cheeks recalls the Egyptian practice of placing cone-shaped headpieces made of aromatic substances on the heads of guests. The perfume would run down over the head and cheeks (see Psalm 133:2).

She uses imagery taken from statuary to describe his body. Having spoken of his arms she alludes to his belly adorned with 'sapphires'.

He stands tall and majestic.

She so enjoys his kisses.

⁹How does your lover differ from any lover, O fairest among women? How does your lover differ from any lover, that you adjure us so?

¹⁰My lover is radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand.

¹¹His head is the finest gold; his locks palm fronds, black as a raven.

¹²His eyes like doves by springs of water, his teeth washed in milk, set in place.

¹³His cheeks, like beds of spice, yielding fragrance. His lips, lilies, distilling liquid myrrh.

¹⁴His arms, rods of gold, set with jewels of Tarshish. His belly, a work of ivory, adorned with sapphires.

¹⁵His legs, alabaster columns, set upon sockets of gold. His stature, like Lebanon, choice as the cedars.

¹⁶His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable.

This is my lover, such is my friend, O Daughters of Jerusalem.

¹Where has your lover gone, O fairest among women? Which way has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?

²My lover has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spice, to browse in the garden, and to gather lilies.

³I am my lover's and my lover is mine; he browses among the lilies.

The chorus questions her (6:1)

If he is all that fantastic and if she is so sure of his love, why has he gone away? Why isn't he here with her? Why does she need to go looking? Does she need help?

She responds (6:2-3)

He is with her, browsing (see 1:7; 2:16; 4:5) in the garden into which she has invited him, enjoying the fruit and the intoxication of their mutual embrace.

Their union is consummated.

We recall Paul's song of joy:

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

– Romans 8:38-39