



Context of A Virtuous Wife

By Marcus Lander (1994)

This poem was written when I was still at school, not having had any personal experience of the subject in question, however it is based on a Hebrew acrostic poem found in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs. It is known as the Eshet Chayil, or 'woman of virtue' / 'woman of valour', and it is traditionally read as a blessing in Jewish households on Friday evenings as part of the Erev Shabbat ceremony. It may be understood both as an expression of grateful recognition for the essential role played by the wife and mother in the life of her family, but on a more spiritual level as a description of wisdom as embodied by the teachings of God's word found in the Bible. This divine wisdom is personified as a woman in the book of Proverbs, as is the foolish rejection of God's instruction. Being espoused to God's laws then is like the blessing that accompanies the union between a man and a worthy woman—a marriage made in heaven.