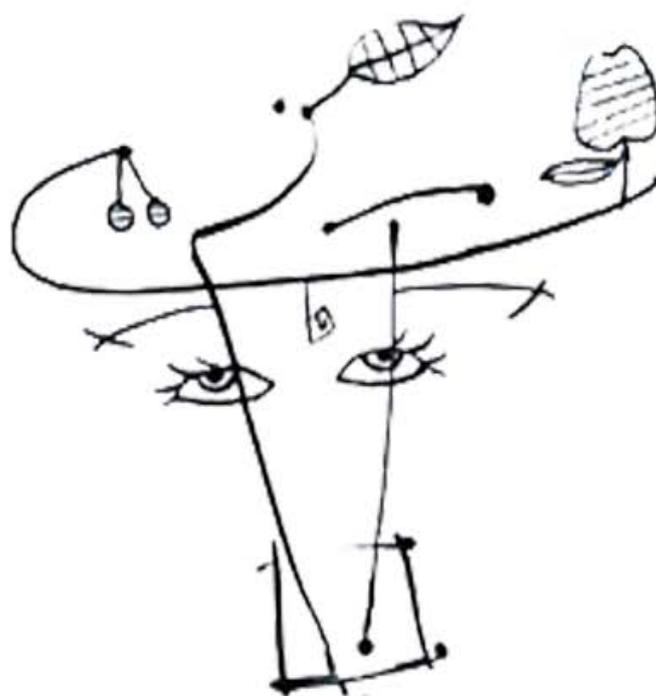


# Hidden Camera



**Author: Ali Abdolrezaei**  
**Translator: Abol Froushan**

نشر پستالنگ

2011

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**Author: Ali Abdolrezaei**

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1

Neither a green  
nor a red  
not even a white  
flag can be hoisted  
atop this tower  
in the colour of freedom  
Hey you who gave a lifetime to these seven letters  
and in the end gave your life in its square  
the impact of each bullet  
takes a rung off your rib cage  
that must mount  
a ladder  
that still  
does not reach the tall tower of freedom

2

In Revolution Square\*  
a new movie theatre has opened  
in this film that is on  
everyone is a player  
no one is watching

\* Revolution Square is one of the famous squares in Tehran surrounded by many cinemas while most demonstrations assemble in this square.

3

Basijis have surrounded him  
he laughs  
beating him with batons  
he laughs  
whatever expletives they deal  
gives no answer except he laughs  
they scratch his face  
to unpick his deep smile  
he laughs  
a baton goes up  
to land on his crown  
it does  
and he dies  
they drag the body away  
put him in the grave with the same blood stained clothes  
before the murderer shovels back the earth  
he takes a fistful of dust  
to cover the dimple in his cheek first

4

Dogs bark  
you shout slogans  
the dogs attack  
you run away  
one is hunted down  
two  
three  
thousand  
till no dog is left  
to become a Basiji

5

To give hand  
to the little night you followed in the alley  
in the alley  
up to the house that was lost in the street  
to lose a corner of mother  
mother  
and a home that had become people's property

A chador\* was lost in the street  
and the child was crying

\* Chador is a ubiquitous form of Islamic cover in Iran consisting of a large cloth covering women from head to ankles.

6

There is nothing scary about swimming in a sea of people  
in the water  
with water  
they cannot do anything  
The more you drown in this sea  
the cleaner  
even the dearer you become

7

This march has a dark air about it  
the child  
with shut eyes is shouting  
but everywhere is clear  
like the obligation of a homework  
done in the street rather than at home

8

Women's voice is higher  
don't keep saying us men  
a pain that has caught pneumonia  
has no pain  
to run away from Iran  
No man can stand this child birth  
even if only for once  
let us  
give ourselves over to a woman  
may be she will nurse this cat\*

\* The map of Iran looks like a sitting cat which explains the poets reference to the cat

9

A fist went up  
punched a hole in the air  
two fists  
three fists  
three million holes in Tehran's air  
grew to a tornado  
that is still advancing  
keeps advancing  
now if only the wind knew  
where it's heading  
even if we are jetsam  
and flotsam\*  
we shall arrive

\* Iran's president Ahmandinejad in his famous speech referred to 15 million protesting people as jetsam and flotsam.

10

Freedom doesn't do anything for you  
it only shakes the wall that you have drawn round yourself  
and sometimes writes something  
so that you think it is your last poem  
that last night you pissed on the wall  
when you had it jab in your flesh

11

Your chador  
this long night  
and your visage  
like the moon  
in the belly of the night  
So when will your day dawn girl?!

12

I'm just not capable anymore than this  
I still say I'm fine to my mother  
who calls every week  
I love you to my girl friend  
to my friends?  
Everything's gonna be alright  
Even though I have not started yet  
I keep saying it'll be finished tomorrow  
to my publisher who who knows his job  
This game is never-ending  
at least allow me  
in my poem  
a bit of myself  
if it didn't work out  
to be at least a bit honest

13

You die for lips  
I'm also in love with your labia  
So why is it that whenever we meet  
We talk about the latest shit Agha's\* got up to?

\* Agha is a popular reference to the Supreme Leader

14

There is no womb there  
They threw man out of the womb  
    to search  
    to keep searching  
    to fall in love  
A love that kills him  
    and takes him back  
    to the womb  
There is no womb

15

As if to have won a scuffle  
his hand went up  
waving at me from a distance  
that is to say  
this is the same student  
they arrested  
or the one who asked for permission  
like this to go for a pee?

16

With the flood  
the electricity went out  
the telephone cut  
so you talk to yourself a little  
don't get so hung up on TV  
look at yourself  
see  
where you've ended up

17

What do they want  
banging on my door?  
I never called  
on anyone without invitation  
knocked at a door  
so out of the blue

18

Running hell for leather  
first her book  
then her handbag  
fell on her head  
she was run over  
by a car that severed her in two

The Basijis  
were looking  
at the hip half

19

A bird you are  
in nothingness  
birth  
cuts your head off  
so you give life  
while you are  
around

20

Watch out  
don't you raise  
your hand  
or voice  
if you did  
bite your tongue  
or you die  
life is hard in Iran  
death... easy  
enough  
to raise your head a little  
just as simply  
you die

21

Though I'm afraid  
another Neda\* adorns the newspapers again  
Though I'm afraid  
they find Satan in your eyes\*\*  
and shoot  
but go  
go but  
don't forget your shades

\* Neda Agha-Soltan was shot in the post election uprising in June 2009, the clip of her dying moments drowning in blood became internationally emblematic  
\*\*Customarily fundamentalist Basijis don't look at women's eyes believing if they do Satan will seduce them

22

We were small words  
left behind on the black board  
so the pupils in the class read tomorrow  
they don't  
they wipe you off with a bullet  
and bury me in exile

23

Tehran  
is a basket of greens  
with the odd knife here and there

Red is  
freedom's long chopping board  
the more green pours into this street  
the harder for the cleaver

24

Either we have not read the subject  
or the teacher is not fair enough to give us full marks  
so we can't win  
so much the better  
rebellion is sweeter than victory  
all together  
we submit blank sheets  
so we really win

25

In order to crowd up the street  
she promised the first  
who was after marriage  
if he proposes she would not say no  
to the next one happy  
she promised to go back home with after the street  
with the last one who was out of it all  
she made a rendezvous on top of a street  
that was going to be crowded

Though a little later  
all three suiters arrive  
except for the girl  
who had now gone  
to Zahra's Heaven

26

It was for freedom  
that he was jailed  
and in the jail  
it was only for freedom  
that apart from his life  
he also lost you  
for freedom  
he lost you  
so you won't lose him

27

The mind has an empty place  
that is not filled  
except with the word  
the word of freedom  
like a stomach that stays empty  
when you forget to eat something  
and it is the empty place of all this  
that later on  
won't give you the freedom  
except to remember  
you lack something  
to put in its empty place  
a place that would not be filled  
if you did not  
exist

28

Of those who are on the street  
some have come for money  
they have to  
what can one do  
some have come to kill  
it's a job after all  
what can one say  
some too in love with the leadership  
love is an affliction  
one can't say they've gone crazy  
but you are in the street  
to defend freedom  
and how defenseless you are  
against these killers  
lunatics  
money  
this cancer of Ali the beggar\*

29

There is no ditch  
whose water  
has not gone red  
no well  
whose heart  
is not bleeding  
of all this blood poured down the gutter  
Khameneh\* is ashamed    poor town  
will change its name after you

\* Khameneh is the birth town of Ayatollah Khamenei

30

They can't get over  
money  
Agha  
or themselves  
and the rest of it all  
you should infiltrate their hearts  
so they fall in love

31

It's not so bad  
to get beaten sometimes  
to die for people sometime  
if only I had a spare life  
I would not flight

32

Going  
with any girl is good  
Walking  
is very good for losing weight  
8 March though is heaven on earth

33

We all fought for freedom  
a lot of us  
were beaten in the streets  
some died  
and on the Internet we too  
shat ourselves  
god knows what we didn't do  
for freedom

34

Having just finished the day  
driving home he got stuck behind demonstrators  
a big blue pair caught his eyes  
he pulled over and got out  
- *Hi!*  
- Death to the dictator  
- *My name is Ali*  
- Death to the dictator  
remembering his boss  
as soon as he opened mouth to say death to...he got shot  
and fell down by her feet  
- *Will you marry me?*  
He didn't hear anything  
his job was just finished

35

Neither am I after a new form  
that gives the poem character  
nor do I need a rhyme  
make up as many lies as you wish  
pour money in the streets  
buy Basijis  
just as a nation has set on you with bare hands  
you are finished with these very bare pieces

You are shot there  
so your red cells flower ... in Freedom Avenue  
you die  
so snow  
with its white cells  
soft and softly  
shroud you  
hide you  
so an ill wind won't blow  
to steel you who were not one of them\*

You are not one of them  
your arteries are arteries of a city  
that which beats in Revolution Square  
is still your heart  
which sends off  
one by one  
all taxis down any street that leads  
like a dark vein  
toward my heart  
that is in Freedom Square

We both fight in the same street  
you are shot there  
I die here

\* In the recent resurgence of the Green movement in Iran, in solidarity with the February 2011 Egyptian revolution, a university student was killed by a bullet from the security forces. The next day the security forces counter claimed that the victim was in fact a supporter of the regime killed by the demonstrators.

Three well dressed teenagers  
on the corner of the alley that defines the street  
are chatting together  
about a girl that is perhaps  
coming from afar  
seven other youths  
are standing by the side of the road opposite  
perhaps  
they are whispering about the same girl  
who is now a little nearer  
the three and the seven got together  
no fighting  
and before the girl arrives  
they start walking in the direction she was heading  
seventy people are passing the pavement  
and from the next street  
now a thousand  
eleven thousand are waiting in the big square  
the security forces are nervous  
they have closed the road  
to stop the girl arrive\*

\* Boys and girls are not free to appear together in public, in Iran. This has turned into a political issue for the young generation who are a force behind the demonstrations. Because demonstrations are forbidden they arrange to gather together at a specified square in town.

38

I throw a stone  
in the Thames  
a bird drinking at it  
flies off  
to take refuge over there  
on a Parliament tower  
but you were shot in the street  
around the Parliament in Tehran  
you were running away from

39

They are proud of the truncheons  
and the rifles  
they don't know  
they beat people  
they don't know  
they shoot people  
what do they know  
one of these days  
the lump they have planted in our throat  
will explode like a bomb

40

Two Basijies\* arrest him  
with his hands tied to his back  
they take him  
he turns his head  
tells his girl friend  
the good thing is  
now I love you even more

\* The Basij are an army of paid militia who typically aspire to enter the Revolutionary Guard of the Islamic Republic.

41

To be able to hold hands in the street  
they came out last year  
to ask for their vote back  
where his girlfriend was shot  
dead  
Now that he is marching with another girl friend  
as he is shouting slogans  
he is thinking  
of the next march  
and which one

42

Father went to work per usual  
your sister off to university  
and your mother as many years ago  
gone to Zahra in Heaven\*  
it was only you  
who cancelled school  
staid home  
waiting for three o'clock  
to join the demonstrations

it is late boy  
everyone has returned home  
except for you  
gone to Zahra's Heaven\*

\* Zahra is a sacred Shiite figure of the daughter of the Prophet Mohamed and Zahra's Heaven in a literary translation of the name of the main cemetery in Tehran.

43

A Pasdar\* shoots at him  
he falls  
but takes out his mobile  
takes a picture of his killer  
then dies

\* Pasdaran are the corps of Revolutionary Guards loyal to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic. People try to gather evidence of the atrocities to inform the world in the hope to bring them to justice.

44

He had been knifed  
it was obvious from his attacker's face  
he had got good money for this  
he wrestled the knife from the assailant  
and though he should have killed him  
he forgave  
put a hand on his wound  
held his eyes  
and the Basiji fled

45

Just a few seconds ago  
when people were shouting slogans  
they were talking to each other  
exchanging sentences  
with verbs in the present tense  
now  
he is talking about his friend  
who a few seconds ago was shot  
his verbs  
are all past tense

46

The militia were lurking around  
so the plain clothes  
and the guards  
and people  
were shouting slogans  
though none knew  
they must all be connected somehow  
what Revolution Square knew well  
having seen them all  
marching to freedom  
together in 1979.

47

It was no earthquake  
no house in ruin  
last night  
Tehran was beating to a dance  
because its prayers  
been granted

48

Pain was nearby  
the guy  
lost in people's black shadows  
his story was supposed to end on a bright note  
the sight of blood  
at the foot of the lamp post

49

A youth got shot  
a thousand windows opened wide  
his spectacles fell  
broke in two  
everyone got scared  
an only book in his hand  
twirled in the air  
opened out and as it landed  
a window shut  
now were only two left open  
which when the man  
reeled in pain and fell to a sprawl  
were shut

50

Death was in the street  
no one was afraid of it  
it had truncheons  
it had guns  
but it didn't have the balls  
to listen to a word of sense

51

I won't die alongside you  
though I will avenge you  
some day come what may  
between the loves I have  
and play neutral with  
you nevertheless are facing a thousand mercenaries  
apart from the Iranian kind  
they bring them from the Lebanon\*  
so they have fun with you in Evin Prison  
because of this  
for a few years now  
I holiday in Beirut to get some fun

\* It is well known that the Hesbollah from Lebanon have helped suppress the demonstrations in the aftermath of Iran's presidential election of 2009.

52

No one died  
so another would take his freedom  
no one has the right  
because one has  
to die for our sins  
They have painted us black  
you, green\*  
we, absent  
you, present  
so you don't take it back  
and die  
you go  
so we come  
we are absent  
you, present  
so we don't come  
and you die  
please don't take it to heart  
it is because of this  
that for which I write

\* This refers to the Green movement in Iran.

53

The flood that is going to come  
I am sure  
won't come short  
even if the sea is sitting calm ...if blue  
what does this new born wave see  
that it wants to come back to?  
Before it forsakes the shore  
what does it write on the sand  
does anyone read?

54

There is no need to pay a killer  
suicide is cheap in Tehran  
it's enough  
to pay freedom\* a visit  
to die

\* Freedom square is the largest square and the site of major demonstrations in  
Tehran

55

What is left of us  
like a sleeve  
which has lost its hand  
or a trouser leg  
that is always left empty  
we are maimed in  
hand to hand battle  
the war of me against myself

56

Every day I did the class headcount  
there was always one missing  
but you of the last row  
never found you missing  
except for one day  
only one day  
when you had gone tall as a cypress  
to green\* the square behind the school  
one  
two...

I am still doing the headcount  
everyone is present  
but there is always one missing  
in the class

\* This is an allusion to the demonstrations of the Green movement which fills the streets with green flags and insignia.

57

There is a river on the street  
One million  
Two million  
Three million voices are running  
And the mosque head-quartered behind the square  
In all its Fridays  
Hasn't seen such mass

Fear overtakes it  
And a gun-barrel pushes out its window  
Wondering whether to hit at the scarf  
Beside a boy in short sleeves  
Who can single-minded after the bullet  
Give her the kiss of life  
Or the man who had to come out of himself  
In old age  
With his daughters  
No one's seen more people than this who'd become Moses Streetwise  
More than this Nile  
To pour out so many young lives

Freedom Square is the joy of life  
And the trigger .... that is all together amiss

the barrel's revolving round for prey among the people  
can't find one  
so fires into the air  
that instead of god hits  
a piece of black  
on the homely crow  
up there having a rest on the wires  
a piece of red drops  
on the greens who had come out of their cave  
and the wind takes its black wing  
to give to the minaret of the mosque which is a pointless invention  
the gun made in one of our own factories  
singlemindedly shocked  
and like me jolted  
in the middle of a well crafted poem  
whose ending is not in my reach

58

Had this rain stopped  
and the blood in the street not been washed off  
the bus they painted green would have brightened our eyes  
and no one would have been so simple as to become a vagabond like me

Like me who dismounted from Iran  
everyone's over here making announcements over there  
by the BBC  
and waiting  
for the radio switched on in the bus to mount us

Like matchsticks  
thrown higgledy piggledy in the box  
some standing and some grown used to their seats  
waiting on a Noah's steer that won't reach land  
All carry a bomb on their head  
but waiting for the next match to catch fire  
like matches from Tabriz  
or Isfahan (that is not half the world)  
to call a halt to a driver who is not behind the wheel

London's rain gives no respite  
The bus is a box of matches sliding on a slippery street.

59

I had two books  
I did not like  
so I deleted the file  
and emptied the bin to get rid of it  
but I liked this one  
not that I love it  
Just that I like it to be published  
to make you suffer

## Ali Abdolrezaei's books on internet

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<http://www.poetrymag.ws/revue/ebook/aadmhaayehaahani/>
- 2- 'You Name this Book', Tehran, 1992.  
<http://www.poetrymag.ws/revue/ebook/naameinketaab/>
- 3- 'Paris in Renault', Narenj, Tehran , 1996.  
<http://www.poetrymag.ws/revue/ebook/parisdarrenault/>
- 4- 'This Dear Cat', Narenj, Tehran, 1997.  
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- 5- 'Improvisation', Nim-Negah, Tehran, 1999.  
<http://www.poetrymag.ws/revue/ebook/felbedaaheh/>
- 6- 'So Sermon of Society', Nim-negah , Tehran, 2000.  
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- 7- 'Shinema', Hamraz , Tehran, 2001.  
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<http://www.poetrymag.ws/revue/ebook/khatarnaak/>
- 9- 'Hermaphrodite', Paris, 2006.  
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- 12- "So, God exists", Paris ,2010

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13- 'Terror', London, 2009

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16- "Hidden Camera", London, 2011

<http://www.hashtaad.com/main/ketab/doorbin-makhfi-ali-abdolrezaei.pdf>

17- "Third Wisdom" London, 2011

<http://hashtaad.com/main/ketab/hekmat-sin-ali-abdolrezaei.pdf>

## In English

1- 'In Riskdom Where I Lived', London, Exiled Writers Ink, 2007

(A collection of 28 poems translated into English by Dr. Abol Froushan)

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2- 'Sixology', Paris, 2010 (A collection of 6 major poems translated into English by Abol Froushan)

<http://www.poetrymag.ws/docs/sixology/>

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1- 'Zerbombt doch all das Weinen', Paris, 2010 (A collection of 35 poems translated into German by Christina Ehlers)

[http://www.poetrymag.ws/docs/zerbombt\\_doch\\_all\\_das\\_weinen/index.html](http://www.poetrymag.ws/docs/zerbombt_doch_all_das_weinen/index.html)

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1- 'ÖLÜRƏMSƏ KİM BU YALNIZLIĞA DÖZƏR', Paris, 2010 (A collection of poems translated into Turkish by Saeed Ahmadzadeh Ardebili)

[http://www.poetrymag.ws/docs/istanbul\\_skool/](http://www.poetrymag.ws/docs/istanbul_skool/)

- 2- Tehlikede Yasam (A collection of poems translated into Turkish by Saeed Ahmadzadeh Ardebili)

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- 1- 'Ese', Paris, 2010 (A selection of poems translated into Spanish by Elizabeth Lorena Faitarona de Ford)

<http://poetrymag.ws/docs/ese/>

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- 1- 'Only iron men rust in the rain', Paris, 2010 (A selection of 36 poems translated into Arabic by El Habib Louai)

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- 1- "Hidden Camera", London, 2011

<http://www.hashtaad.com/main/ketab/hiden-camera-kurdish-ali-abdolrezaei.pdf>

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- 1- I NEED YOUR DESERT FOR MY SNEEZ, Paris, 2010 (A collection of Abol Froushan's poems translated from English into Persian)

[http://www.poetrymag.ws/docs/i\\_need\\_your\\_desert\\_abol\\_froushan/](http://www.poetrymag.ws/docs/i_need_your_desert_abol_froushan/)