

Ketubah: On the Occasion of a Wedding

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Let us say these words to one another:

Into this offering cup, myself, I gather
To rest in these, your venerated hands.
O my daughter of the barley
Harvest, here, on this threshing
Floor, where these pearls between us
Captured are — even here will I long
For the shadows of your heart
Stretched out between us my love.

O river, O rock! O you
Mysterious face that grazes
Upon the white moon; let me kiss
Your cheek, your own soft eyelids
Deeply veiling silent confidences
— Those which echo tumbling in
The sways of wheat — in the sweet hush
Of these, our playing fields.

Into this cup, myself, I pour
Out for you — your thirsting skin,
Your eyes that kiss at my eyes — grasping.
Where you go, will I go - even here

Before this violet sky you turn
Your face against, O mother of
My people. I consider your wandering,
Delicate feet, your aching back, my
Sister of flowers. Curl up around
My shoulders that I may carry you
To a restful place my love.

O cliff-side, O river bed! O you
Gentle touching hands that rest
Upon my trouble, you who know
Where my burdens gather; can we
Cradle these our whisperings
In gentle palms, protecting? Or
Can we shelter these — our thoughts
And worries yet unformed — in your soft mouth
To keep them for another day until
Our love leaves room enough?

Look, beloved, there above
The harvest fields, where two
Foxes scampering are joyful
In their playing. There the dark
Earth that your enigmatic eyes are,
The sheaf that your shining hair is,
Those slyly leaping in the brilliant sky
That my heart with yours,

Rejoicing is my love.

O strength, O tender courage! O you
Vulnerable arms embracing even those
Stars upon stars upon stars which teach
Us dimly; crush me against
These willowing flowers which
Rain down. May I follow you
Along this path your swaying hips
Within the grass have carved? Or even
Let me clear the way of stones upon
Which your tender feet might bruise.

Where you stay, will I stay - even
Until the sky ends and all which seems
Tiring *is* tiring. Meet me, there,
Upon that river and I will wash
Your travel wearied face. Here
In this our garden, this sacred river
Where pomegranates down the hillside,
Crimson, tumble, a gift of trees; here
Is where your people will be
My people. I will bathe your garments
In this fertile river — for that love which pours
From my own hands — for the sake of
Bearing your soft name in the hollow
Of my own bared and aching arms; or

In this offering cup — where your God will be
My God; and where every curve
Of every living thing is clothed
In downy shades of us
My love.