# CONTEMPORARY PERSIAN HAIKU

Selected and translated by Massih Talebian

About 45 years ago, an Iranian poet and painter, Mr. Sohrab Sepehri, visited Japan to take a painting course. He became familiar with haiku at that time, and translated about ten Japanese haiku into the Persian (Iranian) language. Thinking of haiku as a short poem, but lacking an understanding of the genre, he was unable to ascertain the spirit of the haiku form.

On his return to Iran, and influenced by haiku, Sepehri, like the Western Imagists in the 1920's, adopted a haiku-like style. Many Iranian critics believe that his best poems were written after this trip. He also wrote long poems in which imagery became the central core, allowing him to express his feelings via the use of concrete images.

In 1986 another famous Iranian poet, Ahmad Shamloo, in cooperation with the Zen and Buddhist text translator, E. Pashayi, translated part of Volume I, *Haiku* and Volume I, *History of Haiku* by R.H. Blyth, which is the first Persian book to officially introduce Japanese haiku to the Iranians, featuring haiku composed by Bashō, Buson, Issa, Shiki and the ten disciples of Bashō.

Following the R.H. Blyth translations, it took another 10 years before Iranian poets started to write short poems emulating the haiku form, but most of these short poems, like Sepehri's, lacked the "poetic spirit" which Matsuo Bashō believed to be the main feature of a haiku.

Since that time, and via the Internet, Iranian poets have encountered the international haiku movement, with the result that there are now many haiku enthusiasts in Iran. Many have their own weblogs, and some have published.

The purpose of this short paper is to introduce some Persian contemporary haiku-like short poems from the past two decades, sorted chronologically.

The English translations are my own, in which I attempt to convey the main images, as well as each poem's individual poetic spirit.

## Part 1

Part 1 contains haiku written during 2014, while Part 2 date from more than four years ago. As is evident, recent Persian haiku is adapting itself not only to the aesthetics particular to this genre, but also to its form and sensibility.

### Mrs. Fatima Atash-Sokhan

singing lullaby . . .
the baby cicadas too
with their mothers

...ییالال
مه اه ک ریچریج
ناشردام اب

### Mrs. Mandana Mobki

visiting cemetery . . .
today's spider hunting
few citrus blossoms

weeping willow
releasing drop by drop
the last night rain

sudden hailstone . . .
one is melting slowly
on my nape

...روبُق لِدا ترایز
توبکنع زورما دیص
جنران راهب دنچ

...نونجم دیب
دنکیم امر مرطق مرطق
بشید ناراب

...گرگت ناهگان
مارآ دوش یم بآ یکی
مندرگ تشپ

### Mrs. Forough Foroutani

autumn night . . .
how glister the teeth
of the stray dog

یزییاپ بش
نادند دشخردیم هچ
درگلو گس نیا

### Mrs. Marjan Jalal-Mousavi

the crow's caw,
behind the widow
crescent moon

moonlight beam
wrapping on my body,
the jasmine scent

...غالک راق راق
هویب نز رس تشپ
هام لالَه

باتهم در
،منت رب هدیچیپ
سای یوب

**Mrs. Zohreh Zahedi**

plum blossoms . . .
chuckle to each other
as reconcile again

a starry night . . .
we back home through
the longer path

...اه هفوکش
میدنخیم مه هب
یتشآ ةظحل

... هراتسرپ یبش
میدرگ یم زاب هناخ هب
رترود یریسم زا

**Mrs. Vida Moazami**

in my hut
candle,book and the moon
how wealthy!

candle in the wind,
becoming short and long
the last breaths

a long night . . .
gazin at serum bag
drop by drop

ما هبلك رد
، هام و باتك و عمش
یلانَم و لام هچ

...داب رد یعمش
دوش یم هاتوك و دنلب
اه سفن نیرخآ

...دنلب یبش
مُرِس هب م ا هتخود مشچ
هرطق ...هرطق

**Mr. Ali Beik**

wild geeze . . .
flying in a 7-shape flock
but they are nine

first day of school,
singing for my daughter
while driving

falling leaves . . .
telling the cat unawares
O' my son

یشحو یاغزا
،دنتفریم تفه لکش
ات ُهن یلو

، هسردم زور نیلوا
مرتخد یارب نامرف تشپ
زاوآ رِیز ما هدز

نازیر گرب
هبرُگ هب هاگآ دوخان
!مرسپ متفگ

**Mr. Massih Talebian**

a night trip . . .
passing a town asleep
under the full moon

this autumn dusk,
why the crow gazing at
the same road I pace?

،رفس رد هنابش
باوخ یرهش زا رذگ
مامت ِهام ِریز

،زییاپ بورغ نیا
رب هتخود مشچ غالک ارچ
؟نم هک هار نیمه

my words
isn't just one or two
as yours,cuckoo . . .

for a moment
taking my hat off,the moon
above the town

the hazy moon . . .
munching my moustache
amid a dream

a worn sandal . . .
for sure a warbler too
has also been here

snow covered peak
Beyond the invisible village
orangish red

نم یاه فرح
تسین هک اتود یکی
... وکوک وت لثم

یا هظحل یارب
، مرادیمرب رس زا هالُک
رهش یالاب هام

... دولآ هِم هام
موج یم دوخَ لیبِس
ایور کی نایم

...هنهک لدنَص کی
مه یکواکَچ نمتح
فارطا نیا هدوب

تسین ادیپ هدکهد
شوپ فرب هلق رتوسنآ اما
تسا یجنران خرس

**Mr. Ali Shalkouhi**

a long night . . .
stirring the warm ashes
with the last firewood

the dead dragonfly,
folding and unfolding wings
with each breeze

a cicada cries
somewhere in the yard,
not know where

...دنلب یبش
مرگ رتسکاخ ندز مهب
بوچ نیرخآ اب

،هدرم کقاچنس
دنزیم لاب کمرن مرن
میسنره اب

طایح یاج کی
منادیمن ،شیاجک الاح
یکریجریج

**Miss Leila Rezaei**

the maple leaves
along with the dandelions,
all in the wind

sound of the wind,
my mother is praying
deep in the dark

ارفا یاه گرب
... اه کدصاق هارمه
داب رب ود ره

... داب یادص
یکیرات رد مردام
دوریم هدجس

**Mr. Kambiz Kakavand**

how the day
is more bright with you
O sunflower

ار زور ردقچ
ین ک یم نشور وت
نادرگ باتفآ لگ

**Mr. Kaveh Goharin**

for a moment
on my father tombstone
the ladybird rests

دوسآ یمد
مردپ رازم گنسرب
کزودشفک

a brothel quarter . . .
in the crowd of houses
scent of loneliness

یی اهنت یوب
اه هناخ ماحدزا رد
! ون رهش

this ceiling fan . . .
it's wind at parental home
was more cool

دوبرت کنخ
شا یفقس هکنپ داب
! یردپ ءهناخ

snowman looks
at the passing children,
by two stony eyes

یگنس مشچود اب
دنیب یم ناکدوک نتفر
یفرب مدآ

no lonely tree
when a butterfly
sits on a leave

تسین اهنت یتخرد چیه
یا هناورپ هک یتقو
تسا اه گرب نامدم

**Mr. Ali Beik**

the office parking,
I park my car attached
to a nice lady's car

، تکرش گنیکراپ
منابسچ یم ار ملیبوم وتا
یمناخ نیشام هب

the veteran . . .
resemble map of Iran
his old bed sores

.. زابرس هنهک
شرتسب یاه مخز
ناریا ی هشقن

**Mr. Tirdad Fakhriyeh**

that plane tree
which I called it old,
sprouting buds

رانچ نآ
شمدناوخ ریپ هک
هناوج قرغ

evening hail . . .
remember one by one
my own sins

...هاگماش گرگت
شیوخ ناهانگ زا
منک یم دای

at fourties
in myriad autumn colors,
my gray hair

...ی گ ل س ل ه چ
ز ی ئ پ گ ن ر ر ا ز ه ر د
ی م د ن گ و ج ی و م

**Mrs. Vida Jalili**

an old warbler
on my neighbor's tree,
last year orange

ر ی پ ک و ا ک چ
، ه ی س م ه ت خ ر د ر ب
ل س ر ا پ ج ن ر ا ن

**Miss Hengameh Ahmadi**

a summer night,
a falling unripe orange
wakes me up

، ن ا ت س ا ب ی ب ش
ل ا ك ي ج ي ن ر ا ن ا ف ا ت ا د ي ا ص د ا ب ه
م ر پ م ي ب ا و خ ز ا

early snow . . .
Ignoring my students'
cheat in exam

، م ا گ ن ه د و ز ف ر ب
ا ر م ن ا ز و م آ ش ن ا د ب ل ق ت
م ر ي گ ي م ه د ي د ا ن

**Mr. Ali Matoorian**

withered leaves,
my share of the neighbor's
mulberry tree

، ک ش خ ی ا ه گ ر ب
ت خ ر د ز ا ن م م ه س
ه ی س م ه ت و ت

**Mr. Hojat Mohammadpour**

the paddy sunset . . .
more than the bamboo
my mother bending

ر ا ز ی ل ا ش ب و ر غ
ن ا ر ز ی ر خ ز ا ر ت ه د ی م خ
م ر ا ک ی ل ا ش ر د ا م

**Mrs. Leila Kamkar**

in the moonlight,
stepping on the footprints
that gone to the sea

... ه ا م ر و ن ر ی ز
م ر ا ذ گ ی م ی ک س ی پ ا ی ا ج
ا ی ر د ا ت ه ت ف ر

long for the moon,
bending on the pond
a green bamboo

...ه ا م ر ا ظ ت ا ن ر د
ه ک ر ب ی و ر ه د ی م خ
ز ب س ن ا ر ز ی ر خ

**Mrs. Shahnaz Moghadam**

a moonlit night,
two shadows from afar
now they become one

... باتهم یبش
رود زا هک یا هیاس ود
دندش یکی الاح

autumn sunset . . .
me and the sea, and
a few footprints

... زیئاپ بورغ
دنچو ایرد و نم
اپ ی اج

**Mr. Ali Siran**

two herons . . .
one is pecking the moon
in the pond

... لیصاوح ود
هام هب دنز یم کون یکی
هکرب لالزِبآ رد

## Part 2

**Mr. Sirus Nozari**

looked through the pines
moon
passed beyond the sky

مدرک یم ربونص هب رظن
هام
تشذگ یم نامسآ یوس نآ

**Mr. Ghodsi Ghazi-noor**

our date,
as the sea and the moon . . .
how far, how hazy

ام رادید
! رود هچ ، هام و بآ نوچ
مه رد هچ

**Mr. Yarta Yaran**

among the wheat fields
a woman sits, head on her
knees, lamenting

رازمدنگ نایم
تسا هتسشن ینز
راز راز ، ونراز هب رس

**Mr. Abbas Kiyarostami** (the famous Iranian photographer, poet and movie director)

who assigned
the green berry leaves as
silkworm nurture?

درک نیعیت یسک هچ
ار توت زبس گرب
مشیرابا مرک توق یارب

**Mr. Seyed Ali Salehi** (a famous contemporary poet and author of *Thousand and One Haiku*)

no one but
a woman by the grave . . .
a butterfly

دنا هتفر همه
رازم رانک ینز زج
هناورپ یکی

**Mr. Kaveh Goharin**

no lonely tree
when a butterfly
sits on a leaf

تسینن اهنت یتخرد چیه
یا هناورپ هک یتقو
تسا اه گرب نامهم

**Mr. Seyed Ali Mirafzali**

night passed
as the dead soldier's wrap . . .
through the worn window

یزابرس هدرُم یوتپ لثم بش
هرچنپ زا
تشذگ رادمَن و رادمیَن

**Mr. Sirus Rumi**

oh, donna
how hardness heals
my heart wounds

وناب
دبای یم ایتالتا خس هچ
مل د مخز

**Mrs. Fariba Arabnia**

deep sunset . . .
destined to loneliness,
a barren tree

بورغِ گنت
ییاهَنت هب موکحم
کشخ تخرد کت

**Mr. Majid Jamshidi**

spring mist . . .
a raging flood
for ants

ناراب من من
دوب یلیس
اه هچروم یارب

**Mr. Reza Rezanejad Shirazi**

sunrise . . .
my marvel of Peru blooms
at sunset

دیشروخ
دنک یم عولط مد هدیپس رد
بورغ رد نم یسابع لال

**Mr. Mahmoud Falaki**

this new year,
I paint my room walls . . .
your eye color

ل‌اس‌ا زورون
ار مق‌اطا راوی‌د
درک مه‌اوخ وت ی‌اه مش‌چ گ‌ن‌ر ه‌ب

**Mrs. Katayun Amuzgar**

at night again,
counting the watermelons . . .
idle scarecrow

زاب ن‌اه‌اگ‌م‌اش
درام‌ش ی‌م ه‌ن‌اودن‌ه
راک‌ی‌ب ک‌س‌رت‌م

**Mr. Hossein Mostafapour**

so many robins
that I have frightened . . .
you sprout

ی‌ی‌اه خ‌رس ه‌ن‌ی‌س ه‌چ
م‌دن‌اس‌رت ه‌ک
ت‌ن‌دش زب‌س ق‌وش ه‌ب

descending
the mountain, me and
my shadow

ت‌فر اج‌ک
ت‌ش‌اذگ‌اج ارم ه‌ک ی‌داب
؟راه‌ب زور ن‌ی‌ل‌وا

**Mr. Reza Arabi**

mountain dusk
a distant town's lights
turn on

ی‌ن‌ات‌س‌ه‌وک ه‌اگ‌م‌اش
رود ی‌ه‌ش ی‌اه غ‌ارچ
دن‌وش ی‌م ن‌ش‌ور

**Mr. Ehsan Porsa**

in Braille . . .
kisses as you close
your eyes

ی‌دن‌ب ی‌م ه‌ک ار ت‌ن‌ام‌ش‌چ
ار ه‌س‌وب
م‌س‌ی‌ون ی‌م ل‌ی‌ب‌ر طخ ه‌ب

**Mr. Reza Ashofteh**

Buddha's orange cloak . . .
How luminous it glitters
Under the moon ligh

ادوب ی‌چ‌ن‌ران ی‌ادر
ت‌س‌ا ی‌ن‌ارون ه‌چ
ه‌ام رون ری‌ز

**Mrs. Samaneh Hosseini**

where does it go
the passing by breeze
first day of spring?

ت‌ف‌ر اچ‌ک
ت‌ش‌اذ‌گ‌اج ارم ه‌ک ی‌داب
وا‌ل‌ی‌ن زور ب‌ه‌ا‌ر؟

**Mr. Mehdi Ghanbari**

empty graves
filled by the rain, this
first day of spring

ی‌ل‌اخ ی‌ه‌ا‌روگ
دن‌دش زی‌ر‌ل‌ب‌ر‌ان ا‌ز
غ‌و‌ل‌ش ی‌ه‌ا‌س‌ت‌ور

**Mrs. Fereshteh Panahi**

petunia scent
through the neighbor's terrace . . .
sulky with me

ی‌س‌ل‌ط‌ا ی‌وب
ی‌ه‌ا‌ی‌س‌م‌ه س‌ا‌ر‌ت ز‌ا
ن‌م‌ا‌ب ن‌ی‌گ‌ن‌س‌ر‌س

**Mr. Abbas Hossein-Nejad** (Graduate in Japanese language/literature at Tehran Unviversity)

blooming trees
deep in the winter
a robin

ت‌خ‌ر‌د ه‌د‌ا‌د ه‌ف‌و‌ک‌ش
ن‌ا‌ت‌س‌م‌ز ق‌م‌ع ر‌د
ا‌ی‌خ‌ر‌س ه‌ن‌ی‌س

**Mr. Mohammad Hoghughi**

she is neither
by the sea nor the sea by her . . .
she's just a poet

ت‌س ا‌ی‌ر‌د ر‌ا‌ن‌ک وا ه‌ن
ت‌س‌وا ر‌ا‌ن‌ک ا‌ی‌ر‌د ه‌ن
ت‌س ا‌ر‌ع‌ا‌ش ط‌ق‌ف وا

**Mr. Massih Talebian**

a morning glory
covered with spider's web
one or two fly wings too

snow covered peak . . .
Beyond the invisible village
orangish red

ش‌ف‌ب‌ن ر‌ف‌و‌ل‌ی‌ن ی‌و‌ر
ت‌و‌ب‌ک‌ن‌ع ی‌ه‌ا‌ر‌ا‌ت روت
ه‌ه س‌گ‌م ل‌اب ود ی‌ک‌ی

ت‌س‌ی‌ن ا‌د‌ی‌پ ه‌د‌ک‌ه‌د
ش‌و‌پ ف‌ر‌ب ه‌ل‌ق‌ه‌ت‌و‌س‌ن‌آ ا‌م‌ا
ت‌س ا‌ی‌چ‌ن‌ر‌ا‌ن خ‌ر‌س

**Massih Talebian** holds a Master degree in Electronics engineering, and is currently the manager of an instrumentation engineering company in Iran. He's interested in poetry, especially in haiku aesthetics. Talebian has published essays on Bashō's aesthetics in Iranian poetry journals, and is currently writing a Persian book on haiku theories and aesthetics.