



KHAKSAR, MANSUR

KHAKSAR, Mansur (Maṣṣur Romez Kāksāri, b. Abadan, 26 August 1939; d. Irvine, 17 March 2010; [FIGURE 1](#)), poet, writer, editor and political activist.

Khaksar was born to a working-class family in Abadan. His father worked as a technician in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (see [OIL AGREEMENTS IN IRAN](#)). Khaksar completed his primary and secondary education in Abadan, and had two eminent Persian poets, Maḥmud Mošref Tehrāni (better known as M. Āzād) and Ḥassan Pastā, as his teachers in the last two years of high school. In 1959, due to his political orientations, Khaksar was denied admission to the National Iranian Oil Company's (NIOC) College of Oil Industry (Dāneškada Šan'at-e Naft), even though he had passed the College's entrance exam, and started working at the Abadan branch of the Bank of Tehran (N. Khaksar, pp. 64-68). In 1959, his first poem was published in *Omid-e Irān*, a noted weekly journal published by Moḥammad Āšemi in Tehran.

In 1965 Khaksar co-founded, with Nāšer Taqvā'i, *Honar o adabiyāt-e Jonub* (Art and literature of the south), a pioneering monthly literary magazine published in Abadan. Among contributors to the magazine were such young writers and poets as 'Adnān Ġoreifi, Moḥammad Ayyubi, Nasim Kāksār, Mas'ud Minovi, Bahrām Ḥaydari, Nežām Rokni, and Parviz Zāhedī (Tiregol, 2010, pp. 25-34).

Being involved, with his older brother Nāšer, in labor movements since early 1950s, Khaksar was arrested in 1967 and sent to prison for more than two years, where he was further influenced by Marxist ideology. After his release in 1969 he joined *Sāzmān-e čerikhā-ye fedā'i-e kaḷq-e Irān* (Organization of



Iranian people's guerrillas; see [COMMUNISM iii](#)).

Kārnāma-ye kun (translated by the author as “The story of blood”, 1972), in free verse, was published not under his own name but with the logo of the Organization in 1972. Clearly stamped by the blunt advocacy of political ideologies, it soon turned into one of the most cherished manifestos of the left movement in Iran. “Sāl-e panjāh/sāl-e kun o golula/Sāli ke zang-e bozorg-e kun be šedā dar āmad/ va tufān šekufa dād” (The year fifty/the year of blood and bullet/The year that the grand bell of blood rang/and the storm blossomed; *Kārnāma-ye kun*, http://19bahman.net/audio/soroud_text/Karnameh-e_Khoun.htm). As held by a critic, the poem, in which all the attributes of good line up against the forces of evil, exhibits a dualistic point of view, lodged in the heart of ancient Iran's mythologies and religions, and is empowered by the grip of the battle of light and darkness on the Persian psyche (Davāmi, 2010, pp. 94-113).

In 1975 Khaksar received a fellowship from the Bank of Tehran to study the banking system of England. While overseas, as a covert member of *Sāzmān-e čerikhā-ye fedā'i-e kalq*, he became active in the Iranian students movement abroad (see [CONFEDERATION OF IRANIAN STUDENTS, NATIONAL UNION](#)). His two noted essays, *Bohrān o pāydāri-e mardom* (The crisis and the people's resistance) and *Negareši bar kizešhā-ye mardom dar āstāna-ye enqelāb* (On the people's uprising in dawn of revolution), were published underground in 1976 and 1977, respectively. Representing the Organization he traveled to Lebanon in 1976 and worked closely with the leftist branch of the Palestinian Liberation Front.

While in London, Khaksar and a group of like-minded political activists, notable among them, Sa'īd Solṭānpur, Akbar Mirjāni, Mehrdād Pākbāz and Ḥamza Farāhati, founded *Komita-ye az zendān tā tab'īd* (From prison to exile committee), which played an instrumental role in anti-Shah movements abroad. Most of the committee's proclamations and articles were published in *Irānšahr*, a newspaper published in London (Mehrdād, pp. 82-85).

Khaksar returned to Iran few months before the 1979 revolution, and his third critical essay, *Naqdi bar barnāma-ye panjom-e 'omrāni-e Šāh* (A critique of the Shah's fifth development plan) was published shortly thereafter. Being an active member of *Sāzemān-e čerikhā-ye fedā'i-e kalq* after the revolution, he was arrested and imprisoned for a short period of time in 1979. When the Organization was divided into different factions at the peak of the political



turmoil in Iran, Khaksar joined the faction known as Bayāniya-ye 16 Ādar (The proclamation of 16th of Azar).

Khaksar, along with Moḥammad Moktāri, Rezā ‘Allāma-Zāda, Ḥosayn Eqdāmi, Šams Langarudi, Amir-Ḥassan Čeheltan, Farāmarz Ṭālebi, and Qodsi Qāzi-Nur, was among the founding editors of *Bidārān*, a socio-cultural periodical, which was published in 1982 (N. Khaksar, pp. 64-68). Throughout these years he was increasingly involved in political activities and, his poems were, in turn, more burdened by his ideological views. His long narrative poem *Ḥaydar o enqelāb* (Haydar and the revolution), written in rhyming couplets, was published in 1982. It was followed by the publication of two long poems, *Sarzamin-e šā‘er* (The poet’s land; 1982), and *Šarārahā-ye šab* (The ambers of night; 1984). In these early post revolutionary collections, Khaksar experiments, for a brief period of time, with the classic forms of ḡazal (see [ĠAZAL i & ii](#)) and maṭnavi to appeal a larger audience (Khaksar, p. 160).

With the intensified suppression of political movements after the revolution, and faced with a clear threat of persecution, Khaksar fled to the Soviet Union in 1984. Frustrated with the corrupt communist establishment, however, and bereft of revolutionary ideals and hopes, Khaksar and his family left the Soviet Union in 1986 and received political asylum from the then West Germany. Years later living in Los Angeles, he recalled those years with a sense of regret, anguish and despair (Rahnama, <http://www.arashmag.com/content/view/781/50/1/3/>).

Khaksar left Germany for the United States and took residence in Los Angeles in 1990. *Bā ṭorra-e dāneš-e ‘ešq* (With the tress of love’s knowledge), a poetry collection, was published there at the same year. While working as an accountant to make a living, he was also involved with cultural and literary circles. In the long narrative poem *Qašida-ye safari dar meh* (The ode of a journey in fog), apparently the poet’s point of departure from his past ideological life which was published twenty one years after the publication of *Kārnāma-ye kun* in 1992, he looks back at his long journey from living in the palm groves of Southern Iran to the years of the Revolution, to the times of torture and execution, and to the years of living in solitude in exile. A comparison between this poem and *Kārnāma-ye kun*, “demonstrates that during this twenty-one year span of time, the poet has transformed from a people’s poet to a spokesman for his own self...(and) reveals the most substantial shortcoming of Iran’s political movements: a disregard for individuality and individual rights in the name of group.” (Naficy, pp. 139-52).



After joining the newly formed Los Angeles based Saturday Literary Group (Jam' e adabi-e šanba-hā), Khaksar, along with K̄osrow Davāmi and Majid Naficy, co-edited the group's journal *Daftarhā-ye šanba*, a Persian literary periodical, founded in 1992. From 1992 to 1995, three issues of this journal were published in Los Angeles.

Los Angelesi-hā (Los Angelinos,) and *Tā ān noq̄ta* (Toward that point) were both published in Los Angeles in 1997. In these collections, as noted by a critic, the face of a poet with a language of his own gradually takes shape (N. Khaksar, pp. 64-68). The collections also include the English translation of some of Khaksar's poems by Farkhondeh Afrukhteh.

Ān su-ye berehnagi (Beyond nudity) was published in Los Angeles in 2000. A retelling of the amorous relationship between the Sasanian king K̄osrow II Parviz (590-628 C.E.), and the princess Širin, based on Nezami Ganjavi's *K̄osrow o Širin* with particular emphasis on the romantic figure of Farhād, it revolves around love and death, and is laden with an erotic overtone.

In 2001, the general assembly of the Iranian Writers Association in Exile (Kānun-e nevisandegān-e Irān dar tab' id) elected Khaksar and Majid Naficy as the co-editors of *Daftar-e kānun-e nevisandegān-e Irān dar tab' id*, a quarterly journal for literature and culture. From 2002 to 2005, the six issues of the journal were published in Essen, Germany. From 1998 to 2008, Khaksar also collaborated with Naficy in the selection of poems for the poetry section of *Āraš*, a Persian monthly journal of cultural and social affairs, published in Paris.

Va čand noq̄ta-ye digar (And few other points, [FIGURE 2](#)), another collection of Khaksar's poems was published in 2004, with several poems translated into English by Ali Kiafar and Farkhondeh Afrukhteh. It was followed by the publication of *Bā ān noq̄ta* (With that point), the last in Khaksar's trilogy of "points," in 2009, which also includes English translation of the poems by Majid Naficy, Ali Kiafar and Farkhondeh Afrukhteh. The collection, as held by a critic, is fraught with the ever-presence of betrayed hopes, death, anxiety, loneliness, and homelessness (Zarrin, pp. 35-40). "Tā ān derak̄t barāyad/az pāy darāmad/Tā ān derak̄t/az āb o/abr barāyad/o dar sāya-aš beyāsāyad/rag-e marg ru' id/o derak̄t koškid" (So that tree would grow/He worked breathless/With the help of water and clouds/So that tree would grow tall/And give him shade to rest/But death grew in every leaf/And the tree dried out; pp. 17-19).



Mansour Khaksar committed suicide on 17 March 2010, and his ashes were scattered in the Pacific Ocean. His last long poem *Az saḥarḳizān* (translated as, “From Evolving Dawn”, by ‘Abbās Sadra’i, 2010), a sequel to *Ān su-ye berehnagi*, was published one week after his death. “Besyār/o parākanda-im/bi josti dorost az āzādi/Ĉon bāgi barāmada az ābgina-ye noḳost/ke dar partow-e āftāb-ḳordegi/sirābim/Bi ān ke ru-be-rumān čerāgi bargirand/yā čerāgi bargirim/ Va az foṣul-e tufāni bedānim.” (pp.50-51) “We are massive/but scattered/Without knowing/What the foundation of freedom is/And the right way to pursue it. /Like the trees that grow on their own/And mindlessly bask in the sunlight/We too grow/without a beacon to lead our way/or even a torch in our hands/Without awareness of the stormy seasons (pp. 32-33).

Khaksar’ s exilic essays and memoirs were published in several Persian journals abroad, including *Āraš*, *Barresi-e ketāb*, *Šahrvand*, *Rāh-e kārgar*, *Šimorq*, and *Bārān*. Khaksar married ‘Ešrat Morsali in 1980. They had two daughters, Mahak and Šideh.

Poetry Collections:

Ān su-ye berehnagi (Beyond nudity, 2000)

Bā ān noḳta (With that point, Los Angeles, 2009)

Bā ṭorra-e dāneš-e ‘ešq (With the tress of love’s knowledge, 1990, Germany)

Ḥaydar o enḳelāb (Haydar and the revolution, 1982)

Kārnāma-ye ḳun (The story of blood, 1972)

Los Angelesihā (Los Angelinos, Los Angeles, 1997)

Sarzamin-e šā’er (The poet’s land, 1982)

Šarārahā-ye šab (The ambers of night, 1984)

Qašida-ye safari dar meh (The ode of a journey in fog, 1992)

Tā ān noḳta (Toward that point, Los Angeles, 1997)

Va čand noḳta-ye digar, (And few other points, Los Angeles, 2004)



Bibliography:

Ḳosrow Davāmi, “Sargardān miyān-e gur o māh,” (Adrift between the grave and the Moon), *Jong-e zamān* 6, 2010, pp.94-113.

Maṣṣur Ḳāksār, “Got-o-gu-ye Maliha Tiragol bā Maṣṣur Ḳāksār,” *Jong-e zamān* 6, 2010, pp. 153-69.

Nasim Ḳāksār, “Ruʿidan ān su-tar az foṣul” (Growing beyond the seasons) *Jong-e zamān* 6, 2010, pp.64-68

Ardešir Mehrdād, “Komita-ye az zendān tā tabʿid” (From prison to exile committee), *Jong-e zamān* 6, 2010, pp. 82-89.

Majid Naficy, “Fardiyat dar *Safari dar meh*,” in *Šeʿr o siāsāt va 24 maqāla-e digar* (Poetry and politics and twenty-four other essays), Sweden, 1999.

Saeed Rahnama, “Moṣāḥeba bā Maṣṣur Ḳāksār,” in *Tajdid ḥayāt-e democracy dar Irān* (The revival of democracy in Iran), Sweden, 1994; also available at <http://www.arashmag.com/content/view/781/50/1/3/>, accessed 03/13/2011.

Maliḥeh Tiregol, “Maṣṣur Ḳāksār” *Jong-e Zamān* 6, 2010, pp. 25-34.

ʿAli Reżā Zarrin, “Noḡta-ye pāyān: āsib-šenāsi-e mafhum-e marg” (The end point: the pathology of the concept of death), *Jong-e zamān* 6, 2010, pp. 35-40.