Oral Composition vs. Written Composition: Structural Consequences

Oral Baseline Poem: “Tea with Milk”

1) Tea with milk, tea with milk
2) From the hand of the beauty whose build is slender
3) If you sipped it, it’s better than the doctor
4) It enters the body and extinguishes the burning.
5) I spoke the truth, my nature is not that of one who lies
6) I want to pay out her price, [she of] precious pedigree.
7) And Wādī Falğam that stretches up to where it disappears
8) The riverbed in its breadth is the channel for the flood
9) Where beauty lives, I might cultivate grapes
10) And build up a tower with many storeys all furnished for her
11) That faces the sea breeze and has a wall around it
12) With servants to serve her so she might rest at ease.
13) Give up, my heart, let it go! Be more reasonable
14) It’s not appropriate for your age and they don’t desire you
15) For one, you’re old and further, you are not from around here.
16) I’m just talking nonsense like a bona fide prattler
17) There’s still passion in me and it is deeply woven
18) I love the beauties even though I’m grey.

Written Poem: “Desire” (Dīwān Ḥājj Dākōn #9)

1) My lungs and heart // today are fluttering
2) Desire has filled them // they have been filled to the brim
3) They haven’t yet settled down // from anxiety and excitement
4) Between my ribs // they are shivering.
5) I’ve seen that desire // is dangerous and troublesome
6) If it becomes rooted // and settles in its cavities
7) It blocks the breathing // and you become a wreck
8) You are agitated // quick to anger and impatient
9) Like a dry palm frond // with fire on its fibres.
10) My patience has finished // and my condition is weak,
11) All my emotions // have been torn to shreds.
12) O little falcon! // Go quickly! Fly!
13) Go at dusk, travel all night // from Mḥayffīf,
14) Keep my order in mind // and act faithfully in my stead.
15) After the greetings // have been exchanged twice-over
16) Say: “After you // I’m like a man all used up.”