Mohamed Shoair

Translated by Humphrey Davies

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A donkey cart passed under the window, loaded with clapping singers.

Recite a prayer for the soldier boy.
He threw off his fez for a job as a saint!

Qassem smiled, remembering the night Yahya had sung this hymn stoned on hashish. Oh, if things would only straighten themselves out, all you’d have to do is sing, alley of mine!

Children of the Alley

“I’m a tourist in a museum where nothing belongs to me. I’m merely a historian. I don’t know where I stand.”

Kamal ‘Abd al-Gawad, in Sugar Street
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