

# khejalat.

A ZINE ON QUEER/TRANS IRANIAN DIASPORIC LIFE

# خجالت

zan, zendegi, azadi  
jin, jiyān, azadi

NO. 4 // JUNE 2023

زندگی بیجان آزادی



# ZAN ZENDEGI AZADI:

a movement brewing,  
for decades it has brewed in us.

our bones, our flesh, our hair, our lips touching,  
we have been waiting for this moment.

the day Jhina Amini was taken from us was the day the match was struck,  
the day we set out with no hope of return.

we are the queer and trans Iranians in diaspora,  
grieving, posting, organizing, crying, protesting, chanting, reflecting.

we carry the fury of a nation under attack, unfree and unseen.  
we also carry the rage of a queer and trans Iranian experience, unfree and unseen.

we stand alongside our comrades,  
the tension, the erasure, the uncertainty,  
will our freedom be tossed to the sidelines?  
how many before us have been dealt this hand?  
asked to keep quiet, to remain silent, so others can roam with ease.

we are the queer and trans Iranians in diaspora,  
we are here.  
we are here.  
we are here.

here are our reflections:

zan, zendegi, azadi.

زن

زن

زندگی

زندگی

آزادی

آزادی



# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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## editor's introduction

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*befarmayid, befarmayid too!*  
*bodo bia.*  
*kafshhato daar biyar o bia beshin.*  
*rahat bash.*  
*chayee hazere.*

i feel close to you.  
i feel so close to you without even knowing you, because you too have lived this life. because you have gathered over bowls of *ghormeh sabzi*, *tarofed* with each other until there was no *tahdig* left, and stood around a *haftseen* waiting for *saal-e tahvil*, just as i have with mine. but you too, have cried in your bed, shattered by things you've heard at a *mehmoon*i. you too, have watched your fears consume you. have held the insults and hatred deep within your chest, amazed at how your body could hold so much. for so long.  
what a miracle you are.

*vaghan.*

come out?  
*aslan.*  
*boro baba!*  
*mage mishe?!*

of course not.  
we all know that.  
we *all* know that.  
we all *know* that.  
we all know *that*.

there are few sensations as comforting as coming home. of coming to that familiar abode, with smells of zaferoon and sounds of familiar Persian songs, a symphony of senses that disarms even our innermost child. but this is also the place where i learned i was wrong. where i learned how to hide. where i mastered the art of surviving.  
just like you.

so, is this still home then?  
will it ever be?  
will it ever not be?

of course, i'm offered a cup of black  
chayee. an offering. an invitation.  
a reconciliation perhaps. for all the years  
i was forced to swallow my shame.

it comes steaming hot, in an *estekan* that  
i most certainly remember. i've held this  
glass frame between my fingers for years  
and years in this very home. whether i  
want the tea or not, it is always there.  
always ready. always hot. ready to be  
consumed.

i offer this zine as a makeshift *khooneh*.  
a home for those of us whose lives at  
home are complicated, are ugly, are yes,  
maybe full of *gheymeh* and *polo*, but  
unable to hold our love stories, unable to  
celebrate our body transformations,  
unwilling to marvel at our glories.

so please come in.

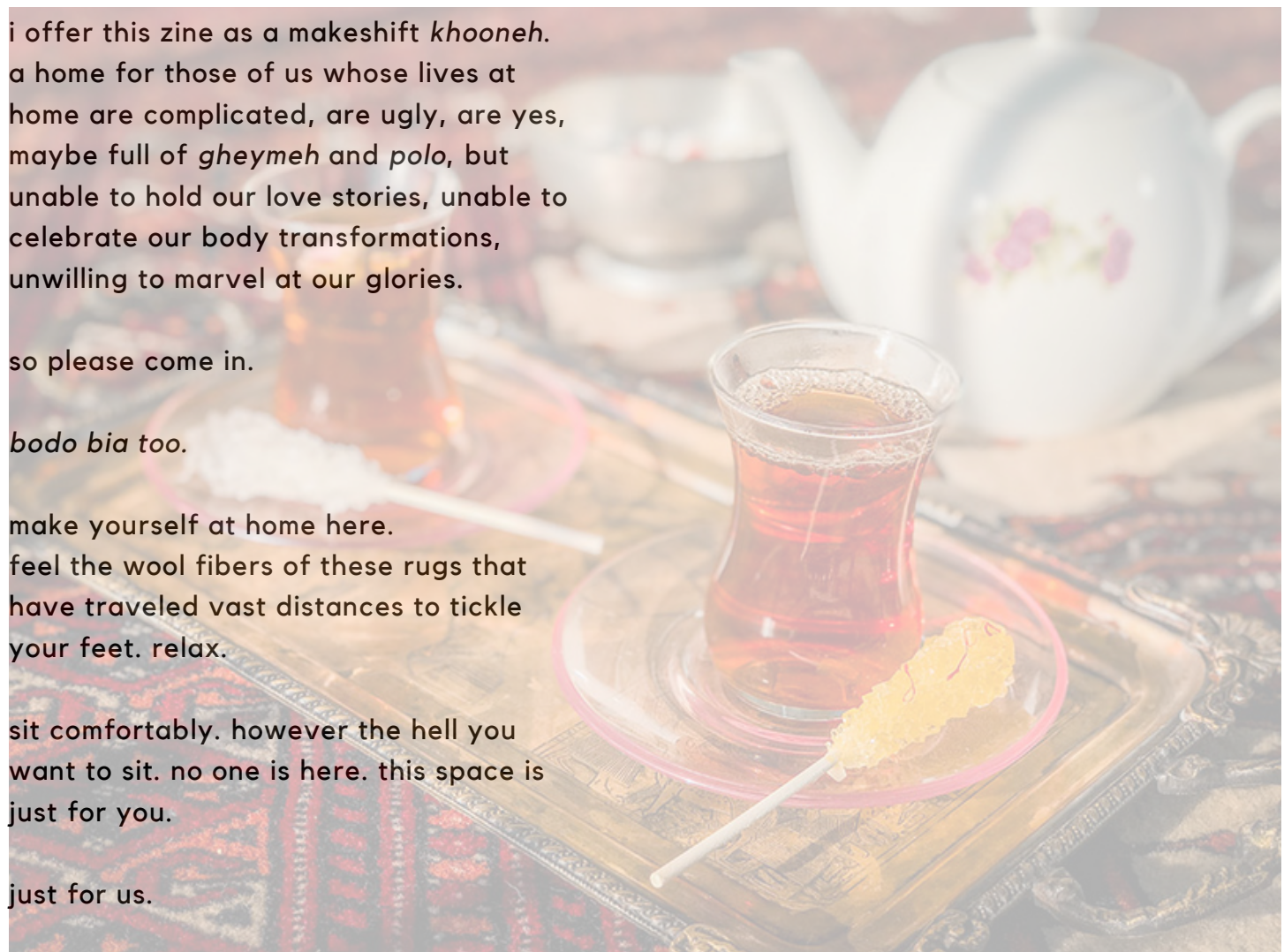
*bodo bia too.*

make yourself at home here.  
feel the wool fibers of these rugs that  
have traveled vast distances to tickle  
your feet. relax.

sit comfortably. however the hell you  
want to sit. no one is here. this space is  
just for you.

just for us.

sip this tea. and finally.  
feel home.



khejalat: an introduction.

خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت خجالت  
pronounced khe-jaw-lat.

shame.

shame as in embarrassment. humiliation. loss of face. loss of reputation. to disgrace. to dishonor, the family. the family.

*khejalat bekesh!*

*khejalat nemikeshi?*

*khejalatam dad.*

**shame my whole life. i have lived shame my whole life. i have lived shame my whole life. i have lived shame my whole**

shame

/shām/

noun

1. a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior.

i call this zine *khejalat* because it is a word that each and every single one of us knows intimately. too intimately.

we know shame, we fight shame, we live in shame, we negotiate with shame every single day.

*khejalat* encapsulates the essence of these pages.

the struggles, the fears, the concerns we are all growing with and through everyday as queer, Iranian, trans, American, and (una)shamed(?)

hide the parts of you that do not fit, i learned.

the parts of you that you should be ashamed of.

a deviance not welcome.

a body and love forbidden.

do not dare reveal all that you are.

who knew my dreams could destroy an entire culture.

*khejalat* has held me quiet for decades. it has placed centuries of family reputation, honor, and legacy on my back, dictating my every move, my every thought, my every fear.

*ay khoda, che kar konam?*

what would it look like to move through the shame? to see it, to call it what it is, to no longer let it immobilize me?

to no longer allow it to strangle me into silence?

a silence so well manufactured it has kept me hiding in the shadows for this long.

this zine is a space for us - Iranian, trans, American, and queer to embrace our shames. our ugly, our messy.

the shames as they come in all of their forms.

it is okay to be ashamed.

it is okay to feel the hurt.

**it is okay to feel the hurt.**

all of it. all of the shit they taught us to hate about ourselves. this is where i can finally let myself feel it all.

and to give myself the permission to be all that i am.

i hope you do too

shawndeez.

6.20



# a letter to my mother and my grandmother. your love is a mighty fortress!!!!!!

Roya Khorram (they/them)

our name translated is evergreen  
with emphasis on ever, as in always  
and with all its puzzling  
Quick-Witted, Articulate, Forceful, Ritualistic, Prayerful  
just like us  
the name you gave me means dream  
beautiful dream  
i am your fantasist  
your believer child

and you, my mothers, are my gatherers  
incubators of knowledge  
takers to another place  
gifters, holders and huggers  
my relationship towards womanhood  
is born of your kind of feminine  
how it's moved me  
things were never perfect, women do patriarchy all the time  
but your motherhood was sanctioned

matriarchy carves like a river through our lineage  
when a revolution dispersed us  
you feared i would be raised apart from that legacy  
apart from the literature in our library  
from our rooftops and balconies  
the angels of our matriarchs surrounded my heart  
i knew you and i was yours and i was theirs  
this is my direct relationship to iran  
how we called on our mothers to connect us home

i formalized their tradition as citizenry  
when i was young, us three prepared dinner together  
i would wash the rice for you  
you sang prayers to me under your breath  
we spoke of all the women in our family  
how you would all cook together at home  
how to wash the rice  
it mattered and you taught me  
how these women dance

when i grew older  
you became aware that i was not woman at all  
we fought over the implications  
you asked  
had i not cooked faithfully, prayed earnestly  
had a revolution torn my mothers' veins and poisoned our blood mamin, your hands  
were already etched into my skin  
the image of you giving blessing tattooed on my thigh  
if angels had not abandoned us, would they now

my name means dream  
beautiful dream  
our name means evergreen  
as in always, with all its puzzling  
these names belong to all iranians  
we are living in a world  
which is not yet born  
these names are a sacred hall we return to  
when our fears and questions of each other form





the most succumbed to fear, the islamic republic  
calls trans becomings  
just as they call women in motion  
and chanting freedom  
a result of clever operations and procedures  
may they be reminded  
we have always sang prayers to each other under our breath  
we will sing prayers which make amends over tadig and top surgery and we will watch as the knees  
of the oppressor tremble at the sounds of our voice

we as a people have always been  
Quick-Witted, Articulate, Forceful, Ritualistic, Prayerful  
we have had visions of unbound spirits  
in shattered hearts  
resisted power which pleasures in doing harm and sunbathes in wicked principles  
principles which hold no virtue  
our mothers have resisted this  
time and time again

we join them in this resistance  
we speak with their same conviction  
when we demand to god  
lovers be seen  
flickering in the windows through persian nights trans bodies  
find communion in a bed of roses under a marble tower in the city center room be made  
to twirl in the alleyways of iran, again

and look now, maman joon and mamin joon  
today, fortified in the hearts of the sacred feminine  
marks what we will forever know to be the great resistance to the  
practice of hatred towards Beloved Femme if we ever forgot  
their revolution has reminded us  
dancing and singing in the streets of iran, again  
is evergreen  
is dream

there is no force strong enough  
to stop their spring from blooming  
our brave siblings are sprouting from every crack in every concrete we link arms and light candles  
from san francisco to new york city  
to zahedan  
sending angels and offerings  
through every crease in every crevice  
surrendering to the birth of something new

to a shifting and to a curling  
with reverence and adoration  
from home to home  
lingering with them on this song  
our name means revolution  
our name means spring  
our mothers have given us these names  
baraye azadi  
forever green, irrepressible dream







## Iran - A Rainbow Spell

Cosmo (he/they)

ایران - طلسم رنگین کمان

I got this Iran map tattoo on my chest & above my heart during the ongoing Iran revolution 2022 to mark this time/space on my body. This is what tattoos are for me, an everyday reminder of the hopes and dreams I have for myself & my communities & life on this planet earth. My hopes and dreams for my Iran is true liberation from oppression monsters that have been hunting our people for generations. I pray for an Ancient Future Healing.  
To Women, Life, Freedom.  
To all the Men that support this path of liberation.  
To all the children that we owe a better world for and are our hope for the future.  
And to all the Queer, Non-binary/ Trans folkx that carry a rainbow of hope & liberation on their chests and in their hearts & teach the world allowance for all to be the way they are and the way they are not.  
So it shall be.

ایران ایران ایران ایران ایران

سیستان و بلوچستان

لرستان

تهران خوزستان

سیستان و بلوچستان

اهواز

کرمانشاه

ایران

بوشهر

کرمان

کوردستان

زاهدان

یزد

کرمانشاه

شیراز

اصفهان







## They Didn't Know

Sheens (he/him)

I don't think anyone knew  
Just how many queer and trans folks  
Are in iran  
How many pro LGBTQ folk, reside there

I don't think anyone knew  
how much Iranians are willing to fight  
For freedom

I don't think we knew  
Just how powerful  
And vast we are  
Around the globe

I don't think mahsa knew  
How much she meant to us  
How much iran rides for her

I don't think my grandma knew  
A revolution would happen again, for the third time in her life

I don't think my mom knew  
The people of iran would welcome her trans son  
With open arms

I don't think anyone knew  
Just how gay iran is  
And how willing they are  
To stand for what's right

Zan  
Zendegi  
Azadi







## Memorial

noor khashe brody (they/any)

“We must regard the past as a catastrophe.” - Max Czollek

yellow	rice
tea	pot
hemmed	pants
bus	stop
strip	mall
dance	floor
shore	bird
book	mark
rear	mirror
folded	sweater
after	dawn
wheat	sprouting









## Land of Diaspora

Sheens (he/him)

What can I do?  
Why am I the privileged one?  
I'm guna strap on my boots  
I'm going to Iran!  
I'm guna fight next to them

IRGC will kill me before I can even land  
Especially when they see my passport doesn't match my gender now  
They'll throw me in jail or murder me for sure

Then what?  
How could I help when I'm dead?

Aight new plan  
I gotta think smart  
How can I help from here?  
From across the globe

Let me post  
Let me email  
Let me be emotional supportive for my cousins back at home  
Let me spark convos everywhere I go

Omg they killed 3 more innocent protestors

Wtf is this shit

## Azadi

Sheens (he/him)

How you gunna take mahsa from us  
And think that we gon be cool?  
You took my grandmothers adolescence  
my mothers joy

You treat women like dogs  
And expect them to serve your tea

You rape my sisters and brothers  
And want me to rep the IRGC?

Too many people know now  
We can't turn back  
You've taken some of the greatest people  
On earth  
Your regime is about to crack

Repeat.

Can't forgive  
Won't forget  
This is the battle to the end

No one said it would be pretty  
For the price of freedom  
We just want

Zan  
Zendegi  
Azadi



IRANIAN  
WOMEN  
ARE BAD-ASS

Peace for Iran  
Peace for the World

IRANIAN  
LIVES  
WOMEN  
LIFE  
FREEDOM



Free Them All

Saiyare Refaei (they/she)



@\_saikick\_



## forty four years

Dena Rod (he/they)

it's been forty four years since this regime rooted in our soil  
and i still remember a time when i didn't know to count the years passed  
since the ground moved beneath a motherland's borders,  
when mirrors cracked like skulls on the pavement and reflected  
what we didn't want to admit

there is something that tells me home may be there  
but still i search for many windows in my current container

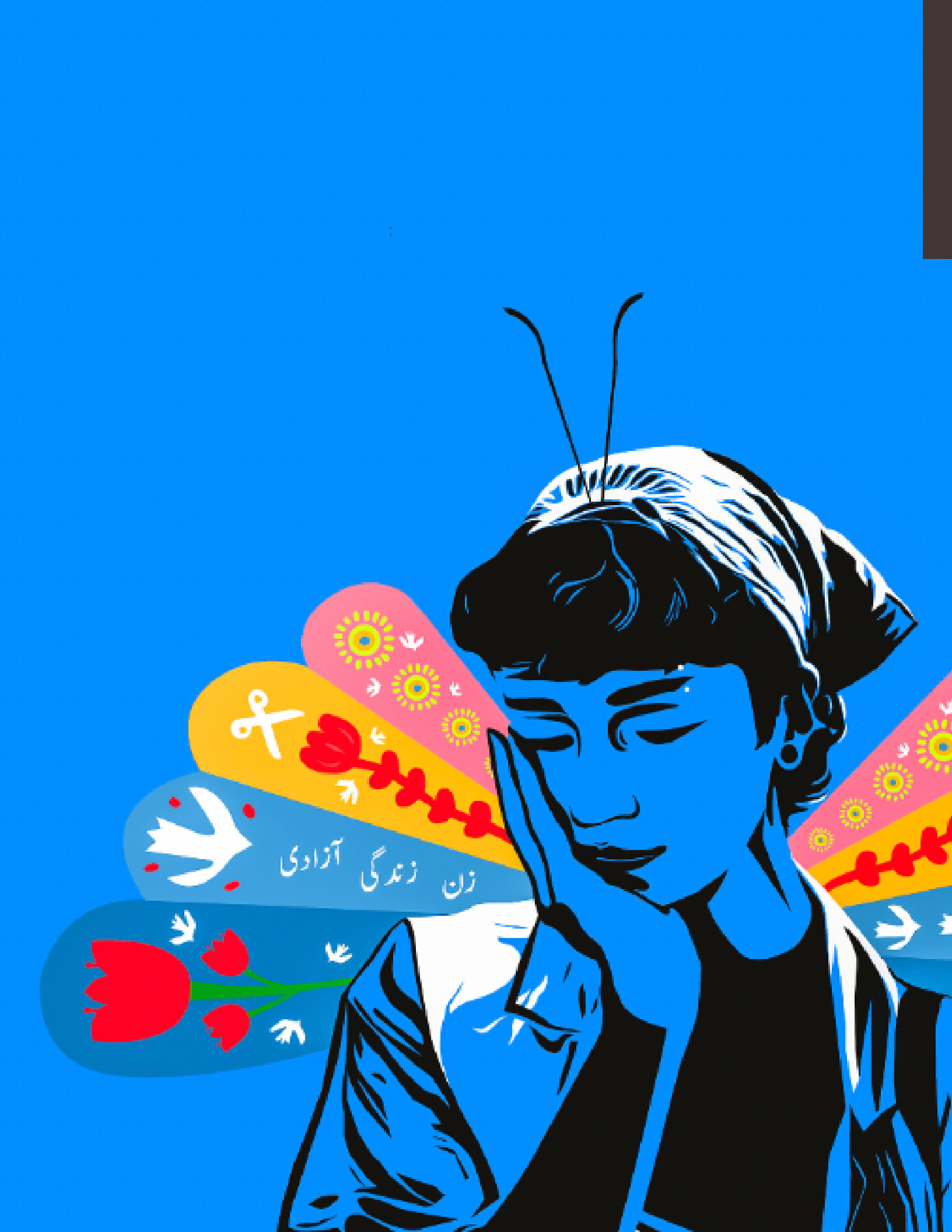
i eavesdrop on tourists dancing on bourbon street,  
think of how these same movements with hair blessing  
the wind continue to be a rebellion over seven thousand miles.

crossing an ocean makes a body with forms deemed female an egregious act in public.  
while i am blessed on easter by a gay jesus, my own hair spiraling out of me in  
jubilation, i know this freedom comes at a cost.

for being scattered means being far from where the tree grows.

i follow the seeds, pick up kebab in chicago, with a pile of bamieh soaking in syrup  
catch a name in farsi on the automotive shop on highway 50  
knowing that we've dispersed for so many reasons, infinite threads  
knotting into a persian rug that somehow still gets caught in customs

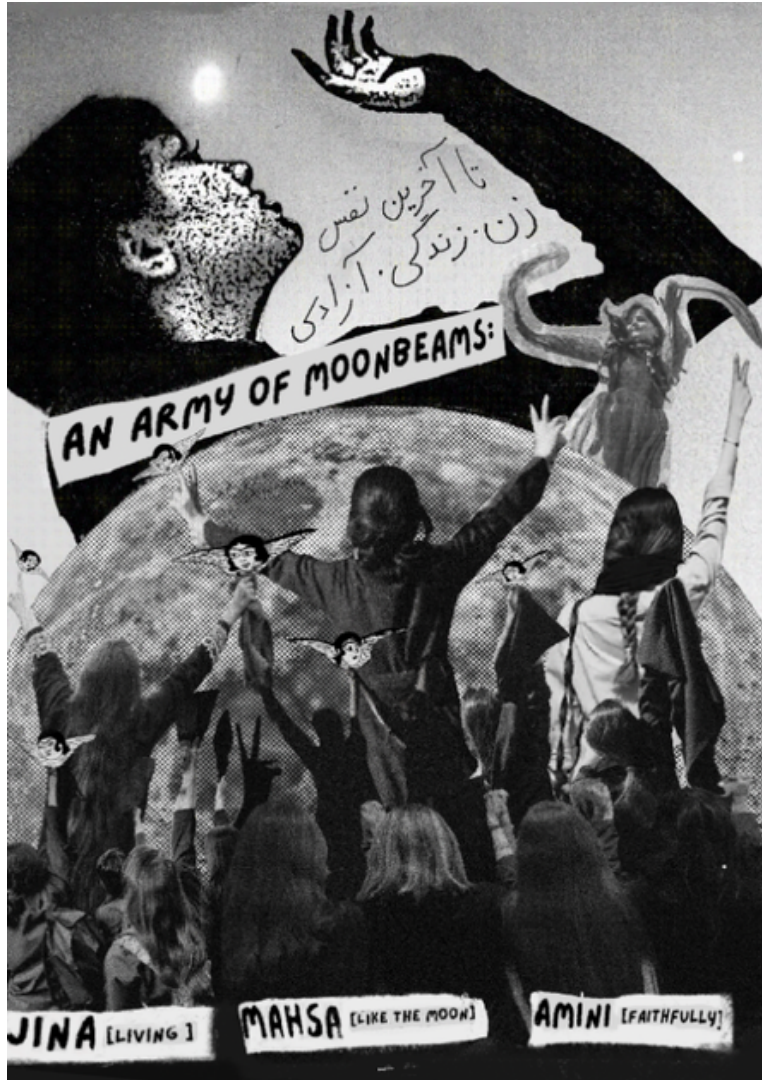
my anger takes shapes i am just beginning to name now i've molded  
myself into who i already was so the world can reflect me back to my eyes.  
i crave a place where i can step amongst geometric tiles with my hair  
blowing in the wind.



زن زندگی آزادی

## Living Like the Moon Faithfully

Sanam (she/her)



گویند رازدان دل اسرار و راز غیب  
بی واسطه نگوید مر بنده را دروغ

They say, "The One Who knows the secrets of all hearts  
Never speaks the mysteries directly to you."

It's a lie.

-Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi

In 1978, shortly before Ayatollah Khomeini's return from exile and the birth of the Islamic Republic, a rumor had taken root that Khomeini's face could be seen on the moon. Although few could recall where they heard this, many people, even the more secular, came to believe it. As a master storyteller, Khomeini had carefully crafted himself into a myth, a conduit of God's will, and a flag bearer for the long-anticipated Islamic messiah, the Mahdi. Amid the upheaval of the time and in anticipation of a savior, my people's collective unconscious mirrored Khomeini's face back to them on the largest reflector in our solar system.

Today, on the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Republic, we are 10 months into a women/minority-led revolution. A movement ignited by the killing of a 22-year-old Kurdish woman whose name translates to living/life, like the Moon, faithfully (Jina Mahsa Amini). She symbolizes a more pluralistic reflection on the moon guiding the subconscious of millions. Iranian society has adopted her name and emerged overnight as an army of Mahsas [Moonbeams]. Her Kurdish name Jina [Life], a name outlawed by the occupying state, ignites a distinct cultural lineage of life-affirming practices and decades of Kurdish feminist struggle encompassing every marginalized body, including the earth that holds us all.

Perhaps it's also [ماهرو] Jina's moon-face essence, a recurring motif in Iranian poetry that has awakened the feminine essence within, unveiling the mystery of consciousness that is longing for our transformation. Layers of history, evolution, and struggle are rooted in the three words that now echo across the world. "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi"/"Women, Life, Freedom" serve as a daily living reminder that becoming a woman is a fluid interdependent process that wanes and waxes on the many spectrums of anyone's existence, separate from one's expression  
But what does it mean to live, like the moon, faithfully?

For the children of the land of the sun [ فرزندان سرزمین مهر ] to be like Jina Mahsa or our Ancient land steward Shahmaran and live like the moon.

In Iranian Sufi alchemy, the moon is the vessel through which the sun actualizes. It is the mirror of the soul that tempers the light of the sun and allows us to see how we truly are. Without such a mirror, the sun becomes simply pure ego wallowing in delusion, wants, whims, and self-image. The mirror of the moon helps discern the type of light that the sun emanates, and transforms the ego into the soul. This process of individualization; ensouling the ego while simultaneously connecting the individual soul to the collective is where the knowledge of the self is attained. Here our inner landscape is illuminated, and so is the intimate realization of the thousands of relationships that constitute us.

The African writer Laurens Van Der Post said no great leaders are emerging because it was time for us to cease to be followers. Perhaps we have. Gen Z definitely has. A new myth is gestating while old ones are being remembered. This new story requires our internal union that follows its own ensouled reflection on the moon. So that when we flock together, we move like geese and trust leadership to emerge from any side. Maybe we have reached the end of the journey described by our beloved Sufi poet Attar in the "Conference of the Birds." After traversing the seven valleys on our arduous journey spanning centuries, we are now confronted with the vision that the illustrious leader we sought, the divine bird Simorgh, was, in fact, a mirror reflecting each of us all along. While we were receptive to charismatic leaders in the past, now we are being ushered towards our core, where there is a seed, a life that courses within every being.

Over 800 years ago, at the brink of foreign occupation, Iranian Sufi poets ushered us into the natural design of the universe. They pointed lovingly to the alchemical process of a human seeking an intimate union with spirit. The dreamer would look within the center of their deepest water, and here is the heart, here is our land, and the language of true desire. The ancients warned us of those leaders directing us elsewhere and presenting themselves as conduits to God.

"They say, "The One Who knows the secrets of all hearts"  
Never speaks the mysteries directly to you."  
"It's a lie."  
It's a lie Rumi said...

How the myth of Khomeini could end a life short remains unanswered. We continue to see how rage burns the veil and whose hands are left with blood, with an edge so sharp it seems like a reason, but really, it is the mere remnants of a decayed structure. Lady Iran has risen, but none of us can see the entirety of the future. We are not who we were or who we will be, but we can conjure up the truth in the stillness in between.

The next part of our story...





## Iran in 2030

### Sheens (he/him)

Women are driving motorcycles  
Their hair in the wind  
They explore on their own  
To any place they'd like  
Alone or with their friends

Women are singing  
In the streets or anywhere they'd like  
They are smiling again  
Even if it's with one eye

Women are dancing  
In & outside of their homes  
They dream now with no limits  
With the freedom to roam

Women can choose their lovers  
There are no ridiculous laws  
Good relationship with their mothers  
They can choose a lover or a dog

They can choose this or that  
They can choose hijab or not  
They deserve this shit  
Every day they fought

Everyday they bled  
Night after night they chanted  
I hope they lay in bed  
With dreams that are enchanted

I'm so sorry it went this way  
I'm so proud of you  
You stood up, you fought, you succeeded



photo: Fantastic B,  
Ekbatan, Tehran, Iran

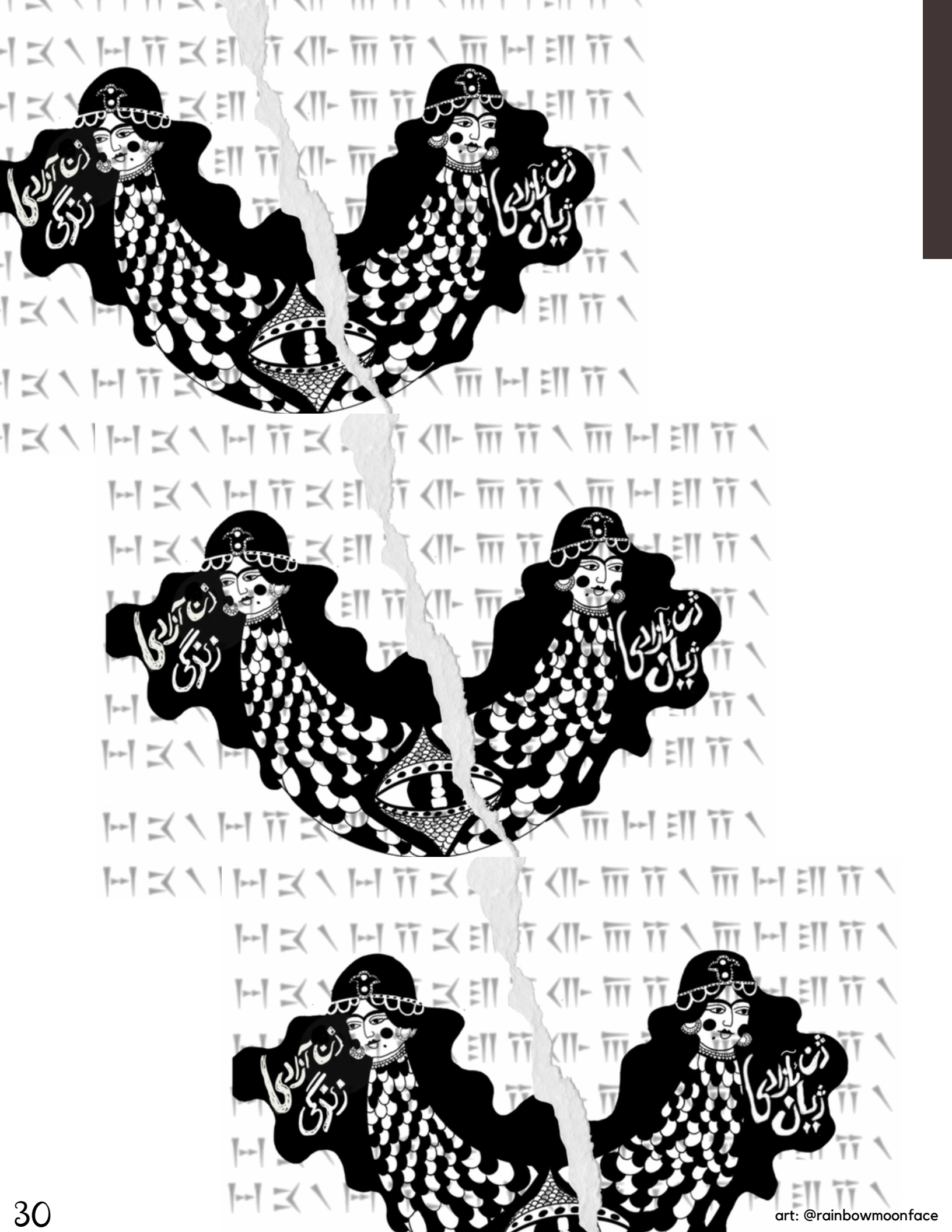
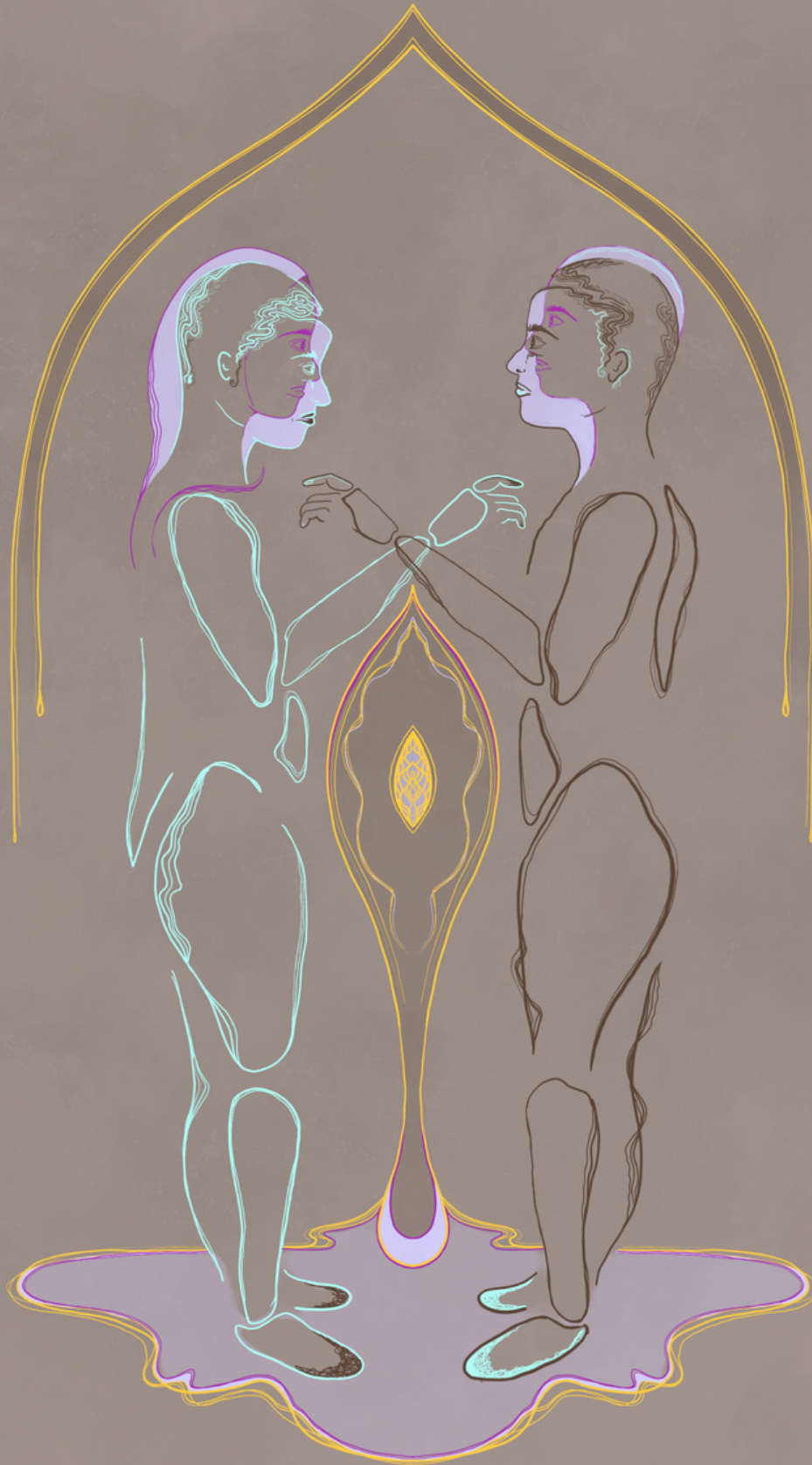




photo: Javad Esmaili  
Qom, Iran





**reflected //refracted**  
**sahar (they/them)**

This illustration is based on the personal notes of grief I felt while watching this revolution unfold. I felt so much solidarity and connection with the brave souls on the streets and felt a sense of wholeness seeing queer visibility in the struggle. But at the same time I felt so much dissonance, reading and watching about it from this detached place in the US. I experienced a lot of oscillating feelings of connection and detachment from my Iranian identity and in my experience as the child of immigrants.



# شجاعتی



what bravery was latent in this land

شجاعتی  
شجاعتی  
شجاعتی  
شجاعتی  
شجاعتی

شجاعتی  
شجاعتی

شجاعتی

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شجاعتی





# kryptonite

mahru (she/they)

green she said  
so i went  
knees shaking and uncertain  
limbs falling softly  
to the worn carpet  
suddenly immobile  
breath rasping out of scorched lungs  
this alien world  
solid and distant  
below me

we come from the same sun  
the one that gave birth to a promise  
complete  
with collard greens and tah-chin  
to us  
to this whirling band of women  
who know no shame or  
if they do  
hide it so well it pours out their eyes  
and sometimes  
even  
their cunts  
twitching and full of themselves

i manage to pull away  
redolent  
swathed with scents:

earth  
marbled with spidery roots  
crumbling rich  
staining my palms brown  
blood  
like melting butter  
collecting in slick puddles  
the soft place  
between curling toes  
deposit myself  
hundreds of miles away  
occasionally bothered  
with dreams  
full of damned cities  
homes we can no longer tend to  
families lost in a cosmic  
blunder

this empty space  
it lingers  
between clavicle and sternum  
bone remembers  
cousin to bedrock  
that lay beneath  
our feet once  
light years  
from this place  
where phones purr  
her muffled voice  
grabbing my throat  
parched and cracking  
crying for water that  
spreads like a shadow beneath me  
an upturned glass

still she pulses with an otherworldly glow  
longing and exhalation  
what is left unsaid a corona  
of light cast out  
like a fishing rod  
pulling me  
full of shudder and damp appeals  
towards her

green she says  
so i go back  
just to remember  
what it felt like to disappear  
the first time



## Raisins & Rosewater

Janet Mona (she/her)

Growing up in Vegas, I felt like I lived in two different worlds: one at school, where I spoke English and traded lunch snacks with my friends, and one at home, where I spoke Farsi with my madar bozorg (who I still call "mamani"). I was the only Iranian kid in my tiny, suburban private school, and grew up thinking I was some sort of an alien with kids telling me I was too hairy and ate food that was "abnormal" in comparison to their ham and cheese sandwiches.

Eventually, an Islamic school opened up in our town, and my parents enrolled me. This was the year after 9/11, and I was being so ruthlessly ridiculed at the school I was in that they thought it would be best if I mingled with other Middle Eastern kids from town. Suddenly, everyone looked pretty similar to me, and the bullying, for the most part, went away. But I was the only (and I mean only) Iranian girl in the entire school, so while my friends' families spoke Arabic to each other and became close, I ultimately felt alone again.

At home, I felt alone, too. My parents have always had a strained relationship, and I was the black sheep: the "American" kid. I would try to speak Farsi back, and felt like I was being made fun of, or that my words were being picked apart EVERY time I tried to speak. I was too American for my household, and I was too Iranian for the world.

Through adulthood I learned a lot more about my family that I think I was always willingly naive about: how conservative they really are, how my dad doesn't view women the same light he views men, how ever present the generational trauma is. When I came out as a lesbian, it was the cherry-on-top for them when it came to our strained relationship. All of a sudden, I felt what I deep down was afraid of all along: "I'm not allowed to be gay...AND Iranian...."

When protests erupted after Jina/Mahsa Amini's death, I joined in. I asked my girlfriend and my best friend, a gay man, if they wanted to join but told everyone "no pressure, no obligation." They both came with me, I made BIG signs, and I made sure to include bits of information about the LGBTQ+ community in Iran, and how they deserve their freedom too. For me, it's azadi for EVERYONE....I learned very quickly this is not the case for many Iranians, unfortunately. I went home feeling proud of myself, for chanting and walking the Las Vegas Strip with our signs, but I also went home feeling even more alone than I had beforehand.

I started to feel really defeated and unwanted in my own culture, but at my girlfriend's insistence I dove more into it as an adult than I had ever before. I remembered how much I loved shirini keshmeshi (those super yummy raisin cookies with the golden, crispy edges), and fesenjoon, and decided to conquer them. She got me a beautiful Iranian cookbook, I went to my local Middle Eastern market and got my raisins and rosewater and got to work. After a day's worth of slow-cooking and dancing to Arash songs in my kitchen, we ate and watched an Iranian horror film I found on Netflix (Under the Shadow). I started to think about how I could introduce my *chosen* family to who I am and how I grew up.

I started to teach Farsi in Tiktoks online, in an effort to teach my girlfriend and best friend Farsi so we could gossip together in public, which then led to me finding other QUEER Iranians online. I realized that while my local community may be super conservative, we DO exist, we ARE out there. I've now connected with so many other queer Iranians who can relate and feel similarly to me, who are disconnected from their not-so-accepting families, who believe in azadi for EVERYONE. At first, when my videos teaching Farsi words attracted some attention, I got a lot of negative comments from very conservative Iranians, which stung because it was people from my culture calling me names: "khejalat bekesh, kesafat hastee" for being a lesbian, for being against the regime in Iran. I almost stopped, until I realize that if we ever want azadi for everyone, I have to move past this, and keep going. If we all gave up because we felt this deep shame for being LGBTQ+, our community can never really begin to heal. I need to heal, so I can confidently pass my culture along to my kids, but do it differently than my parents did: with love, with compassion, and with open arms to every human being on this planet.







## khosh bash shawndeez (they/them)

i smile,  
i see her, playing,  
running her fingers through the fountain water,  
smiling, running across the *hayat* under the sunshine,  
her feet landing excitedly on the clay earth beneath it.  
she is light, she is carefree.  
*khosh bash aziz-e delam,*  
*khosh bosh.*

this is your home, my little love,  
this land, this place, this dream,  
all of this has been created for you.

this is your Iran.

i dream, i dream, i continue to dream.  
i dream for all the babies,  
all of the little ones,  
who wish to frolic in their land,  
play, explore, learn, create,  
  
we create this Iran for you.



## about the creators:

**Saiyare Refaei** (they/she) is an Iranian Chinese artist based in the traditional lands of the Puyallup people (Tacoma, Washington) whose primary mediums include community murals, printmaking, digital drawings and meticulous pointillism pen drawings. They are a member of Justseeds Artist Cooperative and strive to utilize art as a means of community building, education and healing.

**sahar** (they/them) is an iranian-american who was born and raised in the bay area, california. they love exploring the beauties of the nature around them, swimming, tinkering with paints and being silly with loved ones.

**Roya Khorram** (they/he) is an accountant and author based in Oakland, CA. Their perspective draws on their experience as a trans persian boy, writing as a practice of devotion to gender transcendence within and outside the diaspora.

**Sanam** (she/her) is an Iranian-born multi-hyphenated artist whose work centers around the use of art, myth, and ritual to access the transformative gifts of the alchemical heart. Her illustrations and essays are part of a practice of magical resistance with Shahmaran featured in her zine; Rebirth: Lessons from the Queen of Serpents. IG @rainbowmoonface

**Sheens** (he/him) is an Iranian entrepreneur born in California. He is passionate about trans rights and the revolution taking place in the homeland of Iran.

**mahru** (she/they) lives in Oakland, CA. She is currently a student in Antioch University's MFA in Creative Writing program. You can find her @mahru\_elahi

**Dena Rod** (he/they) is a non-binary poet and essayist currently working on their first novel. Connect with Dena at their website, [denarod.com](http://denarod.com)

**Cosmo M. Soltani** (he/they) is a visual storyteller, educator and healer. As a Trans Iranian, displaced person of war, he centers healing and co-creating with their queer/trans BIPOC communities, in every aspect of his life. Whether it's through their storytelling (writing/filmmaking) or acupuncture practice, he is always exploring ways to heal the past, shape the present and envision the future.

**Noor Khashe Brody** (they/any) lives in Oakland CA and is a graduate of June Jordan's Poetry for the People. Send noor fanmail and find their published poems and crosswords at [noooo.org](http://noooo.org).

**Janet Mona** (she/her) is a lesbian Iranian-American singer/songwriter based out of Las Vegas/Los Angeles. She prides herself the most on being every part of music creation: writing, recording, sound engineering, and her hope is to help influence other creative Iranians to feel safer exploring those sides of themselves and sharing them with the world. :)

**shawndeez** (they/them) is still reveling in the joy of putting together this zine and watching it come to life. they are a full-time nerd who received their Ph.D. in Gender Studies at UCLA. they hope to continue to cultivate space(s) for individuals who live multidimensional lives, spaces where we can be who we are without having to compromise, negotiate, or minimize all that we are.



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