

Bird of Dawn: A Century of Song and Struggle in Iran

Song Translation Excerpts

ACT I

Daughters of Cyrus

Characters: Ghamar

by unknown writers

translated by Sadaf Maleki

Daughters of Cyrus
How long in sorrow?
Under the hand of men
How long imprisoned?

As Iran has done
Daughters of Sasan
How long this silence?
O Women of Iran

No one takes heed
No thought of good or ill
O men of Iran
Is woman not human?

The homeland is ruined
The nation's soul is asleep
Daughters so wise
The time for revolution is now

Az Khoone Javanaan-e Vatan (From the blood of the homeland's youth)

Characters: Aref Ghazvini

by Aref Ghazvini

translated by Sadaf Maleki

In the time of wine, in the season of flowers
The meadow has bloomed anew
In the spring garden, free of crows and ravens
Like me, heartsick, a bird caged for the homeland

What crooked ways you have, O sky
What wicked deeds, O sky
You harbor hatred, O sky
You have neither faith nor creed

From the blood of the homeland's youth, tulips have bloomed
From the mourning of their cypress-figures, the cypresses have bent
In the shadow of the rose, the nightingale retreats in sorrow
The rose too, like me, has torn its garment in grief

Bird of Dawn (Morghe Sahar)

Characters: Babar and Ghamar

by Malak o'Shoara Bahar

translated by Alborz Ghandehari

Bird of Dawn, cry out!
Make my anguish fresh once more
From your breath full of sparks
Break and overturn this cage

Wing-tied nightingale, come out from the crook of your cage
Sing the song of freedom for humankind
And from your breath
Ignite the people's land with passion

The cruelty of the cruel, the tyranny of the hunter
Has scattered my nest to the wind
O God, O Cosmos, O Nature
Turn our dark night into dawn.

ACT II

Bar Pa Khiz (Rise Up!)

Characters: Podcasters, Sholeh, Parvin and Ensemble
by anonymous activists
translated by Alborz Ghandehari

In the name of Woman
In the name of Life
The clothes of slavery were cast off
Our dark night turns to dawn
All the whips turn to axes
So that we buds may turn to voices
So that you, I, she...become us again

Aftabkaran-e Jangal (The Sun Planters)

Characters: Roya, Sholeh, and Parvin
by Saïd Soltanpour
translated by Alborz Ghandehari

Winter has ended
Spring has blossomed
The sun has risen once more like a crimson flower
And night has fled
Tulips bloom in the mountains
The tulips are awake
Flower by flower
They plant sunlight in the mountains

Their lips cry out Woman, Life, Freedom!
In the mountains

Her heart is awake
She brings flowers, arms, and wheat
In her heart is life, life, life
In her heart is a forest of stars

ACT III

Bella Ciao

Characters: Ensemble

by Afshin Roustaei, Samin and Behin Bolouri
translated by Sadaf Maleki

Someone is singing from afar
Our sky of horror is spread like a plague
Shame on this nightmare, shame on this despair
The final curtain of life falls on ash

From your throat to our voices
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao
We leap from sleep on a moonlit night
Either all together or all alone
We who are awake until tomorrow

The grain of this wheat lies in the street
Our rights are not few, no room for grief
A brand new world — this is a beginning

Either all together or all alone
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao
In the end, the chain of the world's oppression
Will be broken by our own hands!

Sorude Barabari

Characters: Women of the Ensemble

by Maziar Samiei, Shirin Ardalan, Azade Faramarzi

translated by Alborz Ghandehari

I am blooming
From the wound on my body
Only for the crime that
I am a Woman, Woman, Woman!

Because when we sing together
And walk alongside each other
Hand in hand
We'll free ourselves from oppression

Let's build another world
Out of equality

In same-heartedness and sisterhood
A joyous and better world

Baraye (For...)

Character: Khosrow

by Shervin Hajipour

translated by Alborz Ghandehari

For the sake of dancing in the alleys
For the sake of your nerves, before you kiss someone
For the sake of my sister, your sister, our sisters
For the sake of transforming rotting minds

For the sake of pennilessness, the shame it brings
For the sake of longing for a normal life
For the sake of the child who searches the garbage, for her wishes
For the sake of this despotic economy
For the sake of this polluted air
For the sake of Valiasr Street and its dying trees
For the sake of Pirooz, the cheetah who may go extinct

For the sake of the innocent forbidden stray dogs
For the sake of our endless tears
For the sake of this moment and its image repeating
For the sake of a face that laughs
For the sake of the students, for the future
For the sake of this compulsory heaven
For the sake of the imprisoned leaders
For the sake of the Afghan children
For the sake of all these “for’s,” each one unique
For the sake of all the empty slogans
For the sake of the rubble of collapsed homes
For the feeling of calm
For the sun after long nights
For the anxiety and sleep meds
For man, homeland, prosperity
For the girl who wishes she were a boy
For Woman, Life, Freedom

Jin Jiyan Azadi

Characters: Shiva and Ensemble

lyrics by Mehdi Ahmadpourian

translated from Sorani Kurdish by Faraz Shahlaei and Hamoun Dolatshahi

On top of the mountain peaks.
The snow of glory has fallen
Tell the one true master (god)
Tell them Zagros lives on

Woman, Life, Freedom!
Woman, Life, Freedom!

ACT IV

Ghoghayeh Setaregan (The Tumult of the Stars)

Characters: Woman, Ensemble

by Karim Fakoor

translated by Alborz Ghandehari

Tonight, there's a passion in my mind
Tonight, there's a light in my heart
Tonight, once again I soar the sky's zenith
I have a secret with my stars

I shall converse with the Moon and the Pleiades
And seek a trace on my beloved's face
And gain life from these nights

I shall spur Venus and the Moon to dance
I am unconscious of self; from the jubilee I have
An ode on my lips

Be Khake Sorkhe Iran Ghassam (Swear by the red soil of Iran)

Characters: Ensemble

by: Anonymous

translated by Sadaf Maleki

I swear by the red soil of Iran
I swear by the sanctity of this uprising
By the tears of the Kurd and the rage of the Baluch
I swear by the honor of our fellow fighters
That the dawn will break again over my Iran
When the spell of night is shattered
This homeland will become a homeland once more

Freedom!
I remain, bound by the oath I made to you

I call your name to the ears of the weary city

I know that through you, the back of night is broken

Freedom!

We called you through your torn reed-flute
We will not turn back from the path we have taken
For this dawn remains the testament
Of the lovers who sleep in blood

I swear by the sea of tears and blood
By the surge of the flood within
By the cries of fury and madness
That when the new day rises, no trace of the dark night's demon shall remain

That in our garden there shall bloom
The red blossoms of a hundred Judas trees

Sorude Zendegi (Anthem of Life, Part 1 of Finale)

Characters: Ensemble

by Mehdi Yarrahi

translated by Sadaf Maleki

You are deeply afraid of our undivided hearts
Read the story of our courage in the lines of our song

By the curse of the gripping mothers
By the cry scattered across the sky
By the rage that roars out of Khavaran
By the magnificent uprising of the young generation

Pull your neck out from under the yoke of slavery
Raise the Anthem of Life!
Release your heart from the grief lodged in your throat
You too, along with all the world, say it

Set foot upon the toppled throne!
Wash your hands and face in the waterfall of blood
Look to Mahsa, look to Nika, look to rage and blood
Look to Aban, crimson with those laid low

Raise the Anthem of Life!
You too, along with all the world, say it:
Woman. Life. Freedom.