



## The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca

Van Gogh upon viewing  
Rembrandt's "Jewish Bride"  
offered ten years of his life  
to sit before it for a fortnight  
with just a crust of bread to eat.  
Was Vincent in his right mind to say  
this painting's the epitome of intimacy?

Romantics, we see Rebecca respond  
dreamily to Isaac's caress.  
Her fingers' slightest touch on his  
affirms she wants his hand on her breast.  
His arm on her back supports his love;  
they are of a single flesh.  
Quietly they contemplate each other,  
folds in their clothes proxy their deepest thoughts,  
colors correlate with the richness of their union.

Skeptics, we wonder if Isaac's hand  
on her chest claims his husbandly rights,  
if his arm on her back keeps her from straying.  
He does not seek her eyes because he agonizes  
about how he'll pay for his golden cloak.  
She averts his gaze to hide her loathing,  
fears this merger came at too big a price.  
Money woes may reduce them to paupers  
begging on the streets of Amsterdam.

Unity is in the eye of the beholder.

*Lee Marc Stein*

*Portrait of a couple as figures from the Old Testament, known as "The Jewish bride."* From [Wikipedia Commons](#)