

PARI

1

With a hundred thousand people
You are all alone.
Without a hundred thousand people
You feel you are just as alone.

(Rudaki)

2

They say: "Hell awaits the lover and the drunkard!"
But do not believe it! This statement is false.
Were Hell for lovers and drunkards, then tomorrow
Paradise would be empty as the palm of the hand!

(Khayyām)

3

One time as a child we went before a master to learn.
Then for a time we were happy to be a master ourself.
Now open your ear to what became of us!
Like the sea we rose, but like the wind we blew away!

(Khayyām)

4 [for ĵinā]

Oh you the living,

still dear,

even after death,

with bloodied clothes,

torn and tattered

in downpour of hail

-- you whose being was molded

out of light,

out of passion,

out of striving,

out of growth!

Now every spring,

when nature's season shifts,

your glorious history

once again returns.

Because the story of your life,

on the very plains

and mountain slopes,

is written

with anemone's blood

on petals of the wild rose.

(M. Sereshk)

5

My death, one day it will arrive.

One of these days so bitter, so sweet.

An empty day like the others.

A shadow of days present, of days gone by.

(Forugh Farrokhzād)

6 (for Pari)

Pari was blue.
I had seen her in the mist, in the storm.
In the sea, in the ocean.
It seemed to me she had lost her way.

And it was her I saw weeping in the flatlands,
in the arid plains,
saddened by the great Salt Desert's colour.
She wondered: "Why isn't it blue?"
It seemed to me she had lost her way.

But this passed.
Now when she appeared,
I saw Pari in a different place,
dressed in shining blue.
A paint brush in her hand,
before a canvas
with an image of the great Salt Desert.

She wanted to depict everywhere,
on sand, on soil, on the arid plains,
the blue of the waters of the world.

But then it was she who passed...
And she left you with blue feelings.

(Mehrnaz Salehi)

7

If you come to visit me,
step softly and with grace
lest cracks should appear
in the fragile porcelain of my loneliness.

(Sohrāb Sepehri)

8

Yes!

We are the bud of a dream.

One day we will blossom.

Without a leaf's motion.

In the Valley of Death.

Who will inhale our fragrance?

(Sohrāb Sepehri)

Translated from Persian by John O'Kane