SONGS OF SUNRISE LANDS

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Songs of Sunrise Lands by Clinton Scollard

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CLINTON SCOLLARD

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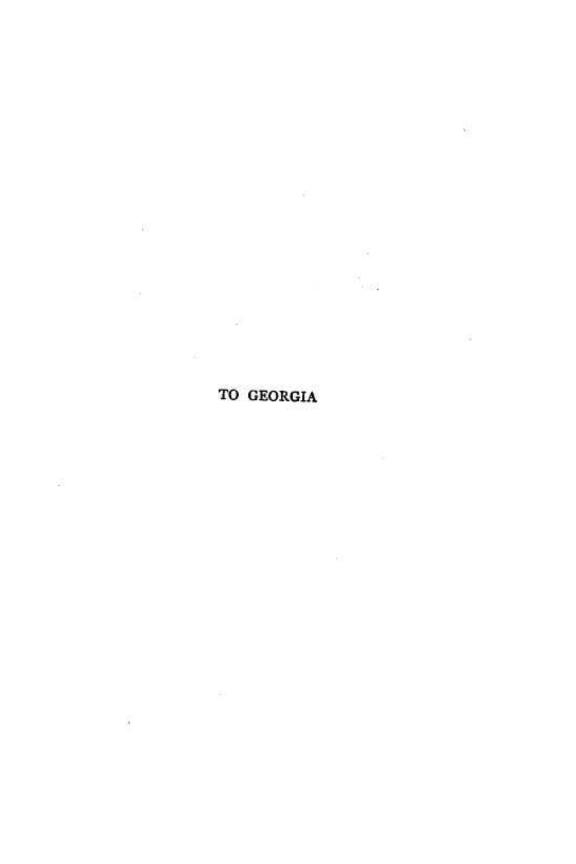


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BY CLINTON SCOLLARD



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CONTENTS

																	P	AGE
KHAMSIN		35	*		8		*:				٠		٠		٠		٠	1
THE RID	E	•	17			23						•		٠				4
THE SHE	KH	AB	DAL	LA	н.								٠					8
THE RID THE SHE EASTER	Eve	AT	K	ERA	x-1	Mo	AB									·		11
THE MOS																		
MELIK T	HE .	BLA	CK					÷						٠		0		24
IN THE I	TAR	ARA	.	•			٠						3		•		×	26
A NILE																		
A REED THE BRO	NZI	. C	HRI	ST										30		*		31
MIRAGE		•																35
THE PRA	YE	R																36
MIRAGE THE PRA IN GILEA THE PAI	D		Ö.	9			়						ŭ.					37
THE PAI	м с	P]	EN	IN.						ď								39
SPRING I	N G	AL	LEI	B.:	7.0		•								:	2		42
A SONNI																		
ı.	Тн	E N	ILB			20						9						45
n.	An	AR	AB	Bo	Y											7.1		46
III.																		
TV	A I	THA	n 0		ers	Ď.			23				٠					48
v.	THI	E P	ALM	ıs .				1						ij				49
VI.	SAR	AR												P	•	2	٠	50
VII.																		
VIII.																		
IX.																		
x.																		

vi

CONTENTS

VI	BUBAS															
049 8800								•								55
	AT HE				٠		•		*		٠		10			56
XIII.	THE M	URZZ	IN			ð		*		10		*		3		57
XIV.	THE S	PHIN	x	•			٠		e.				20		•	58
A DAM	ASCUS B	LADE	8					٠		*						59
THE GO	LDEN S	TREA	м.													61
A Kor	AN .		4													63
Тнв Сл	LIPH'S	PILL	R.				2		¥.							65
SHERBE	т.			-						ø				90		68
	INSTREL															71
	ER CAR															73
THE ST	N AND	THE	NEW	M	00	N					•					75
	H THE B															76
MUSTA	AKT			3	ŀ		٠									80
E-LIM-II	N-AH-DO			٠.						V						87
ON AN	ANTIQU	B LA	MP .	8	2				়		÷				٠	89
	B ON TH															90
	ON THE															93
	ETTIX															97
	is															- 22
	RK PAST															
	R BOTTI								٠							101
HONEY	OF HYS	ETT		2									- 50 U			102
A Feri	FROM	THE	Pizi	RIA	N 5	SPI	LI)	rG.	ু	÷	0		1			105
	ISE OVE				1					ğ	ð	76	30	-	•	106
55 ST	HERD'S	-			4	٥,	0	•		Ť		•				108
	OR THE						•		•		•		•		•	

KHAMSIN

OH, the wind from the desert blew in ! -Khamsin,

The wind from the desert, blew in 1

It blew from the heart of the fiery south,

From the fervid sand and the hills of drouth,

And it kissed the land with its scorching mouth;

The wind from the desert blew in !

It blasted the buds on the almond bough,
And shriveled the fruit on the orange-tree;
The wizened dervish breathed no vow,
So weary and parched was he.
The lean muezzin could not cry;
The dogs ran mad, and bayed the sky;
The hot sun shone like a copper disk,
And prone in the shade of an obelisk
The water-carrier sank with a sigh,

For limp and dry was his water-skin; And the wind from the desert blew in.

The camel crouched by the crumbling wall,
And oh, the pitiful moan it made!
The minarets, taper and slim and tall,
Reeled and swam in the brazen light;
And prayers went up by day and night,
But thin and drawn were the lips that prayed.
The river writhed in its slimy bed,
Shrunk to a tortuous, turbid thread;
The burnt earth cracked like a cloven rind;
And still the wind, the ruthless wind,
Khamsin.

The wind from the desert, blew in.

Into the cool of the mosque it crept,

Where the poor sought rest at the Prophet's shrine;

Its breath was fire to the jasmine vine;
It fevered the brow of the maid who slept,
And men grew haggard with revel of wine.
The tiny fledgelings died in the nest;
The sick babe gasped at the mother's breast.
Then a rumor rose and swelled and spread