



Women Poets Iranica
A Research Compendium

Furūgh Farrukh'zād

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In mid-1356/1977, as unrest in Iran was percolating that would lead to the Iranian Revolution of 1357/1978 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in early 1358/1979, a collection of essays and translations appeared called Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak that introduced prominent women from Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey. Candidates for the subject of the Iran essay were (in order of their dates of birth): Mehr'angīz Dawlat'shāhī (1298–1387/1917–2008), a member of the Iranian Parliament and Ambassador to Denmark; Muhammad Rizā Shāh Pahlavī's twin sister Ashraf Pahlavī (1298–1394/1919–2016), a power broker, palace advisor, and advocate for women's rights; social work pioneer Sattārah Farmān'farmāyān (1299–1391/1921–2012); university professor and fiction writer Sīmīn Dānishvar (1300–1390/1921–2012), author of the best-selling novel *Savūshūn* [Mourners of Siyāvash] (1348/1969); Farrukh'rū Pārsā (1301–1359/1923–1980), physician, educator, and Minister of Education; modernist lyric poet Furūgh Farrukh'zād (1313–1353/1934–1967); surrealist painter Īrān Darrūdī (1936–2021); leading film actress Furūzān (Parvīn Khayr'baksh) (1316–1394/1937–2016); Farah Dībā Pahlavī (b. 1317/1938), third wife of Muhammad Rizā Shāh Pahlavī (ruled 1320–1357/1941–1979); and pop singer and film actress Gūgūsh (Fā'ighah Ātashīn, b. 1329/1950).

For the book's Iran subject, its editors chose an essay on Furūgh

Farrukh'zād,¹ its subject a poet who had published 140 or so, mostly shorter lyric poems in a career that began in 1333/1954 and ended with her death in an automobile accident in February 1353/1967.

But, for many Iranians Farrukh'zād was much more than a prominent modernist lyric poet. As the *Encyclopædia Iranica* entry on Farrukh'zād, published in 1999, reads in part:

[Farrukh'zād's work] is a struggle against the institutions of both literature and society, an oasis of the conventionally forbidden—sexual, textual, and cultural ... A confrontational stance toward gender categories and attributes, ... an exploration of the exhilaration and violence of love, and a candid portrayal of the high price paid by a literary woman to nurture her creativity—these are some of the issues that Farrokzād explores in her writing ... Throughout her five poetry collections we witness the development of a female persona whose complexity defies the stereotype: a woman privileged with emotional, psychological, and intellectual awareness; a woman contradicting prevailing notions of the “feminine,” and asserting ... her sense of herself as different from that conventionally defined as belonging to women ... The canon of Farrokzād's works makes up a passionate personal statement which gradually unfolds to become much more, to take in the concerns of a whole generation of women (even a society) that was struggling for personal and collective (self) acceptance outside of traditional boundaries ... From the very beginning of her literary career, Farrokzād was a daring, often irreverent explorer of a public language of intimacy. Hers was the subversive, the innovative text ... Her candid poetry never banishes what was customarily relegated to the private domain, if expressed at all. It violates norms that define proper language for a woman ... Undoubtedly, Forugh Farroxzād is among the most gifted women of 20th-century Persia [EI's term for “Iran”].²

This *Encyclopædia Iranica* entry illustrates much mainstream

¹Michael Craig Hillmann, “Furugh Farrukhzad, Modern Iranian Poet,” *Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak*, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Basima Qattan Bezirgan (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1977), 291–317.

²Farzaneh Milani, “Farrokzād, Forūgh al-Zamān,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* (1999); available online at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farrokzad-forug-zaman>.

³Farzaneh Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād: Zindagī'nāmah-'i adabī ham'rāh bā nāmah'hā-yi chāp'nashudahh* [Furūgh Farrukh'zād: A literary biography together with unpublished letters] (Toronto: Persian Circle, 1395/2016).

⁴Furūgh Farrukh'zād, *Avvalīn tapish'hā-yi 'āshiqānah-'i qalbī: nāmah'hā-yi Furūgh Farrukh'zād bih ham'sarash Parvīz Shāpūr* [Love's first heartbeats: Letters of Furūgh Farrukh'zād to her husband Parvīz Shāpūr], ed. Kāmyār Shāpūr and 'Um-rān Salāhī (Tehran: Murvārīd, 1371/1992).

⁵Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Pānzdah (15) nāmah bih Ibrāhīm Gulistān" [Fifteen (15) letters to Ibrāhīm Gulistān] in Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 265–406.

⁶Leila Rahimi Bahmany, *Mirrors of Entrapment and Emancipation: Forugh Farrokhzad and Sylvia Plath* (Leiden, Holland: Leiden University Press, 2015).

⁷Florence Howe, ed., "Introduction," *No More Masks! An Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Women Poets*, newly revised and expanded (New York, NY: HarperCollins Books, 1993), xxix-lxvi. Among possible sources, cited therein, of inspiration for Sylvia Plath were: Amy Lowell (1873–1925), Sara Teasdale (1884–1933), H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) (1886–1961), Marianne Moore (1887–1972), Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950), Denise Levertov (1923–1997), Anne Sexton (1928–1974), and Adrienne Rich (1929–2012).

academic writing on Farrukh'zād in its feminist biographical criticism, culminating in Farzaneh Milani's *Furūgh Farrukh'zād: zindagī'nāmah-'i adabī ham'rāh bā nāmah'hā-yi chāp'nashudahh* [Furūgh Farrukh'zād: A literary biography together with unpublished letters],³ which makes use of significant interview data and Farrukh'zād correspondence with her husband Parvīz Shāpūr (1302–1378/1924–1999)⁴ and with Ibrāhīm Gulistān (1301–1402/1922–2023),⁵ her employer and paramour from late 1337/1958 until her death more than eight years later.

An added comparatist perspective to the study of Farrukh'zād's life appears in Leila Rahimi Bahmany's *Mirrors of Entrapment and Emancipation: Forugh Farrokhzad and Sylvia Plath*,⁶ the very subject of which highlights a significant aspect of Farrukh'zād's career as a female Iranian poet. For her American contemporary Plath (1932–1963) had, according to Florence Howe in *No More Masks: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Women Poets* (1993), a score of "sister" forbears.⁷ In contrast, according to anthologist Zabīh Allāh Safā in *Ganj-i sukhan* [Treasure of poetry] (1342/1963), Farrukh'zād had only three then known, older "sisters": Rābi'ah Balkhī (AH 4th century/10th century CE), Mahsafī (c. 468–538/1089–1159), and Parvīn I'tisāmī (1285–1320/1907–1941).⁸

As for early 20th-century predecessors, Dominic Parviz Brookshaw offers texts and translations from seven poets in "Chapter 5: Women Poets" of *Literature of the Early Twentieth Century from the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah* (2015).⁹ Among them, 'Ālam Tāj "Zhālah" Qā'im Maqāmī's frank depiction of personal plights might have resonated most with Farrukh'zād but her *Dīvān* (Collected poems) did not appear until 1345/1966.¹⁰ Her poems appear with English translations and an introduction in Asghar Seyed-Gohrab's *Mirror of Dew: The Poetry of 'Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em Maqāmi*.¹¹

Writing a half-century after Farrukh'zād's death, poet, critic, and leading Persian poetry translator Dick Davis cites and translates



verse in *The Mirror of My Heart: A Thousand Years of Persian Poetry by Women—A Bilingual Text in English and Persian* (2020), from some fifty woman poets preceding Farrukh'zād. Davis also provides an historical introduction to the texts and translations and, interestingly, devotes relative space thusly to translations of individual poets: nineteen pages to Jahān Malik Khātūn (AH c. 724–c. 784/c. 1324–c. 1382), twelve pages to Parvīn I'tisāmī, eleven pages to Zhālah Qā'im Maqāmī (1262–1326/1883–1946), ten pages to Sīmīn Bihbahānī (1306–1393/1927–2014), ten pages to Furūgh Farrukh'zād, and eight pages to Mahsatī.¹²

Writing on Farrukh'zād in Iran and abroad has continued unabated in the decades since her death. In Iran, of course, since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1357/1979, although readers could find her works thereafter, new printings did not appear for some years.¹³ Moreover, writing in Iran by and about Farrukh'zād has exhibited extensive censorship.¹⁴

A chief sort of illumination of Farrukh'zād the person and the poet are recollections, interviews, and the identification of the personal speakers in poems with the person(ality) and life of the poet outside poems. For example, transcriptions of parts of interviews with twenty-three individuals appear in Nāsir Saffāriyān's *Āyah'hā-yi āh: nāguftah'hā-yī az zindigī-i Furūgh Farrukh'zād* (Verses of sighs: things unsaid about the life of Furūgh Farrukh'zād) (1381/2002). This volume and three readily available documentary films were the upshot of a planned biography of the poet.¹⁵

Also appearing in 1381/2002 was Mihrī Bihfar's collection of essays on nine contemporary poets called *'Ishq dar guzargāh'hā-yi shab'zadah* (Love passion at nocturnal crossroads), featuring an essay on Farrukh'zād called "*Sidā-yi khvāhish-i shaffāf-i āb bih jāri shudan*" (The sound of the limpid request of water to flow), which examines asserted groundbreaking and iconoclasm in Farrukh'zād's poetry in the context of Iranian

⁸Zabih Allāh Safā, *Ganj-i sukhan; shā'irān-i buzurg-i pārsī'gūy va muntakhab-i āsar-i ānān* [Treasure of poetry: Major Persian poets and a selection from their works] (3 vols., Tehran: Ibn Sīnā, 1342/1963).

⁹Dominic Parviz Brookshaw, "Chapter 5: Women Poets," in *Literature of the Early Twentieth Century from the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah*, ed. Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, *A History of Persian Literature*, general ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 11:240–310.

¹⁰Zhālah Qā'im Maqāmī, *Dīvān-i Zhālah Qā'im Maqāmī* [Collected poems of Zhālah Qā'im Maqāmī] (Tehran: Ibn Sīnā, 1345/1966).

¹¹Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, *Mirror of Dew: The Poetry of Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmī*, trans. and intro. by Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (Boston, MA: Ilex Foundation, 2014).

¹²Dick Davis, trans., "Introduction," in *The Mirror of My Heart: A Thousand Years of Persian Poetry by Women—A Bilingual Text in English and Persian* (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 2020), xi-lxvii.

¹³Rūh'angīz Karāchī, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād, ham'rāh bā kitāb'shināsī* [Furūgh Farrukh'zād, together with a bibliography] (Tehran: Dāstān'sarā, 1383/2004).

¹⁴E.g., *Furūgh Farrukh'zād, Panj kitāb: majmū'ah-i ash'ār-i Furūgh Farrukh'zād* [Five books: Complete poems of Furūgh Farrukh'zād], compiled and edited by Ruyā Khusraw'nijadī (5th repr. ed., Tehran: Shaqāyiq, 1384/2005).

in which neither the poem “Asīr” [(The) Captive] nor the poem “Gunāh” [(The) Sin] appears, more on both of which anon. A handful of poems in Farrukh’zād’s epoch-making 1342/1963 collection called *Tavalludī dīgar* [Another birth] also do not appear in *Panj kitāb* [Five books]. See *Furūgh Farrukh’zād, Tavalludī dīgar* [Another birth] (Tehran: Murvārīd, 1342/1963).

¹⁵Nāsir Saffāriyān, *Āyah’hā-yi āh: nāguftah’hā-yī az zindigī-i Furūgh Farrukh’zād* [Verses of sighs: things unsaid about the life of Furūgh Farrukh’zād] (Tehran: Rūz’nigār, 1381/2002).

¹⁶Mihri Bihfar, ‘Ishq dar guzargāh’hā-yi shab’zadah [Love passion at nocturnal crossroads], featuring “Sidā-yi khvāhish-i shaffāf-i āb bih jāri shudan” [The sound of the limpid request of water to flow] (Tehran: Hirmand, 1381/2002), 141–85.

¹⁷Karāchī, *Furūgh Farrukh’zād*, 141–200.

¹⁸For example, here follow representative online resources for the study of Farrukh’zād’s 1965 poem called “Panjarah” [(The) Window]: Maryam ‘Alī-jān’zādah, “Naqd-i furmālistī-i shī’r-i Furūgh Farrukh’zād” [Formalist criticism of Furūgh Farrukh’zād’s poetry], Ph.D. dissertation, Māzandarān University, 2010, online at <http://elmet.ir>> article; Mahmūd ‘Ātifrād, “Panjarah’hā-yi shī’r-i Furūgh” [Windows in Furūgh’s poetry], Sangistān, online at <http://saecm110>.

women’s poetry and then analyzes three later poems as illustrative of her evolution as a poet.¹⁶

Rūh’angīz Karāchī’s *Furūgh Farrukh’zād* (1383/2005) features a bibliography that lists forty-eight books in Persian about Farrukh’zād published between 1334/1955 and 1383/2005, and 391 book chapters and articles.¹⁷ Numerous analyses of individual Farrukh’zād poems have appeared in Iran in more recent years.¹⁸

Karāchī’s collaboration with Mitrā Tūsī called *Farhang-i vāzhah’namā-yi Furūgh Farrukh’zād* [A Furūgh Farrukh’zād concordance] (1390/2011) can prove a useful resource in critical writing on Farrukh’zād’s lexicon, particularly images such as “chashm” [eye(s)], “shab” [night], “lab” [lip(s)], “dil” and “qalb” [heart], “panjarah” [window(s)], “khvurshīd” and “āftāb” [sun, sunshine], and “āyinah” [mirror], and other high frequency words such as “tu” [you (intimate)], “ishq” [love], “nigāh” [look(ing), glance], “āh” [sigh], “gham” and “andūh” [sorrow], “dard” [pain], “shī’r” [poem, poetry], “āshiq” [lover], “gunāh” [sin], and “marg” [death].¹⁹

As for continuing attention to Farrukh’zād abroad, her poems have been much translated into European languages, including hundreds of online translations and a handful of volumes of English translations,²⁰ although translations to date appear not to have led her poetry to impinge significantly upon the consciousness of the English poetry-reading public. For example, *The PIP Anthology of World Poetry of the Twentieth Century* (2001) begins its prefatory note to translations of several Farrukh’zād poems with this description of their poet: “One of the major women poets of the Arab world...[whose] first collection of poetry, *Asīr* [(The) Captive] appeared in 1952.”²¹ A January 2019 article called “Overlooked No More: Forough Farrokhzād, Iranian Poet Who Broke Barriers of Sex and Society” appeared in a series of obituaries in *The New York Times* called “Overlooked,” which aims to “add... the stories of remarkable people whose deaths went unreported in *The Times*.”²²



Several facts may constitute factors for why the handful of volumes of Farrukh'zād translations and other many scattered and anthologized translations have not led to popularity for her and her poetry in the English-speaking world. First, the subjects, issues, themes, and tone of her poems might not seem novel to American readers who have grown up with the verse of twenty or so arguably well-known women poets contemporary with her; for example, Anne Sexton (1928–1974), Adrienne Rich (1929–2012), the already cited Sylvia Plath (1932–1963), and Lucille Clifton (1936–2010). Suicide, rape, menstruation, sexual intercourse, lesbian relationships, growing up poor in America, growing up black in America, suffering from anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder, divorce, marital infidelity, motherhood, love of spouse, and women's rights get attention in the works of such poets. Moreover, Farrukh'zād's "unpoetic bluntness" in portraying trials and tribulations of a female self, which shocked and fascinated her Iranian contemporaries, also served to weaken and shatter barriers that traditional norms of public propriety erected in front of female Iranian artists. But no shock or enthrallment factor and different, arguably lesser barriers obtained in America.

Second, the same holds for the relatively unmasked, self-revelatory, and potentially autobiographical personas of Farrukh'zād's first person speakers. Take, for example, Plath's poetic narrative called *The Bell Jar* (1963), which indicts America of the early 1950s for its suffocating and demeaning choices for young women, or Sexton's *To Bedlam and Part Way Back* (1960), which chronicles a woman's psychological problems, or Clifton's *Good Times* (1969), which brings alive the poet's African American people, who were legally and literally enslaved down to the generation of her grandparents.

Third, Farrukh'zād's American and Iranian-American translators to date have mostly offered versions in so-called "free" verse, whereas Farrukh'zād's Persian originals exhibit both

blogfa.com; Ihsān Husaynī, "Tahlīl-i padīdār'shināsānah-i 'Panjarah', asar-i Furūgh Farrukh'zād..." [A phenomenological analysis of 'Window', a work by Furūgh Farrukh'zād...], online at <http://problematicaa.com/forough>; Muhammad Rizā Nūshmand, "Tahlīl-i shi'r-i 'Panjarah', surūdah-i Furūgh Farrukh'zād" [Analysis of the poem 'Window,' composed by Furūgh Farrukh'zād], online at <http://rezanooshmand.blogfa.com>, December 5, 2009.

¹⁹Rūh'angīz Karāchī and Mītrā Tūsī, *Farhang-i vāzhah'namā-yi Furūgh Farrukh'zād* [A Furūgh Farrukh'zād concordance] (Tehran: Chāpār, 1390/2011), 667–717.

²⁰E.g., Hasan Javadi and Susan Sallée, trs., *Another Birth: [34] Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad* (Emeryville, CA: Albany Books, 1981); Jascha Kessler with Amin Banani, trs., *Bride of Acacias: [50] Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzād* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1982); David Martin, tr., *A Rebirth: [35] Poems by Forough Farrokhzaad* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1985); Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, tr., *Remembering the Flight: Twenty Poems by Forugh Farrokhzād* (Port Coquitlam, B.C., Canada, 1997); Sholeh Wolpé, tr., *Sin: [40] Selected Poems of Forough Farrokhzād* (Fayetteville, AK: The University of Arkansas Press, 2007); Meetra A. Sofia, tr., *If I Were God: Forugh Farrokhzad, the Girl Poet in Tehran* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 2008); and Elizabeth T. Gray, Jr., tr., [40] *Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzād* (New York, NY: New Directions, 2022).

²¹The Project of Innovative Poetry, *The Pip Anthology of World Poetry of the 20th Century*, volume 2 (Los Angeles, CA: Green Integer, 2001), 66.

²²Amir-Hussein Radiy, "Overlooked No More: Forough Farrokhzād, Iranian Poet Who Broke Barriers of Sex and Society," "Overlooked," *The New York Times*, January 30, 2019.

²³Vali-Zadeh, "The Aesthetic of Desire and the Feminine Path of Individuation," *Anthropology of the Middle East* 16, no. 2 (Winter 2021): 110–27.

²⁴Umīd Tabīb'zādah, "Furūgh Farrukh'zād: shā'irah' ī kih shā'ir shud" [Furūgh Farrukh'zād: A poetess who became a poet], *Irān'shahr-i Imrūz* 2, no. 6 (Farvardīn–Khurdād 1395/March–May 2016): 27–39, online at <http://academia.edu/omidtabibzadeh>.

quantitative metrical patterns and patterns of accentual verse and ubiquitous aural that contribute in their distinctive sound-sense amalgam effecting poetic appeal arguably missing in most translations.

Critical appreciation of Farrukh'zād's poetry in Iran and abroad arguably remains chiefly focused on gender issues with the implication that its alleged feminine, feminist, female essence and its presumed autobiographical content contribute per se to its aesthetic appeal. Mahdieh Vali-Zadeh offers a stimulating illustration of such criticism in "The Aesthetic of Desire and the Feminine Path of Individuation" (2021), which sees Farrukh'zād's poetry as exhibiting the "agency of the feminine and her active role in choosing a masculine object of love," depicting "feminine sensations in the experience of the erotic," "mystifying the erotic and irrevocably worldly in feminine experience" and "incorporating innovative images to describe her own corporeality...her own body [being] the main object of poetic description." All of this, which Farrukh'zād realizes "via the feminine self gaze," challenges "pre-imposed, male-dominant societal and religious norms with regard to women," Farrukh'zād achieving "individuation as an independent woman and a poet with voice and agency."²³

In the words of Umīd Tabīb'zādah, reader knowledge about Farrukh'zād's life, feminist critics generally assuming that Farrukh'zād's person and poetic personas are usually identical, contributes significantly to "dark va iltizāz-i ash'ār-i vay" [understanding and enjoyment of her poetry]. Tabīb'zādah also observes that biographical writing about her that characterizes her as a figure of boldness and courage in rending metaphorical veils and ripping aside curtains hiding women exhibits such fascination and intensity that readers may suppose that they are not reading literary biography, but rather a treatise or report in Women's Studies or a feminist apology.²⁴ To that assertion, even a practical literary critic of poetry might reply that the Iranian social and cultural context of the day may well call for



advocacy biography and lionization of Farrukh'zād and extrinsic approaches to the appreciation of her poetry,²⁵ for example, literature and biography, literature and psychology, or literature and society.

At the same time, Farrukh'zād's poetry obviously calls for an intrinsic appreciation, engaging it qua poetry to answer questions about what specific features in individual poems contribute to their poetic appeal and effects on readers.²⁶ After all, reading her poetry qua poetry, without overriding attention to life in Iran in the 1320s/1940s, 1330s/1950s, and 1340s/1960s and to her life, may ultimately matter most in whatever status Farrukh'zād may have in the Persian-speaking world and beyond in the distant future.

As for the significance of Farrukh'zād's poetry as a clarion feminist call to women to seek their individual rights and rightful place in society, owing to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in early 1357/1979 and its policies toward women in the following decades, Farrukh'zād's words have perforce fallen on inspired, albeit arguably powerless, ears in Iran for more than forty years, while concomitantly inspiring Iranian women living abroad. Anti-hijab and anti-IRI protests in Iran from mid-September 2022 onward and expatriate Iranian reactions abroad may change the internal power equation in Iran.

In other words, when Encyclopaedia Iranica asserts that Farrukh'zād's life and poetry highlight "the concerns of a whole generation of women (even a society)," it may not take adequately into account the fact that the nature of "the struggle for personal and collective (self) acceptance outside of traditional boundaries" during the post-Mosaddegh pre-Khomeini era may have dramatically changed since 1357/1979, thereafter having literal life-and-death dimensions and consequences, thousands of women reportedly executed for participation in one form or another in that struggle and tens of thousands seeking refuge and a better life outside of Iran.

²⁵Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature: New Revised Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970, 3rd edition), discuss extrinsic and intrinsic approaches to the study of (Western) literature, treating (1) literature and biography, (2) literature and psychology, (3) literature and society, and (4) literature and ideas as foci in extrinsic approaches and (1) the mode of existence of a literary work of art, (2) euphony, rhythm, and metre, (3) style and stylistics, (4) and image, metaphor, symbol, and myth as foci in intrinsic approaches.

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²⁷Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Nasrin Rahimieh, eds., *Forugh Farrokhzad Poet of Modern Iran: Iconic Woman and Feminine Pioneer of New Persian Poetry* (London, UK: I.B. Taurus, 2010).

As for those influential women of the pre-Khomeini era cited above, Farrukh'rū Pārsā remained in Iran and was executed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Farah Dībā Pahlavī and Ashraf Pahlavī fled the country, their wealth reportedly with them, before Khomeini returned. Mihr'angīz Dawlat'shāhī, Ambassador to Denmark in 1356/1978, moved from Copenhagen to Paris. Gūgūsh stayed in Iran for several years, but without performing, and then emigrated to the West. Furūzān gave up acting and stayed in Iran. Īrān Darrūdī, a non-political and non-confrontational surrealist painter, continued her career in Paris and Iran.

In short, an unpredicted regression for Iranian womanhood in several regards has arguably taken place in Iran, which may mean that Farrukh'zād's specific concerns in poems about her society and her role in it may not directly address women's plights in the Iran of the early 1400s/2020s. For example, she faced disapproval, but not torture and prison or possibly stoning, for fornication and adultery. Nevertheless, as the subtitle of a 1390s/2010 collection of essays on Farrukh'zād puts it, for some Iranians and students of modern Persian poetry, she stands as an "Iconic Woman and Feminine Pioneer of New Persian Poetry."²⁷

But, although a concensus of readers of modernist Persian poetry has it that Farrukh'zād holds a prominent and permanent niche in its pantheon, some critics, among them Sāyah Iqtisādī'nīyā, question her status as an "iconic woman" and assumed model for feminist supporters of women's rights. In Iqtisādī'nīyā's view, no doubt exists as to the enduring poetic appeal of many of Farrukh'zād's poems. At the same time, no essential connection obtains between Farrukh'zād's poetry qua poetry and her quasi-mythological status for many Iranian women as a women's right advocate and a model of Iranian womanhood. In the latter arena, Iqtisādī'nīyā affirms that Farrukh'zād was an "āzād" [free, liberated] woman, but rejects the idea that she was "āzādah" [free-spirited, generous, authentic,



free of biases and untoward behavior].

Insofar as Farrukh'zād as a married woman engages in one or more adulterous liaisons, insofar as she divorces her husband and relinquishes her son so that she can pursue her desire to “become a great poet,” insofar as she depends upon men for financial support, even from her ex-husband, insofar as she never achieves financial independence of her own, insofar as she inclines toward some material luxuries, insofar as she travels frequently to Europe, and insofar as she spends the last eight-plus years of her life in a relationship with a married man who has two children, to Iqtisādī'nīyā's thinking, all of that disqualifies Farrukh'zād as a model or icon for Iranian women.²⁸

In response to Iqtisādī'nīyā's critique, one might note that Milani's characterization of Farrukh'zād's career in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, quoted above, relates exclusively both to her daring in publishing her poetry and to the poetry itself, including its formal departures from sacrosanct past poetic practice, its unprecedented and relatively unmasked female speakers, its woman-centered world, and its female tone, all of which contribute to a corpus of first-rate poetic composition. In other words, Farrukh'zād's poetry makes her an inspirational icon and model for women in particular and readers of poetry in general, the poet's life story a circumstantial backdrop and source for non-poetic elements in that poetry.

The following cursory review of Farrukh'zād's life and career may offer readers a preliminary basis for discerning for themselves Farrukh'zād's place as an Iranian social presence and as an enduring Persian poet.

Born on Day 6, 1313/December 27, 1934 in Tehran²⁹ into an upper middle-class family of seven children who lived in the central Amīriyah neighborhood, Furūgh Farrukh'zād spent her early childhood summers in Noshahr on the Caspian Sea, where her father, a military officer, served as supervisor of Pahlavi

²⁸Sāyah Iqtisādī'nīyā, “Chand kalamah darbārah- i Furūgh Farrukh'zād bā fa'ālān-i huqūq-i zānān” [Words about Furūgh Farrukh'zād with women's rights activists], Facebook, March 8, 2018; Sāyah Iqtisādī'nīyā, Furūgh ulgū-yi fimīnīsm-i īrānī ast? na...” [Is Forugh a model of/ for Iranian feminism? no...], Farhang va andīshah... kitāb-i shī'r va adab, <http://www.sarpoosh.com>, June 29, 2019.

²⁹Karāchī, Furūgh Farrukh'zād, provides a useful chronology of Farrukh'zād's life, 5–19, consulted for this Women Poets entry, starting with a corrective of her year of birth, incorrectly cited in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and elsewhere as “1935.”

³⁰Milani begins her *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 1ff, with a multi-page account of second suicide attempt by this “dukhtar-i zībā va javān” [beautiful and young girl], age not given, based mostly on a later account by the son of the two physicians who treated *Furūgh*, who had ingested pills. Milani also reports *Furūgh*'s “marg'andīsh” [(obsessive) thoughts about death] and “iztirāb-i hamīshgīr” [permanent anxiety] in her mid-teens, revealed in letters to her husband-to-be, 3–4.

³¹*Farrukh'zād*, Avvalīn tapīsh'hā-yi 'āshiqānah-'i qalbī, 147; Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 2ff. Milani also observes that reasons for *Farrukh'zād*'s two early suicide attempts remain unknown.

³²*Parkhīdah* and *Ahmad Amīrī*, in conversations with the writer in 1976 in Austin.

³³*Fazl Allāh Nikū'la'ī Āzād*, “Mu'arrif-i...*Farīdūn Kār*—*surūdah'hā va matālib-i adabī*” [Introduction of *Farīdūn Kār*—Songs and literary issues], online at <http://lalazad.blogfa.com>

royal properties. Remembered as a rambunctious child, *Furūgh* attended *Surūsh* elementary school and *Khāvar* high school through the ninth grade and thereafter studied sewing and painting at *Bānuvān* Technical School for almost a year. But she never received a high school diploma. In contrast, her three brothers were sent to Germany for university training, their father presumably thinking his daughters ready for marriage as of their mid-teen years.

Farrukh'zād's father, a verbally abusive martinet who reportedly beat his wife and administered corporal punishment to his children, married a second time when *Furūgh* was fourteen, installing his new wife in a nearby house. In her early teen years, *Farrukh'zād* reportedly became moody and twice attempted suicide.³⁰ In a letter written to her husband-to-be, *Farrukh'zād* also refers to a terrifying event at home that she does not identify, an event about which biographer *Milani* speculates.³¹

As for her husband-to-be, *Parvīz Shāpūr* (1302–1378/1924–1999) was a neighbor and distant relative with whom *Furūgh* fell in love during her sixteenth and whom she insisted on marrying. Despite family objections, they married on *Shahrivar* 23, 1329/September 14, 1950 and moved to *Ahvāz* where *Shāpūr*, a college graduate, had found employment at a Ministry of Finance office. A year later *Farrukh'zād* and *Shāpūr* briefly separated, then reconciled. And their only child, a boy named *Kāmyār*, was born on *Khurdād* 29, 1331/June 19, 1952.

Several *Ahvāzis* have recalled seeing *Furūgh* dressed unconservatively and in short skirts, pushing a baby stroller on the street in *Ahvāz*.³² From these days date *Farrukh'zād*'s first published poems, appearing in *Tehran* magazines, the poet sometimes traveling to *Tehran* to deliver poems personally, encouraged to do so by *Farīdūn Kār* (1308–1382/1929–2003), from whom *Furūgh* sought editorial advice.³³

Her first volume of verse, called *Asīr* [(The) Captive] containing



forty-four poems, composed between the winter of 1332/1953 and the summer of 1334/1955, appeared in late 1334/1955. The volume is the subject of Marta Simidchieva's "Men and Women Together: Love, Marriage and Gender in Forugh Farrukhzād's *Asir*" (2010), in which the author pays "particular attention to poems which divulge" Farrukh'zād's speakers' "sense of self vis-à-vis the significant other in her life: her husband, or her lover."

³⁴Marta Simichieva, "Men and Women Together: Love, Marriage and Gender in Forugh Farrokhzād's *Asir*," in Forugh Farrokhzād: Iconic Woman and Feminine Pioneer of New Persian Poetry, 19–31.

Between ... the extremities of rapture [in "Shab-u havas" (Night and desire)] and dejection [in "Shu'lah-'i ramīdah" (Frightened flame)], lie poems about mundane reality, and the cherished memories and routine despairs of the extramarital love affair ... From the handful of poems in which we see the [speaker] as a wife and mother, only few address her husband directly. More often than not he is just a shadowy presence—her jailor, a haughty man, a selfish creature—whose deeds remain unnamed ... Surprisingly, perhaps, her resolve to break out of the marital cage is forged not by the anticipation of another love, but by the need to preserve her integrity as a poet ... the woman's first open revolt against the limitations imposed on her by marital life erupts not over a love affair, but over the freedom of poetic expression ... gripped by sadness, devastated by the pain that she is inflicting on her son in particular, she nevertheless chooses the road to poetry, described as her friend and lover.³⁴

Asīr's title poem reads:

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
 casting toward you my rueful, astonished look,
 I'm thinking a hand might come
 and I might suddenly spread my wings toward you.
 I'm thinking in a moment of neglect

³⁵Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Asīr" [(The) captive], in *Asīr* [(The) captive] (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1334/1955). Subsequent editions of *Asīr* reportedly did not contain the feminist poems "Surūd-i paykar" [Call to arms] and "Bih khvāharam" [To my sister], which appeared in the first edition.

³⁶Āzar Nafīsī, "Dar panāh-i panjarah: yādī az Furūgh" [In the refuge of a/the window: In memory of Furūgh], *Kilk 3* (1369/1990): 21–28; reprinted in *Kasī kih misl-i hīch kas nīst: darbārah-i Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, compiled by Pūrān Farrukh'zād and edited by Muḥammad Qāsim'zādah (Tehran: Kārvān, 1390/2001), 258.

³⁷A photocopy and transcription of the letter, dated Isfānd 15, 1333/March 6, 1955 appear in Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 473–4.

I might fly from this silent jail,
 laugh in the face of the man who is my jailer,
 and beside you begin life anew.
 I'm thinking these things, yet I know
 I can not, dare not leave this prison.
 Even if the jailer should wish it,
 no breath or breeze remains for flight.

From behind the bars, every bright morning
 the look of a child smiles in my face.
 When I begin a song of joy,
 his lips come toward me with a kiss.
 O sky, if I one day want
 to fly from this silent jail,
 what'll I say to the weeping child's eyes:
 "Forget about me, for I'm a captive bird?"

I'm that candle that illumines a ruins
 with the burning of her heart.
 If I want to choose silent darkness,
 I'll bring a nest to ruin.³⁵

With the assumption later posited by Āzar Nafīsī and other Farrukh'zād experts³⁶ that Farrukh'zād's speakers are mostly "chihrah'hā" [personas] of the poet herself, *Asīr* can intimate that within two years of her son Kāmyār's birth, Farrukh'zād fell out of love with Shāpūr and engaged in one or more adulterous liaisons. Shāpūr had understandably objected to such poems as *Asīr* that presented a wife and mother in love with a man other than her husband. Parenthetically, Farrukh'zād had denied in letters to Shāpūr a romance with her already cited friend and editor Farīdūn Kār, which denies an extant love letter of hers to Kār contradicts.³⁷

After a failed reconciliation and separation from Shāpūr, and ultimately divorce, Farrukh'zād relinquished her son to Shāpūr's family, presumably to pursue fame as a poet and an individu-



alistic life style. As of mid-1334/1955, Farrukh'zād was facing increased stress and opprobrium sparked by rumors about her adulterous relationships and her frank depiction of love desire and relationships in her verse. Particularly upsetting was a multi-part short story by Nāsir Khudāyār,³⁸ a radio personality and editor of Rawshan'fīkr magazine, in which Farrukh'zād had published early poems, including “Gunāh” [(The) sin] (1334/1955), her most controversial poem about romance and love-making. Khudāyār's story, which revealed that he was the lover depicted in “Gunāh” contributed to another Farrukh'zād suicide attempt and nervous breakdown leading to her hospitalization at the Rizā'ī Psychiatric Hospital in Tehran, and psychological therapies, including electroshock therapy. This episode and descriptions of her earlier moodiness, depression, and suicide attempts have led several Farrukh'zād experts to opine that she may have suffered from bipolar disorder.³⁹

The popular moderate modernist poet Nādir Nādir'pūr (1308–1378/1929–2000) recalls visiting her at the Rizā'ī Psychiatric Hospital and falling in love with her during a relationship that lasted six months or so.

Several of his poems depict that relationship, which did not last, in part because, according to Nādir'pūr, Farrukh'zād's outspokenness was too stressful for him.⁴⁰ Farrukh'zād later attacked Nādir'pūr's verse and personality in print.⁴¹ In 1335/1956, a second collection of Farrukh'zād's poems appeared called Dīvār [(The) wall].

Dedicated to her ex-husband, it contained twenty-five poems composed between 1333/1954 and 1335/1956.⁴² First in the volume was “Gunāh” [(The) Sin],⁴³ controversy surrounding it leading to its earlier non-inclusion in Asīr. Still a much discussed poem, “Gunāh” reads:

I sinned a pleasurable sin,
in a warm and fiery embrace.

³⁸Nāsir Khudāyār, “Shi-kūfah'hā-yi kabūd” [Blue blossoms], Rawshan'fīkr, nos. 113–122 (Summer and Fall 1334/1955).

³⁹As of 2015, several Farrukh'zād scholars were suggesting that Farrukh'zād's psychological issues derived from her suffering from bipolar disorder, evidence for which they stated appeared in her poems, as well as in her behavior. Here follows writing on the subject: Sāyah Iqtisādī'nīyā, “Furūgh Farrukh'zād, shakhsīyātī du'qutbī?” [Furūgh Farrukh'zād: A bipolar personality?] Ham shā'ir, ham shi'r: ta'ammulātī dar bāb-i shā'irān-i mu'āsir [Both poet and poem: Reflections about contemporary poets] (Tehran: Markaz, 1394/2015); Sāyah Iqtisādī'nīyā, “Bīmārī-i du'qutbī-i Furūgh; āyā Farzānah Milānī manbā'-i farziyah-'i khvud-rā panhān mī'kunad?” [Furūgh's bipolar disorder; Is Farzaneh Milani hiding the source for her theory?] Rāh'namā-yi Kitāb. www.rahak.com, August 1, 2017; Muhammad Rizā Vā'iz Shahrīstānī, “Naqdī bar ilsāq-i bīmārī-i du'qutbī bih Furūgh Farrukh'zād” [A critique of attributing bipolar disorder to Furūgh Farrukh'zād], Khvābgard, August 1, 2017, online at <http://khabgard.com/1590>. This Women Poets entry does not engage in the discussion of Farrukh'zād and bipolar disorder for two reasons: first, a formalist analysis of her verse does not call bipolar disorder into play; and, second, discussion of the issue may result, as Joanna Russ describes in *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1983) in pollution of agency and false categorization of Farrukh'zād's poetry.

⁴⁰Michael Craig Hillmann, "Nāder Nāderpour and Thirty Years of Persian Poetry," *False Dawn: Persian Poems by Nāder Nāderpour—Literature East & West* 22 (1986): 10–11.

⁴¹E.g., Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Nādir'pūr," *Harf'hā-yi bā Furūgh Farrukh'zād, matn-i asīl va arzān* [Conversations with Furūgh Farrukh'zād, An authentic and inexpensive text] (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Daftār'hā-yi Zamānah, n.d.), 34–35.

⁴²Furūgh Farrukh'zād, *Dīvār [(The) wall]* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1956, 1973/4, 5th printing).

⁴³Farrukh'zād, "Gunāh" [(The) sin], *Dīvār [(The) wall]*, 11–15.

I sinned surrounded by arms
hot and avenging and iron.

In that silent and dark seclusion
I looked into his secretful eyes
My heart impatiently shook in my breast
in response to the request in his needful eyes.

In that silent, dark seclusion
I sat disheveled at his side.
His lips poured passion on mine,
I escaped my crazed heart's sorrow.

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

Desire sparked a flame in his eyes;
the red wine danced in the cup.
My body, in the middle of the soft bed,
drunkenly quivered over his chest.

I sinned a pleasurable sin,
next to a shaking, stupified form.
O God, who knows what I did
in that dark, quiet seclusion.

After her stay at Rizā'ī Psychiatric Hospital, Farrukh'zād found respite from pressures of life in Tehran in a nine-month trip to Europe in 1335–1336/1956–1957, which her ex-husband financed in part, thereafter publishing travel reports in a weekly magazine *Firdawsī*, which reports ended abruptly.⁴⁴

In 1337/1958, Farrukh'zād's third volume of poetry appeared. Called 'Isyān [(The) rebellion], it contained seventeen poems composed in Rome, Munich, and Tehran between 1335/1956



and 1337/1958,⁴⁵ prominent among them “Shi‘rī barāyi tu” [A poem for you], a thirteen-stanza, quatrain sequence poem addressing her then six-year old son and chronicling her separation from him, who was being raised, in accordance with divorce terms, by her ex-husband’s family.

The poem reads in part:

I’m composing this poem for you
on a parched summer dusk
halfway down this road of ominous beginning
in the old grave of this endless sorrow.

This is the final lullaby
at the foot of the cradle where you sleep.
May the wild sounds of my screams
echo in the sky of your youth.

Let the shadow of me the wanderer
be separate and far from your shadow...

That person branded with shame who used to laugh
at foolish taunts was I.
I said I’d be the cry of my own existence,
but oh, alas that I was a “woman.”

When your innocent eyes glance
at this confused beginningless book,
you will see a deep-rooted, lasting rebellion
blooming in the heart of every poem...

I’ve cast away from the shore of good name;
in my heart lies a storm star.
The locus of my anger’s flame,
alas, is the prison’s dark space.

My forehead tight with pain,

⁴⁴Furūgh Farrukh’zād, “Dar diyār-i dīgar, khātirāt-i safar-i Urūpā [In other lands: Memories of traveling to Europe], Firdawsī 9, nos. 303–320 (Shahrivar 1336 to Day 1338/September 1957 to January 1958); reprinted in Farrukh’zād, “Dar diyār-i dīgar” [In other lands], in *Shinākh’t-nāmah-’i Furūgh Farrukh’zād* [Fathoming Furūgh Farrukh’zād], compiled by Shahnāz Murādī Kūchī (Tehran: Qatrah, 1389/2000), 395–431.

⁴⁵Farrukh’zād, *’Isyān* [Rebellion] (7th repr. ed., Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1354/1975).

⁴⁶Farrukh'zād, 'Isyān, 55–60.

⁴⁷Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York, NY: J.B. Lippincott, 1937, Perennial Library Edition 1990), 6.

⁴⁸Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Harf'hā ī bijā-yi muqaddamah" [Comments in lieu of an introduction," *Barguzīdah-ī ash'ār-i Furūgh Farrukh'zād* [Selected Poems of Furūgh Farrukh'zād] (3rd repr. ed., Tehran: Shirkat-i Sahāmi-i Kitāb'hā-yi Jībī, 1352/1973), 6–14. Quoted in *Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak*, 291.

I have rested against a dark door.
I rub my thin, cold fingers
against this door in hope.

Against these ascetic hypocrites
I know the fight is hard.
Sweet child, my city and yours
has long been Satan's nest.

A day will come when your eyes
will quiver with yearning at this painful song;
you will search for me in my words
and tell yourself: My mother, that's who she was.⁴⁶

From her early poem "Ramīdah" [Frightened] (1333/1954) to "Shi'rī barāyi tu" (1336/1957), Farrukh'zād's speakers revealed her commitment to personal, self-revelatory, and frank poetry, expressed her need to love, and lamented her loss of reputation and negative responses to her person and poetry. As for why she persisted in following her desire to compose poetry and live on her own terms, in addition to what lies behind Zora Neale Hurston's observation in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) that "self-revelation [is] the oldest human longing,"⁴⁷ Farrukh'zād had the following to say on the importance she attached to poetry:

Poetry for me is like a friend to whom I can freely unburden my heart ... It's a mate who completes me, satisfies me ... Poetry is a serious business for me. It's a responsibility I feel vis-à-vis my own being. It's a sort of answer I feel compelled to give to my own life ... I don't search for anything in my poems; rather, in my own poems I find myself.⁴⁸

Also from this period date a series of six short stories by Farrukh'zād that also appeared in *Firdawsī* in late 1336/1957 and early 1337/1958.⁴⁹ One critic characterizes the narratives as grounded in loneliness, love passion, separation, and sense of



alienation, each dealing with a sensitive individual, biographically unlike Farrukh'zād, dealing with apprehension and hopelessness, only one of them featuring a so-called happy ending.⁵⁰

Seventy-five of the eighty-six poems in the *Asīr*, *Dīvār*, and *ʿIsyān* volumes were quatrain-sequence poems with abcb end rhyme schemes and regular quantitative metrical patterns. Few of the poems have identifiable Iranian settings or references to identifiable events or issues of the day, most of them presenting a personal speaker communicating personal moods, emotions, moments, and situations, mostly about love and poetry. But negative reader reaction to such content and their personal speakers suggested their concomitant political significance. As Carol Hanisch in “The Personal Is Political” (1969) would later remind readers of women’s poetry,⁵¹ women’s poetry such as Farrukh'zād’s is per se political in its privileging of a non-male centering of the world with a male beloved and a female lover,⁵² its convention-shattering female revelations, and its impression of a non-“poetic,” colloquial register and untraditional informality and relatively unmasked intimacy.

None of Farrukh'zād’s forty-two or so later published poems (1959–1966) would exhibit a quatrain sequence format. Only three of them would exhibit traditional verse forms or verse lines of uniform length or regular metrical patterns or rhyme schemes. In short, some Farrukh'zād experts divide her life and career as a poet into two periods: up to and including *ʿIsyān* and the nine years that followed. Several Farrukh'zād experts refer to the eighty-six published poems in the first period as juvenilia, apparently implying limited poeticity therein.

American formalist critics might disagree. Approaching each early Farrukh'zād poem in vacuo as a *sui generis* composition, their analyses of the three Farrukh'zād poems quoted in translation above might conclude that cited poems live up to their premises and have poetic effects and appeal.

For example, a formalist analysis of the already translated, typ-

⁵⁰Farrukh'zād, “Shikast” [Broken], “Andūh-i fardā” [Tomorrow’s sorrow], “Intihā” [(The end(ing))], “Dūst-i ku-chik-i man” [My little friend], “Bī-tafāvut” [Indifferent], and “Kābūs” [Nightmare], *Firdawsī* 9 (Mihir 1336–Day 1336/ October 1957–January 1958).

⁵¹Carol Hanisch, “The Personal Is Political,” (1969) *Notes from the Second Year: Women’s Liberation*, 1970; “The Personal Is Political,” 2006, online at <http://www.carolhanisch.org>.

⁵²Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 159; Vali-Zadeh, “The Aesthetic of Desire and the Feminine Path of Individuation,” 111 and 116–20.

⁵³The transliteration system employed in this Iranian Women Poets project is an adaptation of the U.S. Library of Congress transliteration table that reflects Perso-Arabic orthography. But, because the LC system is based on Arabic orthography and pronunciation, it fails to reflect Persian pronunciation in Persian texts. The English transcription used here for Persian texts approximates for readers of English the Persian pronunciation of Persian texts, an obviously essential feature in appreciating poetry.

⁵⁴'Alī'jān'zādah, "Naqd-i fumālistī-i shī'r-i Furūgh Farrukh'zād."

ical early Farrukh'zād poem called "Asīr" may reveal poetic effects in its communication to readers of an experience rendered poetic through a sound-sense amalgam fashioned by its poet's wordsmithing. The following English transcription (as opposed to a transliteration)⁵³ of the Persian text, which approximates pronunciation of the Persian, highlights features of the text that contribute to its poeticity.

Underscoring in the transcription identifies sound elements, i.e., alliteration/consonance, assonance, end rhymes, and repetition, incremental repetition, and anaphora. Farrukh'zād, parenthetically, has been called the "queen of repetition" among poets.⁵⁴ Bold script identifies instances of other than neutral subject-object-verb word order that lend emphasis to items not in neutral order. Long (–) and short (u) vowel marks above the opening lines of each quatrain identify the quantitative metrical pattern maintained throughout the poem (/...../ signal instances dieresis [34 instances]). Such sound and rhetorical elements play roles in the poetic effects that the poem has on readers. Parenthetically, in English translations of such poems that do not exhibit parallel features, readers might expect compensating features that achieve the similar effects.

u – – – u – – – u – – 1 • mafā'ilon mafā'ilon fo'ulon

to-rā mikhāham-o dānam / keh hargez / • apostrophe
• dieresis in foot 3 in 21 verses

beh kām-e del / dar āghushat / nagiram / 2 • apostrophe.
• dieresis in feet 1, 2, 3

to'ī ān āsemān-e sāf-o rowshan 3 • apostrophe.
• assonance: ā

man dar konj-e / qafas morghi / asiram / 4 • metaphor
• dieresis in feet 2, 3
feminine abcb rhyme in all stanzas



u - - - u - - - u - -	5 • enjambment
between verses 1 & 2 in stanzas	
zeh posht-e mileh'hā-ye sard-o tireh	• metaphor
negāh-e hasratam hayrān / be-ruyat /	6 • apostrophe
/dar in fekrām / keh dasti pish / . āyad /	7 • metaphor
• dieresis in feet 1, 2, 3	
/ va man nāgah / goshāyam par / be-suyat /	8 • metaphor
• apostrophe • assonance: a	
dieresis in feet 1, 2, 3	
u - - - u - - - u - -	9 • accentual
tetrameter in many verses	
/ dar in fekrām / keh dar yek lahzeh gheflat	• /dar...fek...
dar...yek/ • repetition in 7 & 9	
az in zendān-e khāmush par / begiram /	10 • metaphor
beh cheshm-e mard-e zendānbān / bekhādam /	11 • metaphor
• /m...m...n...n...n...n...m/	
kenārat zendegi az / sar begiram /	12 • apostrophe
u - - - u - - - u - -	13 • dieresis in
feet 1, 2, 3	
/ dar in fekrām / man-o dānam / keh hargez /	• repetition
in 7, 9, 13	
ma-rā yārā-yeh raftan z-in / qafas nist /	14 • metaphor
agar ham mard-e zendānbān / bekhāhad /	15 • metaphor
degar az bahr-e parvāzam / nafas nist /	16 • metaphor.

• 22 /a/ sounds in verses 13-16

- u - - - u - - - u - - - 17 • ze posht-e
mileh'hā har sobh-e rowshan • metaphor
- negāh-e kudaki khandad / be-ruyam _ 18 • emphasis
through SVO
- cho man sar mikonam āvāz-e shādi 19 • a...a...a...
ā...ā...ā • emphasis: SVO
- labash beh buseh miyāyad / be-suyam / 20 • alliteration/
consonance: /b/ • SVO
- u - - - u - - - u - - - 21 • agar ay
āsemān khāham / keh yek ruz / • apostrophe
- az in zendān-e khāmosh par / begiram / 22 • metaphor
- beh chashm-e kudak-e geryān / cheh guyam / 23 • geryān...
guyam
- / ze man bogzar / keh man morghi / asiram / 24 • metaphor
• dieresis in feet 1, 2, 3. • allit: m
- u - - - u - - - u - - - 25 • dieresis in
feet 1, 2, 3
- / man ān sham'am / keh bā shur-e / del-e khish / • metaphor
- foruzān mikonam virāneh'i-rā 26 • emphasis
achieved by SVO order
- / agar khāham / keh khāmushi / gozinam / 27 • dieresis in
feet 1, 2, 3 (34 in the poem)
- parishān mikonam kāshāneh'i-rā 28 • extended
metaphor
- parallel structure: 26 & 28



- emphasis achieved by SVO order

The images of “sky,” “cage,” and “captive bird” in the opening stanza of Farrukh’zād’s “Asīr” immediately call to mind for readers of world poetry the poems “Sympathy” (1899) by Lawrence Paul Dunbar (1872–1906) and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” (1983) by Maya Angelou (1928–2014).

Dunbar’s “Sympathy” reads in part:

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!...

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,...
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart’s deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

Dunbar’s speaker does not reveal how he knows what “the caged bird feels” and “why the caged bird sings” in his description of the physical world that free birds experience. Decades, Angelou’s poem called “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” appeared, its title echoing a line in Dunbar’s poem. “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” reads in part:

A free bird leaps / on the back of the wind
and floats downstream / till the current ends
and dips his wing / in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky...
The caged bird sings / with a fearful trill

of things unknown / but longed for still
and his tune is heard / on the distant hill
for the caged bird / sings of freedom...

Angelou's caged bird sings a sad song in its longing for freedom through realization of the carefree, soaring, free bird's life. The caged bird's gender is unspecified in both Dunbar's poem and Angelou's poem. Nor is a specific setting for the two poems identified. Of course, readers familiar with American history and poetry will know that Dunbar and Angelou are African American writers, the latter most famous for her autobiography also called *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), which identifies the African American struggle to escape slavery, second-class status after emancipation, and racial discrimination in America down to the present time.

In Farrukh'zād's "Asīr," the speaker addresses a much desired "you," called a "clear and bright sky" (ll. 1-2), casts the latter a "rueful look of astonishment" (l. 6), and thinks that "I might suddenly spread my wings in your direction" (l. 8) "and beside you begin life anew" (l. 12).

In contrast with Dunbar and Angelou, Farrukh'zād's speaker describes both the state of her heart and the specific circumstances that have her feeling caged. She presents a suggestive analogy for the state of her heart, i.e., the object of her desire is for her as a sky is to a caged bird. A not unsophisticated notion, it imaginatively communicates feelings to readers by means of images and an extended metaphor. In short, she shows what she feels rather than tells it. In addition, the speaker adds a complicating, potentially moral, dilemma. The man in her life and home is an enemy not because he's cruel or malicious, but merely because he's there, his presence to her like that of a jailor. In addition, there's a child who will suffer loss and sadness should the speaker, presumably the child's mother, choose flight and thus "bring a nest to ruin." At the same time, she feels complicating self-doubt: "I can not, dare not leave this prison... / no breath or



breeze remains for my flight.”

Now, flight in Farrukh'zād's poem does not relate to the freedom to compose poetry, but rather to freely follow dictates of her heart, doing so not without costs

In short, a formalist critic might well conclude that Farrukh'zād's "Asīr," hardly a piece of juvenalia, hits as many poetic notes as Dunbar's "Sympathy" and Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and, unlike those two poems, achieves its full effects without readers having to bear in mind anything external to the text or not implied in the text. And then there is its amalgam of sound-sense, formal features: alliteration/consonance, assonance, repetition, anaphora, apostrophe, emphasis achieved through departures from neutral SOV, its wholly regular quantitative metrical pattern exhibiting a score of instances of dieresis, a concomitant accentual, mostly tetrametric pattern, enjambment in between the first verses in all stanzas, a feminine, abab etc., end rhyme scheme, instances of parallel structure, imagery, metaphor and extended metaphor, and analogy. All of this contributes to heightening of effects of statements that consequently appeal more to the imagination than to the understanding and communicate experience more than information.⁵⁵

If readers add to these notes Mihrī Bihfar's already cited observations, they might conclude that had Farrukh'zād written no poems after "Shi' rī barāyi tu", she would arguably still occupy a more prominent niche in the pantheon of Persian poetry than any female predecessor or contemporary poetess and remain as frequently and substantially anthologized as such moderate modernist male poets as Firaydūn Tavallālī (1298–1364/1917–1985) and Firaydūn Mushirī (1305–1379/1926–2000).

In any case, in mid-1347/1958 Farrukh'zād, who had reportedly just ended a year-long romantic relationship that almost culminated in marriage,⁵⁶ found employment at Gulistān Film, a studio specializing in documentary films. Its founder and director,

⁵⁵These features and observations echo the first chapter called "What Is Poetry?" in Thomas R. Arp's Perrine's *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999, 9th edition), 3–19.

⁵⁶Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 159.

⁵⁷Ibid. Two translations of the novel, one by Gulistān and the other by Paul Sprachman, were unavailable to the author. The same holds for the reported dispute over their publication.

Ibrāhīm Gulistān (b. 1922) was a college dropout and Tudeh Communist Party member from a well-heeled Shiraz family who started out as a reporter, translator, photographer, and short story writer, and then, from 1338/1949 to the mid-1330s/1950s an Oil Company and Oil Consortium employee.

In 1942, Gulistān married his first cousin Fakhṛī (1321–1391/1922–2012) with whom he had two children, Līlī (b. 1323/1944) and Kāvah (1329–1382/1950–2003), who were fourteen and eight years old, respectively, when Farrukh'zād and Gulistān met. Successful in producing a series of documentary films mostly for the Pahlavi government, Farrukh'zād involved in several of them, Gulistān produced and directed two commercially unsuccessful feature films, *Khisht va āyīnah* [Sundried brick and mirror (1343/1964) and *Asrār-i ganj darrah-'i jinnī* [Secrets of the treasure in the haunted valley] (1353/1974). Gulistān also wrote a novel with the same title after penning the screenplay.⁵⁷

In a matter of months, Farrukh'zād and Gulistān fell in love and became a couple, as well as a controversial item in the close-knit Tehran art and literary circles owing to her reputation and his marital and parental status. Their scandalous relationship presumably added to the stress that Farrukh'zād's life had involved since childhood and the increased opprobrium that she faced in some quarters insofar as she would spend the last eight+ years of her life as “the other woman,” dealing with her outspoken and egocentric paramour's enemies as well as her own.

In late 1337/1958 or early 1338/1959, Farrukh'zād published a 97-line poem called “Ān rūz'hā” [Those days], which begins:

Those days have gone
those good days
those healthy full days

and proceeds nostalgically to describe childhood and adoles-



cent days, not paralleling the poet's biographical record, and concludes with:

Those days have gone and that girl who colored her cheeks with geranium petals, O,
is now a lonely woman is now a lonely woman.⁵⁸

Farrukh'zād's speaker a year later in "Vahm-i sabz" (Green delusion) (Isfand 1340/March 1962) expresses regret at not having chosen a homemaker's life and motherhood.⁵⁹ In contrast, her speaker in "Fath-i bāgh" (Conquest of the garden) (Summer 1341/1962) boldly revels in her life lived beyond societal strictures, but in tune with laws of nature.⁶⁰

In "Arūsak-i kūkī" [(The) wind-up doll] (196?), an impersonal speaker describes a handful of ways in which Iranian women can avoid embracing independent personhood and individuality, the title image first appearing at the end of the poem, after the poet presents concrete, specific evidence for the title's characterization of some stereotypical sorts of Iranian women,⁶¹ among them unthinking devotees of traditional 12er Shi'ite Islam and submissive wives.

In "Ay marz-i pur'gawhar" [O jewel-studded land] (196?), Farrukh'zād uses her own Identity Card details in satirizing the Iranian 1960s, including characterizing its poets as "searching trash cans for rhymes," for its "gharb'zadah" [Weststricken] superficiality and materialism. The poem concludes with its fictional "Furūgh Farrukh'zād," so affected by her jewel-studded land, that she intends to throw herself off a skyscraper with hopes of eulogization by a versifier famous for his extemporaneous tributes on specific occasions.⁶²

In real life, Farrukh'zād had entered an exciting period: productivity as a modernist poet with as distinctive a voice as leading modernist poets Nīmā Yūshīj (1276–1338/1897–1960) and Mīhdī Akhavān Sālis (1306–1369/1928–1990) and grow-

⁵⁸Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Ān rūz'hā" [Those days], in *Tavalludī dīgar*, 9–16.

⁵⁹Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Vahm-i sabz" [Green delusion], in *Tavalludī dīgar*, 117–22.

⁶⁰Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Fath-i bāgh" [Conquest of the garden], in *Tavalludī dīgar*, 125–9.

⁶¹Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Arūsak-i kūkī" [(The) wind-up doll], in *Tavalludī dīgar*, 71–75.

⁶²Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Ay marz-i pur'gawhar" [O jewel-studded land], in *Tavalludī dīgar*, 148–57.

⁶³Farrukh'zād, *Khānah siyāh ast* [The House Is Black] (1341/1962), available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch>; discussed in Hamid Dabashi, *Masters and Masterpieces of Iranian Cinema* (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 2007), 39–70.

⁶⁴Gulistān, as quoted by Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 207–8. Parts of Milani's interviews with Gulistān appear in her biography, 183–212.

⁶⁵Furūgh Farrukh'zād, "Gul-i surkh" [Red rose], in *Tavalludī dīgar*, 130–31.

ing recognition as such, acting in Parī Sābirī's stage production of Pirandello's *Shish shakhsīyat dar justujū-yi nivīsandah* [Six characters in search of an author] (1342/1963) and in Gulistān's film called *Daryā* [Sea] (1341/1962), which never got completed, developing film-making and editing skills, directing a much lauded, 22-minute documentary film on life at a Tabriz leprosarium called *Khānah siyāh ast* (The House Is Black) (1341/1962), and living with the love of her life.⁶³

In late 1338/1959 or early 1339/1960, according to Gulistān, Farrukh'zād became pregnant,⁶⁴ which event readers assume lies beyond her exuberant short poem called "Gul-i surkh" [Red rose], which reads:

"Red Rose"

Red
red
red rose.

He took me to a rose garden
and in the darkness placed a rose in my disheveled hair
and finally
slept with me on rose petals

O paralyzed doves,
o inexperienced sterile trees, o blind windows,
beneath my heart and in my inner loins
a rose is growing
a rose
red
like a flag
at resurrection

O, I am pregnant, pregnant, pregnant⁶⁵

Also according to Gulistān, Farrukh'zād terminated the pregnancy because she was busy on projects with which a child



would interfere.⁶⁶ Gulistān notes that, after all, she was later unable to raise Husayn Mansūrī, the child of lepers whom she adopted in 1341/1962. Gulistān adds that he played no role in Farrukh'zād's abortion decision because he feared that she would blame him, whatever decision was taken, if things did not work out in a joint decision.⁶⁷

The post-'Isyān [Rebellion] period also saw physical and psychological ups and downs for Farrukh'zād. Gulistān asserts that she underwent rhinoplasty, used heroin, suffered from depression, and attempted suicide on multiple occasions,⁶⁸ once in late 1341/1962, after *The House Is Black* had premiered and after she began occupying the house that he built or bought for her. Late one day, Gulistān says that he came to the house and found her almost unconscious, an empty bottle of sleeping pills next to her. He rushed her to the home of Parī Sābirī (b. 1932), whose physician husband successfully treated her.⁶⁹

As for the relationship between Gulistān and Farrukh'zād in the the early 1340s/1960s, readers assume that Gulistān is the beloved/lover described or addressed in “Āshiqānah” [Lovingly] (1338/1959), “Ma‘shūq-i man” [My beloved/lover], “Fath-i bāgh” [Conquest of the garden] (1341/1962), “Gul-i surkh” [Red rose], and “Tavalludī dīgar” [Another birth] (1342/1963). Farrukh'zād's most famous later poem. In a translation by Karīm Imāmī with the collaboration of the poet, first published in a Tehran daily newspaper, “Tavalludī dīgar” reads in part:

My whole being is a dark chant
 that perpetuating you
 will carry you to the dawn
 of eternal growths and blossomings
 in this chant I sighed you, sighed
 in this chant
 I grafted you to the tree, to the water, to the fire...
 Life is perhaps lighting up a cigarette
 in the narcotic repose between two love makings

⁶⁶Gulistān, as quoted by Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 207–8.

⁶⁷Gulistān, as quoted by Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 207–8.

⁶⁸Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 193 and 208; reported in Tabīb'zādah, “Furūgh Farrukh'zād,” 35.

⁶⁹Gulistān, as quoted by Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 205–7.

⁷⁰Farrukh'zād, "Tavalludī dīgar" [Another birth], *Another Birth*, 164–169; Furūgh Farrukh'zād and Karīm Emāmī, "The Poet's Reading of 'Another Birth'," *Forugh Farrokhzād A Quarter-Century Later*, edited by Michael Craig Hillmann. *Literature East & West* 24 (1988), 73–77.

or the absent gaze of a passerby
who takes off his hat to another passerby
with a meaningless smile and a good morning.
Life is perhaps that enclosed moment
when my gaze destroys itself in the pupil of your eyes and it is
in the feeling
that I will put into the Moon's perception
and the Night's impression.

In a room as big as loneliness
my heart
which is as big as love
looks at the simple pretexts of its happiness at the beautiful decay
of flowers in the vase
at the saplings you planted in our garden and the song of canaries
that sing to the size of a window...

there is an alley where the boys who were in love with me
still loiter with the same unkempt hair, thin necks and bony legs
and think of the innocent smiles of a little girl
who was blown away by the wind one night

There is an alley
Which my heart has stolen from the streets of my childhood.
The journey of a form along the line of time
and inseminating the line of time with the form a form conscious
of an image
returning from a feast in the mirror.

And it is in this way
that someone dies
and someone lives on.
No fisherman shall ever find a pearl
in a small brook that empties into a pool....⁷⁰



"Tavalludī dīgar" was the title poem of Farrukh'zād's fourth

collection of 35 poems composed between 1338/1959 and 1342/1963, the volume itself dedicated to «.گ.» [E.G.].⁷¹ That title and new forms its contents exhibit have led some readers to suppose that the titles of the four collections of Farrukhzād's poems published in her lifetime suggest four stages in her personal development from a situation in which she felt hemmed in and constrained (Asīr) to a focus on what made her feel imprisoned (Dīvār) to her response to her circumstances (Isyān) and, finally, to a sense of being born anew as a person and as a poet (Tavalludī dīgar).

That rebirth seems reflected in Farrukh'zād's later poems in which content and mood appear to influence form more than in earlier quatrain sequence poems, which makes them as modernist in form as almost all of her poems are in terms of content, with their unprecedented candor and outspokenness on the part of an Iranian woman speaker. In addition to later poems of a personal and apparently autobiographical speaker's reflections on life, past and present, with speculation about the future, Farrukhzād also exhibits broader interests and vision in a series of poems depicting Iranian society and culture.

Between mid-1344/1965 and early 1346/1967, Farrukh'zād published a handful of poems that posthumously appeared in her fifth and final collection of verse, *Īmān bīyāvārīm bih āghāz-i fasl-i sard* (Let us believe in the beginning of the cold season) (1353/1974). The first of them, the title poem, begins:

And this is I
 a woman alone
 at the threshold of a cold season
 at the beginning of understanding
 the polluted existence of the earth
 and the simple and sad pessimism of the earth.⁷²

The first two lines echo the concluding lines of "*Ān rūz/hā*," the already cited first poem in *Tavalludī dīgar*, her epoch-making,

⁷¹Farrukh'zād, "Tavalludī dīgar" [Another birth], *Another Birth*, 164–169; Furūgh Farrukhzād and Karīm Emāmi, "The Poet's Reading of 'Another Birth'," *Furugh Farrokhzād A Quarter-Century Later*, edited by Michael Craig Hillmann. *Literature East & West* 24 (1988), 73–77.

⁷²Furūgh Farrukh'zād, *Īmān bīyāvārīm bih āghāz-i fasl-i sard* [Let us believe in the beginning of the cold season] (Tehran: Murvārīd, 1353/1974), 9 and 11.

⁷³Jalāl Khusraw'shāhī, quoted in Saffāriyān, *Āyah'hā-yi āh*, 168.

⁷⁴Hūshang Gulshīrī, quoted in Saffāriyān, *Āyah'hā-yi āh*, 249.

fourth collection.

In his already cited *Āyah'hā-yi āh* [Signs of sighing], Saffāriyān asks a Farrukh'zād friend: "How much attention to her personality focuses on the sorrow and sadness and the heavy shadow of loneliness that is apparent in her writings?" That friend, writer and translator Jalāl Khusraw'shāhī, responds:

Furūgh was always alone. In a group she was likewise alone. Occasionally when she was with friends, she would open up (sufrah-'i dilash bāz mī'kard) and did not feel lonely. She occasionally would come to our house and when I got home I'd see her seated with my mother talking with her for several hours ... One day when I got home, I saw her there. She picked up mirror and was looking at it. And she cried and cried. She said nothing about the reason for her tears. When she wrote [in "Green delusion"] "All day I cried in the mirror," that isn't an imaginative romantic poetic statement. That was the way she was. Furūgh had an inner sadness. And that sadness of hers was that very loneliness of hers.⁷³

In response to a Saffāriyān question about whether Farrukh'zād mingled [mī'jūshīd] with others or was gūshah'nishīn, prominent fiction writer and critic Hūshang Gulshīrī (1316–1379/1938–2000) recalls:

When she was feeling good, once a week everyone got together at her place, recited poetry, talked, and discussed/argued (bahs), and sometimes people would bring food and drink. But when she didn't feel good, she shut her door to everyone and didn't let anyone in (dar-rā bih rū-yi hamah mī'bast va kasī rā rāh nimī'dād).⁷⁴

Images of death abound in "Īmān biyāvārīm bih āghāz-i fasl-i sard," which fact serves as further evidence for those critics who think that obsessive thoughts of death [marg'andīshī] figure significantly in Farrukh'zād's life and poetry from the be-



ginning of her career.

In “Panjarah” [(The) window] (1344/1965), the title image appearing forty+ times in Farrukh’zād’s poetry,⁷⁵ the speaker reviews her life and expresses satisfaction at having a window and having a connection with the sun.⁷⁶ Meanwhile the poet, outside of her poems, had this to say about windows and poetry:

Poetry for me is like a window which whenever I go toward it, it automatically opens. I sit down there, I look, I sing, I scream, I cry, I merge with the image of the trees, and I know that on the other side of the window there is a space and someone hears, someone who may exist 200 years from now or who may have existed 300 years ago—it doesn’t matter—it’s a means of connecting and communicating with existence, with being in its broad sense.⁷⁷

In “Dilam barāyi bāghchah mī’sūzād” [I feel sorry for the garden] (1343/1964), a personal speaker, whose circumstances and whose family members do not resemble Farrukh’zād’s, describes the attitudes of her father, mother, sister, brother, and herself toward their family home’s neglected, untended garden, that garden ultimately striking some readers as symbolizing Iranian culture under threat in the mid-1340s/1960s from stereotypical past-oriented, religious, Marxist, and consumerist, “gharb’zadah” [west-stricken] outlooks on the part of many educated urban Iranians.⁷⁸

In “Kasī kih misl-i hīch kas nīst” [Someone who is not like anyone] (1345/1966), a pre-teen, lower class Tehran girl dreams down-to-earth features of a day when a savior will bring people like her their fair share of a good life, Farrukh’zād poetically suggesting the unlikelihood of such a day by having such a girl do the dreaming and not an adult speaker like the poet. Child-like repetitions, catalogues, wishful thinking, and concrete, specific details oblige readers to learn, appreciate, and experience the speaker’s mid-1340s/1960s Tehran world and context.⁷⁹

⁷⁵Karāchī and Tūsī, *Farhang-i vāzhah’namā-yi Furūgh Farrukh’zād*.

⁷⁶Farrukh’zād, “Panjarah” [(The) window], in *Īmān bīyāvarīm bih āghāz-i fasl-i sard*, 39–47.

⁷⁷Farrukh’zād, Interview with Mahmūd Āzād (Summer 1343/1964), *Harf’hā-yī bā Furūgh Farrukh’zād: Chahār guft va shunūd* [Words with Furūgh Farrukh’zād: Four interviews (Tehran: Murvārīd, 1355/1976), 38.

⁷⁸Farrukh’zād, “Dilam barāyi bāghchah mīsūzād” [I feel sorry for the garden], in *Īmān bīyāvarīm bih āghāz-i fasl-i sard*, 49–60.

⁷⁹Farrukh'zād, "Kaṣī kih misl-i hīch kas nīst" [Someone who is not like anyone] (1345/1966), in *Imān biyāvarīm bih āghāz-i faṣl-i sard*, 9–37.

⁸⁰Farrukh'zād, "Pānzdah nāmāh bih Ibrahīm Gulistān" [Fifteen letters to Ibrahīm Gulistān], in Milani, *Furūgh Farrukh'zād*, 265–406.

⁸¹Farrukh'zād, "Pānzdah nāmāh bih Ibrahīm Gulistān," 359.

⁸²E.g., *Sadr al-Dīn Ilāhrī and Sādiq Chūbak*, as quoted and discussed by Michael Craig Hillmann, *A Lonely Woman: Forugh Farrokhzad and Her Poetry* (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press and Mage Publishers, 1987), 63–65.

On a trip in mid-1345/1966 to Italy, Germany, and England, chiefly to attend a film festival at Pesaro where her *The House Is Black* was to be screened, Farrukh'zād penned numerous letters to Gulistān, fifteen of which appear in Milani's biography.⁸⁰ The letters reveal, above anything else, the intensity of her love for Gulistān, almost all of them full of repeated terms of endearment and professions of love, along with her description of her emotional difficulty in coping with separation from him. In several letters, she describes how much she misses their nakedness at home and their sexual intimacy. In one letter, she writes: "On the whole planet earth there is only one person whom I love, and that person is you."⁸¹ Farrukh'zād's son Kāmyār was fourteen years of age at this point.

Parenthetically, much ink has been spilled on the supposition that Gulistān's influence figures significantly in the evolution of Farrukh'zād's verse.⁸² The facts speak to reciprocity in their relationship, he as in love with her as she with him, and he also achieving high points in his career as a short story writer and film maker during their years together.

Farrukh'zād's letters also speak to her serious interest and growing expertise in feature films of the day. In one letter, Farrukh'zād states her desire to do things: direct a feature film and write a poem that would enduringly memorialize her love for Gulistān. Of course, she had already explicitly accomplished the latter goal in "Tavalludī dīgar," which weaves her devotion to love of a "you," who readers assume is Gulistān, and poetry into a fabric that offers poetic experiences of both strands.

In another letter, Farrukh'zād describes the Pesaro Film Festival in detail, including these comments:

I'm very dissatisfied with the upshot of the film festival ... They screened my film on the festival's last night ... A Dutch film ... that was very straightforward and mediocre was selected as the



festival's most important short film, which isn't important ... It doesn't matter that my film wasn't chosen as the best short film, insofar as I received more plaudits from attendees than anyone else.⁸³

⁸³Farrukh'zād, "Pānzdah nāmah bih Ibrahīm Gulistān," 315–21.

⁸⁴Farrukh'zād, "Pānzdah nāmah bih Ibrahīm Gulistān," 297.

And, elsewhere, Farrukh'zād voices another complaint in these words:

I wish that I had been born some place other than Iran, a place near the center of motion and movements [harikat and junbish'hā]. But, alas, that I have to waste all of my life and all of my capabilities/skills [tavānā'ī'hā-yam] because of a love for Iran's good earth [khāk] and attachment to memories in a desolate, out-of-the-way place that is full of death and abasement and uselessness [hiqārat va bīhudagī].⁸⁴

Farrukh'zād's last published poem, "Tanhā sidāst kih mī'mānad" [It is only sound/voice that remains] (Āzar 1345/December 1966), reads in part:

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.
...And day is a vastness
that doesn't fit into narrow minds of newspaper worms.

...why should I stop?
Cooperation of lead letters is futile,
and cannot rescue miserable thoughts.

I am a descendant of trees.
Breathing stale air depresses me.
...The ultimate extent of all powers is union,
joining with the bright principle of the sun
and flowing into the consciousness of light.

⁸⁵Farrukh'zād, "Tanhā sidāst kih mī'mānad" [It is only sound that remains," in *Imān bīyāvārim bih āghāz-i fasl-i sard*, 74–81.

⁸⁶Jazmin Darznik, *Song of a Captive Bird: A Novel* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2018). In contrast to Darznik's romanticized depiction of Farrukh'zād (a novelist's prerogative in fictionalizing a life story), Maryam Ja'fari's *Shahr'āshūb: Furūgh Farrukh'zād bih ravāyat-i rumān* [City-disrupter: Furūgh Farrukh'zād in the guise of a novel] (Tehran: Shādān, 1395/2016) presents an unidealized Farrukh'zād protagonist, equally fictionalized in its dialogue featuring specific words coming out of Farrukh'zād's mouth (again a novelist's prerogative).

...Sound, sound, only sound,
the sound of the limpid wish of water to flow,
the sound of the falling of starlight
on the layer 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.

...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.⁸⁵

Farrukh'zād's death in a freak automobile accident on Bahman 24, 1345/February 13, 1967 and her funeral have continued to attract attention in writing about her, who strikes some readers as both an heroic woman tragically taken before her time from an antagonistic, male-dominated, patriarchal and sometimes misogynist world and an inspiration to generations of Iranian women who have followed her.

For example, Jasmin Darznik's *Song of a Captive Bird: A Novel* (2018) features a romanticized fictional Farrukh'zād as its narrator and protagonist who survives everything, including death.⁸⁶ Biographer Milani also finds Farrukh'zād victorious over death, despite the facts that it deprived her of further living with the love of her life and enjoying pleasures of middle and old age, of further growth and achievements in poetry, acting, perhaps painting and film-making, specifically both making that feature film and writing that immortal love poem she talked about less than a year before her death.

Farrukh'zād's thirteen-year poetic career from late 1332/1953 to late 1345/1966 was part and parcel of arguably almost as creative a literary period in a single city as any ever. And she was center-stage and headed for further heights. But this hero,



model, and icon for many readers was an ultimately unfulfilled woman who had attempted suicide at least twice in her early teens, who dropped out of high school, who insisted on marrying in her sixteenth year, who became a mother less than two years later, who then engaged in one or more adulterous relationships that led to divorce at twenty, who had bouts of anxiety and depression occasionally thereafter, including a stay at a psychiatric clinic, who smoked, drank sometimes to excess, and used heroine who had an eight-year, open relationship with a married man with children from the age of twenty-four in mid-1337/1958 to the end of her life, during which period she again attempted suicide at least twice, and whose later poems feature speakers who talk about death, loneliness, and dissatisfaction with society.

⁸⁷A.C. Bradley, "Poetry for Poetry's Sake" (1901), online at Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org>.

In "Tanhā sidāst kih mī'mānad" and other cited later poems, as was the case with the cited earlier poems "Asīr," "Gunāh," "Shi' rī barāyi tu," and "The Couple" anaphora and incremental repetition, alliteration/consonance and assonance, scannable rhythm, parallel structure, instances of expectation-fulfillment, figures of speech, A.C. Bradley's notion of suggestion or suggestiveness as a poetic quality,⁸⁷ and other aural and formal features figure significantly, all of them arguably pleasing to the ear and imagination and contributing both to the poetic transfer of experience(s) from poet to reader and to aesthetic pleasure of the poetic sort.

Formalist analyses of a score or more Farrukh'zād's poems would further define and highlight both the appeal of her poetic art and her status as an enduring Persian poet. At the same time, the self-revelatory and autobiographical core to many of her poems and still undelineated or unresolved issues and moments in her life call for further biographical inquiry for its own sake and as a backdrop for richer appreciation of her poetry. Her life and poetry together also deserve continued attention in the context both of the Iranian age in which she lived and of her participation in Iranianness. Finally, Furūgh Farrukh'zād's career in the

context of world poetry and women around the world and her place in the pantheon of world poetry warrant examination.

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