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Funduk

**Brandon Marlon
Ottawa.**

Clacking camel hooves echo,
preceding the sinuous caravan
contorting into the khan whose bonfire
aspires to the overhead lunette
as hydromel makes the rounds
and susurrous partakers rip frangible pitas,
stuffing maws with chaw while
eyeing carven gobbets dangling from gambrels.

Sizzling giblets lure cameleers,
whose shambling gait belies travel's toll;
vailing as the innkeeper adds tinder,
the weary squinch at flickering light,
pondering their rimples and welts,
attuning to the corral's equine whickerings
even as majestic darkness blears the universe
in a staggering exhibition of dearth.

It is now when rivalless night prevails
that barbate sojourners apply poultices
to neglected wounds, the innkeeper proffers
roasted almonds and sugared pistachios,
and cliquish musicians draw near blowing
the mizhar, qiran, muwattar, and zammara,
thumping on the tabl, rattling the duff,
till sentience suffuses the weary.