

The Leader

By Yisroel Shtern

Translated by Zackary Sholem Berger (2005)

Far off, on endless dusty streets
We're like trekkers on desert paths.
When, exhausted, we cry "A drink!"
Who will bring a glass?

With wandering, with fevered weariness
The folds of our cloaks are filled.
We've taken on the burden of the day
Like camels: our hearts have kneeled.

No palm, no well, just blundering in fire
Dying one by one in sand. Till when?
You hold the sun to your eye like a lorgnette.
God, be the leader of caravans!