

## Poverty and Pomp

*From Unto Thee We Grant...*

Bahloul liked to visit the graveyards. "People here are good friends", he used to say, "They do not backbite." Once, he sat in a corner of a graveyard and with a long heavy stick started probing some of the old skulls which lay scattered about. Harun Rashid, the king passed by, and saw him. The he said: O Bahloul, what are you doing?

Oh nothing very important, said Bahloul. I am just trying to find out whether the skulls belong to kings or paupers. They are all the same.

And what is the stick for, Harun asked.

Well, I am measuring the earth, Bahloul replied.

Measuring the earth? What are your findings?  
Harun joked!

It is equal and the same, O King! Bahloul retorted.  
Three armlengths for me, inspite of my poverty  
and three armlengths for you, in spite your pomp  
and wealth.