

Using Pre-Islamic Poetry to Foster Student Engagement and a Better Understanding of 16th Century English Poetry: Imru' AL-Qais' *L* Poem and Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar*: An Illustrative Comparison of Two Poems

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Abstract

Gaining a better understanding of English poetry is a goal for many Arab college students. The potential disconnect between the use of language in English poetry and the home language of learners is exacerbated when old-English is used. By employing Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar* as a counterpoint to an Islamic ode, it is possible to compare some of the thematic and structural commonalities they share which, in turn, can increase student achievement and satisfaction. Developing an understanding of the nature and function of genre and the literary terms related to poetry, such as prosody and metaphor, provides a further insight into the differences between the two poems and builds on a familiar Arabic poem as a segue to the unusual.

A well-known pre-Islamic Arabic poem (Imru' al-Qais' *L* poem) is analyzed and compared to its 16th-century English counterpart (Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar*). The comparison reveals that, while the Arabic and English poems have features in common, they differ in several respects. In terms of genre, both poems share aspects of form and theme - both are long, descriptive poly-thematic poems with an organic unity of structure. Yet, because themes and poetic forms are culturally conditioned, they vary significantly from one tradition to the other and the physical form of both poems, as well as the themes of love and praise, differ. With respect to prosody, both poems are lyrical with their musical qualities supported by the use of rhythm, meter and rhyme and the sound qualities that come from repeating consonant sounds and words. Yet, the rhyme, meter and rhythm are different - the Arabic is more constrained by certain poetic rules, compared to the flexibility the English poem enjoys.

Metaphorical images taken from nature to describe the states of happiness and sadness are common to both poems. Metaphor is generated by combining it with simile. In the Arabic poem, cultural tradition dictates that metaphor is used more frequently, whereas Spenser uses a range of conceptual devices.

Keywords: Genre, prosody, metaphor, comparison.

**استخدام الشعر الجاهلي لغرض تعزيز اهتمام الطلبة وتحقيق الفهم
الافضل للشعر الانكليزي في القرن السادس عشر
دراسة توضيحية مقارنة بين قصيدة امرؤ القيس اللامية مع قصيدة ادموند
اسبنسر "تقويم الرعاية"**

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المستخلص

يجري هذا البحث تحليلاً لقصيدة امرؤ القيس اللامية ويعقد مقارنة مع قصيدة ادموند اسبنسر "تقويم الرعاية" الانكليزية والتي تعود الى القرن السادس عشر الانكليزي، ومن ثم يتوصل البحث الى وجود اوجه الشبه بين القصيدتين. غير ان الافكار والاشكال الشعرية مشروطة في بنائها الحضاري والتي تتباين بدرجة كبيرة من فترة الى اخرى. اما فيما يتعلق الامر بالسّمات العرضية، فان كلا القصيدتين غنائيتين، بحضور السّمات الموسيقية الایقاعية والتي تتضمن الموسيقى الداخلية والبحر والقافية، فضلاً عن استخدام الرموز الصوتية والمصطلحات الشعرية. إذ إن استخدام القافية والبحر والایقاع يختلف باعتبار ان الشعر العربي اكثر صرامة في اتباع النظم الشعرية مقارنة بما ما نجده في القصيدة الشعرية الانكليزية.

اما فيما يتعلق بالصور المجازية المستوحاة من الطبيعة في وصف حالات السعادة والحزن، فقد كانت هناك صفاة مشتركة في كلا القصيدتين. الا ان الثقافة العربية تملّي على القصيدة العربية استخدام المجاز بشكل اوسع، في حين كان الشاعر الانكليزي اسبنسر يميل الى استخدام ادوات شعرية وفق مفاهيم قصيدته "تقويم الرعاية". ان من شأن هذا الشبه ان يساعد الطالب على فهم القصيدة الانكليزية وبالتالي يزيد من قدرته في التبصر في ايجاد اوجه الخلاف والتشابه بين القصائد العربية والانكليزية ومن ثم فهم واستيعاب ما هو غير مألوف له.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاشكال الشعرية، السّمات العرضية، الصور المجازية، مقارنة.

Introduction

There is often disconnect between the requirements of college-based English language classes and the home language of learners[1].

Translanguaging is a means of providing planned and systematic use of the home language of learners with the language of the classroom...translanguaging [is] a pedagogic tool to enable teaching and learning.

Using the appreciation and knowledge of poetry (such as Imru' al-Qais' *L Poem*¹) gained while at secondary school can improve undergraduate students' understanding of English-language poetry, especially when the poems studied are of a comparable genre. The use of pre-Islamic poetry can act as segue to 16th Century English poetry and, in so doing, students can better experience this 'foreign' world. Language is the most prominent feature of literature. Through literature students can learn about syntax, structure, function, genre, and different ways of connecting ideas. Importantly, literature can act as the bridge between the learner and the culture of the people whose language they are studying.

Comparing the Arabic *L Poem* (*lāmiyat Qaṣīdah*) with a 16th Century English poem, such as Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*², illustrates the number of thematic and structural commonalities they share. It is contended that student

¹ The *Qaṣīdah* is mostly in the form of al *mu'allaqa* or 'hanging poem'. The *L* poem or *lāmiyat*, is so named due to 'the fact that each of its 78 lines ends on the letter 'L', called the *al-Rawī letter*; in this case, the letter is embedded in the syllable 'Li'.

² *The Shepheardes Calender* [47], (1579) was Spenser's first major poetic work. It is in the form of a book, consisting of a series of pastorals, each eclogue titled for the twelve months of the year; each month is essentially a separate poem. It provides a narrative by a shepherd, Colin Cloute.

achievement and satisfaction with the poetry component of the English course can be enhanced by a comparison between the *cultural (genre), material (prosody) and conceptual aspects (metaphor)* of each poem and can lead to a better understanding of these literary terms and the nature of the poetry itself.

Mambrol[2], (2020) asserts that in the 16th Century poets were constantly aware of themselves as craftsmen. Though not Spenser's most famous work, **The Shepheardes Calender** is a symbol and culmination of this poetic self-consciousness and a fusion of experiments in poetic versification. Edmund Spenser was self-conscious of his pursuits, regardless of theme. This poetic self-consciousness was manifested primarily in his display of metrical, stanzaic, and prosodic experimentation. A major contribution to Spenser's fame is not the originality of his themes but the range of these experimentations. **The Shepheardes Calender** explodes with experimentation in poetic forms[3].

I. Commonalities

Written in the pre-Islamic period (*Jāhili*), the Arabic *Qaṣīdah* is in the same pastoral tradition as *The Shepheardes Calender*. Nicholson[4] comments that:

European critics have vied with each other in praising its (Mu'allaqat Imru' al-Qais) exquisite diction and splendid images, the sweet flow of the verse, the charm and variety of the painting, and above all, the feeling by which it is inspired of the joy and glory of youth.

The Shepheardes Calender aims to demonstrate a connection to medieval literature through the use of old English. The entire poem is written using archaic spelling to suggest a

connection to medieval literature and, in particular, to Chaucer[5]. This archaic language strongly challenged those poets who believed that the vernacular should prevail[6]. Spenser's dependence on the idea of antiquity and the use of allegory[7], are central to *The Shepheardes Calender*. In comparison[8], Brown notes that the hyperbolic language of pre-Islamic poetry also reveals its pre-occupation with a pastoral-nomadic lifestyle and that, by placing the ode in a pastoral-nomadic setting, the social messages within the poem are made more prominent.

Both English pastoral poetry and the Arabic *Qaṣīdah* are highly conventional types of poetry, as both are classical¹ in their form and content. The Arabic ode² and the English pastoral poem³ share descriptive, lyrical, and allegorical qualities, often centred on themes of love, ruin, praise and remembrance[9]. Alpers remarks that the Arabian Desert is described as a pastoral landscape and as a 'fit habitation' for the Prophet Mohammed (SAW)⁴. Thus, pastoral tradition and classical poetry both are preoccupied with human life, nature, and pleasure, as well as exploring the relationship to physical objects that honour the past and engender community.

Although Spenser's poetry is from the modern era (post 1500 A.D.)⁵, both it, and Imru' al-Qais' *L* poem, both are

¹ 'Classical' refers to the period from 6th century to the twelfth century and is, sometimes, extended to nineteenth century.

² An ode is a lyrical poem intended to be sung or recited. It is an occasional poem on public or private dignity.

³ Pastoral poems idealise country life and the landscape they take place in. Pastoral poems usually make use of an idyllic setting, one that is completely, or almost entirely, removed from society.

⁴ SAW is Arabic for let 'there be peace upon him'.

⁵ English poetry developed in three stages: Old English (650-1066 A.D.), Middle English (1066-1500) and Modern (since 1500) [46], (Preminger & Brogan, 1993).

reminiscent of Virgil's pastoral world[10]. It is generally agreed that Spenser's poem is pastoral, in imitation of Virgil (see [11], [12], [13]). Although not an Old English poet, Edmund Spenser can be portrayed as an imitator of the classical poets, especially of Virgil's *The Eclogues*¹. *The Shepheardes Calender* focusses on the English poet's indebtedness to the past and his responsibility for the present. It aims to present a picture of current circumstances, illustrating the conflicts and distresses of the first twenty years of Elizabeth 1's reign[14].

Both the English and Arabic poems are similar in their use of conventions, the vocabulary used (reflective of the time in which the poem was composed), the precise nature of their descriptions, and the effective use of similes/metaphors. [15], Simawe (2001) asserts, however, that metaphor, though it is epistemologically saturated with cultural significance, does not function in Arabic as it does in English, a fact that must be taken into account when attempting to find similarities in the poems. Like pre-Islamic poetry, Old English poetry was preserved orally, and the earliest poems took many different forms (proverbs, riddles, fairy tales and epics), often with allegorical, moral, and spiritual themes.

II. Differences

Despite the array of similarities, there are significant differences between pre-Islamic and pastoral poetry. For example, although both follow a set rhyme scheme, the rhyme patterns vary considerably - in the Arabic poem, the rhyme is consistent throughout, with no run-on lines, while in *The Shepheardes Calender* the rhyme is varied, with run-on lines, which (arguably) makes this poem more organic[16]. Heninger claims that the form of *The Shepheardes Calender* is a

¹ An eclogue is a short pastoral poem that is in the form of a dialogue or soliloquy.

distinctive feature of Spenser's originality, and the word '*Calender*' identifies upfront man's relation to the universe.

III. Genre

The genre of poetry is defined either in terms of its form or its theme(s) or both. Usually, odes are structured of three parts, with links between them providing cohesion. With respect to the pre-Islamic *Qaṣīdah*, there are different opinions about its cohesion. Nineteenth century Western and Arab critics at (for example [17], [18], and [19]) attacked the *Qaṣīdah* for its lack of coherence, while twentieth century and modern critics claim the opposite (for example, [20], [21], [22]). [23] Somekh writes that:

Unlike much of Archaic verse, however, Classical Arabic Poetry does present us with a very formalised, though not rigid, organization of the poetic material, namely the *qaṣīdah*, and it is here that a subject encountered but rarely in the domain of Archaic verse holds sway: the omnipotence of convention.

[24], Farrin (2006) presents an interpretation to the organic unity or cohesion of Imru' al-Qais' *L Poem*, using [25], Monroe's (1972) research on the ring structure of classical Arabic poetry – the amatory and the elegiac prelude revolves around remembering past days, giving detailed descriptions of his ideal beloved, and ending with a declaration of continuing love and disconsolation over her loss. In this context, the ode highlights personal experiences. [26], Lichtenstadter states:

[The poet] may extol his own qualities, his generosity toward those in need, his heroic exploits in war. This part of the poem, called *fakhr*, "praise," or *iftikhār*, "self-glorification," presents a very fine picture of the ideal Arab hero'.

In *The Shepheardes Calender*, Colin Clout is the poem's pastoral persona. However, both poems, because of their rural setting, often have an animal providing the narrative. In the

Qaṣīdah, the horse represents the poet, while in *The Shepheardes Calender* sheep are used.

Just as in Imru' al-Qais' *Qaṣīdah*, *The Shepheardes Calender* is poly-thematic and like its pre-Islamic counterpart, it is structurally divided into three parts [27]:

'moral' (this includes ecclesiastical satire), 'plaintive' (mainly love elements), and 're-creative'. [28], Johnson explains that the plaintive eclogues 'employ more elaborate verse forms, whereas the moral eclogues seem to be designed to evoke the rhythms and forms of traditional English verse'. Thematically, the twelve eclogues are logically connected in the form of a circle and unified by the four seasons of the year. This is akin to the *L Poem*, which has the organic unity of a circle which starts with lamenting and crying and ends with rain, like tears from Heaven. In addition, both poems share the theme of love and praise, but instead of praising himself (self-praise) as in the Arabic poem, the English poet indirectly praises the Queen. Each poem begins describing a state of personal ruin caused by love. The Arabic poem relates a direct personal experience, whereas the English poem confers a newer dimension by aligning Rosalind with the Queen Elizabeth, particularly significant in a religious context, conferring a more serious and didactic tone. The three main themes of *The Shepheardes Calender* are not consistently discussed across the twelve months. Clout's unrequited love for Rosalind (January); in May and June, the narrative centers on religion and the Church; and in July, August and September the focus is on Protestant theology, but there is a comparison between the winter season and spring, the season of joy, that represents his youth - *And yet alas, but now my spring begonne* (line 29); in October, Clout recalls his frustrations and compares his life to the four seasons; in December, the cords of the poem are tied together to form the

circle of a year in which Clout imagines himself in old age, regretting his wasted life. The plaintive eclogue explores the problems of love in the form of the monologue and soliloquy of a desperate lover (Colin Clout) and poet compares Clout's state with the saddest season in the year, winter, in an allegorical way. Rosalind's cruelty is also compared to the coldness and cruelty of winter: *My life bloud friesing with vnkindly cold* (line 26).

Unlike the Arabic *Qaṣīdah*, *The Shepheardes Calender* is written in a stanzaic form with variation in the numbers of the lines. The *Qaṣīdah* is 'fixed' with a series of lines in the form of two hemi stiches, whereas *The Shepheardes Calender* employs a variety of verse types. Spenser tried a variety of verse forms that better suited his subject matter and employs a highly developed style with complex vocabulary¹.

The Shepheardes Calender appears to be more sophisticated and insightful with respect to theme and length, compared to the *L Poem*[29]. Although Spenser's 'January' is similar in number of stanzas to *L Poem*, the 78 lines of the eclogue are only part of the poem rather than the whole poem.

IV. Prosody

Prosody plays a big role in both poems as they use sound devices to create musicality and to support their meaning[30]. The exaggerated descriptions are enhanced through the use of words with difficult and strange sounds, caused, in part, by the old languages used in the poems, and providing the Arabic poet an opportunity to show off his ability to use a wide range of vocabulary (hanging poems) or, in Spenser's case, that his work is an imitation of Virgil's pastoral poetry[31].

¹ Rostvig (p. 62) gives a way of analysing a poem to show how stanza patterns involve numerical structures of various kinds.

Imru' al-Qais' poetry provides a window into the conventions of pre-literate Arabic poetry, demonstrating a commitment to a strict prosodic code with respect to rhyme[32]. The Arabic pattern of short and long syllables (stressed and unstressed) is used for its musicality and because it harmonises with the themes of self-praise, eulogy, elegy, zeal (*ḥamāsa*), apology, and reproach found in the poem. Mnemonic devices served to preserve the oral text, making the poem easy to memorise because of its regular sound qualities. The assumption that memory for sound patterns, or form, is rapidly lost is contradicted by the tradition of oral storytelling[33].

Badīʿ or embellishment is another Arabic rhetorical technique which uses beautiful expressions, as is *al-Tikrār* of a letter, a phrase, or a whole hemistich. Repetition of words is often employed for the sake of the meter[34], (Lichtenstadter) and *Jinās ghayr tām* or incomplete paronomasia in which two words with similarity in pronunciation (but with a difference in meaning inferred by the context) are used. This device is used to emphasize the meaning on the poet's final position.

Prosody in *The Shepheardes Calender* involves rhyme, meter, and rhythm as well as other sound devices, such as alliteration and repetition, all of which reinforce the meaning and giving aesthetic and musical qualities to the poem.

[35], Zurcher claims that Spenser was committed to 'linguistic experiments':

Spenser's archaic diction, E. K. argues, ought to be interpreted as a patriotic attempt at language enrichment, part of the wider Elizabethan practice of 'embellishing' the English tongue... it is straightforward to see that Spenser wanted older English words, rather than Latinate terms or their Romance

Alliteration is used throughout *The Shepheardes Calender* and, as evident in 'January', it is used both ornamentally and to stress and unify the meaning. In an early interpretation of Spenser's work, [37] Child states that 'he kept up the intolerable practice of systematic In line 2, the alliteration of the letters 'w' and 's' illustrate the intent to stress the dreary season: *when Winters wastful spight was almost spent*. Alliteration can also occur in a cluster of more than one line[38]:

Such rage as winters, reigneth in my heart, 25
My life bloud friesing with vnkindly cold: 26
Such stormy stoures do breede my balefull smarte, 27
As if my yeare were wast, and woxen old. 28

The repetition of the consonant letters in the above lines highlights the meaning of key words, such as *rage*, *cold*, *storm* and *wast*, emphasising Colin's unrequited love for Rosalind and his deep suffering. Additionally, by starting a line with the same phrase, the tonal motive of this repetition is effective in suggesting the extent of the speaker's regret:

And yet alas, but now my spring begonne, 29
And yet alas, yet is already donne. 30

V. Metaphor:

The Arabic poem is comparable to the English poem in its use of metaphor as a rhetorical device¹. According to Al-Khalīl, author of the Iraqi textbook 'Literature and Texts, Fourth Stage'[39], the *Qasīdah* abounds with direct comparisons and most of the metaphorical images are presented in form of similes (indicated by the Arabic letter of comparison *ka/ك* or the word *ka'anna/كأن*). Lines 44-47 exemplify the poet's technique: night

¹ A metaphor is a rhetorical figure of speech that compares two subjects, while a simile states that one thing is like another, a metaphor asserts that one thing is the other, or is a substitute for the other thing. It asserts a correlation or resemblance between two things that are otherwise unrelated.

as a wave from the sea to check whether he can resist the hardships of life, night as a curtain falling upon the narrator.

44 And many a night like a wave of the sea has let down its curtains on me,

thick with various cares, to try me.

45 So I said to it, after it had stretched out its spine,

raised its buttocks, and heaved forward its ponderous chest,

46 O, you long night, won't you clear yourself off and give way to morning?

though morning, when it comes, is no better than you.

47 Oh what a night you are! It is as if the stars,

by every twisted rope, were fastened to Mount Yadhbul

The eclogues of *The Shepheardes Calender* are also presented in an extremely descriptive way. The language used is highly rhetorical, employing symbols, emblems, metaphors, anagrams, antitheses, and puns, but the most distinctive technique used by Spenser is allegory. [40], MacCaffrey maintains that *The Shepheardes Calender* is 'an ambitious, encyclopaedic allegory, controlled by a metaphor that is capable of sustaining a complex *signification*'. The moral eclogues are an allegory of the political and religious conditions prevailing in England at that time. E. K.¹ asserts that twelve eclogues are allegorical, indicating the numerous stages of human life. In general, the pastoral conventions in the poem are allegorical, when simple lyric tends to be satiric or ironic in tone. The voices are allegorical sounds for distinctive figures – for example, Colin Clout is the voice of Spenser; Rosalind is the (disputed) voice of the Queen. No such device is used in the *Qasīdah*, because it is a personal poem, without the double meaning apparent within *The*

¹ Scholars have never satisfactorily identified E.K. One unsubstantiated theory is that the initials E.K. stand for "Edmundus Kedemon," a translation of Spenser's name into Greek.

Shepherd's Calendar. Many of the words in this poem are symbols or emblems for religious issues. For instance, Clout represents the poet, and the other shepherds represent poets, scholars, governors, and ecclesiastics; the sheep are a symbol of the readers.

The mirror as metaphor is used throughout *The Shepherd's Calendar*. The macrocosm (nature and man) is a mirror of the microcosm. This comes from the Platonic tradition and hints at the link between the beauty in the soul and the divine[41]. In 'January,' Colin represents the microcosm who reflects winter and the macrocosm, the saddest season of the year. So, Colin's suffering and his inner state is in comparison with winter with all its troubles.

And from mine eyes the drizzling tears descend, 41

As on your boughs the ysicles depend). 42

The pastoral setting of hills, valleys, woods, and pastures with its unifying power acts also as a metaphor. The pastoral setting invokes the images of wrath, storm, rage, frost, naked trees, and withered grass to describe man's life when he is disillusioned[42]. The congruence is between man's nature and external nature. The type of metaphor used in this poem is quite complex, if compared with the less sophisticated metaphor used in the *Qasīdah*. This is not to deny that this interpretation is without its challengers, for example [43], Al-Garrallah who claims that there has been 'a failure in translating (implied) metaphor from Arabic into English' and [44], Simawe, who maintains that metaphor has a longer and more complicated history in Arabic literature and that, in pre-Islamic poetry, simile rules supreme, with only occasional uses of metaphor that often do not go beyond conceptual comparison. In Imru' al-Qais' ode,

there are twenty-four uses of simile and only six metaphors in its eighty-two lines and that these are primarily one-line metaphors.

Anagram is another key aspect of Spenser's *Calender*. Each name in the poem is based on a word that suits its role. For example, the name E.K. is an anagram of eke, which means to increase, to enlarge or to comment - the actual role of E.K. in the poem. Colin Clout is an anagram of 'coling-clout', the action of cutting words in writing so that readers cannot get the intended meaning directly. Rosalind is an anagram of rose-a'lined, meaning to put beautiful words in order. All characters in this book are based on particular words. Thus, playing with words, with sounds, and with spelling shows the ability and wittiness of the poet.

Two opposites are also presented in each poem to point out the contradictory sides of life. The use of antithesis in the *Qaṣīdah* is aural, while it is imaginative in *The Shepheardes Calender*, as the imagined world of Spenser contrasts storms and sunshine, friendly and hostile shepherds, persons of high and low birth [45].

VI. Conclusion

By employing Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* as a counterpoint to an Islamic ode, it is possible to compare some of the thematic and structural commonalities they share which, in turn, can increase student engagement and satisfaction with this aspect of their studies. The comparison of an Arabic ode or *Qaṣīdah*, such as the *L Poem* by Imru' al-Qais, and Spenser's pastoral poem, in terms of their *cultural (genre)*, *material (prosody)* and *conceptual aspects (metaphor)*, can lead to an improved understanding of these literary terms and the nature of the poetry itself. The potential disconnect between the use of

language in English poetry and the home language of can be alleviated by such a teaching strategy.

Although similarities abound, as both English pastoral poetry and the Arabic *Qaṣīdah* are highly conventional types of poetry - classical in their form and content. Both the English and Arabic poems are also similar in their use of convention, the vocabulary used (reflective of the time in which the poem was composed), the precise nature of their descriptions, and the effective use of similes/ metaphors. Prosody plays a big role in both poems as they use sound devices to create musicality and to support their meaning, as does metaphor which is used throughout both poems as a rhetorical device

Despite notable similarities, there are significant differences between pre-Islamic and pastoral poetry which must be acknowledged and taken into account in any comparison. For example, in *The Shepheardes Calender* themes are not consistently discussed, unlike in the *L Poem* in which the theme is apparent throughout the poem. In addition, the use of antithesis in the *Qaṣīdah* is aural, while it is imaginative in *The Shepheardes Calender*, as the imagined world of Spenser contrasts storms and sunshine, friendly and hostile shepherds, persons of high and low birth.

Appendix 1

An extract from the *L Poem* (Imru' al-Qais)

The section of the *L poem* chosen for explication consists of lines 44-51 (out of 78 lines), although reference to other parts of the poem is made to explain certain rhetorical devices.

44	عَلِي بِأَنْوَاعِ الْهُمُومِ لِيَبْتَئِلَ	وليلٍ كموج البحر أرخى سدوله
45	وَأَرْدَفَ أَعْجَازاً وَنَاءً بَغَاكِلَ	فقلْتُ له لما تَمَطَّى بِصُلْبِهِ
46	بُصْبِحَ وَمَا الْإِصْبَاحُ مِنْكَ بِأَمْثِلَ	أَلَا أَيُّهَا اللَّيْلُ الطَّوِيلُ أَلَا انْجَلِي
47	بُكَلِّ مَغَارِ الْقَتْلِ شُدَّتْ بِيَذْبِلَ	فِيَاكَ مِنْ لَيْلٍ كَأَنَّ نَجُومَهُ
48	بَأَمْرَاسٍ كَتَّانٍ إِلَى صُمِّ جَنْدِلَ	كَأَنَّ الثَّرْيَا غَلَقَتْ فِي مَصَامِهَا
49	بِمُنْجَرِدٍ قَيْدِ الْأَوَابِدِ هَيْكِلَ	وَقَدْ اغْتَدَى وَالطَّيْرُ فِي وَكَنَاتِهَا
50	كَجَلْمُودٍ صَخْرٍ حَطَّ السَّيْلُ مِنْ عِلَ	مَكْرٍ مَفْرٍ مُقْبِلٍ مُدْبِرٍ مَعَا
51	كَمَا زَلَّتِ الصَّفَوَاءُ بِالْمُتَنَزِّلِ	كُمَيْتٍ يَزِلُّ اللَّبْدُ عَنْ حَالِ مَتْنِهِ

English Translation (Farrin, 2006).

- 44 And many a night like a wave of the sea has let down its
curtains on me,
thick with various cares, to try me.
- 45 So I said to it, after it had stretched out its spine,
raised its buttocks, and heaved forward its ponderous chest,
- 46 O, you long night, won't you clear yourself off and give way
to morning?
though morning, when it comes, is no better than you.
- 47 Oh what a night you are! It is as if the stars,
by every twisted rope, were fastened to Mount Yadhbul;
- 48 As if the Pleiades were restrained in midcourse
by strong flax cables connected to crags of granite.
- 49 And often have I ridden forth early, while the birds were still
in their nests,
on a steed short-haired, able to shackle wild game, huge.
- 50 Charging, fleeing, advancing, retreating—all at once;
he is like a great boulder hurled from on high by the torrent.
- 51 A chestnut stallion, whose saddle pad slips from his back
as rainwater cascading slips from the surface of a smooth
stone.

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