

## NEDA ABKARI / Koocheyee Shahreza

Tara's hair is curly  
long  
in the vein of  
It happened in a day; not even a day  
It happened in the night; not even in the news  
And I face it in the morning.  
Lonsdale.  
I can find every little Iranian trait there.  
Lonsdale Street reminds me of  
"Koocheyee Shahreza"  
I can't remember what we called that street after the revolution  
Revolution destroyed my memories  
Cracked my dreams  
I can find everything in this rain  
But not  
Those street traders  
Those Labou venders  
eating Hot Red Beets in snow  
The cheapest sweet

Ava's hair is straight  
long  
Immediate into the tale  
It happened in a day; not even a day  
It happened in the night; not even in the news  
And I had to face it the next morning  
Duthie's  
I can find rare books there  
But not books in Farsi

there was just one bookstore in Tehran  
Where I could find elegant books  
like Madame Bovary  
Overpriced, of course.  
I cannot pronounce well. I cannot say “TH”  
To me “The” is just a simple “Dah”  
In Duthie’s  
I picked *Seniors*  
I open it and ask Paul what is the meaning of “jacking off”?  
he was shy  
Paul was shy but the stranger behind us says “masturbating”  
Refugee, Immigrant, Citizen  
This is all a process  
Exactly like BA, MA, and PhD  
I am a citizen  
I pronounce “3,” “Tree.”  
was early in the morning  
Just a simple morning  
is always something about the early morning’s call  
it’s something about them  
frightened, beating heart and news I knew.  
He is not here anymore and is not yet even 1994.  
Zalzadeh was killed  
At his house  
In the middle of the night  
My publisher is killed.  
WHY, WHY, WHY!  
These stupid WHYS, we know them evidently

My hair was long  
in the vein of the morning  
It happened in a day; not even a day

It happened in the night; not even in the news  
I did not want to face it.  
I did not cover my head.  
I did not cover my hands.  
I did not cover my legs.  
I was 10, just 10  
not even 10  
I was stoned in the morning  
with my red bike.  
I pedaled fast, faster, too fast  
I could not see anything  
I had got home.  
I was in the middle of the tree  
I wish that I was a tree.  
Trees never changed after revolution.  
my girls are loud  
We drive  
I put them in my lap and I let them drive in the cul-de-sac  
they laugh and scream  
My mother says:  
“Nazar har cari mighan bokonan  
Bachee bayad harchy motharesh migeer goosh bedeh.”  
We have reasoning  
And rules which are negotiable  
before setting them up  
Tara says:  
“Don’t see what I am doing  
Tell yourself not to see me.”  
she cannot speak Farsi  
It makes me sad sometimes  
but all these are just kind talk  
And we all don’t know what we are talking about

1987

they catch me in the street

Islamic Brothers

He wants to throw me into the van

They are four

Pull my hands

“Take your hands off of me”

He says, “Get into van

Or I put you in there.”

I say, “You need to have special gloves to be able to touch me, as God says.”

And I run

Fast, fast, too fast

I fall down stairs.

Stairs never changed after revolution.

Beautiful Vancouver in summer

I go to Kitsilano beach

To run

Run just for run

Seagulls are chasing me,

And I run fast.

With seagulls, wind, and my hair all over.

We do not have an “-ing” suffix in Farsi

Ava says:

“Start bebefing my hair now.”

I twist her hair with the morning.

We all get into the car,

Turn on the crazy song,

I rock the car.

Music was prohibited

I take 15 lashes with the whip

Instead of 50.

Lucky me.

My father pays.  
Beautiful totems at the airport  
Stairs  
Lines and immigration  
Nationality?  
Passport  
How many luggages?  
“Quelle a votre raison de venire au canada  
Quesque vous apportez avec vous?”  
“Je suis Iranienne.”  
Mon passport  
J'ai une valiz  
Et un petit tapis  
Je vien voir mon frère  
S'il vous plait Monsieu  
Laiser moi laiser moi passer.  
D'accord allez-y.  
Merci, merci beaucoup.  
Et je pars.  
Georgia Street.  
My friend says this is the most important street in Vancouver.  
Me with my luggage on Georgia Street.  
My brother is up north still walking and planting trees.  
Summer with my long hair  
It happened in a day; not even in a day.  
It happened in the night; not even in the news.  
His picture was on the first page of the news paper  
With the other 50  
(mofsedeh fel arz)  
Uncle Minister Executed  
I grab it from the front of the door  
I fold it and hide it in my bag

I hold in my tears and I walk into the house  
Everybody knew it  
My mother blends with the couch  
Father cries  
I take the newspaper out of my bag and throw it on the morning  
Run into the yard and swing on the bottom branch of the berry tree.  
Do I have a heart?  
Do I still have a heart?  
Windows are broken  
Walls are broken  
War and eighties  
Tehran is empty  
I take my poems with me  
My brother  
Takes his stamps  
When the bombs come I want to stand beside his innocence  
thank God for sparing his virtue  
But the cats live their regular lives throughout  
Cats never change after revolution  
Istanbul  
seeing my brother  
After years with no permission to leave the country  
We go out for breakfast  
The first beer that I had  
16  
“You had to have it all.”  
I won't help  
I had it all  
Fainting on the morning  
They knocked on the door  
Look for him  
To take him to the war

My mother says:  
“I can not resist this anymore.”  
we pushed him out the back door into the hands of a dealer  
he walked through the war.  
The fog is very thick here.  
I stopped the car, leave the lights on.  
And I show Ava and Tara their shadows in the fog  
And then we drive through the trees  
Mistake  
Roads  
Marriage goes wrong  
Hong Kong  
SARS  
Iraq says  
The Chinese women are much prettier with the mask  
I say Chinese men too  
Lan-Kwai-fong  
Bars and wine  
I sketch women at the Bars  
I go home walk down the stairs  
Morning  
I step on the news  
Turn the key quietly  
He sits on the bed  
“Where have you been?”  
At the bar  
we are not talking anymore  
He is watching TV  
I take the girls to the beach  
Ava wakes me up  
Night is wet

Moon is wet  
Everywhere is wet  
I changed her  
I change the night  
Affair an affair  
How is it going to be to have an affair  
I go to Bangkok  
River  
River was all over  
I am lost in the river  
Orange county  
Poems  
I lost them at the river  
Dance  
On the beach  
I make love with the revolution  
Monogamy  
It happen in a day not even in a day  
It happened in the night not even in the news  
Communist cousin  
Disappear  
Stranger calls my aunt  
Ask her to pick up his body from the morning  
I cover my legs  
Cover my hands  
Cover my head  
I pass through  
From what  
What happened in a day  
Not even a day  
What happened in the night, no longer in the news.