



# SEPEHRI, SOHRAB

---

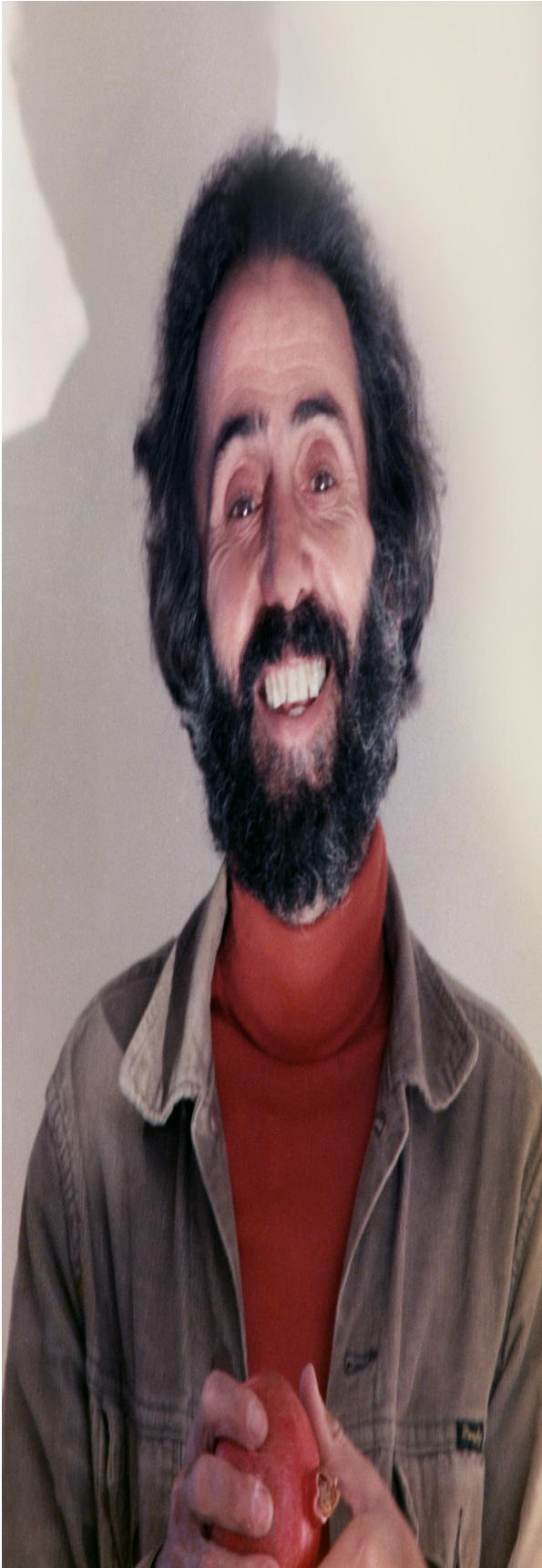




FIGURE 1. Photograph of Sohrab Sepehri.

Photo by Abbas Hojatpanah.

**SEPEHRI, SOHRAB** (b. Qom, 14 Mehr 1307/6 October 1928; d. Tehran, 1 Ordibehešt 1359/21 April 1980), notable poet and painter (FIGURE 1 and Figure 2).

*Life.* The third of five children, Sohrab was born to Māhjabin (Foruḡ Irān, d. 1994) and Asad-Allāh (d. 1962) Sepehri (Paridoḡt Sepehri, 2001, p. 13). About three months after Sohrāb's birth, his family went to Golpāyegān and then to K̄vānsār, before settling in the Darvāza 'Aṭṭār quarter of Kāšān. A painter, skilled calligrapher, *tār* maker and player, Sepehri's father worked for the telegraph and post office there until he became paralyzed early in Sohrāb's adolescence, leaving Sohrāb's mother to take a position in the same office to support the family. A published poet, Sepehri's maternal grandmother Ḥamida Sepehri was wife to Malek al-Mowarreḡin and daughter to Mirzā Moḥammad Taqi Khan Lesān al-Molk Sepehr (1801/2-1880), the noted historian and author of *Nāseḡ al-tawāriḡ* (Paridoḡt Sepehri, 2003, pp. 14, 17-19; Širi, p. 4-5).

For the first part of his life, Sepehri lived in their family home which had a large orchard, an experience he would later recount in his posthumously published book *Oṭāq-e ābi* (The blue room, 2003). From 1933 to 1940, he attended the K̄yayām School (later named Modarres), where he started painting early on and wrote his first poem, a traditional quatrain, at the age of ten (for the poem, see Qaračadāḡi, 2001, p. 400). In the summer of 1940 Sepehri took his first job at the Kāšān Textile Factory and was then temporarily hired by the Ministry of Agriculture as a field worker to combat a plague of lotuses that had afflicted Kāšān that year (Paridoḡt Sepehri, 2001, p. 16). From September 1940 until June 1943 he attended Pahlavi High School where he briefly studied the *santur* (hammer dulcimer) and continued painting. In September 1943 Sepehri moved to Tehran to attend the Teachers' Training School (Dānešsarā-ye moḡaddamāti-e Tehran; see EDUCATION xviii). Graduating in June 1945, he returned to Kāšān and in December found employment at Kāšān's Office of Education, where he met the poet Mošfeḡ Kāšāni (pen name of 'Abbās Key-Maneš, b. 1925) who familiarized him with Persian prosody (see 'ARŪŽ) and encouraged him to write poetry. Never thinking highly of his poems from this time, Sepehri would later burn almost all of them. During this period, he studied the poetry of Šā'eb (1607-1675) and Bidel (1644-1721), both of whom would noticeably influence Sepehri's work (§.



Hosayni, 1992, pp. 131-64 ; Š. Rajabzāda, 1989, pp. 20-23). In summer 1947 he published his first book of poetry titled *Dar kenār-e čaman yā ārāmgāh-e 'ešq* (Along the grass or love's resting place) with an introduction by Mošfeq Kāšāni. That same year Sepehri wrote an introduction to Kāšāni's *Kāṭerāt-e javāni* (Memories of youth; 'Ābedi, 1996, pp. 28-29).

In summer 1948, Sepehri met the poet and painter Manučehr Šeybāni (1923-1991) who introduced him to the works of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) and Nimā Yušij (1897-1960), the first Persian modern poet successfully to break free of Persian classical prosody and its traditional imagery and conventions. According to Sepehri himself, the impact of this meeting changed his course: he quit his job, moved to Tehran, and enrolled at Tehran University's Faculty of Fine Arts (Paridoḡt Sepehri, 2001, p. 19). While living in the capital, he worked for eight months for the then [Anglo-Persian Oil Company](#) and became more immersed in the works of Nimā Yušij, as well as [Fereydun Tavallali](#) (1919-1985), whose poetry was generally more lyrical than Nimā's with more regular stanzaic patterns. His first poem in the manner of Nima, entitled "Bimār" (The patient), was published in September 1948 in the journal *Jahān-e now*. Founded in Tehran in June 1946, this modern literary journal was edited by Morteżā Keyvān (1923 -1954), an intellectual and political activist, who was later sentenced to death for collaborating with the military branch of Tudeh Party. Three other poems followed this one in 1949 in consecutive issues of *Jām-e jam* (est. March 1949, Tehran), another literary journal that folded after six issues.

In fall 1951, Sepehri published his first collection of Nimāic poetry titled *Marg-e rang* (The death of color). The early 1950s also marked the beginning of his friendship and acquaintance with other notable poets and painters, many of whom would become important figures in Persian modernism in their own right, namely [Foruḡ Farroḡzād](#) (1935-1967), Mārko Gregoriān (1925-2007, painter), Parviz Kalāntari (b. 1931, painter), Bahman Moḡhaššeš (b. 1930, painter), Nāder Nāderpur (1929-2000, poet), Nošrat Raḡmāni (1929-2000, poet), Šādeq Tabrizi (b. 1938, painter), and Parviz Tanāvoli (b. 1937, sculptor). Around this time, he also met Biyuk Mošṭafavi (1925-1992) a life-long friend to whom Sepehri later dedicated *Ḥajm-e sabz* (The expanse of green, 1967).

In June 1953, Sepehri completed his bachelor's degree with honors, took a position as designer with the Organization of Public Health (Sāzemān-e behdāšt), and briefly collaborated with the art magazine *Panja Korus* (Pākbāz, 2000, p. 103). This same year he participated in a number of group exhibits



and published his third book of poetry, *Zendegi-e k̄vābhā* (The life of dreams), with one of his own paintings on the cover (Ābedi, 1998, p. 114).

In 1954 Sepehri took a position in the Office of Fine Arts (Edāra-ye koll-e honarhā-ye zibā) and started to teach at the School of Fine Arts (Honarestān-e honarhā-ye zibā). During the course of the next two years Sepehri published translations of Japanese, French, and English poetry along with some of his own poems (see below). In 1956 he participated in a group show at the Mehregān Club, and in August 1957 he traveled to Paris, where he enrolled in a lithography course at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts. His letters from this sojourn in Paris provide a candid vista into Sepehri's growing connection to nature and his painful awareness of people's disconnect from their surroundings, both themes characteristic of his later poems (Paridoḡt Sepehri, 2001, pp. 75, 83-87, 124). On 14 April 1958 a number of his paintings were exhibited in the first Tehran Biennale. Four were selected together with works by other Persian artists and sent to the Venice Biennale (Emāmi, 2004, pp. 11-12). Later that spring Sepehri participated in the Venice Biennale (June 1958) before returning to Tehran, where he worked at the Ministry of Agriculture as a supervisor of audio-visual programs.

In January 1960 Sepehri briefly traveled to Tokyo before returning to Tehran to participate in the second Tehran Biennale, where he won the Grand Prize of Fine Arts (for Sepehri's diary entries from this trip, see Paridoḡt Sepehri, 2001, pp. 42-44). Very soon thereafter Homāyun Ṣan'atizāda, director of the [Franklin Book Program](#), purchased 150 of Sepehri's paintings (all gouache-on-paper depicting desert scenes; Emāmi 2004, p. 12). That August Sepehri used the proceeds from this sale to return to Tokyo for nearly six months to study woodblock printing with Unichi Hiratsuka (1895-1997), one of the most noted names of the 20th century Japanese art (Pākbāz, 2000, p. 103). On his way home in late winter 1961 he traveled to India for the first of several visits, completing a journey that would leave a permanent mark in his creative life. Back in Tehran Sepehri had his first solo exhibit at Reżā 'Abbāsi Gallery and a group show at The Export Bank of Iran (Bānk-e ṣāderāt-e Iran). In September he took a teaching position at the School of Decorative Arts (Honarkada-ye honarhā-ye taz'ini), and gave up his post six months later (Šeybāni, pp. 313-14). This would be his last government or public service position. This same year three of his poems appeared in an anthology of modern Persian poetry called *Nemunahā-ye šer-e āzād* (Examples of free verse, Tehran, 1960). He also published his next book of poetry *Āvār-e āftāb* (The downpour of sunshine)



with an introduction by himself. In May-June 1962 Sepehri had another solo exhibit at Farhang Gallery (Tālār-e Farhang) and published, along with a number of his own poems, translations of Chinese poetry in *Sokan* (est. June 1943, Tehran), a prominent academic literary journal edited by Parviz Nātel-Kānlari (Ṭāhbāz, p. 185; Ābedi, 1998, pp. 119-28).

In 1963 Sepehri had six solo and group exhibitions, and one of his paintings appeared on the cover of Nāderpur's selected poems entitled *Bargozida-ye aš'ār-e Nāder Nāderpur, 1326-1341*. That same year Abby Weed Grey purchased a number of his paintings for the Ben and Abby Grey Foundation. These pieces were subsequently included in a show called Fourteen Contemporary Iranian Artists, which opened in Tehran before circulating in the United States for four years under the auspices of the Western Association of Art Museums (Grey, pp. 74-75, 89, 124, 165, 189). A selection of these and other paintings by Sepehri were later included in other exhibits funded by the Grey Foundation, namely Contemporary Art of India and Iran, which circulated throughout the United States by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Program from 1967 to 1969, and One World Through Art, at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds Gallery in 1972 (Grey, pp. 190, 241, 285).

In 1964 the journal *Musiqi* (est. March 1939, Tehran), a prominent literary and cultural journal edited by Gōlām-Ḥosayn Minbāšiān, published Sepehri's translation of a Japanese play, and he designed the set for the production of the play *Āhan* (Iron) written and directed by Kōjasta Kiā. This same year he traveled extensively throughout India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In 1965 he had one group and one solo exhibition in the Borghese Gallery in Tehran, and published his poem "Ṣedā-ye pā-ye āb" (tr. by Karim Emāmi as "The Sound of Water's Footsteps") in *Āraš* (est. November 1961, Tehran), a popular modern literary journal of the 1960s edited by Sirus Ṭāhbāz. The poem, which made a great impact at the time also, showed that the poet had at last found his own voice and style. The year also marked the beginning of Sepehri's decade-long work on his famous tree trunk painting series. For the next two years Sepehri continued his extensive travels, visiting Munich and London in 1965, and France, Spain, Holland, Italy, and Austria the following year. In 1966 he published "Mosāfer" (Traveler), again in *Āraš*, and translations of hymns from the *Rig Veda*.

The death of Foruḡ Farroḳzād in a car accident on 13 February 1967 had a profound impact on Iranian literati in general, and Sepehri in particular. As reflected in his famous elegy for her called "Doust" (Friend, *Hajm-e sabz*, 1968),



with her death Sepehri lost not only a close friend, but a fellow poet who shared much of his world vision and sensibilities, both emotional and poetic. In 1968 Sepehri published *Hajm-e sabz*. Its release coincided with the opening of his exhibit at Seyhūn Gallery in February 1968. In the next decade, he published few poems yet remained extremely active as a painter. In April and March 1969 he traveled to London, and then to Cagnes-sur-Mer in South of France where he exhibited his work at the town's International Art Festival (Paridoḳt Sepehri, 2001, pp. 67, 73). In late spring 1970, Sepehri went to New York and briefly stayed with his friend Manučehr Yektā'i (b. 1921, painter and poet) in Long Island before moving to Manhattan in late August for eight months, during which time he had a group show in Bridgehampton. After a brief return to Tehran he was back in Manhattan by mid-May 1971 for a solo exhibit at Elain Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton, which opened on 10 July (Paridoḳt Sepehri, 2001, pp. 61-66). He had an extended stay in Paris in 1974 and traveled to Greece and Egypt on his way back to Iran. In 1975 he participated in Tehran's First International Arts Festival, and later that year he received the Foruḡ Farroḳzād Poetry Award. From 16-21 June 1976 he participated in a group exhibit of modern Persian art at the International Art Fair in Basle, Switzerland. In winter 1977 Sepehri moved back to Kāšān, and published *Hašt ketāb* (Eight books), an almost complete collection of his published work since *Marg-e rang* with the addition of the new collection *Mā hič, mā negāh* (We nothing but gaze).

In 1978 Sepehri had another solo exhibit at Seyhūn Gallery. This would be his last exhibit before his untimely death. In fall 1979 Sohrāb Sepehri was diagnosed with leukemia. He traveled to London with his sister Paridoḳt in December 1979, where they stayed until January 1980 for treatment, before returning to Tehran. On 2 April 1980 Sohrāb was admitted to Tehran's Pārs Hospital where he died at 6:00 PM on 21 April 1980.

Sepehri was buried on 22 April 1980 in the eastern courtyard of the shrine of Solṭān b. 'Alī Moḥammad Bāqer (a.k.a., Ṣaḥn-e sardār) in Mašhad-e Ardahāl, a village near Kāšān. The inscription on his tombstone, taken from one of his famous poems "Vāḥa-i dar laḥza" (An oasis in a fleeting moment, *Hajm-e sabz*) with the calligraphy of Reżā Māfi (1943-1982, painter, calligrapher), reads: "Be sorāḡ-e man agar miā'id / narm o āhesta biyā'id, mabādā ke tarak bardārad / čini-e nāzok-e tanhā'i-e man" (If you come to call on me / Tread gently, step softly lest you crack / The fine porcelain of my loneliness, *Hašt ketāb*, p. 361; Kāšāni, 2001, p. 385; Filsufi, p. 380). The original tombstone was broken in the



mid 1990s and eventually replaced with another marker. Since the decade after his death, Sepehri's burial ground has become an increasingly popular monument. In late 2004, a debate had started among members of the Persian literati and representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding a relocation of Sepehri's resting place. By January 2009, the issue remained open.

Sepehri never married and had no children. There are no records of a personal relationship anywhere in his writings or in any of his biographies published through 2008. For the greater part of his adult life, he lived with his mother and younger sister Parvāna in a two-story house in North Amirābād Street of Tehran (Ābedi, 1998, p. 108; Bozorgmehr, pp. 286-88). He was a soft-spoken, calm, and unusually sensitive introvert with a high-pitched voice and an exceptionally captivating gaze. He was meticulous and orderly, as much about his daily life as his artistic production, never signing a canvas or sending a poem to print before he felt completely satisfied with it. As such, it was not uncommon for him to destroy paintings and manuscripts that, for him, never came to full fruition for one reason or another (Emāmi, 1980, pp. 55-56; Paridoḵt Sepehri, 2001, pp. 8-19). He shied away from crowds and steered clear of personal confrontations, which is why he never attended opening nights of his exhibitions and never responded verbally or in writing to any number of negative critiques of his work.

*Poetry.* In the course of his development as a poet and painter, Sepehri went through different phases of preoccupation with one or another tenet of his personal poetics and ultimate world vision. For practical purposes, we can break these down into five general periods, the first of which is a classical one comprising various *ghazals* (*ḡazal*), quatrains and, foremost, his first book *Dar kenār-e čaman yā ārāmgāh-e 'ešq*, a twenty-six page *mathnawi* (*maṭnawī*, a poem in couplet form) in the style of Iraj Mirzā's (1874-1926) *Zohra o Manučehr*. Written in classical meter, these works are replete with traditional tropes and imagery, and reveal the sentimentality of a teenage poet emulating his late 19th century Persian predecessors. Though Sepehri would later discard all of these poems as naïve, they remain nevertheless critically valuable as they demonstrate both his familiarity with prosodic and imaginal staples of Persian classical poetry, and the span of his linguistic and stylistic trajectory as a poet.

The second phase of Sepehri's poetic development begins with his discovery of Nimā Yušij's poetry in mid 1948. The regular stanzaic form of his poem,



“Bimār,” portraying a hopeless man smoking in his sickbed, clearly reveal Nimā’s influence in structure, language, and conceit, as do “Zendegi” (Life), “Jazira-ye ṭalā’i” (The golden island), and “Šam‘-e bālin” (Bedside candle), all published in *Jahān-e now* in Spring 1949 (Ābedi, 1998, p. 102). Sepehri’s Nimāic phase comes to full fruition in *Marg-e rang* (1951). With respect to meter, form, and subject matter, all the poems in the collection so self-evidently bear the stamp of Nimā’s influence that in the case of “Morḡ-e ḡarib” (The alien bird, reprinted with some changes in *Hašt ketāb* as “Morḡ-e mo‘ammā” (The riddle bird), “Daryā va mard” (The sea and the man), “Naqš” (Design), and “Sargoḡdašt” (Tale) one could easily mistake them for Nimā’s own. What distinguishes Sepehri from his predecessor, however, is the absence of Nimā’s urgent sense of social commitment, which is replaced in Sepehri’s work by an introspective self-contemplation that gives his voice a quality and tone comparable to those of mid to late 19th century English poets. Thus while in *Marg-e rang* Sepehri’s tone echoes the characteristic nostalgia and hopelessness of Nimā’s poetic language, Sepehri’s symbols point to a romantic poet’s existential despair with respect to his personal path in life both as an artist and an individual, whereas Nimā’s convey in stead a socially committed poet’s perception of a people lost in the course of history and a nation with little, if any, future prospects. *Marg-e rang* furthermore represents the height of Sepehri’s romanticism, especially with respect to his use of elements of nature as mirrors of the poet’s emotions. “Ru be ḡorub” (Facing sunset), a poem in which all the elements of the natural landscape at sunset uniformly reflect the persona’s depressive state, is arguably the best example of this conceit. Though less obvious, the influence of Fereyduṅ Tavallali is also noticeable in this collection, especially with respect to language (Āšuri, 1995, pp. 13-16).

Sepehri’s third period in poetry starts around 1951 and ends in 1961 with the publication of *Āvār-e āftāb*, a compendium of three collections: *Zendegi-ye k̄vābhā*, previously published as an autonomous volume in 1952; the title collection of poems written between 1952 and 1958; and *Šarq-e anduh* (East of sorrow). The volume also includes an introduction by Sepehri himself, in which he argues for an inherent dichotomy between Eastern and Western worldviews, with the former being presented as one in which mankind’s intuitive connection with the organic laws of the cosmos are more overtly cultivated by the values and nuances of their ancient myths and pervading philosophies (Langarudi, vol.2, pp. 644-46). With numerous references to Hindu mythology, Taoism, Confucianism, and Zen Buddhism, Sepehri argues



for the comparably more favorable nature of the Eastern *Weltanschauung*.

The decade of poetry comprised in this compendium constitutes the next and arguably richest formative period of Sepehri's development. Having completed his studies, these were the years when Sepehri traveled abroad frequently and translated poems from French, English, Chinese, and Japanese (see "Selected translations by Sohrab Sepehri" below) and experimented widely with language, writing blank and metered verse, prose poetry (e.g., "Sāya" 'Shadow'), and poems written in folk and nursery rhyme meters (e.g., "Morḡ-e šedā ṭalā'i" 'The bird with a golden voice'). He even tried his hand at French poetry (Grey, p. 99). During this decade Sepehri also studied Hindu mythology and Eastern philosophy, all of which had a direct impact on his aesthetics as poet and painter, and informed the central tenets of his nascent worldview.

By the early 1950s Sepehri had gradually integrated himself into Tehran's burgeoning modernist literati and artistic society, gravitating most towards members of *Korus jangi* (The fighting rooster), an art and literary journal started in 1949 by the painter Jalil Žiā'pur (b. 1928), the pioneer of cubism in Iran (Momayyez, p. 50; Paridoḡt Sepehri, 2001, p. 19). *Korus jangi's* original promotion of Nimāic poetry and modern art had made it a natural niche for Sepehri, whose principal link to the group was his first mentor Manučehr Šeybāni, the journal's first poetry editor. In 1951 *Korus jangi* was revamped with a new board of editors. Hušang Irāni (1925-1973, poet, painter), the journal's new poetry editor and the avant-garde poet, commonly known to readers of modern Persian poetry by his notorious coinage "jiḡ-e banafš" (purple scream), declared poetics based on Nimā's writings passé, and urged the search for a new poetic language (Langarudi, vol. 1, pp. 452-59, 553).

Sepehri followed the call and in 1952 published *Zendegi-ye k'ābhā*, a collection of sixteen poems in blank verse depicting the surrealist dreamscapes of an introspective poet in search of his personal voice. "Gol-e kāši" (Tile flower), "Nilufar" (Lotus), and "Safar" (Journey) offer glimpses into the preliminary stages of a language that was to become his signature voice, with the last two also providing the first examples of Zen, Buddhist, and Taoist influences on Sepehri's worldview. In "Yādbud" (Memento), for instance, a clock pendulum's perpetual motion in space and time emerges as a symbol of the Buddhist principle of perpetual reincarnation. Irāni's influence on Sepehri's language is easily recognizable in this collection, as is the absence of Nimāic poetics (Langarudi, vol. 1, pp. 573-74). The poems' often convoluted language and their



surrealist imagery further offer one of the earliest examples of the burgeoning homogeneity between form and content in Sepehri's work, in this instance reflecting the Taoist principle that 'Truth' defies verbal definition and can only be hinted at in such a way as to lead to an intuitive or mystical understanding of it.

Written between 1952 and 1958, the poems in *Āvār-e āftāb* continued to reflect Sepehri's preoccupation with this principle. In "Sāyabān-e ārāmeš-e mā, mā'im" (We are the parasol of our own sanctity), for instance, Sepehri writes:

*Dar havā-ye dogānagi, tāzagi-e čehrahā pažmord Biyā'id az sāya-rowšan  
beravim Bar lab-e šabnam beistim, dar barg forud ā'im Va agar jā pā'i didim,  
mosāfer-e kohan rā az pay beravim*

(The freshness of faces wilted in the air of dichotomy Let us come leave the shadow-lights Let us stand on the dewdrop's edge, let us land in the leaf. And should we see a foot print, let us follow the ancient traveler) (*Hašt ketāb*, pp. 172-74)

Here, as elsewhere throughout the collection, the poem's language reflects Irāni's influence, while further showing Sepehri's growing connection with nature and his increased belief in mankind's purpose in the universe (Langarudi, vol. 2, pp. 643-46; Širi, pp. 48-53). Throughout the collection this and other poems like "Āy nazdik" (O near), "Farātar" (Beyond), and "Ku qaṭra-ye vahm" (Where is the illusion drop) call on the reader to embark on a quest for 'Truth' through an unmitigated connection with nature, and to realize that "Ramz hā čon anār-e tarak k'orda nimā šekofta-and" (Mysteries, like cracked pomegranates, are in half-bloom; *Hašt ketāb*, p. 170).

Sepehri's own quest took on a more mystical dimension in *Šarq-e anduh*, a collection of twenty five poems, many of which reflect the obvious influence of Rumi's *Divān-e Šams* influence as much in ideology and content as in rhythm and inner rhymes (Hamadāni, 1980, pp. 84-86; Behbahāni, pp. 339-44). As evidenced by titles like "Bodhi" and "Vid" (Veda), and a language that frequently recalls the minimalist simplicity of haikus, *Šarq-e anduh* further forges a peculiar combination of Sufism and Eastern philosophy ultimately to offer the first glimpses of Sepehri's vision of a higher spiritual being: an omnipresent yet ever fleeting god whose presence can be experienced in everything from nature to random objects of daily life (Behbahāni, pp. 336-38). The poems in *Šarq-e anduh* also reveal Sepehri's broad view of all religions,



their basic unity, and the futility of doctrinal dispute. This ideology is epitomized in “Šuram rā” (My fervor) where he writes: “*Qorān bālā-ye saram, bāleš-e man Enjil, bestar-e man Towrāt, va zirpušam Avestā, mi binam k̄vāb: budā-i dar nilufar-e āb / Har jā golhā-ye niyāyeš rost, man čīdam* (The Quran above my head; my pillow the New Testament; my bed the Hebrew Bible; my undergarment the Avesta; I dream: a Buddha in the water lotus. / Wherever a flower of prayer grew, I picked it; *Hašt Ketāb*, p. 238). These verses, more than anything else, distinguish Sepehri from his contemporaries not only as a poet ceaselessly searching for a unique personal voice, but further as a thinker propelled by an urgent drive to conceptualize and convey an universal vision of existence above and beyond the mundane socio-political dynamics of daily life.

In 1965 Sepehri published his watershed poem “Šedā-ye pā-ye āb,” a loosely autobiographical work that introduced not only the fourth phase in Sepehri’s poetry in particular, but a novel and hitherto unique voice in modern Persian poetry (Šamisā, 1993, pp. 185-91). The poem revolves around a central dichotomy between the restrictive formalities of received knowledge and the dehumanizing materialism of modern times, on the one hand, and the need to reevaluate preconceived ideas and ultimately to attain a closer connection with nature, on the other. “Čašmhā rā bāyad šost,” Sepehri advises, “jur-e digar bāyad did” (We must wash our eyes, we must learn to see otherwise; Sepehri, 1978, p. 291). This urgent call to see everything anew emerged as one of the major themes of all of Sepehri’s subsequent poetry (Āšuri, 1980, pp.18-25; Nafisi, pp. 85, 95-102).

In his next long poem “Mosāfer” Sepehri turns to ancient Persian, Hindu, and Abrahamic mythologies within the panoramic context of the world history to elaborate on the mystical dimension of his thought (Šamisā, 1993, pp. 30-41, 119-84). Carrying faint echoes of Coleridge’s (1772-1834) “Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner” and subtle affinities with Eliot’s (1888-1965) “The Wasteland,” “Mosāfer” comprises the tale of its traveler-persona who, upon arriving at a friend’s home, recounts the story of his spiritual wanderings, a mythical soul journey through time and across lands, which ends with the Ulyssean lesson that Ithaca is an ever-fleeting ideal in time and space, always longed for, but never reached. This soul journey, together with the urge to see anew, lie at the core of Sepehri’s next and most famous collection, *Hajm-e sabz*.

A collection of twenty-five poems written between 1962 and the summer of 1967, *Hajm-e sabz* comprises virtually all of Sepehri’s best-known and most



anthologized works. The first edition has a run of two thousand copies, twice the average print run of the time. “Nedā-ye āgāz” (Primeval call), “Vāḥa-i dar laḥza,” “Pošt-e daryāhā” (Beyond the seas), and “Nešāni” (Address) are among the book’s best received poems, each one rendering various aspects of the above delineated themes with the simplicity, frankness, and subtle urgency that have become emblematic of Sepehri’s voice. The striking shift in *Ḥajm-e sabz* is Sepehri’s existential awareness of his loneliness in the world. It is also in this collection that the new poetic language Sepehri originally introduced in “Ṣedā-ye pā-ye āb” takes on many of its unique and characteristic features, subsequently to become unmistakably associated with him.

Sepehri’s language at this stage is characterized by his forging of unorthodox associations of words, conceptually elusive images, and semantically ‘non-logical’ utterances, to create a crisis of meaning in language; a crisis that ineluctably mobilizes the reader to reach beyond the familiarity of ordinary language ultimately to conceptualize an otherwise indescribable abstraction. A closer look at a section of one of Sepehri’s most characteristic poems “Nešāni” will help clarify the point. Looking for a friend’s home, a horseman asks a passerby for directions. The passerby points to a tall aspen and replies:

*Naresida be derakt,  
kuča bāgīst ke az k̄vāb-e kodā sabz tar ast  
va dar ān ‘ešq be andāza-ye parhā-ye šedāqat ābist.  
Miravi tā tah-e ān kuča ke az pošt-e boluḡ, sar bedar miārad  
pas be samt-e gol-e tanhā’i mipiči  
do qadam mānda be gol  
pā-ye favvāra-ye jāvid-e asātir-e zamin mimāni  
va to rā tarsi šaffāf farā migirad.  
Dar šamimiyat-e sayyāl-e fažā  
keškeši mišenavi  
kudaki mibini  
rafta az kāj-e bolandi bālā  
juja bardārad az lāna-ye nur  
va az u miporsi  
kāna-ye dust kojāst*

(Just before the tree,  
there is a lane greener than God’s dream  
Where love is as blue as the feathers of truth.  
Go to the end of that lane that leads behind puberty



Turn toward the flower of solitude,  
two steps before the flower,  
you will stop next to the immortal fountain of Earthly myths  
where a translucent fear takes hold of you.  
There, in the fluid sincerity of the atmosphere,  
you will hear a rustling:  
You will see a child,  
who has climbed up a tall pine tree,  
to take a nestling from light's nest.  
And there you ask the child:  
where is the friend's house?)  
(*Hašt Ketāb*, p. 359).

While the passerby's simple diction and unquestionably familiar syntax give any speaker of colloquial Persian basic and easy-to-follow directions, the poem's abstract imagery and elusive concepts make for road signs that are essentially impossible to follow. Nevertheless, the delicate balance between the syntax's simplicity and the images' abstraction mobilize the reader to interject meaning where none otherwise exists, ultimately to recognize that the friend's house is an otherworldly place beyond the familiar and ordinary perimeters of day-to-day reality. Unlike Nimā, who often coins new symbols out of concrete objects to convey abstract notions, Sepehri generates meaning through an association of an abstract image with an equally abstract concept, both expressed in a simple language. While other features further contribute to the novelty of Sepehri's language, his success in generating easily accessible abstractions in a simple and highly economical language remains at the core of his success in coining a language that has become infallibly associated with him that the echo of its influence remains recognizable to any reader of Persian modern poetry.

In spite of Sepehri's achievement to introduce a novel language in the then fervent atmosphere of Persian modern poetic production, the publication of *Hajm-e sabz* was met with an onslaught of mixed reviews. Mirroring this split in the Persian literati, two popular newspapers *Āyandagān* and *Keyhān* named *Hajm-e sabz* the best book of the year, while others called it the worst (Langarudi, vol. 3, pp. 419-30). Perhaps the most notorious critique of the book, and in deed of Sepehri's poetry in general, was written at this same time by Rezā Barāheni (b. 1935) in three consecutive issues of *Ferdowsi* (nos. 845-847, Bahman 1346) in which he famously referred to Sepehri as "an aristocratic



Buddha-boy” (bačča Budā-ye ašrāfi) sitting high in his holly ivory tower of sanctity and peace (*borj-e āj-e taqaddos o šafā*) (Barāheni, pp. 281-82). Explicitly intended as a scathing remark, the implications of Barāheni’s commentary were potentially devastating at a time when political commitment (ta’ahhod) was a central issue for a literati who defined literature as a political vehicle. The term “aristocratic Buddha-boy” not only dismissed Sepehri as a child in an ageist patriarchal society where authority can only be gained by virtue of life experience, but it further disenfranchised him from the Persian literati by associating him with a Far Eastern, hence alien, mystical figure who stands as a universal emblem of passivity and political disengagement. More poignantly still, the term “aristocratic” also carried the subtle connotation of associating Sepehri with royalty, hence the court and the Shah: the quintessential ‘Other’ of the *mote’ahhed* literati.

Barāheni was not alone in his opinion. Many, including Nāder Nāderpur, Mehdi Aḳavān-Tāleṭ (1928-1991), and Aḳmad Šāmlu (1925-1999) followed suit, some of whom consistently held the party line on the issue of Sepehri’s poetics until the end of their life (Nāderpur, pp. 198-99; Aḳavān-Tāleṭ, 1989, pp. 61-62; idem, 1994, pp. 115-29; Šāmlu, p. 48). History, however, would prove the shortsightedness of this school of criticism about Sepehri’s work. Starting with the presumption that Sepehri was disconnected from his time, his critics failed to understand not only the depth of his commitment but also its very nature. Recognizing many of the same problems in his world as did his contemporaries, Sepehri’s commitment was not defined by a call for social upheaval and political change, but rather by a drive to reform society through the perfection of the individual from within, and the concomitant belief that society’s problems will invariably correct themselves upon the spiritual and emotional awakening of its people.

In 1979 Sepehri published his famous *Hašt ketāb*, a compendium of his previously published books—with some omissions and revisions of earlier poems—and a new series of poems written between 1967-1979 called *Mā hič, mā negāh*. The most abstract of Sepehri’s poems, *Mā hič, mā negāh* constitutes the fifth and final phase in his poetic development. While many have criticized Sepehri for excessive abstractions that allegedly render these poems incomprehensible (e.g., Behbahāni, p. 361), others have succeeded in revealing the elusive yet profound philosophy that underlies them (M. Raḥmāni, pp. 27-121). The key to decoding these admittedly abstract poems lies in the collection’s title and its not so faint echo of a quote from the American



transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803-1882) essay "Nature," "I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing, I see all" (Š. Ĥosayni, 1996, p. 242). Reverberating this echo, the poems in the collection reflect the Emersonian idea that a direct union with nature can take mankind back to an Edenic state void of the fixed social structures and inflexible belief systems that hinder spiritual evolution. Sepehri's exceptional economy of words, unorthodox phraseology, and elusive imagery convey this philosophy by forcing the reader actively to engage with an excessively abstract text ultimately to forge a new subjective meaning of life.

Though unfinished, Sepehri's final work *Oṭāq-e ābi* remains nevertheless an indispensable tool in any serious study of Sepehri's work, as it provides invaluable insight into the workings of his mind, and reveals the breadth of his knowledge about various ideologies ranging from Taoism and Sufism to Hindu mythology and Jungian analytical psychology. More importantly, *Oṭāq-e ābi* offers a wealth of intertexts to Sepehri's poetry with concepts that elucidate not only some of his more abstract poems but also the techniques and symbolism of his painting.

*Painting.* As was the case with his poetry, the developmental course of Sepehri's painting can also be divided into various phases, each with its respective aesthetic features and thematic characteristics. And while many of the central tenets of his poetry clearly carry over to his paintings, the five distinct phases of his work as a painter were not always strictly synchronistic with those of his development as a poet, even though both began with a classical phase. In his portrait of a young girl reading, landscape with shepherds, and landscape with mud brick house (Sayyār, pp. 14-15) Sepehri's classicism comes through in his concern with perspective, light, and shadow, all characteristic features of the figurative representational school of Kamāl al-Molk (Moḥammad ġŪaffāri, 1848-1940), the father of realist painting in Persia. As was the case with his poetry, this classical phase ended before Sepehri enrolled in Tehran University, without offering any notable innovations in technique, style, or subject matter.

Sepehri's meeting with Šeybāni and his subsequent affiliation with *Ķorus jangi* marked the beginning of the second period in his painting. Like Hušang Pezeškniā (1917-1972), Jalil Žiā'pur, Maḥmud Javādipur (b. 1920) and other early Persian modernist painters who moved away from Kamāl al-Molk's realist style to follow post-impressionist techniques as seen in Paul Cézanne's (1839-1906) landscapes, Sepehri was now relying on color-contrast and



simplified geometric forms with heavy black outlines to express depth and space, rather than defining form with perspective, light, and shade (Raḥmati, pp. 226-28. For Sepehri's paintings, see Sayyār, pp. 20-21). And though Sepehri's post-impressionist period in painting would prove as short as his Nimāic one in poetry, its central principles of a) emphasis upon volumes of space through simple geometric forms as the basis of composition; b) definition of form through color rather than light and shade; and c) the use of series of planes in conveying principles of space, depth, and structural development from a flat surface would stay with him throughout the remainder of his life as a painter.

The next important period in Sepehri's painting is commonly referred to as his Far Eastern phase, examples of which were first displayed at his exhibition at the Farhang Gallery in June 1962 (Emāmi, 1980, pp. 42-43). Over the course of the next two to three years, Sepehri's medium and technique varied, but his subject matter remained essentially the same: semi-abstract figurative still lifes or landscapes with reeds, branches, occasional tree trunks, tulips, and poppy flowers, along with minimalist abstract-expressionist compositions mostly in earth tones with rapidly drawn lines resembling reeds or abstractions of Japanese and Chinese characters ( Pākbāz & Emdādiān, pp. 105-12; Sayyār, pp. 23-31; Golestān, pp. 71-91). While some have resisted referring to any of these works as Japanese or Chinese *per se* by arguing that none comprise any of the defining traits of either tradition (Qarabāgi, pp. 353-59), the overt influence of Chinese and Japanese painting in certain aspects of Sepehri's technique, composition, and subject matter is irrefutable (Mojābi, pp. 208-09). This influence is first and foremost noticeable in Sepehri's preoccupation during this period with semi-abstract natural landscapes that both in composition and subject matter emulate Far Eastern natural landscapes in general, and Chinese monumental landscapes in particular (Sayyār, pp. 23, 29). A direct expression of the Taoist and Zen Buddhist conception of nature, Chinese monumental landscapes provided Sepehri with the ideal model in his strive to express in painting the same notion of the undifferentiated primal unity of the cosmos expressed in *Āvār-e āftāb*. Valuing suggestion over direct declarations, the predominantly vertical composition of these landscapes were meant to invite the onlooker into a hierarchical ascent towards an understanding of the dynamics of the spiritual and natural worlds. Within the composition, what may seem an excessive abstraction of a mountain, river, tree trunk, or tulip by extension proves an intentional expression of the Taoist principle of the inexpressibility of an absolute 'Truth'



that can only be suggested through vague images and composition. That which is not painted thus reflects the imperceptible, indiscernible mystery of unified universe; that which is painted, reflects the boundaries of our perception (Āgdāšlu, pp. 216-18; Raḥmati, pp. 228-30; Qarabāgi, pp. 354-59).

Sepehri's persistence in painting in thematic series, beginning with his Far Eastern landscapes, reached its mature climax in the series he devoted to tree trunks, which comprise the fourth period of his painting (Emāmi, 1968, p. 6. For paintings, see Golestān, p. 107; Pākbāz & Emdādiān, pp. 129, 133; Sayyār, pp. 68-99). Introducing the subject circa 1965, Sepehri continued to paint his tree trunks well into the mid 1970s. Produced with basic variations in style, composition, and color scheme to convey the individual character of each scene, the paintings depict clusters of tree trunks in tight close-ups that leave branches and foliage out of the frame (Mojābi, pp. 209-10). As evidenced by Sepehri's experimentation with series of abstract composition of geometric patterns in 1968-1969 (Sayyār, pp. 33-44) or clusters of rocks and minimalist still-lives later in 1975-1976 (Golestān, p. 56; Sayyār, pp. 47-49; Pākbāz & Emdādiān, pp. 138-39, 142-43), in this fourth period Sepehri was arguably less concerned with the actual subject matter than with the metaphorically imbued potential of the very act of series painting. And while the other subjects did not prove as popular as his tree trunks, they were undoubtedly produced with the same intent (Kaṭīb, pp. 317-19; Qarabāgi, pp. 360-62).

In his fifth and final period, Sepehri returned to his figurative representational watercolor desertscapes of the scenery around his hometown of Kāšān (Emāmi, 2004, pp. 15-16). While the subject matter of this final series arguably lacked the more overt metaphoric potential of his abstract compositions and semi-abstract tree trunks and Far Eastern landscapes, their intent was quite conceivably the same. For here again, faced with frame after frame of virtually identical scenery, the onlooker is left with little choice but to look for those differences that set the simple and serene desertscapes apart from one another. Instinctively driven to look for those particular nuances in each painting that engender a different emotion in us, we are led to break out of our habitual perception of things, to look anew and see the world in a different light (Abbāsi, pp. 329-30).

A panoramic view on Sepehri's collected creative output reveals that he ranks among the poets and painters whose work is not only based on a particular set of aesthetic values, but is further informed by a consciously selected set of tenets appropriated from a broad range of cultures and worldviews. In his



vision of the world and of mankind's place within it, Sepehri believed above all in the importance of people's direct relationship with nature (Hillmann, p. 658; Yarshater, p. 365; Emami, 1971, 359), one unencumbered by the anesthetizing effect of daily habits and preoccupations with preconceived ideas. Unwavering in his belief in a delicate yet essential unity between mankind, nature, and a greater cosmic order, Sepehri spent the length of his artistic life in search of the most effective expression of this central belief. To this end, he freely crossed over to a variety of myths and philosophies ranging from Zen Buddhism and Taoism to Sufism and European Romanticism, retaining from each those tenets most organically suitable to his vision. From romantic poets and Far Eastern philosophers he came to understand creative imagination as a necessary antidote to the banalities of ordinary life and a conduit to a higher, ideal state of spiritual awareness. Symbolic interpretations of myths, faraway places, and the historic past, and a profound subjective connection to nature are also themes Sepehri retained from Romanticism. From Nimā and European post-impressionists he learned to react against classical formalism and restrictions on individual expressions of creativity. Taoism brought him to believe in an essential oneness between mankind and nature, and taught him to see nature as an undifferentiated consubstantial whole in which each constitutive part reflects the organic laws of the great cosmic order. Elsewhere in Zen Buddhism he found the value of a constant and consistent meditative self-contemplation; of living in the here and now; of extracting simplicity from complex paradigms and expressing complex thoughts in the simplest, most economic fashion possible. Thus with a simple verse like "*Tā šaqāyeq hast zendegi bāyad kard*" (So long as the corn poppy exists, life shall go on, *Hašt ketāb*, p. 350) he encapsulates the perpetual, random, and ephemeral nature of life in the image of a self-seeding wild flower that instantly wilts when picked. Closer to home, from Persian Sufis he learned that the presence of a divine spirit in both nature and the human soul makes self-understanding and the contemplation of subtle beauties of the natural world ideal venues for arriving at a first-hand experience of the divine and a deeper understanding of a universal truth. And in accord with all of these worldviews, he came to believe that while a higher unifying truth was innate in all of creation and the knowledge of it intuitively available to all mankind, a conclusive understanding of it was impossible in an individual's life time and the search for it a life-long journey for all.

While the reason for Sepehri's growing popularity both as poet and painter remain perpetually open to investigation, his influence on generations of



artists after him is irrefutable. In poetry this influence began before his death, as his signature voice became the model for Aḥmad Reżā Aḥmadi (b. 1937) and the New Wave Movement (Mowj-e now) in Persian poetry (Langarudi, vol.3, pp. 32-35; Nuri 'Alā', pp. 42-44). Since Sepehri's death, one of the more internationally recognizable reflections of his worldview can be seen in the work of the Iranian film maker 'Abbās Kiārostami (b. 1940) who selected a verse from Sepehri's poem "Nešāni" as the title for one of his earlier films *Kāna-ye dust kojāst?* (Where is the friend's home; Nakjavani, pp. 148-49) As evidenced by multiple reprints of his *Hašt ketāb*, the ever-growing bibliography of criticism on his work, numerous versions of his poetry on tape, recordings of Persian classical music with his poems for lyrics, and the extreme desirability of his paintings for private and institutional collectors, Sepehri has only become more admired since his death. In this exponentially growing popularity, it is above all the unique combination of his deceptively simple style, his philosophy about life, and his transcendental perception of the world that have captivated his audience.

### **Selected Exhibitions:**

1956 – Group exhibition, Kānun-e Mehregān, Tehran  
1958 – First Tehran Biennale, Iran Venice Biennale, Italy  
1960 – Second Tehran Biennale, Iran  
1961 – Solo exhibition, Tālār-e Reżā 'Abbāsi, Tehran  
1962 – Solo exhibition, Tālār-e Farhang, Tehran (two exhibitions)  
1963 – Group exhibition, Gilgameš Gallery, Tehran Solo exhibition, Golestān Film Studio, Tehran Solo Exhibition, Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazils Group exhibition, "Fourteen Contemporary Iranian Artists," Tehran. The show then traveled to Minneapolis before touring the U.S. for four years.  
1964 – Fourth Tehran Biennale, Iran Group exhibition, "Artistes contemporains iraniens," Musé du Havre, Le Havre, France Group exhibition, Niālā Gallery, Tehran Group exhibition, Šabā Gallery, Tehran  
1965 – Group exhibition, Borges Gallery, Tehran Solo exhibition, Borges Gallery, Tehran International Contemporary Art Exhibition, New Delhi  
1967 – Group exhibition, "Contemporary Art of India and Iran," Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Program. The show toured the U.S. until 1969  
1968 – Solo exhibition, Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran Group exhibition, Mess Gallery, Tehran Festival de Royan, France Group exhibition, Goethe Institute, Tehran Group exhibition, Festival of the Arts, Shiraz University



- 1969 – Festival international de peinture, Paris Festival international de peinture, Cagnes-sur-Mer, France
- 1970 – Group exhibition, Elain Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton
- 1971 – Solo exhibition, Elain Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton Solo exhibition, Litho Gallery, Tehran
- 1972 – Solo exhibition, Cyrus Gallery, Paris Solo exhibition, Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran Group exhibition, “One World Through Art,” Minnesota State Fairgrounds Gallery
- 1975 – First International Arts Festival, Tehran Solo exhibition, Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran
- 1976 – Group exhibition, Modern Iranian Art, Basle, Switzerland
- 1978 – Solo exhibition, Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran
- 1982 – Group exhibition, “Bar Yād Māndegān: Ḥosayn Kāzemi, Sohrāb Sepehri, Hušang Pezešk-Niyā,” Tehran Museum of Modern Art, Tehran

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Works by Sepehri:

A. Poetry Collections:

———. *Dar kenār-e čaman yā ārāmgāh-e ‘ešq* (Along the grass or love’s resting place), Kashan, 1947.

———. *Marg-e rang* (The death of color), introduction by Amir-Šāpur Zandniā, Tehran, 1951.

———. *Zendegi-e k̄vābhā* (The life of dreams), Tehran, 1953.

———. *Āvār-e āftāb* (The downpour of sunshine), Tehran, 1961; comprises a reprint of *Zendegi-e k̄vābhā* (the title collection), and *Šarq-e anduh*.

———. *Ḥajm-e sabz* (The expanse of green), Tehran, 1968.

———. *Hašt ketāb* (Eight books), Tehran, 1978.



——. *Montakeb-e aš'ār* (Selected poems), Aḥmad-Rezā Aḥmadi, ed., Tehran, 1985.

——. *Čini-e nāzok-e tanhā'i-e man: montakeb-e aš'ār-e Sohrāb Sepehri* (The thin porcelain of my loneliness: selected poems by Sohrab Sepehri), Nāhid Faršādmehr, ed., Tehran, 1998.

——. *Oṭāq-e ābi* (The blue room), Parvāna Sepehri, ed., Tehran, 2003.

Sepehri has also written the introduction to Mošfeq Kāšāni's collection of poetry, *Kāterāt-e javāni*, 1947. His articles "Kār-e honari āgāz o anjām nadārad", and "Man dayn-e k'vod rā adā' kardam," appeared in *Adabestān*, vol. 2, no. 19, Tir 1370, p. 13, and *Eṭṭelā'āt*, 13 Ordibehešt 1373, p. 11, respectively.

B. Books on CD of Sepehri's poetry:

Aḥmad-Rezā Aḥmadi, *Abyāt-e tanhā'i* (Verses of loneliness), music by Fariborz Lāčini, Tehran, 1989.

Hušang Kāmkār, composer, *Dar Golestāna*, Sepehri's poetry set to classical Persian music, Šahrām Nāzeri (vocals), Tehran, 1988.

Ḳosrow Šakibā'i, *Sohrāb*, with Šahrām Faršid (vocals) and Ḥamid Šadri (arrangements), Tehran, 2003.

——, *Šedā-ye pā-ye āb*, Tehran, 1994.

C. Selected translations of Sepehri's poetry:

Sepehri's translations of Japanese and Chinese poems were published in literary journals of the period (e.g., *Soḳan*, vol. 6, no. 8, Mehr 1322, pp. 703-706, and vol. 13, nos. 9-10, winter 1342; *Ḳusa*, nos. 4 & 5, 1956; *Musiqi*, no. 90, Mordād 1332, pp. 67-69, and no. 91, Šahrivar 1342, pp. 37-46). His translation of the selected parts of *The Rig Veda* appeared in *Honar va sinemā* (Art and cinema), no. 2, 1345). He also translated the works of some Western poets, which were published in different issues of *Daftarhā-ye rowzan* (see, 'Ābedi, 1998, pp. 114-15; Langarudi, 1999, vol.2, pp. 123, 278, 280-86).

In English:

Karim Emami, *The Lover is Always Alone: Selected Poems* (bilingual edition), Tehran, 2004.



—, “Friend,” in Michael Hillmann, *Forugh Farrokhzad: A Quarter-Century Later*, Austin, 1988, pp. 141-42.

—, “Water’s Footsteps: A Poem by Sohrab Sepehri,” *Iranian Studies*, 15/1-4, 1982, pp. 97-116. The translation of the poem in English, German, and French was published in *Matn-e čahār zabāna-ye ‘Šedā-ye pā-ye āb’*, ed., Iraj Hāšemizāda, entitled, Austria, 1990.

—, “A Pinch of Poetry,” *Keyhan International*, 24 June 1968, p. 6.

—, “New Horizons in Persian Poetry,” *Kayhan International*, 20 March 1963, p. 6.

Massud Farzan, “The Sound of Water’s Footsteps,” *Mundus Artitum*, nos. 1 & 2, 1972; repr., in *Kashan to Kalamazoo: Poems and Poems in Translation*, Tehran, 1977, pp. 73-88.

Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, *An Anthology of Modern Persian Poetry*, Colorado, 1987, pp. 96-103 (selected poems).

David L. Martin, *Expanse of Green: Poems of Sohrab Sepehri*, New York, 1988.

Abbas Zahedi & Ismail Salami, *Sohrab Sepehri: The Traveler, We Nothing But Look*, Tehran, 2001.

—, *The Water’s Footfall: The Green Volume*, Tehran, 1999.

#### In French:

Térésa Battesti & Sadreddin Ellahy, “De la poésie contemporaine en Iran,” in *Art et littérature en Iran: Aspects d’hier et d’aujourd’hui*, Marcel Colombe, ed., Paris, 1964, pp. 133-35 (selected poems).

Daryush Shayegan, *Sohrab Sepehri, Oasis d’émeraude*, Paris, 1982 (translation of selections of Sepehri’s poetry with Sepehri’s collaboration).

—, *Les Pas de l’eau*, Paris, 1991.

#### In German:



Cyrus Atabay & Gesäne von Morgen, *Neue iranische lyrik* (selected poems), Hamburg, 1968, pp.

Iradj Hashemizadeh, ed., *Sohrab Sepehri, Der Klang der Wasserschritte*, Graz, 1990 (“Şedā-ye pā-ye āb”).

Djafar Mehrgani & Kurt Scharf, *Echo des Beginns: Vier klassiker der modernen persischen Lyrik. Gedichte von: Achavan Saless, Forugh Farrochsad, Ahmad Schamlu, Sohrab Sepehri*, Köln, 1994.

Kurt Scharf, *Noch immer denke ich an jenen Rabe: Lyrik aus Iran*, Stuttgart, 1981 (“Şedā-ye pā-ye āb” and “Mosāfer”).

In Italian:

Riccardo Zipoli & Gianroberto Scarcia, *Un giardino nella voce: Persia 1972-1994: Fotografie di Riccardo Zipoli; poesie di Sohrāb Sepehri*, Firenze, 1995.

In Armenian

Eduard Hakhverdyan, *Kanach' tsaval: banastghtsut'ynner ew poemner, Sohrab Sep'ehri*, Ervan, 2000 (*Ĥajm-e sabz*).

Critical Studies:

Neẓām ‘Abbāsi Ṭāleqāni, ed., *Mehmāni dar Golestāna: Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1998 (A collection of critical studies on Sepehri).

Peymān Āzād, *Dar ḥasrat-e parvāz: ḥekāyat-e nafs dar še’r-e Aḥmad Šāmlu va Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1995.

Iliyā Diyānuš, *Berahna bā zamin: gozin-guya hā va nāgofta hā-ye Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 2004.

Moḥsen Elhāmi, *Ārmānšahr-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1998.

Karim Emāmi, “Modern Persian Artists,” in Ehsan Yarshater, ed., *Iran Faces the Seventies*, New York, 1971, p. 395.

‘Emād Ḥojjat, *Sohrāb Sepehri va budā*, Tehran, 1998.



- Moḥammad Ḥoquqi, *Šeʿr-e zamān-e mā 3: Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1992.
- , *Šeʿr-e now az āgāz tā emruz*, Tehran, 1991.
- Šarq*, vol. 3/766, 22 May 2006 (Special issue on Sepehri)
- Morteżā Kāki, *Rowšantar az kāmūši*, Tehran, 1989, pp. 59-60.
- Mošfeq Kāšāni (ʿAbbās Key Maneš), *Kalvat-e ons*, Tehran, 1989.
- Maḥmud Kiyānuš, *Naẓm, faẓilat va zibāʿi: taʿammolāti dar honar va adabiyāt*, Tehran, 1990, pp. 84-87 (a reading of “Āb rā gel nakonim”).
- Jalāl Kōsrowšāhi, *Adā-ye deyn be Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 2000.
- Bahrām Meqdādi, *Hedāyat va Sepehri*, Tehran, 1999.
- , *Tahlil va gozida-ye šeʿr-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1998.
- Šāhroḡ Meskub, “Qessa-ye Sohrāb o nušdāru,” *Kvāb o kāmūši*, London, 1994, pp. 13-32.
- Ḥosayn-ʿAli Moḥammadi, *Az bahār tā šahriyār*, vol. 2, 1994, pp. 599-605.
- Javād Mojābi, *Pišgāmān-e naqqāši-e moʿāšer-e Irān*, Tehran, 1997.
- Ḥamid Mošaddeq, *Dar bāra-ye honar va adabiyāt*, vol. 6, ed., Nāšer Ḥariri, Bābol, 1989, pp. 155-58.
- Moḥsen Ṭāher Nowkanda, *Sohrāb Sepehri: ʿarḥhā va etud-hā*, Tehran, 1990 (includes a timeline with Sepehri’s biography).
- Manšur Nurbakš, *Be sorāg-e man agar miāiʿd*, Tehran, 1997.
- Roueen Pakbaz, *Contemporary Iranian Painting and Sculpture*, Tehran, 1974, pp. 36-38, 47-48.
- Pari Šāberi, *Man be bāg -e ʿerfān: Sohrāb Sepehri be rawāyat-e Pari Šāberi*, Tehran, 1990.
- Sirus Šamisā, “Foruḡ o Sohrāb,” in idem, *Negāhi be Foruḡ Farroḡzād*, Tehran, 1994, pp. 295-316.



Maḥmud Sanjari; *Mokāšefa-ye hašt: be tamāšā-ye še'r-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1999.

Žiā-al-Din Torābi, *Sohrābi digar: negāhi tāza be še'rhā-ye Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1996.

Simā Vazirniā & Ġazāl Irāndust, *Zir-e sepehr-e ābi-ye Sohrāb: kand o kāvi dar še'r o andiša-ye Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 2000.

Moḥammad Ja'far Yāḥaqqi, *Čon sabu-ye tešna*, Tehran, 1995, pp. 134-42.

Ġolām-Ḥosayn Yusefi, "Hamzabān bā āb," *Češma-ye rowšan*, Tehran, 1990, pp. 558-67.

Ḥamid Zarrinkub, *Čašmandāz-e še'r-e now-ye Fārsi*, Tehran, pp. 120-22.

#### Sources:

Esmā'il 'Abbāsi, "Bā Sohrāb Sepehri va tablow-hāyaš," *Mo'arrefi va šenākt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, 2001, pp. 329-30.

Kāmyār 'Ābedi, *Tapeš-e sāya-ye dust: dar kalvat-e ab'ād-e zendegi-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1998.

—, *Az mošaḥbat-e āftāb: zendegi va še'r-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1996.

Āydin Āġdāšlu, "Gorizān az jedāl bā jahāni maġšuš," *Bāq-e tanhā'i: Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Ḥamid Siyāhpuš, Tehran, 1995, pp. 212-19.

Mehdi Aḳavan-Ṭāleṭ, *Dar bāra-ye honar va adabiyāt*, ed. Nāšer Ḥariri, vol. 7, Bābol, 1989, pp. 61-62.

—, *Ḥarim-e sāyahā-ye sabz: majmu'a-ye maqālāt*, 2 vols., ed. Morteżā Kāki, 1994, pp. 115-29.

Dāryuš Āšuri, Karim Emāmi, Hosayn Ma'šumi Hamadāni, eds. *Payāmi dar rāh: nazari be še'r va naqqāši-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1980, pp. 15-30.

Dāryuš Āšuri, "Sepehri dar soluk-e še'r," *Bāq-e tanhā'i: Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Ḥamid Siyāhpuš, Tehran, 1995, pp. 11-27.



Rezā Barāhāni, “Yek bačča budā-ye ašrāfi,” *Ṭalā dar mess*, idem, Tehran, 1992, vol. 1, pp. 281-92.

Simin Behbahāni, “Yek ruz bā *Hašt ketāb*,” *Yād-e ba’zi nafarāt*, idem, Tehran, 1998, pp. 327-71.

Nāšer Bozorgmehr, ed. *Yādmān-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1988, pp. 286-88.

Karim Emāmi, *Sohrab Sepehri: The Lover Is Always Alone: Selected Poems Translated from Persian*, Tehran, 2004.

—, “Art in Iran xi. Post-Qajar,” *EIr.* II, 1985, pp. 640-46.

—, “Az āvāz-e šaqāyeq tā farātarhā: negāhi be še’r va naqqāši-e Sohrāb Sepehri,” in *Payāmi dar rāh: nazari be še’r va naqqāši-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, eds., Dāryuš Āšuri, Karim Emāmi, Hosayn Ma’šumi Hamadāni, 1980, pp. 31-60.

—, “An Eyeful of Art in Goethe’s Garden,” *Keyhan International*, 16 June 1968, P. 6.

—, “In Quest of Sepehri,” *Keyhan International*, 5 February 1968, p. 6.

—, “Artist at Peace With Himself,” *Keyhan International*, 2 June 1962, p.6.

Lili Golestān, ed., *Sohrāb Sepehri: šā’er-naqqāš*, Tehran, 1980.

Abby Weed Grey, *The Picture is the Window, The Window is the Picture: An Autobiographical Journey*, New York, 1983.

Ḥosayn Ma’šumi Hamadāni, “Az me’rāj o hobaṭ: seyri dar še’r-e Sohrāb Sepehri,” *Payāmi dar rāh: nazari be še’r va naqqāši-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Dāryuš Āšuri, Karim Emāmi, Hosayn Ma’šumi Hamadāni, eds. Tehran, 1980, pp. 84-86.

Michael G. Hillmann, “SIPIHRI, SUHRĀB,” *EI2*, IX, p. 658.

Ḥasan Ḥosayni, *Bidel, Sepehri va sabk-e Hendi*, Tehran, 1988.

Šāleḥ Ḥosayni, *Golhā-ye niāyeš: se’r va naqd-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1996.

—, *Nilufar-e kāmūš: nazari be še’r-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1992.

A. M. Kaṭīb (Darrudi), “Sohrāb Sepehri va tafannoni bā morabba’ hā,” *Mo’arrefi va šenākt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī pp. 317-19.



Šams Langarudi, *Tāriḳ-e taḥlilī-e šeʿr-e now*, 4 vols, Tehran, 1999.

Javād Mojābi, “Ravāyat-e ensāni ke jozʿ-e ṭabiʿat ast,” *Bāq-e tanhāʾi: Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Ḥamid Siyāhpuš, Tehran, 1995, pp. 208-12.

Morteżā Momayyez, “Nešāni,” *Sohrāb Sepehri: šāʿer-naqqāš*, ed., Lili Golestān, Tehran, 1980, pp. 50-54.

Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, ed, *Moʿarrefī va šenāḳt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 2001.

Nāder Nāderpur, “Šāʿeri bā tasalloṭ bar bayān va čira dasti dar tašvir sāzi,” *Moʿarrefī va šenāḳt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, Tehran, 2001, pp. 195-99.

Āzar Nafisi, “Čašm hā rā bāyad šost,” *Moʿarrefī va šenāḳt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, Tehran, 2001, pp. 81-102.

Erik Nakjavani, “Getting at the Primordial Roots of Being: Abbas Kiarostami’s Cinematic and Poetic Vision,” *North Dakota Quarterly*, 70/3, Summer 2003, pp. 137-51.

Ruiʿn Pākbāz & Yaʿqub Emdādiān, *Be bāq-e hamsafarān: Ḥosayn Kāzemi, Sohrāb Sepehri, Hušang Pezešknīā*, Tehran, 2000.

ʿAli-Ašḡar Qarabāḡi, “Tardidhā-ye tajassomi,” *Moʿarrefī va šenāḳt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, Tehran, 2001, pp. 350-64.

Mehdi Qaračadāḡi, “Payām-e kānavada-ye Sepehri,” *Yādmān-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Nāšer Bozorgmehr, Tehran, 1988, pp. 145-47.

—, “Ḳāṭerāt-e širin-e man az dāyi Sohrāb,” *Moʿarrefī va šenāḳt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, Tehran, 2001, pp. 400-02.

Mehri Raḥmāni, *Sohrāb: payāmbār-e sabz*, Tehran, 2003.

Ḥamid Raḥmati, “Kušešhā-ye šādeqāna ammā šekast ḳʿorda,” *Bāq-e tanhāʾi: Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Ḥamid Siyāhpuš, Tehran, 1995, pp. 223-32.

Hāšem Rajabzāda, “Negāhi be šeʿrhā-ye Jāponi-e tarjoma-ye Sohrāb Sepehri,” *Moʿarrefī va šenāḳt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, Tehran, 2001, pp. 236-49.



Šahrām Rajabzāda, “Bidel, Sepehri va sabk-e Hendi, va ḥādeṭa’i mobāarak o šowq angiz,” *Soruš*, vol. 11, no. 487, 1 Mehr 1368, pp. 20-23.

Sirus Šamisā, *Negāhi be Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1993.

Aḥmad Šāmlu, *Honar va adabiyāt-e emruz*, ed., vol. 1, ed. Nāšer Ḥariri, Bābol, 1986, p. 48.

Parviz Sayyār, *Naqqāši va ṭarḥā-ye Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1992.

Paridoḳt Sepehri, *Sohrāb, morḡ-e mohājer*, Tehran, 2003.

—, *Hanuz dar safaram: še’rhā va yāddāsthā-ye montašer našoda az Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 2001.

Parvāna Sepehri, “Barādaram Sohrāb,” *Mo’arrefi va šenākt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, 2001, pp. 403-04.

—, “Eṭṭelā’iya dar mowred-e āṭār-e Sohrāb Sepehri,” *Eṭṭelā’āt*, 19 Farvardin 1371.

—, “Neshāni az dust: goft o gu bā Parvāna Sepehri,” *Adabestān* 19 Tir 1370, pp. 10-13.

—, “Sohrāb az zabān-e k̄vāharaš,” *Adabestān*, vol. 1, no. 5, Ordibehešt 1990, pp. 20-21.

Manučehr Šeybāni, “Naqqaš-e šākahā va panjarahā: namāyešgāh-e Sohrāb Sepehri dar talār-e Rezā ‘Abbāsi,” *Mo’arrefi va šenākt-e Sohrāb Sepehri*, ed., Šahnāz Morādi-Kučī, Tehran, 2001, pp. 313-14.

Sa’id Širi, *Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 2002.

Ḥamid Siyāhpuš, ed., *Bāq-e tanhā’i: Sohrāb Sepehri*, Tehran, 1995.

Sirus Ṭāhbāz, “Nemāyešgāh-e naqqāši-e Sohrāb Sepehri,” *Keyhān-e māh*, vol. 1, no. 2, Šahrivar 1341, p. 185.

Ehsan Yarshater, “Contemporary Persian Painting,” *Highlights of Persian Art*, R. Ettinghausen and E. Yarshater, eds., Boulder, Colorado, 1979, pp. 363-79.