

Classic Poetry Series

Forough Farrokhzad
- poems -

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Forough Farrokhzad(5 January 1935 - 14 February 1967)

Forugh Farrokhzad was an Iranian poet and film director. Forugh Farrokhzad is arguably one of Iran's most influential female poets of the twentieth century. She was a controversial modernist poet and an iconoclast.

Biography

Forugh (also spelled Forough) was born in Tehran to career military officer Colonel Mohammad Bagher Farrokhzad and his wife Touran Vaziri-Tabar in 1935. The third of seven children (Amir, Massoud, Mehrdad, Fereydoun Farrokhzad, Pouran Farrokhzad, Gloria), she attended school until the ninth grade, then was taught painting and sewing at a girl's school for the manual arts. At age sixteen she was married to Parviz Shapour, an acclaimed satirist. Farrokhzad continued her education with classes in painting and sewing and moved with her husband to Ahvaz. A year later, she bore her only child, a son named Kamyar (subject of A Poem for You).

Within two years, in 1954, Farrokhzad and her husband divorced; Parviz won custody of the child. She moved back to Tehran to write poetry and published her first volume, entitled *The Captive*, in 1955.

Farrokhzad, a female divorcée writing controversial poetry with a strong feminine voice, became the focus of much negative attention and open disapproval. In 1958 she spent nine months in Europe and met film-maker and writer Ebrahim Golestan, who reinforced her own inclinations to express herself and live independently. She published two more volumes, *The Wall* and *The Rebellion* before traveling to Tabriz to make a film about Iranians affected by leprosy. This 1962 documentary film titled *The House is Black* won several international awards. During the twelve days of shooting, she became attached to Hossein Mansouri, the child of two lepers. She adopted the boy and brought him to live at her mother's house.

In 1963 she published *Another Birth*. Her poetry was now mature and sophisticated, and a profound change from previous modern Iranian poetic conventions.

At 4:30PM on February 13, 1967, Farrokhzad died in a car accident at age thirty-two. In order to avoid hitting a school bus, she swerved her Jeep, which hit a

stone wall; she died before reaching the hospital. Her poem *Let us believe in the beginning of the cold season* was published posthumously, and is considered by some to be the best-structured modern poem in Persian.

Farrokhzad's poetry was banned for more than a decade after the Islamic Revolution. A brief literary biography of Forough, Michael Hillmann's *A lonely woman: Forough Farrokhzad and her poetry*, was published in 1987. Also about her is a chapter in Farzaneh Milani's work *Veils and words: the emerging voices of Iranian women writers* (1992).

She is the sister of the singer, poet and political activist Fereydoon Farrokhzad (1936 — 1992; assassinated? murdered? in Bonn, Germany). Translations into English include those by Sholeh Wolpe, *The Sad Little Fairy Maryam Dilmaghani, Sin: Selected poems of Forough Farrokhzad*. Nasser Saffarian has directed three documentaries on her; *The Mirror of the Soul* (2000), *The Green Cold* (2003), and *Summit of the Wave* (2004).

Age Seven

Ay, age seven
Ay, the magnanimous moment of departure
Whatever happened after you,
happened in a mesh of insanity and ignorance.

After you,
the window which was a lively and bright connection
between the bird and us
between the breeze and us
broke
broke
broke
after you,
that earthly doll which did not utter a thing,
nothing but water
water
water
drowned
in water.

After you,
we killed the cricket's voice
we became lured
by the bell ring rising off of the letters of the alphabet
and the whistling of the arms factory.

After you, where our playground was beneath the desk
we graduated from beneath the desks
to behind the desks
and from behind the desks
to top of the desks
and we played on top of the desks
and lost
we lost your color
Aah, age seven.

After you,
we betrayed each other
after you,

we cleansed your memories
by lead particles and splattered blood-drops
off of the plastered temples of alley walls.

after you
we went to the squares
and shouted:
'long live...
and down with....'

and in the clamor of the square
we applauded the little singing coins
which had insidiously come to visit our town.

After you,
us: each other's murderers,
judged love
and while our hearts were anxious in our pockets,
we judged love's share.

After you
we resorted to cemeteries and death was breathing under the grandmother's veil

and death
was that corpulent tree
which the living of this side of the 'origin'
would tie their desire-thread to its weary branches
and the dead of the other side of the 'end'
would paw at its phosphorous roots
and death
was sitting on that sacred mausoleum which had four blue tulips
abruptly lighting up at its four corners.

the sound of the wind is coming
the sound of the wind is coming
Aah, age seven.

I rose up and drank water
and suddenly recollected how the plantations of your youth
became agitated by the swarm of crickets.

how much must one pay?

how much for the growth of this cemented cubicle?

We lost everything we must have lost
we started treading without a lantern
and moon
moon
the kind Feminine
was always there
in the childhood memories of a clay and straw rooftop
and above the young plantations
dreading the swamp of crickets.

How much must one pay?.....

Translated by: Leila Farjami

Forough Farrokhzad

Another Birth

A dark and chanted verse is what I am
Forever bearing you
In myself imbued with you
Forth to the morning of eternal burgeonings and blooms
Oh yes I drew you through this verse oh breath
Oh yes I drew you through
This verse and crafted you
To seas to trees to fire I grafted you.

Life may be
A street crossed by a woman with a basket every day
Life may be
Rope for a man who hangs himself from a branch.
Life may be a child coming home from school.
Life may be a cigarette lighting
Up in the narcotic pause between lovemaking and love made
Or the dazed gaze of a passerby
Tipping his hat to a passerby
With a senseless smile and a Good Morning.
Life may be that cloistered moment
When my gaze comes to ruin in your pupils
Wherein there lies a feeling
Which I shall blend
With the moon's impression
And the night's perception.
In a room the size of loneliness
My heart the size of love
Looks at the simple pretext of its happiness,
The vase's flowers, their beautiful decay,
The sapling that you implanted in our garden
And the canaries' song
Wide as a window frame.

Oh
My lot is this
My lot is this
This sky abducted from my sight by a hung curtain,
This passage down a deserted stairway
To retrieve something from amid the rot and banished thoughts.

My lot is a sad promenade in nostalgia's garden,
My lot is to catch my death in the despair of the voice that says to me
'I love
Your hands.'

I shall plant my hands in the garden
And I will grow I know I know oh I know
And in my hand's inkstained hollow
The swallow
Shall lay its eggs.

I shall wear
A pair of cherries as ear-rings
And dress my nails with dahlia petals
There is an alley where
Boys who were in love with me even now
Linger with the very unkempt hair and lanky legs
Recollecting the innocent smiles of a little girl
The wind blew away one night.

There is an alley my heart
Has stolen from my childhood's neighborhood

A form journeying along time's line
Inseminating time's dry line with form
A form aware of an image
Back from a mirror's feast

And that is how it is
That somebody dies
While someone abides
None who fish
In the tiny stream that drains out into a ditch
Can ever fish up a pearl.

I
Know a sad little ocean sprite
Down in her watery haven
Who oh so softly
Plays her heart through a flute,
A sad little sprite
Who dies from a kiss at night

To be born from a kiss at dawn.

Translated by A.Z. Foreman

The Original:

1578;1608;1604;1583;1609; 1583;1610;1711;1585;□
1601;1585;1608;1594; 1601;1585;1582;1586;1575;
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میگذرد
 زندگی شاید□
 ریسمانیست
 که مردی با
 آن خود را
 از شاخه
 میاویزد
 زندگی
 شاید
 طفلیست که
 از مدرسه
 بر میگردد
 زندگی
 شاید
 افروختن
 سیگاری
 باشد ، در
 فاصلهء
 رخوتناک دو
 همآغوشی□
 یا
 عبور گیج
 رهگذری
 باشد
 که
 کلاه از سر
 بر میدارد
 و به یک
 رهگذر دیگر
 با لبخندی
 بی معنی
 میگوید '
 صبح بخیر '

 زندگی شاید
 آن لحظه
 مسدودیست
 که نگاه
 من ، در نی
 نی چشمان
 تو خود را
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میسازد
ودر این حسی
; است
 که من آن
را با
ادراک ماه
و با
دریافت
ظلمت خواهم
آمیخت

 در
اتاقی که
به اندازهء
یک
تنهاییست
دل من□
 که به
اندازهء یک
عشقست
 به
بهانه های
سادهء
خوشبختی
خود مینگرد
 به
زوال زیبای
گل ها در
گلدان
 به
نهالی که
تو در
باغچهء
خانه مان
کاشته ای
 و
به آواز
قناری ها
 که به
اندازهء یک
پنجره
میخوانند

آه...□
 #1587;هم من
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 سهم من ،□
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 میگیرد
 سهم
 من پایین
 رفتن از یک
 پله مترو
 کست
 و به
 چیزی در
 پوسیدگی و
 غربت و اصل
 گشتن
 سهم من
 گردش حزن
 آلودی در
 باغ خاطره
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 و در
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 خواهم شد ،

میدانم ،
 میدانم ،
 میدانم
 و
 پرستوها در
 گودی
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 گذاشت

گوشواری به
 دو گوشم
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 و به
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کوچه
ای هست که
قلب من آن
را
از
محل کودکیم
دزدیده ست
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حجمی خط
خشک زمان
را آبستن
کردن
حجمی از تصو
یری آگاه
که ز
مهمانی یک
آینه بر
میگردد
و
بدینسانست
که
کسی میمیرد
و
کسی میماند
هیچ
صیادی در
جوی حقیری
که به
گودالی
میریزد ،
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صید نخواهد
کرد .
من□ پ&
ری کوچک
غمگینی را

میشناسم که
 در
 اقیانوسی
 مسکن دارد
 و دلش
 را در یک نی
 لبک چوبین
 مینوازد آر
 ام ، آرام
 پری
 کوچک
 غمگینی
 که
 شب از یک
 بوسه
 میمیرد
 و
 سحرگاه از
 یک بوسه به
 دنیا خواهد
 آمد

Forough Farrokhzad

Border Walls

Now, again in the silent night,
sequestrant walls, border walls
like plants entwine,
so they may be the guardians of my love.

Now, again the town's evil murmurs,
like agitated schools of fish,
flee the darkness of my extremities.

Now, again windows rediscover themselves
in the pleasure of contact with scattered perfumes,
and trees, in slumberous orchards, shed their bark,
and soil, with its thousand inlets
inhales the dizzy particles of the moon.

Now
come closer
and listen
to the anguished beats of my love,
that spread
like the tom-tom of African drums
along the tribe of my limbs.

I, feel.
I know
which moment
is the moment of prayer.

Now stars
are lovers.

In night's refuge,
from innermost breezes, I waft.
In night's refuge, I
tumble madly forth
with my ample tresses, in your palms,
and I offer you the equatorial flowers of this young tropic.

Come with me,
come to that star with me
that is centuries away
from earth's concretion and futile scales,
and no one there
is afraid of light.

On islands adrift upon the waters, I breathe.
I am in search of a share in the expansive sky,
void of the swell of vile thoughts.

Refer with me,
refer with me
to the source of all being,
to the sanctified center of a single origin,
to the moment I was created from you
refer with me,
I am not complete from you.

Now,
on the peaks of my breasts,
doves are flying.
Now,
within the cocoon of my lips,
butterfly kisses are immersed in thoughts of flight.
Now,
the altar of my body
is ready for love's worship.

Refer with me,
I'm powerless to speak
because I love you,
because 'I love you' is a phrase
from the world of futilities
and antiquities and redundancies.
Refer with me,
I'm powerless to speak.

In night's refuge, let me make love to the moon,
let me be filled
with tiny raindrops,
with undeveloped hearts,

with the volume of the unborn,
let me be filled.
Maybe my love
will cradle the birth of another Christ.

Translated by Layli Arbab Shirani

Forough Farrokhzad

Call To Arms

Only you, O Iranian woman, have remained
In bonds of wretchedness, misfortune, and cruelty;
If you want these bonds broken,
grasp the skirt of obstinacy

Do not relent because of pleasing promises,
never submit to tyranny;
become a flood of anger, hate and pain,
excise the heavy stone of cruelty.

It is your warm embracing bosom
that nurtures proud and pompous man;
it is your joyous smile that bestows
on his heart warmth and vigour.

For that person who is your creation,
to enjoy preference and superiority is shameful;
woman, take action because a world
awaits and is in tune with you.

Sleeping in a dark grave is happier for you
than this abject servitude and misfortune;
where is that proud man..? Tell him
to bow his head henceforth at your threshold.

Where is that proud man? Tell him to get up
because a woman is here rising to battle him;
her words are the truth, in which cause
she will never shed tears out of weakness.

Forough Farrokhzad

Conquest Of The Garden

The crow that flew over us and sank-
in the confusion of a vagabond cloud;
The crow that swiftly crossed-
the extent of the sphere-
like a short arrow-
will tell about us-
in the town.

Everybody knows.
Everybody knows that you and I,
looked through the oblique crack of the wall-
and saw The Garden.

Everybody knows.
Everybody knows that you and I,
reached for the trembling branch of The Tree-
and picked the apple.

Everybody is scared.
Everybody is scared but you and I,
together joined lights,
mirrors and water-
and feared never.

For you and I,
it is not about a frail union of two names-
in the aged pages of a registrar notebook.
It is about my fortunate locks-
and the burning stroke of your kiss.

For you and I,
it is about the imminence of our skins-
in the sacred wellspring of lightly streams,
swiftly sliding -over the waterfalls and the hills.

And,
it is about the fountain's songs-
its fleeting flight, its short, silvery life.

You and I,
in the core of a darkened night,
in the fluid freshness of forests,
on the peak of shielding mounts,
and in a freezing fearful sea-
asked young, golden eagles-
what we ought to do.

Everybody knows.
Everybody knows that we pierced-
into the silent dream of Phoenix.

Everybody knows.
Everybody knows that you and I,
In the prairies and the plains-
reached to the glittering roots-
of Truth.

Everybody knows.
Now, everybody knows that you and I,
in an endless instant, conquered the entirety of Eternity.

For you and I,
It is not about a shaking whisper in the dark.
It is about Day and its invading spark.
It is about a breeze over the fertile side.
It is about birth, evolution and pride.

It is about burning every futile piece-
in the garnet core of the flames.

And it is about our hands-
that contrived a bridge,
concrete and bright,
over the tear of night.

Come to the turf!
Come to the turf-
and call my name!
Call my name-
with a choral of white lilies-
like a gazelle who calls his mate.

The shades of dusk-
are floating in their veiled sorrow.

And doves,
from the windows of their white tower-
are looking at Earth.

Come to the turf!

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, May 2006.

Forough Farrokhzad

Friday*

My silent Friday,
My deserted Friday,
My Friday: sad, like dusty-
forsaken lanes.

My Friday,
The cold day of ailing, idle thoughts;
The moist day of endless, cruel bore,
My Friday, loaded with grief,
mournful of my fading faith,
and of my vain hope,

Oh, my Friday,
this renouncing day...

&

Oh, this empty room,
Oh, this gloomy home!

These opaque walls, isolating me from attacks of youth,
these collapsing roofs on my short daydreams of light,
this place of solitude, reflection and doubt,
this space of hues and shapes, signs and sound,
all speak to me- of this invincible void.

&

My life, like a mysterious river,
streamed into those silent, deserted days,
so calmly, and with a lot of pride.

My life, like a mysterious river,
Streamed into those empty, gloomy rooms,
so calmly and with a lot of pride.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, March 2006, Montreal

* In Iran, Friday was/is the equivalent of Sunday.

Forough Farrokhzad

Gift

I speak out of the deep of night
out of the deep of darkness
and out of the deep of night I speak.

If you come to my house, friend
bring me a lamp and a window I can look through
at the crowd in the happy alley.

Forough Farrokhzad

Green Mirage

The whole day,
I was crying in the eyes of mirrors.
Spring had handed over my window-
to the green illusion of the trees.

I was not fitting into my lonely wrap;
And the smell of my hollow crown-
had infested the surround.

I could not,
I could stand no more-
the noisy lane,
the cry of birds,
the blast of balls,
and the screams of a child...
And then,
the waltz of colorful kites,
in all frames of my windows-
like soap bubbles-
climbing up their white tiny ropes...

And that wind,
the wind was breathing fast,
as if in the darkest depth of a making-love.

They were all, pressing on the gates of my mute fort of faith.
They were breaking through;
And, when they did-
they called my soul-
by her name.

The whole day,
I stared into the eyes of my life.
Those nervous, fearful eyes,
were running away from my sight.
Like helpless thieves, they hid-
in dark, masking holes.

Where was The Peak?

When was The Rise?

"All these spinning roads will end-
in the cold, absorbing mouth of death."
Isn't it right?

What did you give me words, sly words?
What did you give me sore limbs?

If I'd put a flower on my hair,
wouldn't it be better- than this fake,
this paper-made crown,
stinking on my head?

I don't know-
how the ghost of desert possessed me-
and the marvel of moon moved me away-
from the faith of flock.

And, how the empty hole in my heart grew-
and infected the whole heart.

I don't know-
how I could stand and watch that Earth,
was falling down underneath my feet.

And, how I could bear-
thta the fever of my lovers-
could never reach-
the fading hope of the void
in my heart.

Where was The Peak?
When was The Rise?

Shelter me blinding, mystifying lights!
Shelter me, glowing, silent abodes!
Shelter me in the row of your washed cloths-
swinging on your roofs!
Shelter me in your basin of scented steams!

Shelter me perfect, simple women!

I watch your fingers tracking-
the fantastic course of your unborn child-
beyond the depth of your expanding skin.
And, I sense that the tears of your robe-
spread in the air, the generous perfume of fresh milk.

Where was The Peak?
When was The Rise?

Oh, shelter me, shelter me!
Shelter me fire-stoves, lucky charms!
Shelter me, singing plates!
Shelter me- in the sticky stream of your sink!
Shelter me, blue melody of sewing machines!
Oh, Shelter me!
Shelter me- in the daily quarrel of rugs and brooms...

Shelter me, greedy loves!
Shelter me, survival instincts!
Shelter me- in your stained conquest bed-
Shelter me- in its elixir flood and blood.

The whole day,
like a forsaken remain riding on the tides,
alone in my boat,
I was heading towards-
frightening rocks, deserted isles-
towards the darkest, most profound caves-
near the most dangerous sharks.

And my thin back-bone was shaking-
up to the extent of the wits of Death.

I could not,
I could no more.

My footsteps at the end,
confessed to the vain futility of the route-
And despair, at last, defeated the patience of my soul.

Then spring,

that Green Mirage,
while passing cross my sight,
whispered to me :

“Look!
You have never advanced,
you have been drowning.”

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, August 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

I Feel Little Garden's Pain

Nobody cares for flowers.
Nobody cares for birds.

Nobody wants to believe that Little Garden is dying,
Nobody wants to believe that Little Garden's heart-
is swollen in this parching heat.

Nobody wants to know that Little Garden's mind-
is slowly losing its green past.

And it seems that Little Garden's sense is a distinct piece,
perishing fast, in the isolating scent of the air.

Our courtyard is feeling lonely.
Our courtyard is yawning-
in hope of a possible visit from a raining cloud.

Our pool is drained.
And young, tiny leaves-
are collapsing from the heights of the trees.

And from the pastel windows of the cage,
song of the birds breaks suddenly-
into the attacks of coughing.
Our courtyard is feeling lonely.

My father says:
"I am done with life,
I am done with life and I did my work."

In his room, all day long-
he is reading history and poems.

He tells my mom:
"Who cares about upkeep of the yard?
I am ill and old and my pension-pay, is just to carry on."

My mother's entire life is a prayer book,

spread at the doors of fright of Hell.
My mother is looking every where-
for the blessed parts of things.

She thinks that Little Garden is spoiled by a depraved plant.
My mom is gifted with tons of innate sins.
She has to pray every day to save her restless soul.

She sends blessing to flowers and birds,
She sends blessing to me, my sister and herself,
She is longing for the resurrection day-
and Divine Pardon that will descend.

My brother calls Little Garden "Graveyard".
My brother laughs at the chaos of the lawn-
He is counting the bloated bodies of birds,
My brother is addicted to Philosophy.

My brother knows: to salvage Little Garden,
we must wipe it out, as soon as we can!

My bother gets drunk,
My brother blows up mirrors,
plates and painting frames.

He is trying so hard, so hard, so hard to show-
that he is very desperate, sad and drawn.

He takes his ID, his lighter, and his despair-
to streets, to bistros and to shops.
His despair is so tiny that every night,
it gets lost in the crowd of a bar.

My sister was friend with flowers and birds.
When my mother was mad, wanted to scold her,
she was hiding behind the green mass of the trees.
She loved to keep company of wounded, unwell birds.

My sister is living in uptown now.
Now, she has a sham house,
Now, she has an artificial plant.

She stays with her fake husband,
They listen to synthetic music,
And they will make lots of natural kids.

My sister comes to visit.
She doesn't like dusts of Little Garden.
She always brings perfumed, hydrating creams.

Our courtyard is feeling lonely.
Our courtyard is feeling lonely.
The whole day, it sounds like razing and hammering:
Our neighbors are implanting mines in their field,
Our neighbors are mounting a safety cover for their pool,
Our neighbors' basement looks like a secret arsenal base.
Our neighbor's children are fighting with noisy guns and bombs.
Our courtyard is feeling scared.

And I am scared of this Heartless Time.
I am scared of all those Wasted Hands.
I am scared of all these Stranger Heads.
I am so lonely, like a nerd in Math Class.

I think we have to bring Little Garden to the clinic.
I think...
I think...
I think...
And Little Garden's heart is swollen in this parching heat.
And Little Garden's mind is slowly losing its green past.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, June 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

I Will Greet The Sun Again

I am sending-
my warmest greetings to the sun,
and to the tender rivers that streamed in my veins,
and to the raining clouds that forever carried- my endless dreams-
to the other side.

Also,
my greetings go-
to the poplar trees in the yard-
and their sore but graceful aging-
under the comes and goes of sun:
They escorted me in all chilly visits-
of dry times.

And,
I am sending my greetings to the dark crowd of crows:
They always brought me the refreshing scent of nightly crows.

And,
my greetings go to my mother-
who stayed and lived in the mirror,
and looked like my aged face.

And my greetings to this earth, this generous earth-
that the thrill of repeating me, filled its aroused inside- with countless greening
seeds.

&

I will come, I will come,
I will arrive.

I will arrive:
With my flowing locks:
the winged scent of Earth;
With my eyes:
the bright insight of Night.

And I will bring to you-
all the flowers that I picked-
from the other side of the wall.

I will come, I will come,
I will arrive.

I will arrive!
And then,
all the closed gates will be shattered by Love,
And all the forsaken isles will be invaded by Love,
And there, I will greet everybody who loves.

And, I know:
There will be a girl,
still standing in front of the gates,
those soaked gates-
in the Deluge of Love.
I will greet her again as well.
I will greet her again as well.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, September 2006, Montréal.

Forough Farrokhzad

It Is Only Sound That Remains

Why should I stop, why?
the birds have gone in search
of the blue direction.
the horizon is vertical, vertical
and movement fountain-like;
and at the limits of vision
shining planets spin.
the earth in elevation reaches repetition,
and air wells
changes into tunnels of connection;
and day is a vastness,
which does not fit into narrow mind
of newspaper worms.

why should I stop?
the road passes through the capillaries of life,
the quality of the environment
in the ship of the uterus of the moon
will kill the corrupt cells.
and in the chemical space after sunrise
there is only sound,
sound that will attract the particles of time.
why should I stop?

what can a swamp be?
what can a swamp be but the spawning ground
of corrupt insects?
swollen corpses scrawl the morgue's thoughts,
the unmanly one has hidden
his lack of manliness in blackness,
and the bug... ah,
when the bug talks,
why should I stop?
cooperation of lead letters is futile,
it will not save the lowly thought.
I am a descendant of the house of trees.
breathing stale air depresses me.
a bird which died advised me to
commit flight to memory.

the ultimate extent of powers is union,
joining with the bright principle of the sun
and pouring into the understanding of light.
it is natural for windmills to fall apart.

why should I stop?
I clasp to my breast
the unripe bunches of wheat
and breastfeed them

sound, sound, only sound,
the sound of the limpid wishes
of water to flow,
the sound of the falling of star light
on the wall of earth's femininity
the sound of the binding of meaning's sperm
and the expansion of the shared mind of love.
sound, sound, sound,
only sound remains.

in the land of dwarfs,
the criteria of comparison
have always traveled in the orbit of zero.
why should I stop?
I obey the four elements;
and the job of drawing up
the constitution of my heart
is not the business
of the local government of the blind.

what is the lengthy whimpering wildness
in animals sexual organs to me?
what to me is the worm's humble movement
In its fleshy vacuum?
the bleeding ancestry of flowers
has committed me to life.
are you familiar with the bleeding
ancestry of the flowers?

Forough Farrokhzad

Later On

My death will arrive one day,
It may be a bright, spring dawn,
It may be a distant winter dusk,
Or perhaps a silent night-
of a foggy, frozen fall.

That day,
gloomy, bright or cloudy, yet,
it will be an empty day-
like all the rest:
a figment of the future,
a picture of the past.

That day,
My eyes like dark holes,
My face like cold marbles;
I'll be taken away in a swift sleep,
leaving behind my colorful dreams.

My hands will fall on the pallor of a page,
My rhyming thoughts will flee from their cage,
My mind losing to the vibration of this last verse;
And then, there will be no sorrow, no pain-
no rage.

The Earth,
incessantly calling my name,
so they will arrive to place me inside the grave.
Oh, perhaps my lovers, at all midnights-
will put some flowers on my lone place.

Then,
the thick shades of my world-
will be suddenly pulled away:
In the full moon-light, one night-
strangers will read on my rhymes...

They will step in my little room,

a sunny day, in my memory.
Next to my mirror yet, they will find
a lock of my hair,
the signs of life-
my fingerprints.

My soul,
like a sailboat,
It will escape,
free of myself and missing from my corpse.
I will fade away at the borders of sight,
like a vagabond kite,
in an endless flight.

Days so quickly get to weeks,
And weeks become months as fast;
You'll stare into eyes of the clock,
waiting in vain my letters, my calls.

But then,
My lifeless body will calmly rest-
far from you and the pounds of your heart-
in the voiceless arms of Mother Earth.

Later on,
The sun, the wind and the rain,
will polish the cold stone of my grave:
And lastly I'll be free-
forever free-
from the myths of return,
name and fame.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, July 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

Love Song

My nights are painted bright with your dream, sweet love
and heavy with your fragrance is my breast.
you fill my eyes with your presence, sweet love.
giving me more happiness than grief.
like rain washing through the soil
you have washed my life clean.
you are the heartbeat of my burning body;
a fire blazing in the shade of my eyelashes.
you are more bountiful than the wheat fields,
more fruit-laden than the golden boughs.
against the onslaught of darkening doubts
you are a door thrown open to the suns.
when I am with you, I fear no pain
for my only pain is a pain of happiness.
this sad heart of mine and so much light?
sounds of life from the bottom of a grave?

Your eyes are my pastures, sweet love
the stamp of your gaze burning deep into my eyes.
if I had you within me before, sweet love
I would not take anybody else for you.
oh it's a dark pain, this urge of wanting;
setting out, belittling oneself fruitlessly;
laying one's head on chests hiding a black heart;
soiling one's breast with ancient hatred;
finding a snake in a caressing hand;
discovering venom behind friendly smiles;
putting coins into deceitful hands;
getting lost in the midst of bazaars.

You are my breath of life, sweet love,
you have brought me back to life from the grave.
you have come down from the distant sky,
like a star on two golden wings
silencing my loneliness, sweet love,
Imbuing my body with odors of your embrace.
you are water to the dry streams of my breasts,
you are a torrent to the dry bed of my veins.
in a world so cold and as bleak,

in step with your steps, I proceed.

You are hidden under my skin
flowing through my every cell,
singeing my hair with your caressing hand,
leaving my cheeks sunburned with desire.
you are, sweet love, a stranger to my dress
but so familiar with the fields of my nakedness.
o bright and eternal sunrise,
the strong sunshine of southern climes,
you are fresher than early dawn,
fresher and better-watered than spring-tide.
this is no longer love, it is dazzlement,
a chandelier blazing amidst silence and darkness.
ever since love was awakened in my heart,
I have become total devotion with desire.
this is no longer me, no longer me,
oh wasted are the years I lived with 'me.'
my lips are the altar of your kisses, sweet love
my eyes watching out for the arrival of your kiss.

You are the convulsions of ecstasy in my body,
like a garment, the lines of your figure covering me.
oh I am going to burst open like a bud,
my joy becoming tarnished for a moment with sorrow.
oh I wish to jump to my feet
and pour down tears like a cloud

This sad heart of mine and burning incense?
music of harp and lyre in a prayer-hall?
this empty space and such flights?
this silent night and so much song?
your gaze is like a magic lullaby, sweet love,
a cradle for restless babies.
your breathing is a breeze half-asleep
washing down all my tremors of anguish;
it is hidden in the smiles of my tomorrows,
it has sunken deep into the depths of my worlds.

You have touched me with the frenzy of poetry;
pouring fire into my songs,
kindling my heart with the fever of love,

thus setting all my poems ablaze, sweet love.

Translated By Karim Emami

Forough Farrokhzad

My Beloved

My beloved,
with his bare bold body-
rose over his legs,
fearless like death.

On his firm face,
an array of fine lines-
was tailored by the revolt-
of his limbs.

My beloved surely belongs-
to a faded clan.

In the depths of his eyes, it seems-
A Tartar is constantly on guard-
for the advent of knights.

In brightness of his teeth, it seems-
a primal man- is patiently waiting-
for cornering a prey.

My beloved is like the earth-
in his blunt fated air,
in his concrete, cruel rule.

My beloved is wildly free.
My beloved is like a whole instinct-
In the core of a dark isolated isle.

My beloved is originally estranged,
like veiled gods, like lone monks.
My beloved is a male from the ancient eras,
and from the natural age of beauty.

By his tread, he awakens-
the innocent sense of youth.

With his aura, he reminds-
the fond flavor of mythical tales.

He loves with such a faith-
all bits of life, all tads of soil
all laughs and all the sorrows.

He loves with such a faith-
The void roads of the parish, the green veins of the trees
the slight smell of soap, the fresh taste of milk.

My beloved surely belongs-
to a faded clan.

My beloved,
He is a natural man.
And in this wicked wonderland
He must hide away.

My beloved,
He is a simple man.
And like the last rest of the vast past beliefs,
I hide him always away,
in the wake of warmth of my breasts.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, September 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

One Day Ali Told His Mom

The little Ali,
The spoiled Ali,
woke up suddenly-
At exact midnight.

He rubbed his eyes-
with his little hands.
He yawned twice-
and then he sat.

What had happened?
What had he seen?

He had a dream, about a fish;
A shiny, gilded fish,
soft, sleek, slick,
light, bright, slight.

It was like sunshine-
Across a navy pane,
throwing sparkle and stars-
to both Ali's eyes.
And finally,
she laid on surface
with its tiny wings,
padding water's face.

It smelt so good,
like washed, clean sheets,
like new notebooks,
like presents' wraps.

It felt like warm nights-
on the top of roof.
It felt like stars, like rain, like a full moon.
It smelt like candy, like chocolate, jelly.
It was just- so pretty.

It looked like a goddess, bathing in heavenly lakes,
It looked like a saint with a golden crown,
It looked like divine visions of Paradise.

Whatever it was,
Whoever she was,
Bewitched our Ali...
Yes, Little Ali- fell madly in love-
with that shiny fish.

As soon as Ali, pulled his small hands-
to catch that piece of art, that rare beauty,
Sky got mad, ranting and raving;
Storm started roaring and raging.
Rain poured down like hell.
Then the soil tore off,
and took up the fish.

Little Ali was left alone,
in his tiny bed, with no dream,
with no shiny fish,
upset and in daze!

The wind was blowing, brutal, in the yard.
It was dragging tresses of the trees.
It was flowing, under covers and sheets.

The wind was blowing and on the rope,
wet clothes and wears were hung, fairly close,
they were playing, dancing in the breeze.

Cheerful crickets were nicely harping.
If the wind was mild, frogs were singing.
Brief, that night was just the same,
as all nights before.

Only Ali was different.

Little Ali was bewildered,
cast under the spell- of the dreamy fish.

He wanted the fish of his dream.
He couldn't stop- thinking about it.
That shiny little Fish, from then on,
possessed Ali's mind.

"Hey Little Ali,
Hey Little Ali,
Don't fidget so much!
Stay straight or you're gonna fall!
If in your dream, it was a fish in a blue lake,
It was not real.
Don't get confused: It was a vision.
Don't spoil your day!"

"What is wrong with you?
What is your problem?
You are so healthy, you are so lucky,
Forget about that fish!"

"Listen to me!
Dreamy roads are not like reals-
with sidewalks and signs,
with light and asphalt.
In the dreams, you may get lost,
You may get hurt...
In the dreams, in dreamy roads-
there is no way back!"

"Look Little Ali!
You will grow up,
You will buy a car,
You will buy a house,
You may be a boss,
You may be famous,
You will be handsome,
You will travel,
All will be lofty."

"Why don't you play?
Don't you have friends?"

Don't you like your toys?
Why are you so sad?"

"Hey Little Ali,
You went crazy!
You lost your mind,
What the heck the fish!
I don't understand..."

"Hey Little Ali,
You are getting sick,
I am getting mad!
You are just spoiled.
I will punish you,
No ice cream, no bike, no party."

"What the heck the fish?
Why do you need fish?
Fish is stinky,
Fish is gonna die,
It's no worth a dime.
Go back to your bed,
Try to sleep!
And leave me alone."

Water was upset,
pretty tired.
Water slowly-
was running off-
to the roof of Sky:

"Hey Little Ali,
You disappointed me!
Not everybody can dream about a shiny fish!
They dream about fries, chips and fish,
They dream about youthful ladies, wealthy gentlemen,
They dream about dress and necklace, about dogs and cars."

"Whoever dreams about the fish, must go and get it!
Whoever dreams about the fish,

his days are filled up by billion stars.
He won't see the sight,
He won't need the light,
He won't be able to sleep the night...

Hey Little Ali,
Don't let me down!"

A butterfly was getting drowned.
Little Ali was listening to the water's words.

It seemed that someone was calling Ali.
It seemed that a hand, a moist, smooth hand-
tapped on Ali's back:

"Hey Little Ali,
Do you hear me?
One, two, three,
Jump in the water!"

"Hey little Ali,
Don't you want to come?
I am the Shiny Fish.
Believe me Ali!
I am right here,
ynder the water"

"Hey Little Ali,
I waited for you,
Now it's a long time!

I'll take you to Sea,
It is not that far,
It is not so hard.
I will take you there:
To Garden of pearls,
To Crystal palace,
To Mountains of light,
We will play there."

"Believe me Ali,
If you don't see them-
what is your life for?
If you don't go there-
what is your time for?"

"Hey Little Ali,
I am getting sick,
in this dirty pool!
Make up your mind:
Either jump inside-
Or then never mind,
I'll leave you behind!"

Sky got mad,
Storm started.
Water coiled upward.
Then suddenly,
gulped down Ali.

Silvery circles over the water's face,
They turned and they turned.
Then blue bubbles,
took their place.

And at the end,
On the water's face-
of Little Ali- was left no trace!

- Where is Ali?
- I don't care!

- What is he doing?
- I don't dare:
"If you want to know,
jump in the water!"

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, May 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

Only The Sound Will Last

Why shall I mind, why?
Birds fled to the aquatic side,
The sphere is vertical,
The sphere is vertical-
And move: rise and fall.

At the borders of sight, bright stars rotate.
The earth stands steady, seen from the heights.
All the black holes are altered to confined circuits and links.

And day is an unknown vastness-
to the contracted wits of paper-worms.

Why shall I mind, why?
The route had to cut across my veins,
But, don't you see?
The cultivation stand of moon doesn't agree-
with the disposition of defective cells.

In the ambiance of sunrise, only the sound,
only the sound will adhere-
to the active quantum of time.

Why shall I mind, why?

Why this inert bog is there, why?
Isn't it just to amass the mass of vicious bugs?

Don't you see?
Those decomposed corpses had shaped
all thoughts of this freezing morgue.
In the dark, infirm creatures veil-
and insects talk.

Why shall I mind, why?

Don't you see?
These printed sheets will not prolong,
the short life of a shameful thought.

I am progeny of the tree,
I cannot breathe-
in this contaminated air;
And a dying bird-
has just reminded me of the flight.

Don't you see?
The feat is to reach to the bright gates of Sun.
And it is to surge into the consciousness of lights,
And it is to watch these aged windmills dying out-
in the releasing vacuity of space.

Why should I mind, why?
I milk unripe clusters of wheat with the warmth of my breasts.

Sound, sound, only sound,
Sound of the clear calls of ice to flow;
Sound of the stroke of shines-
on the feminine limb of earth;
Sound of fertilized sense;
Sound of the expanding love;
Sound, sound, sound,
Only the sound will last!

In the land of dwarfs, scales are small,
Why shall I mind, why?

Don't you see?
I act upon roots of Truth
And the constitution of my soul
overruled the bounded jurisdiction of the blind.

Don't tell me about the lengthy, wild, howls-
and about the pitiful genitals of animals!

Don't tell me about the sorry twist of worms-
in the emptiness of limbs!

Legacy of martyred flowers committed me to life,
Legacy of martyred flowers,
Don't you see?

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, March 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

Rebirth

My entire verve-
is a dark verse.
It will take you-
to the unending dawn of blooms,
flight and light.

In this verse,
I heaved you a sigh, sigh.

In this verse,
I tied you to trees,
water and flames.

Life perhaps,
is that long, shady road,
where every day, a woman wanders-
with her basket of fruits.

Life perhaps, is that rope;
the one that a man would hang himself with-
in a gray, rainy day-
from a thick branch.

Life perhaps,
is that child who is running back home.

Life perhaps,
is those brief smokes,
in the lazy, idle times-
stolen from two making-loves.

Life perhaps,
is that still instant,
when my eyes sink into-
the reflection of your sight.

Life perhaps,
is its sheltering sense;
I will merge it- with the flood of moonlight-

and the frozen abode of night.

In my little,
lonely room,
my heart is invaded-
by the silent crowd of love.

I am keeping track of my life:
The beautiful decay of a rose, in this antique vase;
the growing plant that you brought,
and those birds in their timber cage.
They are singing every hour,
up to the full depth-
of their view.

Oh...
This is my share.
This is my share.
My share,
is a piece of sky-
and a little shade-
can take it away.

My share,
is a gradual descent-
from some deserted stairs.
It is a sudden landing- in some forsaken, exiling place.

My share,
is a gloomy march-
in the distant garden of my past.

My share,
is a slow death-
for the advent of a voice.
The voice-
who once said:
"I love your hands".

I will plant my hands.
I will grow,
I know, I know, I know.

And a lost bird-
will lay lots of eggs-
in my inky palms.

I will pick a pair of twin cherries,
and I will hang them on my ears.
I will take two white oleanders,
And I will put them charily-
on my fingertips.

There is a road,
full of young, vulgar boys.
I used to be their sole muse.
They are still hanging-
with their untidy hair,-
with the same thin legs,
about the same square.
And,
they are still thinking-
of that little girl with a shy beam;
the girl that one day-
faded in the breeze.

There is a congested road that my heart,
kept it from my childhood neighborhood.

The journey of a mass in the row of Time;
And loading this arid line,
with the weight of its shape-
a polished, smooth, even shape-
coming from a place,
just after the village of mirrors.
And it is so-
that someone remains
and some will die.

Did you ever meet a fisher who caught a pearl-
in the yellow, inert, close-by river?

I know a sad, little fairy.
She is living in a remote ocean.

And she is playing her heart-
into a wooden flute.

A sad little fairy-
who dies every dusk.
She is reborn the day after-
right at the dawn,
from a slight kiss.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, May 2006, Montréal.

Forough Farrokhzad

Someone Who Is Like No One

I had a dream,
someone will come.

I had a dream,
someone is coming- for sure.
I had a dream about a red star,
And my eyes are blinking all the time,
And my steps join up, out of the blue.

I swear to God!
I don't lie!
I dreamed about a red, shiny star-
when I was, like, awake.

Someone will come,
I know.
Someone is coming,
Someone else,
Someone better,
Someone who is like no one!

Someone who is not like my daddy,
And is not even like my mom.
Someone who is not like Ali,
And is not like Sara.
Someone who is like no one-
But like the one who "ought to be".

And,
he is taller than our neighbors' trees,
And his face is brighter than Mohamed's face.

He is not afraid of Mr. Nour' brother-
who wears a marine uniform-
and has a huge, huge pistol.

He is not even scared of Mr. Nour-
who owns all of our buildings' rooms.

He must be a Saint, for sure!
I know, he can read my sister's English book-
with closed eyes.

I know,
he can take a thousand off a million-
just very-very fast.

And,
and he can do something-
and we won't have any blackout,
especially on Friday nights.

And he can make the Allah neon,
on the top of the mosque, become bright and green again.

Oh, I like that green neon a lot!
I like all colorful lights!
And I want Ali to have a bike,
with a big, red, flash light;
And I want to sit on the back of his bike,
And turn around the square.

Oh, I like biking around the square so much!
It is so good to go to the park;
And it is so good to have an ice cream;
And it is so good to drink a coke;
And it is so good to go to a movie.
I like all those good things a lot.

I am so little,
and I always get lost in the streets.
But daddy is not little- at all,
And he knows all the streets in our town.

Why he doesn't do something-
for The One, the red star in my dream, to come here now?

Why he cannot make my dream-come true?
Why nobody does anything?

Oh, this sun is so lazy,

and it is still cold...
But I have cleaned up everywhere,
I have even washed all the stairs,
and I have opened all the windows.

Why my daddy doesn't dream at all?

It is still cold...
But I have cleaned up everywhere,
I have even washed all the stairs,
and I have opened all the windows.

Someone will come,
Someone is coming,
Someone who walks with me,
Someone who is in my heart,
Someone who hears me breathing,
Someone who sees me dreaming of him.
Someone who hears me talking, talking about him.

I know,
Nobody can catch Him.

I know,
Nobody can jail Him.

I feel that He is growing on the other side of the fence,
I feel that He is singing with all the drops of rains.
and the falling of leaves.

Someone will come,
Maybe, on the day of Firework Show.

Someone will come,
and will bring fresh bread, butter and cream,
and a big pot of soup with lots carrots and potatoes.

Someone will come,
And will fairly divide the park, the coke and the soup,
And will give everybody his share.

I know,

He will give me my share too.

Someone will come,
Someone is coming,
I had a dream.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, January 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

Terrestrial Verses

Then

The sun turned cold
And abundance left lands

And in deserts shrubs dried
And in deeps the fish died
And thereafter the earth
Did not receive the dead.
The night in all the pale windows
Was incessantly raging and rebelling
Like a suspicious fancy,
And the roads
Abandoned their ends in the dark.

None thought of love any more
None thought of glory any more
And none
Thought of nothing any more.
In the dens of solitude
Vanity was born,
The blood smelled of opium and hemp,
The pregnant women
Gave birth to headless babies
And the shameful cradles
Took refuge in the graves.
What a bitter and dark time!
Bread had defeated
The miraculous force of prophecy,
Poor hungry prophets
Escaped from divine trysts
And the lost lambs of Jesus
Did not hear the dirge of a shepherd
In the wonder of the desert,
As if in the eyes of the mirrors
Motions, colours and pictures
Reversely were reflected
And as if a sacred shining halo

was burning like an umbrella ablaze
Over the heads of the despised clowns
And over the ugly faces of prostitutes.
The swamps of alcohol
Giving off a poisonous bitter vapor
Drew into their depth
The motionless mass of intellectuals
And the noxious mice
chewed up the gilded pages of books
Preserved in ancient chests.
The sun was dead
The sun was dead, and tomorrow
Was a vague lost concept
In children's mind.

They were drawing
The weirdness of this obsolete word
With a black stain
In their homework.

People,
The lapsed bunch of people
Dejected, dumbfounded and feeble
Were wandering about in exile
Under the evil weight of their corpses
And the painful desire for murder
Was inflating in their hands

Sometimes an insignificant spark
All of a sudden, from within
Shattered this silent lifeless society;
They would attack one another
Men would cut each other's throat
With a dagger
And in a bed of blood
They would sleep with
Immature girls.

They were obsessed with terror
And the scary sense of sinfulness
Had paralyzed
Their blind and stupid souls.
Always during the execution
When the hanging rope
Pushed out
A convict's convulsive eyes
They would be lost in thought
And their old and weary nerves
Would ache of a lustful fancy,
But you would ever see
These small murderers
Standing
And staring at
The constant fall of fountains.

Perhaps still
Behind the crushed eyes
Amidst the chill
There had remained
Something faint and half-alive
In whose breathless effort
Wanted to believe
In the innocence of the song of waters

Perhaps , but what an infinite vacuum!
The sun was dead
And nobody knew
The name of that sad dove
Which has escaped the hearts
Is faith.
O Imprisoned Voice
Can the majesty of thy despair
Ever penetrate into light
Through this disgusting night?
O Imprisoned Voice
The last voice of voices ...

Forough Farrokhzad

The Bird May Die...

I feel sad,
I feel blue.

I go outside and rub my cold fingers-
on the sleek shell of the silent night.

I see that all lights of contact are dark,
All lanes to relate us- are blocked.

Nobody will introduce me to the sun,
Nobody will take me- to the gathering of doves.

Keep the flight in mind,
The bird may die.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, September 2006, Montreal

Forough Farrokhzad

The Bird Was Just A Bird

The birds said:

“What a bright day, what a fresh air!
Spring has arrived.
I must look for my mate.”

The bird fled from the edge of wire.
The bird soared away towards the clouds-
and disappeared fast.
Just like a wish,
Just like a prayer,
Just like a whisper,
The bird spread far and wide-
in the air.

The bird was tiny.
The bird was light.
The bird was not bright,
The bird was lonely,
But the bird, well,
was truly free.

In the sky,
Over the ups and downs of the hills and the lanes,
Over the traffic lights and over the stop signs,
The bird constantly flew.

And,
in the heights of the peace of her dreams,
She finally felt the blue sense of time and space.

The bird, well, was just a bird.
The bird, well, was truly free.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, February 2007, Santa Barbara

Forough Farrokhzad

The Captive [Asir]

I want you, yet I know that never
can I embrace you to my heart's content.
you are that clear and bright sky.
I, in this corner of the cage, am a captive bird.

from behind the cold and dark bars
directing toward you my rueful look of astonishment,
I am thinking that a hand might come
and I might suddenly spread my wings in your direction.

I am thinking that in a moment of neglect
I might fly from this silent prison,
laugh in the eyes of the man who is my jailer
and beside you begin life anew.

I am thinking these things, yet I know
that I can not, dare not leave this prison.
even if the jailer would wish it,
no breath or breeze remains for my flight.

from behind the bars, every bright morning
the look of a child smile in my face;
when I begin a song of joy,
his lips come toward me with a kiss.

O sky, if I want one day
to fly from this silent prison,
what shall I say to the weeping child's eyes:
forget about me, for I am captive bird?

I am that candle which illumines a ruins
with the burning of her heart.
If I want to choose silent darkness,
I will bring a nest to ruin.

Forough Farrokhzad

The Gift

I am speaking to you-
from the edge of darkness,
and about the depths of night.
I am talking about the thickness of absolute shade.

Darling!
If you are coming to visit me,
Then, bring me a torch,
and put up for me-
a little window.

I will then watch-
the noisy crowd of the happy lane.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, Summer 2006, Montreal

Forough Farrokhzad

The Sin [gonah]

I sinned a sin full of pleasure,
In an embrace which was warm and fiery.
I sinned surrounded by arms
that were hot and avenging and iron.

In that dark and silent seclusion
I looked into his secret-full eyes.
my heart impatiently shook in my breast
In response to the request of his needful eyes.

In that dark and silent seclusion,
I sat dishevelled at his side.
his lips poured passion on my lips,
I escaped from the sorrow of my crazed heart.

I whispered in his ear the tale of love:
I want you, O life of mine,
I want you, O life-giving embrace,
O crazed lover of mine, you.

desire sparked a flame in his eyes;
the red wine danced in the cup.
In the soft bed, my body
drunkenly quivered on his chest.

I sinned a sin full of pleasure,
next to a shaking, stupefied form.
O God, who knows what I did
In that dark and quiet seclusion.

Forough Farrokhzad

The Wall

With the cold moments of the past fleeting by,
Your wild eyes contained in your silent demeanor
build a wall around me
And I flee from you to a pathless path.

Until I see valleys on the moons dirt
Until I wash my body in the water fountains of light
In a colorful fog of a warm summer morning
I'll fill my skirt with lilies from the fields
And hear the roar of roosters from the village rooftops

I'm fleeing from you to the very skirts of the valley
Where I'll press my feet to the ground
Until they sip dewdrops of grass
I'm fleeing from you to a deserted beach
Where on the lost boulders beneath dark clouds
I'll learn the twisting dance of the ocean's hurricane

In a far off sunset, like wild doves
I'll see fields, mountains, and the sky beneath my feet.
And in the midst of dry bushes I'll hear
the blissful music of field birds.

I'm fleeing from you until I open the path
To the city of desires
And in that city...
The castle of dreams will have a heavy golden lock

But your eyes with their silent scream
Will blur my vision
Like your dark secrets that
Build a wall around me.

At last one day...
I'll flee from the illusion of conceiving doubt
And I'll radiate like a perfume from
the colorful flower of dreams
And I'll diffuse into the wavy hair of night's zephyr

And travel to the very beaches of the Sun
In a silent world, within an eternity of calmness.

I'll gently rock on a bed of golden-colored clouds
That extends hand like rays toward the serene sky
As if playing a song.

It is there where I am happy and free
And I weave memories of this world
Because your bewitching eyes
Find my eyes
And blur my vision
Like your dark secrets
That build a wall around me.

Translation by Pari Kooshesh January 2003

Forough Farrokhzad

The Wave

To me you are a wave;
never here, never there!
You are –still- nowhere!

Grabbing,
dragging, then fleeing away,
you swiftly spread- like a deadly plague,
on the run for the Other Soil, your destination's vague!

Watching you-
from far and wide,
in my seized eye,
you're a rebellious tide-
in an eternal glide.

Insistent, impatient, then a restless errant,
you must be calm in heart, fretful just in act!
And I now know, the sea of regret- is your native land.

Yes, you are an unruly tide!
So always on the ride,
in an eternal glide!

But one night,
I will wear a mask-
made of the thirst-
of the remotest shores,
and their desert islands.
And I'll capture you- in my absorbing sands,
forever far away- from your naval natal lands.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, July 2006, Montreal

Forough Farrokhzad

The Wedding Band

The girl smiled and said: What
is the secret of this gold ring,
the secret of this ring that so tightly
embraces my finger,
the secret of this band
that sparkles and shines so?
the man was startled and said:
it's the ring of good fortune, the ring of life.

Everyone said: Congratulations and best wishes!
the girl said: Alas
that I still have doubts about its meaning.

The years passed, and one night
a downhearted woman looked at that gold band
and saw in its gleaming pattern
days wasted in hopes of husbandly fidelity,
days totally wasted.

The woman grew agitated and cried out:
O my, this ring that
still sparkles and shines
is the band of slavery and servitude.

Forough Farrokhzad

The Wind Will Take Us Away

In my little night, alas
The storm has a fateful tryst
with the sweet sleep of the trees.

In my little night, alas
The freezing fright of ruin streams.

Listen!
The shadows are stepping by...
We must flee.

This bliss seems so odd to me,
I am addicted to my despair,
I feel that something will disrupt
this flowing peace of our quiet night.

&

Listen!
The shadows are stepping by...
We must flee.

Don't you see?
Our roof is shaking in fear of collapse,
and over this roof, an immense dark cloud,
like a dull, grieving crowd,
is expecting the moment of cry.

Don't you hear?
Night is marching behind the window's glass
and the wind is cutting our yard's breath
It seems that stranger eyes
are watching this house.

Listen!
The shadows are stepping by...
We must flee.

&

You,
O green like the soul of the leaves,
Put your hands into mine,
And hold them like the burning memories of love.

You,
O green like the soul of the leaves,
Leave your lips to the stroke of mine,
And savor them like the swell flavor of an old wine.

If we forget,
The wind will take us away,
The wind will take us away.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, May 2006, October 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

The Wind-Up Doll

More than this, yes
more than this one can stay silent.

With a fixed gaze
like that of the dead
one can stare for long hours
at the smoke rising from a cigarette
at the shape of a cup
at a faded flower on the rug
at a fading slogan on the wall.

One can draw back the drapes
with wrinkled fingers and watch
rain falling heavy in the alley
a child standing in a doorway
holding colorful kites
a rickety cart leaving the deserted square
in a noisy rush

One can stand motionless
by the drapes—blind, deaf.

One can cry out
with a voice quite false, quite remote
“I love...”
in a man’s domineering arms
one can be a healthy, beautiful female

With a body like a leather tablecloth
with two large and hard breasts,
in bed with a drunk, a madman, a tramp
one can stain the innocence of love.

One can degrade with guile
all the deep mysteries
one can keep on figuring out crossword puzzles
happily discover the inane answers
inane answers, yes—of five or six letters.

With bent head, one can
kneel a lifetime before the cold gilded grill of a tomb
one can find God in a nameless grave
one can trade one's faith for a worthless coin
one can mold in the corner of a mosque
like an ancient reciter of pilgrim's prayers.
one can be constant, like zero
whether adding, subtracting, or multiplying.
one can think of your --even your—eyes
in their cocoo of anger
as lusterless holes in a time-worn shoe.
one can dry up in one's basin, like water.

With shame one can hide the beauty of a moment's togetherness
at the bottom of a chest
like an old, funny looking snapshot,
in a day's empty frame one can display
the picture of an execution, a crucifixion, or a martyrdom,
One can cover the crake in the wall with a mask
one can cope with images more hollow than these.

One can be like a wind-up doll
and look at the world with eyes of glass,
one can lie for years in lace and tinsel
a body stuffed with straw
inside a felt-lined box,
at every lustful touch
for no reason at all
one can give out a cry
"Ah, so happy am I!"

Forough Farrokhzad

To My Sister

Sister, rise up after your freedom,
why are you quiet?
rise up because henceforth
you have to imbibe the blood of tyrannical men.

Seek your rights, Sister,
from those who keep you weak,
from those whose myriad tricks and schemes
keep you seated in a corner of the house.

How long will you be the object of pleasure
In the harem of men's lust?
how long will you bow your proud head at his feet
like a benighted servant?

How long for the sake of a morsel of bread,
will you keep becoming an aged haji's temporary wife,
seeing second and third rival wives.
oppression and cruelty, my sister, for how long?

This angry moan of yours
must surly become a clamorous scream.
you must tear apart this heavy bond
so that your life might be free.

Rise up and uproot the roots of oppression.
give comfort to your bleeding heart.
for the sake of your freedom, strive
to change the law, rise up.

Forough Farrokhzad

Unison

Those two lone pilgrims of void routes,
my dark pupils, had fainted away-
under sway of his eyes.

I saw that he was waving-
on the entirety of my verve:

Like an immense fire in the wind;

Like the waltz of a sleeping lake-
under the stroke of rocks;

Like grey, thick clouds-
in the crisis of storm;

Like breathless skies-
in warm, humid days.

He was extended,
up to infinity,
down to the other side.

I saw myself thawing,
with seizing bends of his hands.
And I sank in the opaque steam of my substance.
The bewitching rhymes of his heart-
at last took away the air-
from the chants-
of my breath.

The time hastily flew away.
The drape went off with the wind.
I had surrounded him,
in the circle of flames.

I felt like calling,
but I had to leave-
with the flood of his eyes...
They streamed from extremes of night-

along the long limbs of desire and thirst,
to the morose vibration of fever,
to the lost end of me.

I felt released.
I felt released.

I saw my skin cracking in the expansion of love.
I saw my burning mass, slowly melted;
melted and poured, poured, poured.
It poured in the moon,
that waned, slight,
pale moon.

We had cried in each other.
In that fleeting instant of unison-
We had lived madly in each other.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, June 2006, Montreal.

Forough Farrokhzad

Window

A window to see-
A window to hear-

A round window like an unending well:
It should reach to the blazing core of Earth.
And it should release into-
its gentle, lightly air.

A window that loads lonely, little hands-
with the nocturnal scent of generous stars.
A window that invites the sun-
to the glacial exile of blooms.

A window,
A window is enough for me.

I am coming from the land of puppets,
And from underneath shades of painted trees-
in the printed gardens of fiction books.

I am coming from-
arid seasons of thrill-
and barren years of romance,
from deserted lanes of innocence,
from the age of pastel faced letters.

I am coming from-
behind benches of a tired class.
And from that confusing time-
when I wrote the spell of "stone" on the board-
and terrified birds- fled from naked branches of the trees.

I arrive from beneath roots of carnivorous trees,
And my mind is still filled -with the fearful cries of dried butterflies-
under weighty volumes of pale, aged books.

When my trust was hung-
from the frail justice line of this town,
And in the streets, they were cutting off the head of my torch,

When they blind-folded the innocent eyes of my love,
When fresh blood erupted from all veins of my shaking dreams,
And when my life was nothing-
but the regular chant of a Grandfather clock,
I realized that I had to love,
I had to love madly.

A window is enough for me.
A window to the instance of light, insight and peace.

Now,
the little walnut tree-
that you had once known-
is so grown, grown, so grown,
that it can narrate the tale of wall-
to its young leaves.

Ask the name of The Redeemer from mirrors!

Don't you see?
This trembling ground-
underneath your bare feet-
is lonelier than you.

The verdict of this ruin arrived in prophetic, sealed notes;
And these infected clouds and incessant blasts, perhaps,
stem from those sacred words.

My friend!
Don't forget!
When you land on the moon,
engrave the date of the carnage-
of young flowers of this Earth-
on its sad, soft, wrinkled face.

Dreams always fall from their naive heights and die.
And on the soil, where old beliefs silently rest,
a little plant, with four tiny leaves,
constantly grows.
I smell this plant.

A woman was buried in the chaste coffin of her hope.

Is she the remnant of my youth?

A gentle god was taking nightly walks-
in the fresh air of the roofs.

Will I climb again, climb again-
the curious steepness of the stairs-
to greet him?

I feel that the time had left.

I feel that my share of instant is planted in the past.

I feel that in this stand,
there is only an unreal void, distancing my hair-
from the hands of a sad, stranger guest.

Talk to me!

And I reward you-
with the igniting love-
of a whole life.

And, I expect you nothing-
but the reflection of its birth-
in a glance of your eyes.

Talk to me!

Don't you see?

In shelter of my window,
I am attached to the sun.

Translation: Maryam Dilmaghani, June 2006, Montréal

Forough Farrokhzad