

Desert Woman

Everlasting sand drifts
Against the thick canvas
Of my father's tent.
I drop my burden to the dunes
And rest. A staid maiden

Adorned with veils
And baubles, my youth is tolled
By the passing bells of goat herds.
Shall I have no sons,
Relish no daughters?

Remnant of a wicked generation,
I am wounded in spirit, untried.
In those desolate cities I would have been
A prize—sturdy, stalwart,
Enduring valleys and sandstorms.

I wait for a warrior's venison breath
To fall hot upon me,
His voice whispering, "Sariah, Sariah,"
As the arrows in his quiver
Catch my thick black braids.

—Helen Walker Jones

Helen Walker Jones is a poet residing in Salt Lake City, Utah. She is the sister of Jim Walker, whose poems appear on pages 196–97.