

Thistle Field

Casualene Meyer

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So speaks King Saul:
I want this modest man of war
David, dead.
Snare him with a string
from his own harp,
promise him my daughter Michal
for the bride price:
five score Philistines.
No, just their foreskins.
And she can have
her bloody husband.

David flourishes
for love, killing 200,
covenanting with Michal:
*You are Sarah and I,
Abraham.*

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Shining arms raised to heaven,
back arching, David
dances before God and women
praising enduring mercy:
Philistines routed,
ark of the covenant
brought to Jerusalem.

Michal at the window chants
*The Lord our God is one,
let us exalt his name together.*
Watching David by slices
when linen leaps high,
twirls wider than his body,
Michal chews her long braid.

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Having feasted his people,
David comes home, kisses
the door post, puts hands out
to press blessings on Michal's head.

*—You should be so lively
at home, King—
Are you God,
when you reveal yourself,
a burning bush?*

*—I will dance more.
I will take
a real daughter of the covenant.
I will look to it.
Bless yourself.*

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Possessed again, Saul paces
the thistle field where servants
dumped his demand with citrus peels,
palm fronds, pot shards.

In Ashkelon, Philistine women
scream the cadence of waves
casting at iron-clay sand.