

APPETITE

Michael Pfeifer

*"The Anazeh of the extreme north set the stranger by himself
and in the dark, that he be not ashamed of his appetite."
Seven Pillars of Wisdom, T.E. Lawrence*

Only in blindness, the nomads believe,
do we truly find appetite;
forgetting manners before the food
and God. The huge brass plate,
the only one the Anazeh have,
overflows with rice
and the broken quarters of a lamb.
Solitude lets the guest grope
after whatever he wishes
with the excess and zeal
appropriate to the famine
he brings to share with the desert.
Bedouin kindness is a custom
nurtured on daily deprivation.
Imitating the desert,
each man is welcome for one day,
after which he may be killed.
The sheep's boiled skull is thus cracked
alone and the sweet brain's sucked out.