

BARE THE BONES OF KARBALA

Bare the bones of Karbala.
Sun and foe their broken
arms by thorn-brake strewn afar,
clashing-hearted token.

Serpent glides on gravel dune;
spider's home in dusty
tamarisk 'neath madding moon,
tempest grey and gusty.

Bleeding blades of blazing fire,
gelid ghosts of guilty
shame and shirking false desire.
Guile of Kufa guilty.

Vain the boasting in their hall,
vain the vaunting threaping
villains vain with clarion call.
Vows are made for keeping.

Tongues that talked of Murtada
praised his virtues, ne'er would
suffer slander from afar,
pledged their troth to serve him.

Mark their falchions blowing brave,
mark the name of Ali
broidered at the towers wave,
marked from hill and valley.

He the gate of learning's town:
every portal bore his
seal in bronze in bold renown
closed against his kinsman.

Wilderness of Karbala
veil with night the fallen
forms still clad in steel and valour
watching for the daytime.