*Qasida* to an Epidemic of Typhoid Fever, in Free Verse

Observe this good year, in which the typhoid fever broke out
Erupting against women and men, leaving its imprint on humankind.

Even the doctors were amazed; he who fell ill they took
And placed in the hospital, friends coming up and down.

Hoping the unfortunate one would be drenched in sweat until his discomfort would ease,
They took him to a gynecology clinic; with him would they remain.

Hear from me a word of reproach. Cleanse your children of lice.
The ruler will have nothing to say after he sees you clean.

It begins with headaches; the inoculated will have nothing to fear.
They won’t be loaded into ambulances; their households will remain at ease.

We fear this flame; they should thin out their hair
And burn incense at home, keeping their homes sealed.

A car will take them to a doctor who will see them.
About an injection, he asks them: Did you do one or two?

And quietly they reply, clutching two test tubes.
Look, we received two injections, as the test tubes attest.

Yesterday the thing was done; heed the ruler so that you will make gains.
Take an injection and you’ll be happy and calm as typhoid fever rampages.

Jews, take pleasure in that injection, which came from nearby from the direction of the sea.
I warn you with moral counsel: Do it and stay healthy.

Then one day at dawn, policemen came to town.
This is the blinding blow, to the Jewish quarter they turn.

The workers will rush, on bicycles will they flee.
For the police have come to inspect; to them they return on sundry excuses.

This is the blow; neither girl nor matron remained.
Until humiliated and they returned against their will.

Soon it will all blow over, even meals will irk us.
The groom will yet laugh at us, the young men on whom we rely.

It’s a quiet illness; the careless die fast.
People, clean all your houses, and typhoid fever will you outlast.

Everyone fears it, from Casablanca and Marrakech.
The illness of the head will come upon them, will find them prostrate at home.

This woe has overtaken the young men.
It has heaped reproaches upon them, all of them together with the elders.

People, isolate yourselves in place; heed the doctors and endure.
From typhoid fever and its depredations will you be forever inured.

May God pity us so that the plague be gone,

Cleanse us of this vexation and let the ill rebound.

Thus ends the qasida to what occurred in Casablanca.

May God have mercy on His children, who toppled and took to bed.