Joseph was eleven and slept in Jacob’s bosom.  
He dreamed a dream, a marvellous dream  
In the midst of slumber. Waking he asks the sense  
From his prophetic father.

‘Father, I dreamt the rising sun bowed down  
And the full moon, and the eleven stars.  
To me they bowed. I am quite sure of that.  
Explain this to me, father!

Unlock the sense within this dream.  
Do not lie! Tell me its final end.  
Expound the road of this fate. Tell me now!  
Explain these marvels! Let me understand!’

Prophetic Jacob unwove that dream  
And told of happiness to come, uttering  
‘Allah in His truth will help you  
And achievement and respect be yours.

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1 Here, in the original, the Poet inserts several quatrains on the names of the stars seen by Joseph in his dream. These quatrains, which would otherwise break the narrative, can be found translated in the Preface.
You can expect that He will make you wealthy,
and in His mightiness provide great sustenance.
You have eleven elder brothers. They will pay you respect
and they shall work at your behest.

The name of Joseph shall be famous the world over.
In the East and the West wise men shall be aware of you
and people will know who you are till the Day of Judgement.
And I see you ruling in the realm of Zabih and Halil.2

You will attain to the rank of prophet and messenger
and find yourself the head of a state.
Luck will be yours, and life will be yours to enjoy.
This is a dream of great happiness for you.

You have to trust me on this, my son:
there is a kingdom promised you.
In return, offer to Allah your praise and thanks,
and He in his power will grant you great benefits.

But promise me, listen to me carefully. On no account
tell this dream to anyone at all.
Beware your family and friends, and remember that old saw:
‘the devil stirs up division among people.’

If, through an accident, this should come out
and your brothers get wind of what this dream means,
they will be jealous, and that will make them furious,
and what began as marvellous will end with great trouble.’

But unfortunately Jacob had a stepdaughter,
and she had been listening at the door
(from such keyhole listeners preserve us Allah!)
and she went and told Joseph’s brothers.

‘Joseph it seems has been having a dream. The sun,
the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to him;
and Jacob, your father has interpreted it favourably.
I heard what he said with my own ears.’

2 Zabih (The Stabbed, Slaughtered One) – the Islamic epithet of Ishmael; Halil (The Friend of
God) – Abraham (Ibragim).