

Shahin Najafi**"When"**

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When condom was capote [1], it was ugly, it was bad

When commander of Sepah [2] was a replica of Mammad [3]

When heroin and syringe was per plan

When pain killers were painful themselves

When there was no war, the leaking roof of the house was under the rain's bomb

When there was no war and brains were under bombardment

When Dracula for my brother was the police

When center of the world for me was Rasht [4]

When the Revolution bowed down, it reached down to Khavaran [5]

When Jamkaran petitions [6] were delivered to Jamaran [7]

When a woman was not a woman but a mother

When my sister's friend's friend was a sister

When headscarves were still the camel-lip type [8]

When horse riders of Hussein [9] were motorcycle riding thugs

When it's you and bitterness of satire, and satirical bitterness

When it's you and a herd of rejected learned

When it's you and repentance and carefully-worded [10] poems

When it's you and the thought of pissing on this world

When strawberry and banana became free in paradise

When love affair between eyes and breast became surreptitious

When "Tom" tore "Jerry" [11] apart and ate him to the last

When my eighteen year old thought was taken away by a girl's period

When we were drained by the "Black Is Color of Love"

Did you see how we were tuned with broken diapasons [12]!

When the thought of you would wet my shorts and prayer rug

When my being twenty was causing danger by your alley

When "Shamloo" [13] had no legs, "Moallem" [14] was the millipede

When victory was not on the table, was alone in bed

When it's you and bitterness of satire, and satirical bitterness

When it's you and a herd of rejected learned

When it's you and repentance and carefully-worded poems

When it's you and the thought of pissing on this world of mine

When reform and reformism were the same as each other

When the revolutionaries bowed down or they were a few

When beards became stubbles and roots went down under the hatchet

When likes of "Bakeri" [15] and "Hemmat" [16] became politicians

When "Fereydoon" [17] overdosed and died

When twenty million votes was taken away by the wind

When cloaks [31] were chocolate-colored, white, and yellow

When we were free and freedoms were like pain

When film directors were baton-wielders

It wasn't cinema, it was circus, full of "Hedyeh" [18] and "Golzar" [19]

When it's you and bitterness of satire, and satirical bitterness

When it's you and a herd of rejected learned

When it's you and repentance and carefully-worded poems

When it's you and the thought of pissing on this world of mine

When my wife and your daughter and your mother means duff [20]

When rap became vomit in the throat of every jobless lumpen [21]

When ghost of "Marx" [22] was over the head of "Derrida" [23]

When "Dali" [24] behind the canvas, was "Frida" [25]

When "Hussein" [26] had the White House, he became "Barack"

When our representative in America, was "NIAC" [27]

When we laughed at politics and politics laughed at us

When satire had parasites [28], frequencies spoiled

When human rights was game and strategy

When homeland was "Cyrus" [29], Chelo Kabab [30], and nostalgia

When, when this was going on

Someone from behind the curtain was giving us the finger

When it's you and bitterness of satire, and satirical bitterness

When it's you and a herd of rejected learned

When it's you and repentance and carefully-worded poems

When it's you and the thought of pissing on this world of mine

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Notes:

[1] Capote is the French word for condom. This could be a reference to the policy of population control and family planning, which was in effect at the time of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, being stopped after the Revolution, i.e. birth control devices, including condom, was frowned upon as being ugly and bad.

[2] The Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, or The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC), is referred to as Sepah, or Pasparan, in Iran.

[3] Mammad is a nickname for Mohammad. Might be a reference to Seyed Mohammad Jahan Ara, a brave commander of the Pasdaran force (IRGC) in Khorramshahr. He was instrumental in liberating Khorramshahr from the Iraqi forces. A eulogy song became a popular war cry after his death in battle. The song and images of him are included in this graphic war footage >>>

[4] Rasht is the provincial capital of Gilan Province in the northern part of Iran.

[5] Khavaran is a neighborhood in south-eastern part of Tehran. Khavaran Cemetery is located in this area, where many executed political prisoners are buried there.

[6] Jamkaran is a village in Qom Province in Iran and the site of Jamkaran Mosque, where Imam Zaman is believed to reappear from a well at the site. Thousands of appeal notes (petitions) are dropped in the well each year, asking for help.

[7] Jamaran is a neighborhood in northern part of Tehran, Iran. It was once the home of Ayatollah Khomeini.

[8] Many types of mandatory head covers have been used in Iran throughout the years, one of them being referred to by some people as "camel-lip head scarf".

[9] Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi á¹-alib (626-680), the third Imam in Shia Islam.

[10] The phrase "Ø³Ø^a Ø¹Ø^μØ[§]" literally translates to "cane-in-hand" which is emblematic of doing a task with caution and refrain. Extreme caution in behavior or deed.

[11] "Tom and Jerry" is a series of theatrical animated cartoon films created from 1940 to 1954.

[12] Diapason is the Tuning Fork.

[13] Ahmad Shamloo (1925-2000), Iranian poet, writer, and journalist.

[14] A vague reference to Mohammad Ali Moallem Damghani, a contemporary Iranian eulogist poet serving the ruling clerical establishment in Iran.

[15] A vague reference to Mehdi Bakeri (1954-1985), an Islamist revolutionary at the time of the Iranian Revolution. During Iran-Iraq war, he joined the IRGC and was promoted as a commander. He was killed in combat.

[16] A vague reference to Mohammad Ebrahim Hemmat (1955-1984), an Islamist revolutionary at the time the Iranian Revolution. During Iran-Iraq war, he joined the IRGC and was promoted as a commander. He was killed in combat.

[17] A vague reference to Fereydoon Foroughi (1951-2001), a musician, composer, singer, and actor.

[18] A vague reference to Hedieh Tehrani, an Iranian actress.

[19] A vague reference to Mohammad Reza Golzar, an Iranian actor.

[20] Duff is a colloquial Farsi word. Depending on the context it is use, it could mean anything from a woman being a 'babe' to a 'slut'.

[21] Lumpen is an adjective from the German lumpenproletariat, referring to dispossessed and displaced people who are cut off from the socioeconomic class with which they ordinarily be identified.

[22] Karl Marx (1818-1883), German philosopher, economist, sociologist, historian, journalist, and revolutionary socialist.

[23] Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), French philosopher.

[24] Salvador Dali (1904-1989), Spanish painter.

[25] Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), Mexican painter.

[26] Barack Hussein Obama, President of the United States of America.

[27] National Iranian American Council (NIAC)

[28] Parasites is a French word, means static, interference, noise. Parazit is also a Voice of American Persian language satire television show, now suspended.

[29] Cyrus the Great (576 BC-530 BC), the founder of the Achaemenid Empire.

[30] Chelo Kabab is a popular Persian cuisine.

[31] A reference to former Iranian President Seyed Mohammad Khatami.

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