

Forugh Farrokhzad (1934 - 1967) was an influential Iranian poet and film director. She was a controversial modernist poet and an iconoclast, writing from a female point of view.

She is still inspiring many women all over the world, and in some (Middle Eastern) countries her popularity is comparable to a rockstar.



Forugh (also spelled Forough) was born in Tehran to career military officer Colonel Mohammad Bagher Farrokhzad and his wife Touran Vaziri-Tabar in 1935. The third of seven children (Amir, Massoud, Mehrdad, Fereydoun Farrokhzad, Pouran Farrokhzad, Gloria), she attended school until the ninth grade, then was taught painting and sewing at a girl's school for the manual arts. At age sixteen she was married to Parviz Shapour, an acclaimed satirist. Farrokhzad continued her education with classes in painting and sewing and moved with her husband to Ahvaz. A year later, she bore her only child, a son named Kāmyār (subject of A Poem for You).

Within two years, in 1954, Farrokhzad and her husband divorced; Parviz won custody of the child. She moved back to Tehran to write poetry and published her first volume, entitled *The Captive*, in 1955.

Farrokhzad, a female divorcée writing controversial poetry with a strong feminine voice, became the focus of much negative attention and open disapproval. In 1958 she spent nine months in Europe and met film-maker and writer Ebrahim Golestan, who reinforced her own inclinations to express herself and live independently. She published two more volumes, *The Wall* and *The Rebellion* before traveling to Tabriz to make a film about Iranians affected by leprosy. This 1962 documentary film titled *The House is Black* won several international awards. During the twelve days of shooting, she became attached to Hossein Mansouri, the child of two lepers. She adopted the boy and brought him to live at her mother's house.

In 1963 she published *Another Birth*. Her poetry was now mature and sophisticated, and a profound change from previous modern Iranian poetic conventions.

At 4:30PM on February 13, 1967, Farrokhzad died in a car accident at age thirty-two. In order to avoid hitting a school bus, she swerved her Jeep, which hit a stone wall; she died

before reaching the hospital. Her poem Let us believe in the beginning of the cold season was published posthumously, and is considered by some to be the best-structured modern poem in Persian.

Farrokhzad's poetry was banned for more than a decade after the Islamic Revolution. A brief literary biography of Forough, Michael Hillmann's *A lonely woman: Forough Farrokhzad and her poetry*, was published in 1987. Also about her is a chapter in Farzaneh Milani's work *Veils and words: the emerging voices of Iranian women writers* (1992).



(source: <https://www.poemhunter.com/forough-farrokhzad/biography/>)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/30/obituaries/forough-farrokhzad-overlooked.html>

<https://basiacofuoco.com/2022/03/14/de-eenzame-vrouw-in-het-zwarte-huis/>

Farrokhzad – quotes:

"If my poems have an aspect of femininity, it is of course quite natural. After all, fortunately I am a woman."

"Of course we compose poetry out of personal need, an irresistible calling...but what happens after we commit our poems to the page? We must be judged and feel that we have made a difference, made a connection, and that we are responsible."



*"There is no shortage of ugliness in the world.
If man closed his eyes to it, there would be even more.
But man is a problem solver." From: 'The House is Black'*

"...how can one look fondly at, or even expect an answer from a society that is shapeless, without an ideal, refusing any sort of responsibility, its only movement being from a season of mating to a season of grazing?" FF

"In this field, an artist's work is private and individualistic. How long can he or she survive this isolation, conversing only with the door and the four walls? This is a question, the answer to which lies in the capacity and forbearance of each individual artist. Those who grow silent or have nothing more to say, had better keep their peace, otherwise their ability to cope with this frightful sewage becomes impossible, and they find themselves abandoned and useless." FF

"The only way to survive is that one should reach such a state of detachment and maturity that he or she can become both a builder of and a mouthpiece for her world, both an observer and a judge." FF

Poetry of Forugh Farrokhzad
<http://farrokhzadpoems.com/poems/>

'Sin' - Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad translated by [Sholeh Wolpé](#)

