

Spreading wings in desire to fly (*Par Gushudanhā be Havā-yi Parvāz*)

I received good news last week. My good former editor, a lovely, and a humble human being at last agreed to publish some of her poems and this collection is titled: Spreading wings in desire to fly (*Par Gushudanhā be Havā-yi Parvāz*) and will be on the market by the end of the month.

Lu'bat Vālā's presence in the contemporary Persian poetry is felt for more than fifty years. She continues her work in silence and outmost humbleness. The book of Spreading wings in desire to fly (*Par Gushudanhā be Havā-yi Parvāz*) is divided in two sections, the first part is about classical poetry and *Ghazals* (29 lyrics) 'The Classical Circles' (*Meydānhā-yi Kuhan*) and in the second part 'Knowing of the New' (*Shinākhtā-yi Nu*) there are her new poetries comprising of 19 poems. The book is published by the Toos Foundation based in London.

There is a nice and sentimental foreword written by Simin Behbahāni which expresses Lu'bat personality in the best possible way. Simin has named it 'The rested years in dust' (*Sālhā-yi dar Ghubār Neshasteh*) in it, she refers to Lu'bat as a capable poetess back in the 50s.

The following is a poem from her published collection:

*A garment full of tears, a bosom filled with flames I have
Fear me, oh, dearest to my soul, a wild candle within I have*

*Run, before my flames catches your garment
Be aware, for within inflamed a bowl of fire I have*

*A wandering wild wave of the envious sea, within I have
On the shore of desire I am, yet such restlessness within I have*

*Cheerful, Ruined, Common, Disgraced, Rogue, and Intoxicated I am
Pleased am I; for in these five days of life, every one of the six I have*

*In a fountain where the face of a Negro manifests as the countenance of a Nymph
Conceive, whether the face of a demon or an angel I have!*

*The ascetic covered my intoxicating path with a veil
For connected to the arch of prayer, the tavern I have*

*For as long as the old wine of agony stains the cup of memory
With a sip from the wine of your images, joy and happiness I have*

*Let me have a cup or two, oh Saqi,
Before the cup of existence becomes empty of all I have*

Lu'bat, now that the bosom is the cup filled with His purity

What need to the good old wine I have...

Dr Mesbāh Zādeh, the owner of Keyhan Empire used to say to us: Journalists, usually gain their reputations by working in a reputable publishing company; however, this can be other way around too. You must try to be smart, a good journalist, and above all a decent human being. Only then you would bring credibility to this publication. Lu'bat falls into this category. Her presence brings credibility to wherever she goes.

Last Sunday around 1000 people went to the celebration event held in Chelsea Town Hall for Lu'bat Vālā's event; however, only 700 hundred could get in and the remaining 300 hundred were left behind due to the shortage of seats. The police had to get involved due to the pressure by the admirers who wanted to get in. A few of our colleagues were also among those left behinds. Alas! The coordinators should have made exceptions and made some special reservations for Keyhan newspaper journalists. Tufiq, the programme manager whose efforts for the past six months was the very foundation of this event, hoped that the speeches would take no longer than three hours; however, that wasn't the case and the speeches, jokes, and the memories took much longer. After all, whatever was said and read was interesting.

The preparations for this programme took over six months. Tufiq Mumtāz and few others were involved in four corners of the globe to contact artists and singers connected to this programme. Some had to travel to London, and some were set to send visual messages. In the United States 'Asal Pahlevān and Farāmarz Khudāyāri were gathering the messages. Sirus Malakuti also had this responsibility in Paris. After all, what turned all these efforts into reality was the financial support of the Toos Foundation and its founder Mrs. Jamileh Kharrāzi. To coordinate and setup this programme a total of 600 hours of work was involved, and some 100 hundred hours of telephone conversations took place. Three groups were filming the event and seven technicians were handling the technical sides of the programme and an active team was responsible for the transportation of the guests, taking them to their hotels and bringing them to the Hall.

Her name and her family name "beauty" and "grace" tempted too many of her admirers to compose something. One her fans wrote this couplet for her:

***Every vast and salty water, won't become a sea
Every beautiful doll, won't become a ravisher
Any woman who has a beauty and intellect
Is graceful, but she won't be our graceful "Lu'bat"***

The young and talented poetess Shirin Razaviān also praised Lu'bat in her own ways.

***She was standing on the better face of the Dawn
She was tall***

***With dishevelled tress
With a breath of dawn***

***It was the continuity of her red heart
That was being spread to the fields of loneliness***

The rainbow of words was pouring from her bosom

And her skirt was as vast as the eternity

Having time for Love

Every time she opened her arms

The blossoms of Love fell on the ground

And her eyes cried for the everyone's pain

The celebration event in honoring Lu'bat Vala in London

The celebration event in honoring Lu'bat Vala, poetess, writer, lyric writer, journalist, and an associate of the Keyhan newspaper on Sunday night at Town hall in Chelsea London, together with a group of scholars, elites, her colleagues, and some of her family members took place. To be a part of this celebration a number of famous poets and writers such as Simin Behbahani, Muhammad Asemi, and Mahmud Khushnam had come to London from Iran and other parts of the world. Her Royal Majesty Farah the former Queen of Iran, Mehrdad Pahlbod, and Shuja' al-Din Shafa thanked Lu'bat Vala for her achievements during the past half century by sending messages, they further praised her activities in the field of the liberation of women in Iran.

Fakhri Nikzad, who was the host of the event, started the programme by saying: welcome to the celebration event in honoring Lu'bat Vala, to begin this event, we first salute the intellect, the intellectuals, the art and the artists and the Iranian nation. We salute freedom and freethinking. Following this start, the life story of Lu'bat Vala was displayed by slides while she was giving a speech herself. Lu'bat Vala said: my mother "Rukhsareh" was the daughter of a village chief in Khalkhal and my father was the great grand son of 'Abbas Mirza and my older sister was married to Ahmad Shah Qajar.

The other slides related to Lu'bat's activities during her service at the Ministry of arts and culture and her involvement in art and cultural, literal, and social assemblies.

Following the slides show, Dr Bizhan Shafiqian "her son in law" spoke of his engagement period with his wife where they both met at the school of medicine during their studentship.

He said: sadly, I must say that Shiva has not inherited the feeling and talent of poetry from her mother.

Dr Mahmud Khushnam the famous writer gave the next speech. He talked about his friendship with Lu'bat and stated that it began from Tehran and continued until the present time in London with the Keyhan newspaper. Khushnam further added: I have brought one of Lu'bat's beautiful poems which was sung by Gulchīn and the music was composed by Pāyvar as a souvenir. This song was later played for the audience.

The message from Khatereh Parvaneh from Tehran changed the atmosphere and brought tears to the eyes of the audience.

Shamsi 'Asar (Shusha) who so far has published few successful books in English about Iran, read two self-translated poems of Lu'bat Vala.

'Abdul Vahab Shahidi the famous Iranian classical singer in a message sent to Lu'bat from Iran said: *I have a garment filled with tears, and a bosom full of flames...Open your wings, oh you, whose vice is the soul to my wild candle.* Azar Pazhuhish the former speaker of the radio and the *Gulha* programme, who had travelled from Paris to London, read a poem by Lu'bat Vala under the title of "*Sarkesh*". Later, Muhammad 'Asemi in a long speech talked about his friendship with Lu'bat and added: The meetings with Simin Behbahani, and Lu'bat Vala is like a meeting with one's youth.

More talks about Lu'bat

Lu'bat Vālā was a poetess. Her poems were printed in magazines. Lu'bat had come back from France. She had finished her work on designs and tailoring garments and now returned to Tehran to set up a new fashion hall. She was friendly with a bright face, with eyes somewhat brighter and a smile brighter than them both.

Tehran was just gaining calmness from the street demonstrations, the newspapers and magazine were also concentrating on stories, fashion, and local news as a pose to political issues.

Lu'bat had a page of literature in Tehran "*Mussavar*" magazine. To have had a literature page in those days was considered a literal credibility. After the closure of "*Kāvian*" the literature page in "*Itila'at-i haftegi*" was managed by Mr. A. Partu A'zam, the literature page in "*Rushanfeker*" magazine was managed by Mr. F. Mushiri, the literature

page in “*Sepid u Siyāh*” was managed by F. Kār and the literature page in “*Mussavar*” was managed by Lu’bat Vālā, the presence of a woman among the men was a huge issue. This had nothing to do with the fact that Lu’bat was the sister of the chief editor of the same magazine. She was chosen for the post due to her abilities and talent. She maintained a proper balance in her literature page. She printed classical poetry from classical poets and at the same time encouraged the new poets and new poetry. Contrary to “Kār” who always printed his own poems in the magazine on weekly bases she hardly printed her own, very rarely, and only when she composed new poems were they printed.

When Lu’bat left Tehran for America, she left the magazine to Simin Behbahāni and she continued the job since. In the pages of Tehran “*Mussavar*” if a poem was printed it would be the sign of recognition for the poet; hence, all the new and young poets would give their work to Lu’bat to print in the magazine. Poetries from Sirus Niru, Rezā Sābeti, Muhammad Tāheri, Sirus Tāhbāz were printed on that page.

I had just given up poetry and was being occupied with sports magazines, in addition, I also wrote notes for “*Sepid u Siyah*” under the title of “*Rāndeh*” and under *nome de plume* “*Kārun*” which had made a bomb. ‘Ali Dashti didn’t mind to act as the main figure in the story. One of the stories became very popular, titled: “*Pusht-i Pardehā-yi Makhmali*”. Obviously, readers saw similarities between the female stare of the story and the beautiful theatre actress Shalā. Lu’bat, also had seen this story and had read it. She liked it. She wanted to see me and I went to see her it was there and then that our friendship began. Few months later a bomb exploded in the building, Mr. Musta’ān who was the back bone of the magazine left the publication.

It was during this period that Lu’bat placed her trust in me and asked me to work and write for the magazine, but, could she trust a 23 year old young man? Tehran “*Mussavar*” was in a way on its knees. They asked Sa’id Nafisi and all other known writers to write something, but it was not an easy task. It was Lu’bat that recommended me saying that this young man is the man for the job. Therefore, I started the job by writing a love, social, and a historical story they proved successful and I became a permanent employee of the magazine. Today, when I look back at those days I realise that all my profession and success is owed to a woman who helped me and through my employment stood by me as a true friend.

Democracy within a reactionary magazine

The understanding we had of the Tehran “*Mussavar*” magazine was the image of a reactionary magazine whose policies were in line with the government policies. However, in coming years we came to realise that the meaning of press democracy in this magazine exceeds all other.

The chief editor of Tehran “*Mussavar*” was ‘Abdul Allah Vālā, an honourable human being, he was likeable and a very helping individual. He didn’t act like the traditional managers. Perhaps, he was more like our Dr Mesbāh Zādeh. He encouraged novelty. He was a talkative person and the interesting point was that before any decision making took place he consulted with Lu’bat.

During my editing position in Tehran “*Mussavar*” I found some of my best friends. Rajā, Ra’in, Rushaniān, Shifteh, Mansour, Karimiān, Barzegar, Khursandi, Yegānegi, and so on... they were so many that I cannot remember. They all liked Lu’bat and respected her not

because of her relationship with the chief editor, because of her personality and talent. Perhaps, it was due to this fact that when the opportunity arose they all approached and asked her to become the chief editor of the magazine. This was the first time that a woman would sit as a chief editor of a political magazine.

She accepted the position and became the chief editor of the magazine. Her ideas were fresh and new, her decisions would make a difference to the weekly sales of the magazine. Women don't always get along well at work; however, the leadership of Lu'bat encouraged many women to take employment with the magazine. Mrs. Bāygan, Mrs. Sepeh Khādem, Simin Behbahāni, Bahrāmi, Gudarzi, Khātereh Parvāneh, and many more...

To choose a name for the story, consulting Lu'bat

The first successful story written by myself in Tehran "*Mussavar*" was "The Blond of our town". The name was chosen by consulting with Lu'bat. In those days there was shortage of blonds in Tehran. The most popular blond was a woman who was mostly talked about and I chose her name as "Zari" on purpose so that it would be easy to remember. Everyone was keen to know who Zari the blond was?

One day Colonel Kiāni who was later promoted to the rank of General came to the office of Tehran "*Mussavar*" in the room Mr. Vālā, Rajā, Lu'bat and I were present. They closed the door and he tried by hook and the crook to find out who this Zari the blond was? Anyway, he read the story a few times and said: there are no clues! However, it seems that the star of the story is a famous lady. We looked at each other. Vālā said in a modest way: Colonel, who? And while stressed out he shouted: how do I know? Pari Ghafāri. I was pleased knowing that I have done my job right.

Months after the end of the story, one day a lady came to the office of Tehran "*Mussavar*" to settle up and get paid, when she saw a young boy before her as the writer of the story she lost her temper and began using foul language. Iraj Dāvar Panāh calmed her down the same day and gave her a lift in his famous V.W. seemingly; she was paid; because we never heard from her again. Later, 'Abbas Shabāviz made a film titled "The Blond of our town" and this lady was the star in that film, a blond lady whose hair is now silver.

The lights and shades of the celebration night

Dr Mesbāh Zādeh, the owner of Keyhan Empire used to say to us: Journalists, usually gain their reputations by working in a reputable publishing company; however, this can be other way around too. You must try to be smart, a good journalist, and above all a decent human being. Only then you would bring credibility to this publication. Lu'bat falls into this category. Her presence brings credibility to wherever she goes.

The admirers were left behind closed doors

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600 hours of work

100 hours of phone calls

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The scattered papers



At that night of the celebration Lu'bat talked about her family pictures and the way they were scattered and plundered by the authorities' right after the Islamic revolution. She talked about how they were being thrown into the rubbish bin while her niece rescued some of them and what has



survived today is what they could save at that time. Lu'bat is a woman of many talents. She is a good writer, poetess, tailor, and a designer. She started to study again at Melbourne University right after the revolution and began the student life once again at the age of fifty.

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It won't be Lu'bat Vālā

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Lu'bat has a special love for her grand son 'Atā, who is a professional piano player. As his mother says: 'Atā has been brought up by Lu'bat, they are very dependant on one another, 'Atā announced at the beginning of the programme: this piece that is called “*Ufuq-i Nu*” I have composed for my grandmother. And Lu'bat has also composed a poem for her grand son in her last collection titled: “*Par Gushudanhā be Havā-yi Parvāz*”.

'Atā, a God's gift to the grandmother

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To my talented grand- son “‘Atā”

I can see:

*When your green voice
Echoes in every corner of the house
The Sun gets filled with lyrics
The birds of the garden
Start whirling dance
And the wave of the buds
Together with the breeze, begin to dance*

*And the autumn of my soul, borrows a thousand
Springs from the light of your songs*

*And my wintry eyes stare at the wedding place of the roots and the soil
So that they can witness;*

*The glory of love, flourishing of hope, fruitfulness of unity,
and the growth of a different tomorrow*

I can see:

The unwritten poems of my soul

*You shall write.
You shall sing.*

*The multitude birds of my imaginations
From the loneliness of the cage,
From the thorny borders of explosions
You shall free.*

You shall shout my unsaid discourse.

*You shall, with a fiery voice a better world,
a world filled with love and truth, establish.*

*And with the melody of compassion, and the tales of kindness,
You shall rebuild the retarded periods of my ruined mind.*

The definition of a mother in law in the dictionary of the son in law

Dr. Bizhan Shafiqiān, Lu’bat’s son in law said: Lu’bat was silent for 20 years; because, she looked after her old mother. He said if all mother in laws were like Lu’bat, the word mother in law would find a different meaning in our minds. He talked about Lu’bat’s peaceful soul and mentality and at the same time told a memory.

Lu'bat Vālā and Simin Behbahāni have a special friendship. And they call each other “my Lu'bat” and “my Simin”. Following Simin's speeches that night, Lu'bat read 6 couplets for Simin which she had composed specially for her. One of them is this:

***Simin! You are the pride and joy of utterance
You are the freest speakers of the homeland
With all these fame, glory and titles
You are humble, and my loyal friend***

During the event, various interview tapes recorded during 1962-1972 in radio Iran were played.

Shushā Gāpi (Shamsi 'Asār) the daughter of professor Muhammad Kāzem 'Asār one of the contemporary and a most distinguished theologian and a man of letters at the University of Tehran “in the old days” who now for many years lives in London and has published a few valuable books in English about Iran, spoke of the high school days and her friendship with Lu'bat. She said: we used to read her poems at school. She finally, read a poem of Lu'bat which was translated by Shivā into English.

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The flower from friends

On the night of the event some of the admirers and friends who were not able to attend, sent baskets of flowers as tokens of appreciations. Among those baskets of flowers there was one sent by Mrs. Marziyyeh the prominent Iranian singer from Paris, and one from Mrs. Ta'idi and her husband Behnezhād.

On Saturday night at a concert held by Gulpā, once again Lu'bat was commemorated and once the audience realised that she was at the concert they gave her another warm reception. Gulpā who had received a basket of flowers from some of his fans gave the basket to Lu'bat.