



## MOSHIRI, FERAYDUN

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**MOSHIRI, FERAYDUN** (Fereydun Moshiri, b. Tehran, 30 Šahrivar 1305 Š./10 October 1926; d. Tehran, 3 Ābān 1379 Š./ 23 November 2000), prominent 20th-century poet. (FIGURE 1)

### LIFE

Fereydun Moshiri was born to Ebrāhim Moshiri and his wife, Ḳoršid. His lineage on the paternal side extends to Dāvud-Qoli, among the commanders in [Nader Shah Afshar](#)'s army, and on the maternal side to the descendants of Zahir-al-Dowleh Kermāni. His maternal grandfather, Mirza Javād Khan Šadiq Mo'tamen-al-Mamālek, was a poet, and as a child Moshiri was often exposed to his mother reciting her father's verses. Moshiri studied at Adab elementary school until the second grade, at which point the family relocated to Mashad. He continued his primary school education there at Hemmat School, and he was subsequently enrolled at Shah Reza secondary school. The Moshiri family did not remain long in Mashad, and Fereydun returned with his family to Tehran after completing his first year of secondary school. He first attended Dār-al-fonun and later continued his education at Adib High School (Moshiri, 1998, pp. 9- 11; Šākeri-Yektā, pp. 23-55; Moḡammadi-e Āmoli, p. 20).

Moshiri began to compose verse at an early age. His first poem was published in *Irān-e mā* (Tehran, 1943-60), a periodical that published such noted poets as Moḡammad Ḥosayn Šahryār and Nimā Yušij (Moshiri, 1999, pp. 456-58; Šāḡeb-Ekṡtiyāri and Bāqerzāda, eds., pp. 9-10).



In 1945 Moshiri began to work for the Ministry of Post and Telegraph. He continued to pursue his education while employed, enrolling in the ministry's technical school (Moshiri, 1998, p. 11, 18; idem, 2008, p. 1670). Moshiri received his diploma in 1965 and enrolled at the then Faculty of Literature of Tehran University, but he never completed the course of study, switching to journalism instead (Moshiri, 2008, p. 1671; Şāḥeb-Ek̄tiyāri and Bāqerzāda, eds., p. 9; Moḥammadi-e Āmoli, p. 25-26). Finally, he abandoned this field as well.

Notable among the magazines that Moshiri worked with were *Sepid o siāh*, a literary and cultural magazine established by 'Ali Behzādi (1925-2010), and *Soḡan*, the monthly journal of Iranian studies founded in 1943 by Parviz Natel Khanlari (Parviz Nātel Kānlari 1914-1990). His most important contributions were as editor-in-chief, from 1953 until 1972, to the cultural pages of *Rošanfekr*, a weekly journal founded by Raḥmat Moṣṭafavi in 1953. During this period he was responsible for introducing many promising young poets to the public; the most notable among them were [Forugh Farokhzad](#) and [Manučehr Ātaši](#), both of whom subsequently achieved significant fame (Moshiri, 1999, pp. 465-66; Ātaši, pp. 49-52). In 1954, he married Eqbāl-al-Zamān Aḡavān-e Zanjāni; they had two children, Bahār and Bābak (Moshiri, 1998, p. 21; Šākeri-Yektā, p. 80).

In 1955 his first collection of poetry, *Tešna-ye tufān* (Longing for storm), was published. By way of an introduction he employs a letter from Moḥammad Ḥosayn Šahriār, an article from 'Ali Dašti, and his own recollections. *Tešna-ye tufān* consists of more than seventy poems, of which one-third are composed in the classical formats, such as quatrains (*do-bayti*) and rhymed couplets (*matnavi*). The rest are composed in neo-traditional forms, often in a basic pattern of *čahārpāra* (foursome), which follows an abcb rhyme pattern and indicates, to a certain degree, the poet's inclination toward modern poetry. This collection was reprinted two years later as *Nāyāfta* (Unfound), with additional poems (Moshiri, 2008, p. 21).

His second collection, entitled *Gonāh-e daryā* (The sin of the sea) was published in 1956. Roughly one half of the poems are in the classical formats (see 'Aruż), and once again *čahārpāra* features prominently. However, there is a poem, "Barā-ye āḡarin ranj," which is based on a Nimaic meter. The publication of *Gonāh-e daryā* elicited a critical response from 'Abd-al-Moḥammad Āyati, the writer and translator (Āyati, pp. 3-10), who identified some flaws in Moshiri's work and ridiculed him with confrontational language. [Nader Naderpour](#), the famous poet, rose to Moshiri's defense and



answered Āyati's criticisms (Naderpour, 1956, pp. 23-34). Others subsequently stated their opposition to Naderpour in the press (Šams-e Langarudi, p. 434). The debate between the two camps created quite a maelstrom around *Gonāh-e daryā* in the media.

*Abr* (Cloud), Moshiri's third collection, was published in 1961 and earned the praise of Naderpour for the simplicity of its language and imagery (Naderpour, 1961, pp. 497-500). It was republished in 1967 with additional material as *Abr o kuča* (Cloud and alley, Moshiri, 2008, p. 1671). *Abr o kuča* comprises more than fifty poems including his most famous work, "Kuča" (Alley). Although roughly one-third of the poems are in čahārpāra, the collection marks Moshiri's increasing engagement with Nimaic poetry.

In 1962 Moshiri was appointed a member of Radio Iran's Council of Writers, and in 1971 he joined the production unit of Radio Iran's Musical Council (Moshiri, 2008, pp. 1671-72). In 1978 Moshiri retired from the Ministry of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone (Moshiri, 2008, p. 1672; Šāḥeb-Ekṭiyāri and Bāqerzāda, eds., p. 10). In 1997 Moshiri traveled abroad and participated in nights of poetry reading in four cities in Germany, including Frankfurt and Berlin, and a number of American cities, including Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, and Miami. The events drew the warm applause of the audience (Šārem-Ašlāni, p. 64; Mo'ini, pp. 58-62). In 2005, five years after his death on 23 November 2000, a selection of his unpublished works appeared in two volumes, *Az dariča-ye māh* (From the moon's window) and *Navā'i hamāhang-e bārān* (A song tuned to rain). Both collections, like almost all collections he published during his lifetime, include poems in Nimaic verse, as well as in classical and new traditionalist verse.

Moshiri's poetry is an invitation to kindness and love, and he is considered among the most widely read Iranian poets of his generation (Taqizāda, p. 253). His poems or fragments thereof have often been set to music (Moshiri, 2005, pp. 68-69; Fakreddini, pp. 303-4; Bižani, p. 327). At times Moshiri himself set his poems to music (Ta'rif, pp. 317-20).

## WORK

Moshiri's early poems are usually romantic in imagery and tone. The majority of verses in *Tešna-ye tufān* are on the agonies of unrequited love or laments on the fickleness of the beloved. His next two collections, *Gonāh-e daryā* and *Abr o kuča*, which includes one of his most celebrated poems, also deal largely with



affairs of the heart.

*Bi to, mahtāb šabi, bāz az ān kuča goḏaštam,  
hama tan češm šodam, kīra be donbāl-e to gaštam ...  
Yādam āmad ke šabi bā ham az ān kuča goḏaštīm  
(“Kuča,” in *Abr o kuča*, 2008, pp. 402-3)*

Without you in a moonlit night  
again, I walked down that alley  
I was all eyes, gazing in search of you ...  
I remembered that night when we walked together that alley  
(“Alley,” in *Lucky Those Half-Opened Buds*, 2007, pp. 46-53)

While with the passage of time Moshiri no longer composed as much amorous verse, erotic love remains, nonetheless, an area of interest, and romantic poetry continues, to the very end, to appear in all of his collections—a characteristic for which Moshiri’s poems are often criticized (Barāheni, p. 1130; Behfar, pp. 138-42).

References to natural elements and forces—birds and flowers, sea and sky, wind and rain, the sun and the moon—abound in Moshiri’s poems (e.g., “Tolu’,” in *Morvārid-e mehr*, 2008, pp. 761-62; “Rāz,” in *Az kāmūši*, 2008, pp. 612-13; and “Yek laḥza ārāmeš ...,” in *Āvāz-e ān paranda-ye ḡamgin*, 2008, pp. 1387-88). Moshiri’s nature poems, although not fully bereft of urban settings and imageries (e.g., “Šahr,” in *Tā šobḥ-e tābnāk-e Ahurā’i*, 2008, pp. 1559-61) more often depict idyllic settings. He has written extensively in admiration of spring and its manifestations:

*Bu-ye bārān, bu-ye sabza, bu-ye kāk  
šākahā-ye šosta, bārān korda, pāk  
Āsemān-e ābi o abr-e sepid,  
Barghā-ye sabz-e bid,*

*‘Aṭr-e narges, raqṣ-e bād,  
Naḡma-ye šowq-e parastuhā-ye šād,  
Kalvat-e garm-e kabutarhā-ye mast...  
Narm narmak miresad inak bahār,  
koš be hāl-e ruzegār!*

(“Koš be ḥāl-e ḡončahā-ye nima bāz,” in *Abr o kuča*, 2008, pp. 307-8)

The scent of rain, the scent of greens, the scent of soil,



washed boughs, rained on, clean  
 Blue sky and white cloud,  
 the green leaves of willow

The perfume of narcissus, dance of the wind,  
 the passion song of joyful swallows,  
 the intimate sanctum of intoxicated birds...  
 Warm seclusion of drunken sparrows,  
 Gently arrives the spring,  
 Lucky world!

(“Lucky Those Half-Opened Buds,” in *Lucky Those Half-Opened Buds*, 2007, pp. 16-20).

Praise of Iran and the expression of love for homeland is another topic encountered in some of his poems (“Iran o javānān,” in *Tā ṣobḥ-e tābnāk-e Ahurā’i*, 2008, pp. 1568-70; “Simorq,” in *Āvāz-e ān paranda-ye ḡamgin*, 2008, pp. 1308-9). He dedicated “Hamiš bā tow...,” one of his most celebrated Nimaic poems, to ‘Irānam, Irān-e jāvdānam’ (To my Iran, my eternal Iran):

*Ma’nā-ye zenda budan-e man, bā tow budan ast ...*  
*ān laḥza-i ke bi tow sar āyad marā, mabād!*  
*Mafhum-e marg-e man*  
*dar rāh-e sarfarāzi-e tow, dar kenār-e tow*  
*mafhum-e zendegistat.*  
*Ma’nā-ye ‘ešq niz*  
*dar sarnevešt-e man*  
*bā tow, hamiša ba tow, barā-ye tow, zistan.*  
 (“Hamiša bā tow ...,” in *Āh, bārān*, 2008, pp. 831-32)

The meaning of my life, is to be with you ...  
 that moment which without you passes, let there not be.  
 The significance of my death,  
 in honoring you, beside you,  
 is the significance of life.

The meaning of love too,  
 in my destiny,  
 with you, always with you, for you, to live.  
 (“Forever with you” in *Lucky Those Half-Opened Buds*, 2007, pp. 136-39)



Although classical schemes have never been absent from Moshiri's poetry corpus, the majority of his popular or most celebrated poems are composed in Nimaic meters. Examples include "Jām agar beškast ...?" and "Kuča" (*Abr o kuča*, 2008, pp. 386-88; 402-05), and "Jādu-ye bi atar" (*Bahār rā bāvar kon*, 2008, pp. 550-51). Moshiri never tried his hand in free verse, or at least he never published any.

While many of Moshiri's poems chronicle life's travails, the dignity he gives to the pains of existence and his accepting outlook on life have a notable presence in his work. In this manner Moshiri affirms life and advocates optimism, without denying the difficulties of existence.

Although long poems, occasionally longer than demanded by the poem's content, are not few in Moshiri's collections, many of his poems, often written in short or relatively short classical schemes such as *robā'i* or *gāzal*, benefit from brevity. Moshiri's language is relatively straightforward, both in the expressions employed and in his turn of phrase. His poems are generally devoid of obscure or obtuse references and do not convey other meanings than that which first meets the eye (Šafi'i-Kadkani, 2011, p. 536).

The clarity of Moshiri's syntax and the grammatically correct phrases and sentences he employs (Šafi'i-Kadkani, 1968, p. 211), the beautiful and easily accessible imageries of his poems (Behbahāni, p. 141), and the sustained balance between the old and new poetry by which his work is recognized, have earned him the praise of scholars of Persian literature (see Zarrinkub, p.7-9; Riāḥi, p. 397-405; Yusofi, pp. 122-26; Korramšāhi, pp. 189-200). On the other hand, his detractors among literary critics, especially those not inclined toward classical poetry, are not few. Some criticize the emotional overtone of his work as skin-deep and lacking in intellect (Ābedi, p. 155), and others find fault with the didactic overtone of his poems, the position he takes between the traditionalists and the modernists, and his reluctance to experiment with new forms (Amini, p. 156). The relative absence of politically charged imagery in Moshiri's poems has led some to criticize him for lacking social sensitivity and perspective. Perhaps the most vehement of the attacks on Moshiri is that written by Rezā Barāheni (Barāheni, pp. 1129-34). It should be noted, however, that Moshiri's last two collections *Az dariča-ye māh* (2005), and *Navā'i hamāhang-e bārān* (2005), published after his death, do include many poems charged with social motifs and ideas. In some of these poems, he even places a finger on specific socio-political problems and joins the ranks of many dissidents in expressing a deep concern over the suppression of ideas and the



nation's political inequities.

Moshiri's literary career, unlike those of many of his contemporaries, did not change shape and content in parallel with the dominant social and political ideas and trends, and instead it followed a smooth path marked by his concern over the dehumanizing materialism of modern time, the ravages of war, and the increased aggression and hatred in the world ("Aški dar godārgāh-e tāriḳ" and "Kuč," in *Bahār rā bāvar kon*; "Ranj," in *Az kāmūši*; and "Bā zabān-e ašk inak," in *Az diār-e āšti*). His call to stay true to humanistic and moral values, gives him a signature voice in modern Persian poetry (Košnām, pp. 329-30). A bilingual collection of Moshiri's selected poems, entitled *Ḳoś be ḥāl-e ḡončahā-ye nima bāz / Lucky Those Half-Opened Buds*, 2007, translated by Sara Khalili, was published in 2007 in Tehran.

#### POETRY COLLECTIONS

*Abr* (Cloud), Tehran, 1961.

*Abr o kuča* (Cloud and alley), Tehran, 1967.

*Āh, bārān* (Ah, rain), Tehran, 1988 (FIGURE 2).

*Āvāz-e ān paranda-ye ḡamgin* (The song of that sad bird), Tehran, 1997 (FIGURE 3).

*Az dariča-ye māh* (From the moon's window), Tehran, 2005.

*Az diār-e āšti* (From the land of friendship), Tehran, 1992.

*Az kāmūši* (Of silence), Tehran, 1977.

*Bā panj soḳan-sarā* (With five poets), Tehran, 1993.

*Bahār rā bāvar kon* (Let's believe in the Spring), Tehran, 1968.

*Gonāh-e daryā* (The sin of the sea), Tehran, 1956.

*Laḡzahā o eḡsās* (Moments and sentiments), Tehran, 1997.

*Morvārid-e mehr* (The pearl of love), Tehran 1986.

*Navā'i hamāhang-e bārān* (A song tuned to rain), Tehran, 2005.



*Nayāfta* (Unfound), Tehran, 1957.

*Tā šobḥ-e tābnāk-e Ahurā'i* (Till the bright Ahuraic morning), Tehran, 2000 (FIGURE 4).

*Tešna-ye tufān*, Tehran, 1955.

In addition to his poetry, his oeuvre includes two books entitled *Yeksu negaristan o yeksān negaristan: Šarḥ-e aḥvāl o ḥekāyāt-e Abu Sa'id Abi'l-Ḳayr* (1966) (on the subject, see [Abu Sa'id Abi'l-Ḳayr](#)) and *Šekoftanhā o rostanhā: montaḳab-e še'r-e mo'āšer-e Iran* (1999), as well as a handful of articles, largely devoted to poetry and poets.

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