When spirits depart, bodies are like dead-weight stones or piles of wood,
And the corpse in its grave knows not whether its shrouds are
tattered with use or newly wrapped;
Someone came and mixed gray into our hair, and we wish he hadn't sullied us so.
Blessed are birds snatching plucked seeds, or wild cows striding in the grass,
They neither keep company with humans nor truck with baseness,
nor can sin climb up to meet them,
And so they don't ignite the blazing fire of war. Whosoever lights a flame
will put it out with himself.

* * *

The dust of the earth has many names: Birds, tucked safely in their nests;
Or the lion, whose retreat is a den; or the gazelle, its refuge a covert.
All forms of dirt resemble each other [tağñasat] in meaning,
even if wordplay [jinās] wins not their favor.
When you pick a phrase to give news of your final end,
Say, “A flat-nosed cow that strayed, or many cows.”

* * *

When a living soul is finally dressed in shrouds,
Both clothing and clothed have come to an end,
And the shining young face is faded, leaving neither chuckle nor frown,
If this lifetime be so pleased;
And is captive in a narrow grave, nor will the captor release it,
So it cannot walk backwards in time, nor gain a torch on a dark night.
It lies next to a whole people, masters of preaching in days past,
yet not one of them speaking now.

* * *

The body is brass, soft earth bedecking it like rust.
But doing good is gold remote from all tarnish,
Which even if it lay hidden in the earth for a lifetime,
Wouldn't depart from its charge, imposed by the tribe.

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