

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FjGm7yB1hY>

"The Song of Solomon", like many of the songs on The Red Shoes, contains heavy background vocals by the Trio Bulgarka group, amplified by the use of a Fender Rhodes. Bush herself plays the Fender Rhodes heard in the recording, as well as the piano and the keyboard. Percussion instruments and guitar were also used.

As well as the title, which refers to the Bible, Bush uses a number of literary references and allusions in the lyrics of the song. The lines in the second verse, for example, "Comfort me with apples...", are taken from the Biblical book. Additionally, Bush references figures from mythology in the third verse, among them the lovers Iseult and Marion. She also highlights the willingness of the song's protagonist to "do anything" for her lover with the reference to the Rose of Sharon, from the Bible and the John Steinbeck novel The Grapes of Wrath.

Kate Bush - Song of Solomon starring Jessie Matthews

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come.
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Sonnet 116

Love is my sin and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving:
O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;
Or, if it do, not from those lips of thine,
That have profaned their scarlet ornaments
And seal'd false bonds of love as oft as mine,
Robb'd others' beds' revenues of their rents.
Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lovest those
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee:
Root pity in thy heart, that when it grows
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.
If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self-example mayst thou be denied!

Sonnet 142

“First of all, love is a joint experience between two persons — but the fact that it is a joint experience does not mean that it is a similar experience to the two people involved. There are the lover and the beloved, but these two come from different countries. Often the beloved is only a stimulus for all the stored-up love which had lain quiet within the lover for a long time hitherto. And somehow every lover knows this. He feels in his soul that his love is a solitary thing. He comes to know a new, strange loneliness and it is this knowledge which makes him suffer. So there is only one thing for the lover to do. He must house his love within himself as best he can; he must create for himself a whole new inward world — a world intense and strange, complete in himself. Let it be added here that this lover about whom we speak need not necessarily be a young man saving for a wedding ring — this lover can be man, woman, child, or indeed any human creature on this earth.

Now, the beloved can also be of any description. The most outlandish people can be the stimulus for love. A man may be a doddering great-grandfather and still love only a strange girl he saw in the streets of Cheehaw one afternoon two decades past. The preacher may love a fallen woman. The beloved may be treacherous, greasy-headed, and given to evil habits. Yes, and the lover may see this as clearly as anyone else — but that does not affect the evolution of his love one whit. A most mediocre person can be the object of a love which is wild, extravagant, and beautiful as the poison lilies of the swamp. A good man may be the stimulus for a love both violent and debased, or a jabbering madman may bring about in the soul of someone a tender and simple idyll. Therefore, the value and quality of any love is determined solely by the lover himself.

It is for this reason that most of us would rather love than be loved. Almost everyone wants to be the lover. And the curt truth is that, in a deep secret way, the state of being beloved is intolerable to many. The beloved fears and hates the lover, and with the best of reasons. For the lover is forever trying to strip bare his beloved. The lover craves any possible relation with the beloved, even if this experience can cause him only pain.”

— Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Café and Other Stories*

“Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may gaze upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the mecholot Machanayim

(dance of the Machanayim [see Bereshis 32:3]).

Shir Hashirim 6:13



Obsessive love
she has the strongest voice
he seems to come-then disappear
“trust men”!
she might say...
but she is besotted.

powerful men...
powerless women
abused by her brothers
assaulted by watchmen meant to protect,
mocked by the “daughters of Jerusalem”
her voice rings true
even now
after millennia.

her playful delight
in his arms
in nature
in perfumery
just treasuring life and love
its pure feeling
images, not lectures,
with no thinking to darken its hue

lying together in bliss
the body’s landscape comes alive
mountains and valleys
hills and dales
every expression pointing to sensuous touch
and caressed contours.
the “curves and edges”
the “perfect imperfections”
all the more for its humanness.

in the end
is the Song
what remains
of this tryst
people are long dead
cultures gone
landscape has forever changed
only those words
that survived the ages
etched into parchment
in black black ink
and canonized as Holy
for some curious Midrashic reason

For maybe these Rabbis realized
that of all the books of the Bible
moralistic, pietistic readings
written by pious scribes
and well intended copyists,
this single book
reflected a truth far deeper
than the imagined perfections of the others,
that this book alone
with its unrequited love
and pain in the flesh
pointed to a reality of human condition
that could not be ignored
a reality about human longing for man and woman
and possibly the Divine too.

Love as an impossibility
the chances of lovers loving equally
and intensely at the moment of climax
what goes on in each others minds
what are they thinking?
of the past? the present?
who are they really making love to?
an image?
a chimera?
an idealism?
what have they projected from their deep wounds
what illusions does love play?

***“Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
O any thing, of nothing first create!
O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.”***

— William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet