

Bare foot, through the bazaar,
And with the same undulant grace
As the cloth blown back from her face,
She glides with a stone jar,
High on her head
And not a ripple in her tread.

Watching her cross erect
Stones, garbage, excrement and crumbs
Of glass in the Karachi slums,
I, with my stoop, reflect:
They stand most straight
Who learn to walk beneath a weight.

Theme

This poem is a tribute to a working woman. Work creates rhythm in life. Work keeps a person strong and vigilant. An idle man will soon decay. This poem also portrays realistically the slums of Karachi in a few words. The poet praises and appreciates the working woman who has practically turned her work into an art. The woman walks softly with the delicacy and rhythm of a dancer's feet.

Paraphrase

A Sindhi woman is going through a bazaar with bare feet. She is walking impressively and there is a rhythm in her movement which can be seen in her swaying body and floating dress. The wind pushes the cloth from her face. She is carrying stone jar on her head. She walks as smoothly as the wave of a stream. She is passing through stones, garbage, pieces of bread and the broken glass. This is the scene of a Karachi slum. The poet meditates and sees his own body that is bent by time. He observes that only those who bear the burden of life and carry its hardships through life are strong and straight.

Glossary

undulant	wave like motion or look
glide	move along smoothly
tread	walk
garbage	waste, worthless or rubbish
excrement	waste matter expelled from the body

crumbs	small pieces of dry food
slums	a heavily populated area of a city having much poverty, with poor facilities
stoop	bend forward / downwards

EXERCISES

	Add t	wo moi	re rhymir	ng won	rds in the	e blank	s with e	ach wor	d.	
	a)	grace	Contract Contract	-6			15.0			
	b)	tread		all re-		-8.6				
	c)	cruml								
	d)	weigh		-			49			
	Write down the missing rhyming words in each verse.									
	a)		on her							
		(i)	red	(ii)	head	(iii)	body	(iv)	foot	
	b)	As th	e cloth bl	own ba	ack from	her				
	9	(i)	mouth	(ii)	head	(iii)	face	(iv)	hair	
c)	c) -	Watching her cross								
		(i)	bridge	(ii)	street	(iii)	road	(iv)	erect	
	d)	I, wit	h my stoc	p,						
		(i)	walk	(ii)	run	(iii)	think	(iv)	reflect	
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	What	t pictur	e of the F correct ar	Karacl nswer.	hi slums	do we g	get after			oem?
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