

Rubáiyát  
of Omar  
Khayyám

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JAICO PUBLISHING HOUSE  
BOMBAY-CALCUTTA-NEW DELHI-MADRAS

LIX

KUZA NÁMA

Listen again. One Evening at the Close  
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,  
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone  
With the clay Population round in Rows.

*Kúza Náma*—"The Book of Pots."

*Ramazán*—The ninth month of the Mohammedan calendar, a  
time of strict fasting from dawn to sunset

*Better Moon*—The new moon.



And strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot  
Some could articulate, while others not:  
And suddenly one more impatient cried—  
“Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?”



Then said another—"Surely not in vain  
My substance from the common Earth was ta'en,  
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape  
Should stamp me back to common Earth again."



Another said—"Why, ne'er a peevish Boy  
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in  
Joy;

Shall He that *made* the Vessel in pure Love  
And Fancy, in an after Rage destroy!"



None answer'd this; but after Silence spake  
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:

“They sneer at me for leaning all awry;  
What? did the Hand then of the Potter shake?”



Said one—"Folks of a surly Tapster tell,  
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;  
They talk of some strict Testing of us—Pish!  
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."

*Surly Tapster—The devil.*



LXV

Then said another with a long-drawn Sigh,  
"My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:  
But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,  
Methinks I might recover by-and-byel"



So, while the Vessels one by one were speaking,  
 One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:  
 And then they jogg'd each other, "Brother!  
 Brother!  
 Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

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*Crescent*—The moon in its last quarter, nearing the end of the month of fasting.  
*Porter's shoulder-knot*—A shoulder pad used for carrying heavy loads—here, for bringing up wine after the fast.

