I. A poem composed by al-Dindān (Kurpershoek, 1994: 173)

1. Ad-Dindān made his ascent to the top of a prominent mountain, // And, though he had sworn never to sing anymore, he could not resist the inner urge.
2. In my breast my heart fluttered like a falcon chick flapping its wings, // Once it feels strong enough to fly from its nest.
3. Behold the traces of fellow-tribesmen who passed away, // And the drifting sands that covered their abandoned camp!
4. How many epochs were turned over by Time’s wheel // That obliterates the vestiges of every century!
5. I suffered all the pains visited on God’s creation, // An experience the lighthearted are unable to fathom.
6. All my requests for a truce my heart rejected; // How will he exculpate himself when death’s cortège draws near?
7. Woe unto a heart that struggled to conceal its bitterness! // Like a mortar made of copper, it rings out when beaten.
8. When its rim is struck with force it screams and whines, // And when its bottom is pounded its ribs raise a clamour.
9. If it begins to purr, then knock it merrily, // But if it howls in terror, the company groans in sympathy.
10. Beware of places once inhabited by your beloved ones: // Like dreams at night, they seem to have never existed at all.
11. On those deserted haunts I was assailed by memories of days past, // Absorbed in mournful thoughts and almost crying.
12. Don’t upbraid me: I have enough trouble as it is; // At that kind of naive advice I could have guessed myself.
13. By God, there is only one way to dampen the flames of a thirsting heart: // To roam the desert on swift camels running their best.
14. Nothing throws me in raptures like their calm, swaggering gait, // Now moving at an easy pace, then trotting steadily, in the late afternoon.
15. Until the end of my days this will be my heart’s deepest desire: // To feel the cool air stream over my face as I ride on their backs.

Listen to al-Dindān’s recitation of the poem here: