

Intimations of the Deserts

Anthology of Poems



by

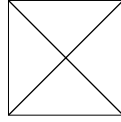
Abdul-Aziz Saud Al-Babtain

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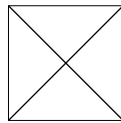
This Book is Translated

by

Abdul-Wahid Lúlúa, Ph.D.

Professor of English Literature
Philadelphia University
Amman - Jordan

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The Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's

Prize For Poetic Creativity

Tel: 2430514 - Fax: (+965) 2455039
E-mail : Kuwait@albabtainpoeticprize.org >

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KUWAIT

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In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Foreword

It never occurred to me once, and since I started my journey with poetry, more than forty years ago, to publish an anthology of my poems. I consider that those poems express my own intimate feelings and emotions, and no one has any need to look into them, as they are so private, and not necessarily the product of a personal experience. But some friends and members of the Board of Trustees of "The Foundation of Abdul-Azeez Saud Al-Babtain Prize for Poetic Creativity" prevailed on me to publish this anthology, since I have such a high esteem for poetry, and an incessant love for poets. Hence this selection, out of a collection which I have kept for years. The title, *Intimations of the Deserts* stems from the fact that most of these poems were inspired by various Arabian and foreign deserts, where I used to exercise my hobby of hunting.

Abdul- Aziz Saud Al-Babtain

20 – 6 – 1995

Love - Poems

1. Dedication

Intimations of the deserts I here
Present to her who once did love a youth,
By cruel separation agonized.
She taught me types of love so pure
Like morning clouds, transcending carnal pleasure.
I loved her all my life, a love that weighs
Upon a life that fell a victim, claimed
By parting once, and once by forbearance.
I yearn to her, and yearns a soul that suffers
A constant love, that dominates the heart.
Except for love, my heart could not flutter
With a line of verse, or sing, for ever.
Life-companion, if censors ever knew
That we have nursed our hopes through painful strife
Their world would be unbearably confined,
Like one whose eyes are purblind and sore, too.
The life of my heart I present to her,
Who shared with me the gloom of life.
I still remember the day of farewell,
Your eyes said that we should remain as one,
Until the end – then we were overwhelmed
By parting, which rendered me so helpless.
Life-companion, inspiration, I wish
I could raise you a monument of verse,
So that love and lovers would remember
A youth by separation agonized.

Abdul-Aziz Saud Al-Babtain

2. Your Abodes in My Heart

I knew you, before love knew me;
I, the enamoured, sick with love.
Your image always shines within my mind,
And all about me it likes to loiter.
Inside my heart your love will always stay
Throughout all time, with tenderness is nursed.
If loyalty allowed and I could live
With it for years, then this is real love.
When love is mentioned, then I am recalled,
Since my body, alas, is sorely sick.
And I recall that calmly in your heart,
I lived an age, while sleep deserted you.
And in your eyes I soundly was asleep,
Throughout your life, safely, and dignified.
To you I was nearer than anyone,
In tenderness, my equal, there is none.
Did you forget, my love, all that has passed
Or is the memory nourished by flames?
Or is the image by long strife disturbed,
While mine within your heart is harmed?
Inside my heart, and in my eyes, and soul,
There, your abodes, are upwardly installed.
My true love shall remain, always like that
Of Jameel and Buthaina – ever chaste.
Has love remained with you, as mine has done,
With me, the enamoured, and sick with love?

30 – 12 – 1993

3. O My Palm-Tree

O date-palm in Neice, it is time to part,
I wish I could return, so we can meet.
Love memories I recreate
So in my soul all grief prevails.
All my feelings, and all my dreams
Hearken to you, my palm, for news.
So you repeat your old advice:
"Patience! for patience knows no end."
Then my feelings return dismayed
Like one with empty hands, distressed.
I keep on asking how the months
Passed after me, were you ever approached?
You answer with a bashful smile:
"Your love and secret stayed with me."
My doubts, inflamed, within me rise,
My heart complains of loneliness.
Was my secret widely divulged,
So everyone exchanged the news?
And my love-cares were thus disclosed
My tears exposed them in my poems.
I do not here reproach, my palm
For fear of censure backed with threats.
I have ignored that for long years
Unmindful of repeated blame
I rather fear my love secret
If known, she then will turn away!

1 . 9 . 1982

4. Remember Me

Remember me whenever yearns the heart
And on the skyline my memory peeps;
And when the distance weighs upon the heart
And when my moon in eclipse fades away
Remember me!

Remember me when clouds begin to rise
Across my sky, where birds do often sing
Each one its mate among the stars to call,
Enthralled, and roused for love, aloud they sing,
Remember me!

Remember me when blows the tender breeze,
And flies my soul to follow in its course,
To bowers, where my love and tender youth
We have, for one short period, known the bliss,
Remember me!

Remember me whenever a bird sings,
Bemoaning the loss of a sweet mate gone.
And when the roses touch the morning dew,
Of glorious day, eager for tomorrow;
Remember me!

Remember me when roses open up
In gardens, where all that is seen is fair,
And when the fragrance wafts and puffs around
A spot, that we have haunted at sunset;
Remember me!

Remember me whenever the spring comes,
Spreading the buds' fragrance throughout the air,
That purifies the air, like an infant,
Chanting the jovial hymns of lofty skies;
Remember me!

Remember me when the delighted sings,
Sighing his agony in numbers sad,
While the tunes of the lute enthrall the hearts,
Which start to weep at the beats of the tunes;
Remember me!

Remember me when the partridges rise
To fill the sky with cooing and laments,
To span the world, with ever hurried hops,
Wandering, in search of the sweetheart's nest;
Remember me!

Remember me when the dawn guilds the sky,
Though the lover may not have tasted sleep,
And when the night canopies every eye,
And when your soul courts me with cups of love;
Remember me!

Remember me when rosy age has passed,
And when my years have gone behind the years,
And when my youth is no longer in prime,
When I am lost, with yearning and desire;
Remember me!

Remember me when you are all alone,
And distance weighs on the enamoured heart,
When passion smites a lonely heart in love,
Come, let us drink together cups of tears;
Remember me!

Remember me, my dear, I am enthralled
In your passion, in every morn and eve,
When morning rises, or when falls asleep
In waking nights, the beacon of the sky;

Remember me!

Remember me when inspiration fails,
And when the heart is spent with hot desire,
My song, a tune that in the world was lost,
My heart for you will be the sacrifice;

Remember me!

Remember me when my life-span is gone,
And earth to earth, we meet our journey's end,
Remember, when in times which have gone by,
Our souls to love would always have recourse;

Remember me!

20 . 4 . 1978

5. Nostalgia

Ask the dale of love, and a rose therein
About that tryst, if it could be refreshed,
Then green would grow the land, and all about,
Tulips and lavender would smile in bloom.
A tryst the star would often talk about,
To future days, repeatedly, with pride.
Deep from the heart that tryst I have recalled
For love cannot be blown away by time.
O lute, play on, my heart is sick with love,
O passion, come, my feeling is alert,
O lutist, ask that dale, it will inform
You that the glee would echo all around.
So raise your tunes, O lutist, and rejoice.
Let memory of our tryst be wooed.
The meeting day, awaited in time past,
By Udhri lovers, we bring back to life.
In corners are traces of our courting
Found, and on roads are echoes of its songs,
And in the turns are remnants of our sighs
Fearing parting, pains of separation.
My heart yearns to that meeting as in it
Love memories transcend all other senses.
I wish the soul could keep that sense for long,

For me to remember and its echo keep.
Ask the dale of love about that love which
Keeps me awake, with a heart that is lost.
I tried to hide it, but it slips away
To my hidden secret and makes it known.
I gave it the best life-nectar to drink
It only gave me fancies false, and pain.
We kept each other's company for life,
Can the bird quit the nest it has tendered?
Love has no life if I were not in love,
Nor can I live alone, away from love.
Companions were we, and shall so remain,
The thorns hurt me, but they protect the rose.
Would the dale of love satisfy our thirst
For union, and grant us that happiness.

11 – 7 – 1990

6. Yearning Persists

As torture has become used to my heart,
My heart has grown tired of that torture.
Both contraries have travelled on some roads
Of rooted pain, and of tricky mirage.
My heart has not lost hope of some union
As torture had enough of argument.
My years have thought that my estrangement time
Will anchor at my shore without return.
But the years knew not that I have a heart
Grown used to punishment and to censure.
My ways of life have tortured the torture
And torture fell victim before my might.
Desire persists, as life persists, in me
And love transcends in dignity and worth.
My moments of love and pleasure frolic,
And smile the lips, to chase away the pain.
Then we enjoy the nights of glorious time
Of union sweet, no nectar half so sweet.
And we forget a stage in years of life
When parting tasted so bitter and sour.
I swear ten times, and by a score of nights,
By holy dawn, and by the Holy Book,
That love and myself will remain as twins,
Until love expires, or my end comes near.

1 – 12 – 1989

7. The Soul-Mate

O soul mate, O you of sweet lips,
A darling, in the heart welcome;
Abiding in the heart, for years,
Quaffing my tenderness and bliss.
It settled with love in the core
And became a part of that core.
O soul-mate, do not leave my blood,
My veins wish you to stay therein.
You dwell within my being, and
In love I live, so why the blame?
My life, my youth, and all my hopes,
And verse-bowers in my dreams roam.
O soul-mate, guardian of that soul
You have won that suffering heart.
Be tender, as it is tender,
To you; like it, be merciful.
Don't desert it, O wail-a-way,
If deserted, that would be hell.
O soul-mate, of that heart I am
Only a guest, bless that sojourn.
I crowned her master of my love
Where she has lived intimately.
It is your bower, as it was

When we in love fell, long ago.
So hold it gently, and be kind,
Adopt the touch of gentle breeze.
O soul-mate, if departure winds
Blew up our love, it would be chaff.
Despite my grief, my call is loud
O darling to my heart welcome!

26 – 6 – 1993

8. Hymns

Tomorrow we shall be beaten
By earth, conquered by us for long.
When my instrument is broken
The tune is lost in life so sad.
Then life will cry over my soul
When life is from my body gone.
"Man's fate is certain," is my faith.
My doubts have vanished through the years.
We shall go, whereto is unknown,
We are going, but in which way?
His knowledge, that which is unseen
Is always growing in my heart,
Then my heart, deprived of union would grieve,
After its long story with love.
Love would then bemoan our union
Severed by lover's departure.
I do not know if we shall meet,
Hereafter, or I shall be gone,
Where I shall have no chance to meet
And will be spent out by yearning.
Then after us our memory,
A lively beacon will remain
Sadly to us love will declare:

"You will never be forgotten."
How often hearts are bought and sold
And changed by others, bragging too.
Denouncing, I say: live and see
Wonders: as love likes the faithful.
I wonder, who has carried us
To a sweetheart whose advice was
To fall in love, a love which led
To bemoaning so bitterly?
My life is so brief, O my God,
My heart to love is always near
In wailing, like the doves I am,
The lovers' union I bemoan.
Eternal love my heart assumes,
Its lover it will not forget
My face has grown so pale, it seems,
Such are the signs of those in love.
My God, so bitter is this world
It harms and injures everyone.
But has love extended our life,
Or have we tumbled down in peace?
It is for death we are waiting
And then will come the expected.
We see the wisdom of the wise
It is the day of certainty.

29 – 2 – 1992

9. Infatuation

O you to whom the heart aspires,
Infatuation pained the soul,
And yearning melted my heart's core,
And passion patience pacified
I had too many bitter years
I bored Patience with my patience.
The moaning of the nestled dove
And its cooing – how refreshing!
It points to my love suffering
But who instilled it in my ribs?
The moaning of the dove, inside
My heart, is like a rose bedewed.
O passion you have injured me,
And passion, mine has astonished.
My love of her, O my passion
My soul without you is forlorn.
The highest aim for me is love;
The tough my love has easy made.
By love I loved all of the world,
Through a heart that never forgets,
Despite the years, despite itself,
By laceration set aflame.
Did it occur ever to love
To ask how long the parting lasts
Or does departure ever know
How cruel is the heat of love!

My soul-companion was unfair
Yet she was pampered by my heart.
My heart will always be in love
And overwhelmed by passion pangs.
I yearn to immediate union,
Infatuation pained my soul.

24 . 5 . 1993

10. You Scraped the Wound

You scraped the wound, my time, my wound
That smiles to show nice memories.
The secrets of my heart rejoiced
My upset soul became so calm.
The world went dancing round my soul
As it has brought it some good news.
Its ecstasy grew high with hopes
My dreams revived with melodies.
You scraped the wound, O cruel time,
With meeting like fast lightning, short,
Appearing in a desert waste.
But lightning brought it signs of life.
O day of meeting, in my life,
You equal years of sore parting.
I heard a whisper from afar,
My hearing likes the pleasant sound;
As it reminds me of the nights
When there was no desertion felt.
It brings to memory my youth,
My early love, and days of yore.
That sound complained of restless nights
The heart is tired of complaints.
But it remembers and it yearns,

Smiling at the censors' rumours,
Of my life-long love reminding,
Love to my life is no stranger.
Soul-companion grant me union
Refreshing as water to plants.
I find it as a cure to wounds
That smile to show nice memories.

4 – 6 – 1993

11. I Have not Forgotten

You said you yearn. "Do you remember still?
Or did you all that tender talk forget?
Have years of parting ended all your love?
Was that candle on our way put out?
Or has your heart darkened away from mine
And frozen feelings led you to forget?"
I said, "Never, by Him Who made us love,
Have I forgotten those tender meetings.
The passing of ten whole years that were lost
Has not effaced away your fragrant trace.
But separation, heavy on my soul
Had me unsettled, as gray hair denotes.
They all stand bearing witness against me
And warn against departure, saying: "Don't!
They fear accursed departure that may fall,
And cause the wound to bleed, as once before."
So, let us use the night before the morn,
Forget parting to make it forget us.
Let's be happy. The world is dancing still,
Since we last met, watched by the star of love.
Not much of life is left, except what nights
Of union may offer, in tenderness,
And songs, for love, to hear us singing them,

To choke the jealous and the treacherous.
The dancing grounds are calling us to them,
Let us rejoice today, and celebrate.

5 – 12 – 1974

12. The Winds of Passion

O winds of passion blow on,
Tear up the sails of my love,
Drown the world in separation,
As you drowned my heart that way.
Lighten my desertion clouds
Thunder horror on horror!
Rain down poison, rain down thorns.
Spread the drought over the land,
Stop the flower from growing,
So the seed cannot increase.
For my heart is impatient
With my sweetheart's desertion.
And my eyes are so tired,
With night waking and distress.
I resort to hopes at times,
But they leave me with no help;
Though they sometimes grow about,
In the depths of my being.
Time of union, come to me,
And restore a throbbing heart.
Let the flower grow and live,
For the seed to promise more.
Scatter beauty like a spring,

So the world will freshly shine.
Fill the world with fragrant air,
And with song along my way,
Since the passion calls for you,
And love, too, responds to you.
Don't desert me, O my time,
To be held by storms and moans,
To be held by fears that plague
All my life until the end,
But be with me, to efface
Heart worries with your mercy.

5 – 9 – 1974

13. Days of Love-Union

As if my thirsty heart desires
To join my love who's long since gone.
Infatuated goes the heart
Around that meeting, though worn out.
A whisper, like cooing, I thought,
A cure eternal for my heart.
But that whisper was long ago,
And looked a statue broken down.
My heart looks like a baby deer,
Deprived of friends, and quite forlorn.
O how I wish that night's return,
When together we enjoyed love.
We drank the cups of hopeful love,
While night companion sang that love.
O mates, I never shall forget
Her love, and sorrow in my heart,
Or that beloved, who is far,
But when remembered, tears run down.
May days of reunion be blessed,
With showers to revive their drought.
So buds and blossoms will abound,
And bring to life that love of yore,

Forget a censure that has failed,
And chase a devil and his plots
And we will clear off every care
As pleasant times are near at hand.

2 . 2 . 1975

14. Complaint

Passion shakes me, and sighs blow up.
Cares involve me with remembrance.
The heart is pressed with severe pains,
Despair enhances pain, like thorns.
Patience retreats into the heart,
Perturbed by sighs of that complaint.
My moans are heard by everyone,
Among the humans, except you.
Whenever whispers in the night
A dove, I run fast to meet you.
You frightened off my thought and mind,
Could hope in you restore them both?
Life has enough hardship for us
To fail your tryst is worst of cares,
I came along to bless your home,
And pray you may be so happy.
I passed, the soul, as wanted, urged,
To have the pleasure of your sight.
But I refrained, as I was torn

Between yearning and idle talk.
I fear the slanderous puffs of breeze
May your serene world unsettle.
I plead with myself to avoid
The pleasant meeting, my intent.
Defeated, lonesome, quaffing cares
As cure, when I remember you.

3 – 6 – 1976

15. A Talk of Late

The darkness of the night, beaten by hopes
Has vanished, where my eyes cannot behold,
I kept the soul within my chest, so that
It won't address with cares my burning dreams.
The slow night exhausted me, and wore out
My sighs, as my yearning can give no help.
I chew the cares that settled inside me,
Which wore me out, with passions burning me.
I keep repeating all the talk of late,
Though its echo is denied me by time.
But no beloved has towards me come
Nor love, gone drunk, is hearing my tuning.
I did not hear the birds chanting a hymn,
Reverberating with my tuneful chords.
The partridge did not moan over our love,
Nor blushed a pulse along my tender twig.
The garden blooms refrained from whispering,
With fragrance sweet, to pour into my cask.
The sea-waves were becalmed and pacified,
And in those waves my thought and mind were lost.
And this full moon denied it had seen us,
Though it had face to face witnessed our love.
And that night has denied me all my wounds,

While dressing them, as I was near my end.
As if the night has not witnessed the vows,
Supported by my grief, and my passions.
As if the dawn has not my complaint heard,
Whose moan has echoed loud in every ear.
Why does my blamer never console me,
As torment grows and turns a burden sore?
My youth has withered, as my fountain dried,
Its waters wasted on the parting day.
Who would have mercy on a heart ensnared,
By love I took to be a paradise,
But flared its flame, burning into a soul,
Laden as captive, in a prison night.
O nights of love, refrain from calling me,
I may not meet you, even in my dreams.
The night is gone. There is no darkness left,
To keep me sleepless, and torment my eyes.

26 – 8 – 1980

16. Eternal Fidelity

In all my poems I have said it, my friend
And will be saying it, until my end.
For ever faithful, I have lived for love
My heart repeating sighs, and some reproach.
My jovial song would never wither out,
It moves to dance the lovers and the maids.
O my dear friend, when I go out to hunt
I chase the deer, my hawk, and all the wolves,
So I forget my wounded heart and pains
As I am burned by parting cares and love.
Out in the desert freely moves my soul
I chase away the parting thoughts and pain.
My hawk I send up, and my heart follows,
To open all horizons up for me.
To-day, tomorrow, also yesterday
I look for my beloved that was gone.
She took my heart, my soul and disappeared
Can she restore my soul, now, and my heart,
After a long life that has gone and passed,
That has wasted my senses and my youth?
I send up the hawk, and my mind is dazed
Asking the hawk: has my beloved returned?
Though I am sure that what has gone is gone

Our love became a dream and a mirage.
Love memory will after us survive,
For history, to register in books.
I said it so my world and all can hear
And will be saying it, until my end.

21 . 5 . 1993

17. Tender Beauty

My passion carried me to times of yore,
Like those of love-union in Andalus.
And all my apprehensions haunted me,
Woe to my heart, what a wicked torment!
My friends, I have such a burning desire
Hoping the forgetful may satisfy,
With union by my beloved renewed,
To brighten the heart of a gloomy night.
I sip the wine from lips that are so sweet,
While being wooed by those narcissus eyes.
The fire of my heart is consuming me,
Its heat and flames are feeding on my breath.
Companions of my wooing, where is she
Who made my bliss? Can no one console me,
After we were allies in a romance
And quiet life that was never disturbed
The speaking silence we have so enjoyed
After a whisper, or some pleasant talk
Gone and withered, that jealous wicked time,
That watched our union with a heart so wild.
Companions, for your sake I sacrifice
Every dear, if reunions were restored.
Give me hope of that desired reunion

After desertion that dispersed my hope.
My memories have all gone by, and none
But old ruins of them were left behind
None but the fragrance hovered on the road
Where tender beauty passed with nimble steps.

26 . 11 . 1985

18. A Call

My soul is yours, have you not heard my call?
My cares have laid on me all sorts of woe.
My yearning to you has become a ray,
Which went upwards, until it touched the sky.
It filled the world, and all the space, and turned
Between your eyes to pour the light around.
It journeyed all the night, hoping to meet
Your lovely dawn, spreading the gorgeous dew
O my past days, do you remember love,
When young, and free to sing the way it liked?
When meeting had enough of us, but we
Were still with that union not satisfied.
O dear God! How does life run within us
When painful parting has destroyed our hope?
Parting has no chance to choke my yearning,
Nor has the time a chance to stop my call.
That is my love, which is ever fertile,
Its flow abundant went past Orion.
My soul is yours, my love, and all my years,
And all I have I sacrifice for you.
Have you heard that call, my soul-companion,
Or was my resounding call yelled, in vain?
My call will always circle and echo

To bring my glorious passion back to me.
And sweet singing will enchant all the space
It was me who taught the birds their chanting.
If you should one day hear a cooing dove,
It is my art which I offered the dove.
Or should you in the garden hear the birds
Delighting daylight, garden, and the dreams,
It is what they have heard of my singing,
A potion, which I hope to be the cure.
Restore the union; for you is my soul,
My cares have laid on me all sorts of woe.

30 . 10 . 1992

19. Feelings

Had the lark known what has grieved me,
And that my passions do revive;
That memory of reunion
Yearns to the bower of my love;
That passion burns in my liver,
Inflaming memory that flares,
And scrapes in the heart's core a wound
Treated by years, but it revolts;
That grieving song is suffering
From distant memory that failed;
Enthralled by passion's memory,
But never fails the fire of love,
It moves the verses in my heart,
Which flow and cannot be controlled.
The birds would turn them into tunes.
The spring would make them songs of love.
They touch the pulse inside my heart,
And make the dormant feelings known.
The meadows then would swing in glee,
As beauty sings and dances there.
The blowing breeze would grieve us, as
It would enliven what has passed.
If the lark knew all that ails me,

In my sorrow, it would not sing.
But, though tormented, I would yearn
And choose my best return: to love.
So, do not stop your song, O lark,
The song of love lives all the time.

21 – 4 – 1987

20. Thirsty Heart

My passion, soul, and love were joined
For sundry nights, in times of yore.
The heart has lived, with thirst unquenched
By one sweetheart; ever so fair,
She took from me a love so sweet,
And gave desertion cup to drink.
O love, that passion poured for her,
Deep from the heart, yearning, serene.
All passion gathered in my soul
The lovers' secrets to unveil.
O love, how often have they sung
For you the heartfelt moaning tunes!
As if for us alone has sung
The bird of love, with tender tunes.
Have you recalled our rendezvous,
When drowsed the world, and jasmine spread,
When we were lifted by the hopes,
Among the dreamers, high above?
We tried sore hardship and we hoped
That hardship rock will yield by force.
Where are those hopes? Have they withered
Like tender petals in the waste?
Where is that reunion? Has it

Remained dormant in time's corners?
My passion and my soul were joined
To make my love for ever live,
As if, my love, we live and serve
The king of love, like no one else.

14.2.1994

21. Illusory Reunion

Ask my heart if your memory hovered,
And looked a vision whispering to me,
As night makes me suffer when it sets in,
Its end exhausts me by false reunion.
The grievous night, with grief, would distance me,
I thought the lengthy night would bring me near.
My drunken soul has tenderly embraced
The unseen world, hoping to be informed,
What has befallen the enthralled lover
When parting is burning deep in his veins,
Recalling his past, wishing it to be
Tomorrow? Could what refreshed me return?
Or could the dew the thirst of roses quench,
Or feed my fancies yesterday's rain-drops?
O bower of love and fidelity,
Where are they, the hopes that were promised me?
Ask my heart, with parting pain tormented,
And brought to tears and grieved by open wounds.
Patience is spent, and age is taunting me
As grey hair loomed, and tried consoling me.
My heart! Are you after reunion years,
Or is that but a hope to comfort me?
Live for ever, enough for us the pain
Enough for me the fire that burned my life.

8.3.1981

22. Fidelity

Let us recall the days and union sweet,
And love removed by time and pushed away;
A love, we fought the time, to keep it pure,
And from its flowers' fragrance we formed our hopes.
And up we flew towards the stars and sun,
Singing our mutual whispers in the skies.
We frolic in the wider space that shakes
With our pleasures, so to the earth it bends.
The rhymes and verses went behind our steps,
Chanting to us till we adored those rhymes.
The love-poets were our companions,
Those famous ones were singing songs of love,
Proceeding in a wedding, and so proud,
Of their bride, whose bower outshines all stars.
Companions, be gentle, for life is short,
So leave me, I won't spend weeping my life.
My cooing dove is helpless on the branch,
I vow I always shall be her guardian.
If my love fails me and my dove is gone,
I will to no other one have recourse.
I shall, and love shall after me as well,
With every dove sing my fidelity.

9 – 5 – 1989

23. Brands of Doubt

Ask my soul, when such passion has set in,
To melt my heart over the brands of doubt.
I spend the whole night overwhelmed by cares,
And looked after by the stars and my grief.
I address my soul, blaming it so that
Yearning may not tear it, and cause my death.
It shares complaining and moaning with me,
And shoulders most painful burdens for me.
Beguiling it, I try to make it feel
That sleep is overpowering my eyes.
But fire is fiercely raging inside me,
It burned my bliss and made me old betimes,
My soul and I both keep awake till morn.
Have you been told, or have you ever known,
That I spend all my life recalling nights
Of union gone, and with parting replaced.
Restore, my hope, that union far removed,
By over loaded years with unjust blame.
Sweetheart, let us enjoy a lovely world,
So fairly courted by the rose of hope.

February, 1982

24. And the Years Pass By

O muse of verse and visions, visit me.
I am bored with calling, visit me, dreams!
The heavy years pass by, as if they are
Bound with chains, from old, unremembered times.
Years pass by, and I find nothing tasteful;
Home companions are bewailed by my chants.
Ask the rhymes, for I have set them dancing,
In glee, as if they for the saddened dance.
O time, long days are going to kill me,
Have mercy on a lover and his lass!
Two such hearts they have, that did not weaken
Despite the years and sore separation.
O muse of inspiration, O my hope,
Peep into my mind, you star in my night.
I had enough of people and of life,
My wound is far beyond what I can bear.
I go, but not the times I have enjoyed,
They cannot be in verse or prose described.
O stars, have you a lover ever seen
Like me, involved in grief, like one bewitched?
O stars, have you courted a moon like mine,
A sweetheart who enjoys what words I say?

She says to me, and grief involves her smile,
How nice are poems when they express true love,
But my passion, when I remember you
Say to the fire inside me: off with you!

2.9.1984

25. The Third is Love

May rain refresh my love's bower,
And refresh too the sweet meadows,
When we were two, and love the third,
And all around was fair and sweet,
With butterflies of gorgeous hues,
Heralding love with velvet dawn.
The garden blooms, with dewy leaves,
Were smiling with fantastic glee;
When spread the fragrance of the rose,
To bless my garden with delight;
When circling birds filled up the air
With chants sounding like drunken tunes;
And smiles of love were freshly ripe,
To cure the soul of ailments sore.
The spring that passed I still recall:
Its image in my heart is fixed.
My passion is a river full
Of all my years, refreshing hope.
O time that slipped and has gone by,
May you be blessed with sweetest rain!

13.3.1985

26. Old Love

The night will pass, followed by day,
And seasons follow my sunk day.
The grievous years will go behind
And life will be followed by death.
The glow will go off when the life
Of men is suffering decline.
But memory of man will last
For e'er, due to his righteous deeds.
For love I'll be hope and symbol,
Attacked by time, but never fall.
I bear witness, I never shall
Forget my love, or change my course.
The cords of my heart greet my love
With tunes, conveyed by an envoy,
So she will know I am faithful,
And by old love I am enthralled;
And that the tale-teller will know
That I despise his spiteful tales.
I'll be content with love without
Union, though it is my desire.
Lovers survive on hope to meet;
Enough for me: to yield and sigh.

23.7.1990

27. The Road Was Lost

Passion shook my heart to unleash
Long yearning to one far away.
I remembered our meetings past
And how generous you were then!
A snow-white heart you have, more pure
Than drops that down from heaven fall,
Or like the morning light that touched
The fragrant rose bedewed by dawn.
Woe to me! My self I envied,
As calm I sat in tender bliss;
As in the core of heart I lay,
To sip the sweetest cup of love.
I grew on tasty love and pure,
Since I was young and saw the light.
You dallied to be intimate,
I lightly put off your request.
We went on, and my road was lost,
And life was wasted in torment.
I raved, inquiring about you,
My call was met with ridicule.
And I was sure I went astray,
So I went mocking my distress.
Worn out by roads, in search today
About remains of my being.

11 – 11 – 1991

28. The Ring of Magic

I swear by chaste lovers in times of yore:
Buthaina, faithful Qais, the love poet;
By "Ibn La'boon's" agony, my uncle,
Mourning his dear "May," deceased in Yathrib,*
By passion of lovers, like "Kuthayyir"
Who underwent bitter separation:
We spent the years of love, culling its blooms,
Like bees in rose-gardens, in blooms sheltered.
My life-companion's gown is white and pure
My vision of her: a fair shining star.
A morning butterfly, a rosy throne,
Is how a breeze of love had her portrayed.
Could I forget a charming laugh that shook
The dormant chords of love within my heart?!
The ring of magic in my loneliness
Remained a comfort, and my hopes revived.
Listening to her reproach was joy to me,
Or her complaint about the long journey;
Sometimes I make my joy heard by the world,
At other times I raise complaints to God.
The heart is weary by true love of her
Yet it cannot resign fidelity.
The long journey has worn out our time

And our love, wearied with sore mishaps.
Could I ever forget the time that passed;
Its drunken tunes will ever be alive.
Companions, sweet is the harbinger's news,
That future days will comfort the enthralled.
My patience is over, the lover yearns
To days of reunion, without reproach.
Companions, pardon! I pity your toil,
In joining a lover, waking all night,
Yearning for union, faithful for ever,
Free from the treachery that goes with love.
My heart will be enamoured all my life
Faithful like Qais, known for his poems of love.

24.4.1992

*** Muhammad ibn La'boon (maternal grandfather of the poet) was a well-known poet in the Arab peninsula in the early 1800's. He wrote an elegy on "May" his beloved, who died while on pilgrimage in Yathrib (Madeena).**
