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This weeping human child,
lamenting two thousand
years in my arms?

ROSA JAMALI

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The Raza
Biennale of
Asian Poetry
2019

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CREDITS

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Organised by:

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About the poet

About VAK-The Raza Biennale of Asian Poetry

Knotweed

I've turned to an annual plant, shielded and armed, from the
genus of hollyhocks and broad leaves

Whole five- thousand-year history is turning over my head

It was the moment that you were buried with no shroud

And I'm the weeds and icicles of this land,...

Had been climbing over the flame, it was a black ladder ,
burning my sole feet

It was the moment that I had chopped my heart, you had
sucked my blood in that woundless bowl

Had been growing like a wild flower, had been living for
millions of years

In Syriac over my body:

Nail-shaped herbs had written some letters.

I'm the genus of thorns with wounded heels of thousands
miles travelling in the oasis

My blistered feet, weary and my parched lips

Shattered by the mountain ranges I had been fighting with my
claws

My roots are extended with the fluent liquid in the vessels

Lilacs had grown over my arms and now I've turned to the ivy
as if burning in fire

I left my name for the land I stepped in,...

And who's this weeping human child, lamenting two thousand
years in my arms? Still weeping?! Always weeping?!

I 've been raising this child for six thousand years

I've grown this Persian hero to send him to the battlefield

Breast- fed him

And he has grown out of my eyes

This extreme light which has blinded me....

The Clock Cell

Something dies accidentally
And the sunlight which has soaked is wet and obscure
If I continue the lines
The frozen object captured in your hands slips down
Or the day has come to an end.

Vacant
When I get home
Standstill current of water
And the sunlight which is damp
On the blank sheets
I wept on my old garments.

The elements
Its origin has been painted by my blood
The rain of cats and dogs on my plantation
The moon is vast!

Here with my frostbite on the iron post,
I gave the time to the hand of river
The time was a whim dropped away
The moments have been wasted and cleared away...

The wall has turned blue

Me and the black gown
Happened to pour down to the river.

It's a calf death breast-fed.

What is it?
Sediments on a neutral background
It could be in a different colour
It's been many days since I started walking on the rope
The creased moon is falling down the ceiling.

Blizzard
A flimsy stone
The frostbite on the window glass
The bridge has fallen down
Silence on a metal tape
Ending to a blind full stop.

The angles of the frame

1

Many years have passed since the day,
I looked into a mirror, saw a wrinkled face.
I've been disclosed to the bulging sands of my bed.

2

Aeons of breath account for the many veins in my atrium.

3

The bull I breast-fed for many years
And I've submerged into the frame.

4

I knew the justifications were hard,
Hard as against the current of water.
No news from the ambiguous points
something uncommon.
It can't be justified by natural rules,
many years we've been tangled on it.

5

This usurped land is a part of all buried treasure islands
No finger points in any direction.
Lost in the dead-end alleys
Tracing images without a compass.

6

Horse pounding pulse sing endlessly in my blood.
My kinsmen of horses...
Blood-line linked as to rays of a circle
like roots of a tree growing deep on the roof.

7

You can't stop the hands of the clock.
You can't come back to the broken minutes.
The days have been arranged one after another.
The knights have left the game one after another.

8

There was a straw mat where you fell asleep.
I became numb, quite used to the stillness of the house.

9

Was something supposed to get away from the core to join us?
A century has passed and we still live in this house.

10

Dimensions have shifted
Not exclusive to the roof
The letters approved us as the residents of the house
They ran away as the convicts
And we got used to the standstill.

The last street before you leave Tehran

Facing the airport,
all that's now left in my grasp
is a crumpled land
that fits in the palm of my hand

Facing the wavering sunbeams
of a sun that is cross and will not speak with us.
All the way from the salt sands of Dasht-e Lut,
it came, a dream that made my fingers shift,
that set my teeth on edge, a muted breeze,
a whirlwind
spun from the sand dunes
all the way through the back alley of our house.
Pasting together the cut up fragments of my face to make me
laugh?
A short leap, no longer than the palm of the hand,
exactly the length you had predicted
A huge grave
in which to lay the longest night of the year to sleep
“Sleep has quit our eyelids for other pastures,
has dropped its anchor at the shores of garden ponds
has lost the chapped flaking of its lips,
poor thing.”
Pasting together the cut up fragments of my face to make me
laugh?

With scissors – snip, snip – they're cutting something up.
The alphabet shavings strewn on the ground,
are they the letters of our name?
With every other zig-zag,
rigid and unyielding,
in the middle of the salt dunes, flat and vast,
did you cage my mother's breath,
her footprints fading
in the shifting sands?

Pasting together the cut up fragments of my face to make me
laugh?
No!...
I will not return to the last street.
I left behind a shoe, one of a pair, for you to put on and follow
after me
A strange shape forms
facing the horizon...
It fits in the palm of the hand!
A big leap, beyond what three legs could manage,
the length of the palm of the hand.

Suppose that I am inevitable

Suppose that I'm inevitable
Even the veins of my right hand
Cross you from the drafts

On my smooth nails
The breeze
Which is not from the sky
Is curving you
Either the veins of my right hand
Is running short
On my pulse.

Rolled along my fingers
Vanished
Not repeated for ever
For the second
I'm a half
Since the first.

The veins of my neck cross you all.

If the warmth of my ten fingers
Seized on your torn pieces of breath
All is over
With the dead-end alleys
all in oblivion.

Like a hanged pitcher

Like a hanged pitcher,
No drink is pouring off me
It's natural to get numbed gradually.

Pig-headed seashells!
This boasting sky,
Is an anchor
Which has fallen on my lap
This dizzy sky!
The moon's been cleared
A shadow's coming after me
Barefooted on my dreams
You used to run!

Enjoyed?!
Numbed?!

All my veins are connected to this land...

Like a hanged pitcher
Joyful of this sky
One day a huge whale swallowed it as a whole.

And it was over!
The Gulf was over!
You waved hands.

Like a hanged pitcher,
It's simple!
I lost the game
And gambled away...

Tehran cuddled in my arms

Tehran in my arms
At the agony of death
In my bosom
Is an aged bull
Which is mooing
Yet tamed and dull
Rubbing its figure on my hair.
But tomorrow,
It'll be a dead body
And the dustman will collect it
I'm a refuge of this kicking bitch dog
And I'll leave it to God...

The old resident of this house is the gloomy hawk

Me
huddled here
And my red cells flee
The game ended in nil
Never-existed memories on the road
on sale!

It was a man
Heavy
on my eyelids.
No, it won't be over
All the mirrors show me the same
A locked room
The stone's falling down
Single-handed and barefoot
The day is just the surface!
That parted memory
Tossing and turning
Sing me lullabye
Is this the memory loss
Or I,m wounded?
And nobody knows
The drizzle of salt
On that large basin.
The days are sick!
Can you feel my pulse?
And me
Is a memory joined to your veins
Tired
Although they're playing the drums
As loudly as possible
But I'm a deaf!
The only resident of this house is the gloomy hawk.

Unripe Greengages

I'm unripe greengages
It was a necessity
That I was just born to be a flavour

Chesslike City, Tehran

You see the city in my veins fast asleep
Like the obscure web over my brain
As if destroyed the fragments of my memory.

In the morning things were perfect
Just a watchdog which is penetrating incessantly into the eyelids
Things for sure were perfect in the morning.

Signals, signals and parasites bombarded the satellite TV!

Tehran,
Like a white sheet, stagnant on the washing hanging
Still things are perfect,
Waves moving around me;
This wretched scorching hot sultry weather

I'm the only driver turning into the highways
Railings like parallel lines keeping us altogether

Is the turning turning for ever?

Lack of iron and minerals,
Mercury as fast as death is shadowing the table frame now
Temperature's just dropped!

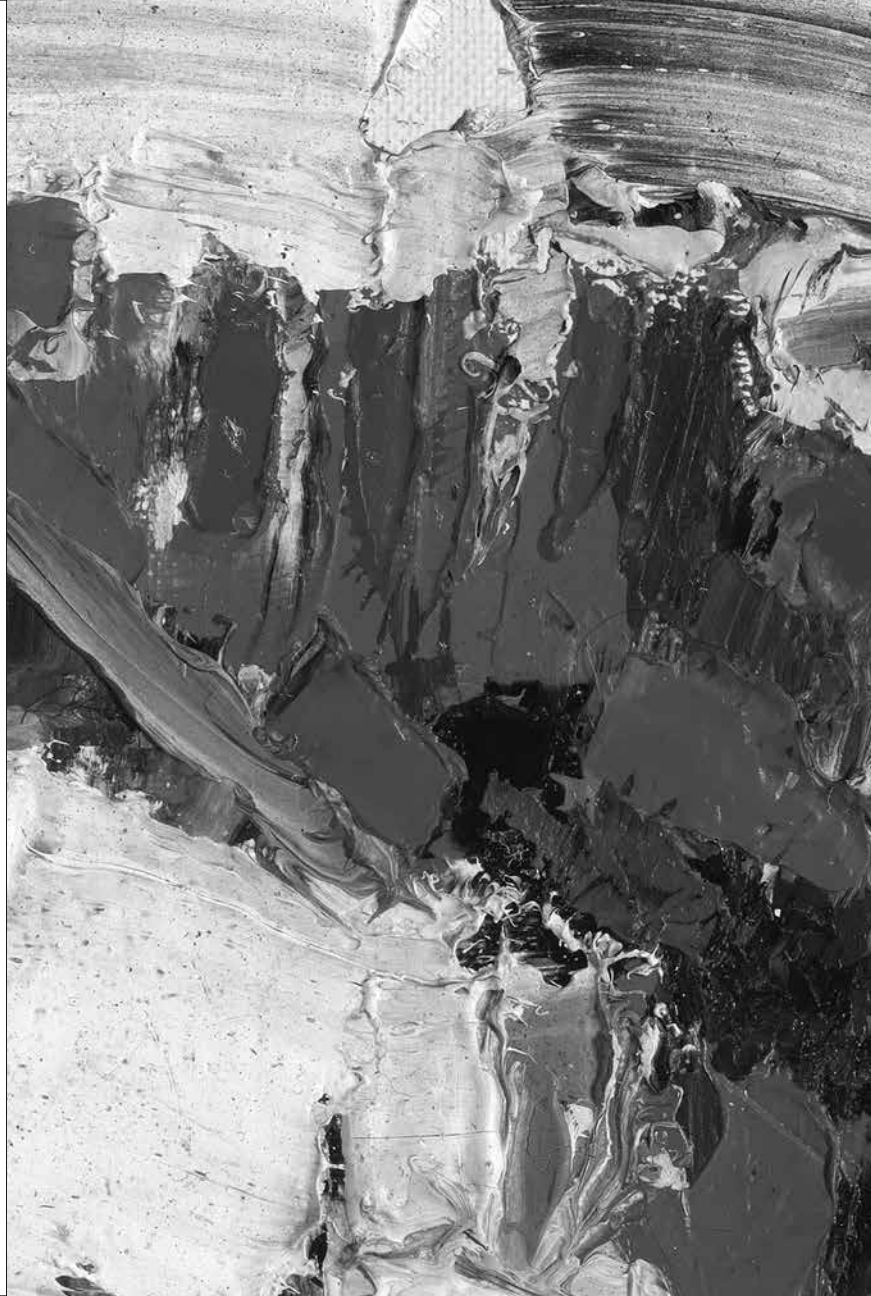
Tehran is the city in my veins fast asleep!

Railings are putting us into sleep
The ruins of city have been left over the frame.

Done with your breakfast?
Shall we exit from the right?
The prism, turning and turning into the wind

As if our torn-up parched lips and the garments in the
whirlwind

By watching I feel pins and needles in my arms
The chessboard you made
With all its dead bodies,
Surfing over the waters and waters of the metropolis!





Rosa Jamali studied Drama at the Tehran University of Art; later she received an MA degree in English Literature from Tehran University.

Her debut collection of poems, “This Dead Body is Not an Apple, It Is Either a Cucumber or a Pear”, was published in 1997 and announced a major new voice in Iranian poetry. The book opened Persian poetry to new creative possibilities. That same year her second collection of poems “Making a Face” was published and well received by critics.

Her third collection “Making Coffee To Run a Crime Story” was partly inspired by Sadegh Hedayat’s Blind Owl. Her most recent books are “The Hourglass is Fast Asleep” and “Highways Blocked”, which have been mentioned for combining present day setting with the myths and themes of Persian mystics.

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**VAK-THE RAZA BIENNALE OF
ASIAN POETRY 2019**

Dates: 15, 16, 17 February 2019

15th February 2019

Opening Remarks by Ashok Vajpeyi and Director, IIC, New Delhi

Launch of VAK-A Collection of Asian Poetry

SESSION I :

Poets: Ko Un **South Korea**, Kutty Revathi **India**, Amir Or **Israel**, Afsar Rahbeen **Afghanistan**

Conversation: Freedom and Dissent in Poetry

Speakers: Marine Petrossian **Armenia**, Udayan Vajpeyi **India**, Nguyen Hoang Bao Viet **Vietnam**, Najwan Darwish **Palestine**

16th February 2019

SESSION II:

Poets: Marine Petrossian **Armenia**, Yang Lian **China**, Alvin Pang **Singapore**, Saw Wai **Myanmar**, Shahnaz Munni **Bangladesh**

SESSION III:

Poets: Emiko Mayashita **Japan**, Rosa Jamali **Iran**, Koushiki Dasgupta **India**, Najwan Darwish **Palestine**, Youhong Liu **China**, K. Satchidanandan **India**

SESSION IV:

Conversation: Truth of Poetry in Post Truth Times

Speakers: Ko Un **South Korea**, Saw Wai **Myanmar**, Nomaan Shauq **India**, Amir Or **Israel**, Sitanshu Yashaschandra **India**

17th February 2019

SESSION V:

Poets: Sitanshu Yashaschandra **India**, Chheangly Yeng **Cambodia**, Thongbay Photishane **Laos**, Hasmik Simonian **Armenia**, Udayan Vajpeyi **India**

SESSION VI

Poets: Chador Wangmo **Bhutan**, Zebo Mirzaeva **Uzbekistan**, Gvanca Kereselidze **Georgia**, Nomaan Shauq **India**, Asad Zaidi **India**

SESSION VII:

Conversation: Violence and Poetry

Speakers: Chheangly Yeng **Cambodia**, Shahnaz Munni **Bangladesh**, Asad Zaidi **India**, Gvanca Kereselidze **Georgia**, Afsar Rahbeen **Afghanistan**

Last words by Ashok Vajpeyi

Organizers

The Raza Foundation, New Delhi, India
India International Center, New Delhi, India

Hospitality partners

Akar Prakar Gallery and Vadehra Art Gallery

RAZA UTSAV - 2019

February 7-8, 2019:

Yuva Shastriya, at Auditorium, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi.

February 9, 2019:

Art Matters- A talk on Indian Modernism at Seminar Hall, India International Center, New Delhi

February 10, 2019:

Kabir Gayan at Rapta Ghat, Mandla, Madhya Pradesh

February 14-28, 2019:

Kala Vividha- a group show at Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi

February 15-17, 2019:

VAK-The Raza Biennale of Asian Poetry at India International Center, New Delhi

February 18-19, 2019:

Aarambh at Alliance Française de Delhi and Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi

February 20, 2019:

Gandhi Matters, Satyagraha and the Conquest of Evil at India International Center, New Delhi

February 22, 2019:

Raza & Krishen Khanna at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

March 1-2, 2019:

Vichar Vinod- A Festival of Ideas at Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi

BOX SET COLLECTION

- 1: AFGHANISTAN: M. Afsar RAHBEEN, *I am a Poemland*
- 2: ARMENIA: Hasmik SIMONIAN, *Love - uninhabited island decaying in the ocean*
- 3: ARMENIA: Marine PETROSSIAN, *What is to be done?*
- 4: BANGLADESH: Shahnaz MUNNI, *Grief that struck no one*
- 5: BHUTAN: Chador WANGMO, *It's raining in my bag!*
- 6: CAMBODIA: Chheangly YENG, *All over me, were all the inscribed names*
- 7: CHINA: Yang LIAN, *A sunflower seed's lines of negation*
- 8: CHINA: Youhong LIU, *This has become the only way home*
- 9: GEORGIA: Gvantsa KERESLIDZE, *I am an empty house*
- 10: IRAN: Rosa JAMALI, *This weeping human child, lamenting two thousand years in my arms?*
- 11: INDIA: Koushiki DASGUPTA, *Dead-Body*
- 12: INDIA: Kutti REVATHI, *Let's wander with our solitary breast and carry our sun above us.*
- 13: INDIA: K SATCHIDANANDAN, *A Tree is a dictionary of leaves*
- 14: INDIA: Nomaan SHAUQ, *Digging in a dead land*
- 15: INDIA: Udayan VAJPEYI, *The sky arches over them, turning them fathomless*
- 16: INDIA: Sitanshu YASHASCHANDRA, *Histories, rob us of our questions*
- 17: INDIA: Asad ZAIDI, *Future is already here*
- 18: ISRAEL: Amir OR, *Beyond language, language is a wound, from which the world flows and flows*
- 19: JAPAN: Emiko MAYASHITA, *I rinse the leaves, the leftovers of green caterpillars*
- 20: LAOS: Thongbay PHOTHISHANE, *Arts of Poetic*
- 21: MYANMAR: Saw WAI, *Because of some scenes without title*
- 22: PALESTINE: Najwan DARWISH, *Seats of hope are always reserved*
- 23: SINGAPORE: Alvin PANG, *Grief will teach you new names*
- 24: SOUTH KOREA: Ko UN: *A Certain Joy*
- 25: UZBEKISTAN: Zebo MIRZAEVA, *Will you come again to this heart, return?*
- 26: VIETNAM: Nguyen Hoang Bao VIET, *A Desired and Expected Spring*

A NOTE

Our times are being described as 'Post Truth' and 'Fact-Free' times. One of the major forms of resistance to and defiance of this massive and global trampling of truth, justice, dignity and memory, we believe, is poetry. It can be reasonably asserted that in these times, when there is a growing dominance of untruth, falsehood, amnesia and injustice globally almost, poetry still roots itself in truth and justice, in human dignity and possibility, in memory and imagination. It dares to speak, embody and insist on truth and justice in our troubled times.

VAK-The Raza Biennale of Asian Poetry aspires to focus and highlight the truth-speaking powers of poetry and to make it coincide with the 150 years celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. He emphasized the abiding value of freedom, justice, tolerance, equality and dignity. The relevance of these values remains alive though they are facing tremendous pressure and, indeed, daily attacks and assaults. The poetry biennale, 'VAK' endeavors to bring together poetic voices from all over Asia to remind it of the continuing struggle and resistance for truth, tolerance, nonviolence and justice to prevail.



The Raza Foundation is an arts and culture organization established in 2001 by the master of Indian modern art Late Shri Sayed Haider Raza, who sets an example where fame and glory are not lonesome attainments but things to be liberally shared with the broader creative community.

The Foundation has been instrumental in creating spaces for various art and culture programs, publications and fellowships to the younger talent and also carrying a deeper research into the work of the masters. The Foundation has also been providing a financial assistance for a large number of institutions, individuals and projects relating to culture, visual arts, music, dance, theatre, ideas, architecture, photography and for the publication of many important books including *The Art Critic: writings of Richard Bartholomew*, Kumar Shahani's *'the shock of desire and other essays*, *Smriti Vismriti: Shankho Chaudhury, Kaljayee Kumar Gandharva, The Spirit of Indian Paintings, Finding My Way: Venkat Singh Shyam, Sonata of Solitude: Vasudev Santu Gaitonde* etc.

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