

Abishag on King David

by [Philip C. Kolin](#) in the [July 27, 2022](#) issue

*1 Kings: 1:1-4*

Now in the cold part of his life, he lies alone  
with no one to warm his memory  
of great deeds done for great blessings.

They called me from Shunem to sleep  
next to the king, to touch but never  
to share his anointed body.

I come with pomegranates and lilies  
but not for dalliance, but only  
to bring rest to his restlessness.

Readying his bones to go beyond  
the temple veil, I help him meet Yahweh  
in the deep sleep of my blanket.

As I lie near his ruddy-hewn frame,  
I hear his dreams, the misery of Saul's  
ghost, a giant's booming voice,

Uriah's mournful questions,  
Absalom's thorny regrets,  
the cries of the armies he routed.

In my silence his words speak  
fleshing out what his spirit calls out.  
I am a campfire before his final victory.