

## Three Poems by Nader Naderpour, a Poet of the Sun Translated, introduced and analysed by Rouhollah Zarei

Nader Naderpour (1929-2000) is a mastermind bridging classical and modern Persian poetry. His power of description is so strong that in modern Persian poetry he stands unrivalled. The sun is the most frequent image in his poetry. With the exception of one book, in all other books of poems the sun is used figuratively on many occasions. Naderpour can thus be safely called a poet of the sun with no rival in modern Persian poetry. Disregarding numerous literal uses of the sun, there are over a hundred figurative takes on it, including personification, Naderpour's favorite trope, similes, and metaphorical and symbolic representations of the sun.

The titles of ten poems contain the word sun and there are a hundred and nine poems in which the sun appears in figurative terms. They were composed between 1950 and 1995 and this is a very strong indication that time and place did not alter the manna of his poetic vision. Both at home and abroad he thought of the sun though his attitude toward the sun was subject to time and place. The personification of the sun in sixty-five poems clearly shows how close the sun was to his heart. The poet in his youth has a very positive attitude toward a personified happy sun but in his old age when he is far away from his motherland he is deprived of the laughing sun which appears in many of his poems.

Reminding the reader of John Donne's "The Sun Rising," an angelic sun is sometimes paradoxically unwelcome since it is a meddling fly in the ointment and ends the love-making night:

You Night Demon kill the Sun Angel  
I do not want her on rooftop in the morning.<sup>1</sup>

Naderpour does not usually create a positive picture of the sun of the fall. However, when he depicts the beloved, even the negative sun of the fall becomes soothing as in "Sketch." The sun is at times a means to help create the image of the beloved as in "Impatient," but in "The Sun's Blood" the personified sun prepares nature for the lovers to do their business. Occasionally, the sun is involved in erotic and sexual scenes and it is the speaker who is a witness. Like Midas, Naderpour has the magic power to turn anything into a sun: ball, balloon, bowl, cart wheel, egg, eye, finger nails, heart, umbrella and numerous other items.

The sun was Naderpour's alter ego. It was seen in all the stages of life: birth, youth, old age, and even death; happy and sad; thriving and ailing, merciful and wrathful, an ardent lover and an avowed enemy. Naderpour lived to the tune of the sun. The rising and setting of the sun represented the ebb and flow of the poet's fortunes. It is no surprise that the poet clairvoyantly speaks on behalf of the sun: "The smiling sun called me 'The Poet.'"<sup>2</sup>

Below are three poems celebrating the beloved, incorporating images of the sun. The following poems, translated for the first time now, were expurgated from Naderpour's collections of poems after the revolution in 1979 in his home country.

<sup>1</sup>Nader Naderpour, "In Memory of a Friend" ["Yād-e dūst"], *Collected Poems [Majmū'e-ye Ash'ār]*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Tehran: Negah, 2003, 161.

<sup>2</sup>Naderpour, "Dream Interpretation" ["Ta'bīr"], *Collected Poems*, 775.

### **Impatient**<sup>3</sup>

Morning: carving the marble of her body curves  
with the sun's golden axe,  
splashing the sun's fragrance on her body  
with pine needles.

Noon: every sweaty bead dripping  
sweet drops of the wine of her body,  
her chest like the soft throat of pigeons  
throbbing heavily in her shirt.

Night: going to bed nude as the moon  
and the moonlight hatching her body.  
The wind: spreading the hot scent of her shirt  
more lightly than the fragrance of convolvulus.

Leaning on the pillow, lecherous and lustful,  
in her heart she raises hopes for my sin,  
ever awaiting me  
to burn her body with hot kisses.

### **Sketch**<sup>4</sup>

You naked houri in the paradise of my fantasy!  
charming as the willow, tall as the cypress,  
do not sketch your silhouette in the air in vain,  
I am your closest acquaintance.

I unveil the spring of your limbs;  
with my wild claws  
I peel the willow of your white body,  
a fresh and juicy willow,  
clear as water, cool as marble!

I watch the red fish of your lips  
swimming in the waves of your forehead  
and behind the fish of your lips  
the sparkle of laughter is  
more soothing than the rising sun of the fall.

From the secret heat of your body  
you at times see clouds in my arms, ready to rain.

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<sup>3</sup> Nader Naderpour, "Impatient" ["Bītāb"], *The Grapes Poem [She'r-e angūr]*. Tehran: Morvarid Publishers, 1958, 93-94.

<sup>4</sup> Nader Naderpour, "Sketch" ["Tarh"], *The Sun's Kohl [Sormeh-ye khorshīd]*. Tehran: Morvarid Publishers, 1960, 67-68.

At other times, the radiance of your laughter  
creates the rainbow of sorrow and joy  
in my tears.

You naked houri of the paradise of my fantasy,  
do fill the chalice of my clear poem!

### **The Sun's Blood<sup>5</sup>**

The spring permeated alleyways with fragrance  
and the fine powder of dews dancing in the air,  
the drunken soil at the end of sleep  
had thirstily gulped a cup of the night's rain.

The morning sun dripped molten gold  
on the enamel of leaves  
and his lips sucked the moles of the night's raindrops  
on flowers' bodies.

Like a drunken serpent  
she was sleeping in the grass,  
through the cleft of her lids  
sun rays shone on the crystal of the eyes.

Sweet drops of laughter  
dripped from the drooping eyes,  
the sun's hot blood simmered  
like pungent wine in my vessels.

With my kisses, she was mad;  
with hers, I was burning.  
We tore and sewed  
the green velvet of the grass,  
I bit her moist and acrid cheeks,  
the ripening raspberries of her lips  
tasted of the sun and soil.

Soft wind like morning birds touched her limbs,  
drunkenness had robbed her of the calm  
and her chest heaved like waves of the sea  
I buried my head in the cup of her chest  
I smelled and drank her in one gulp!  
I covered her with my shadow  
barring her from the lecherous sky's glance!

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<sup>5</sup> Naderpour, "The Sun's Blood" ["Khūn-e āftāb"], *The Grapes Poem*, 89–92.