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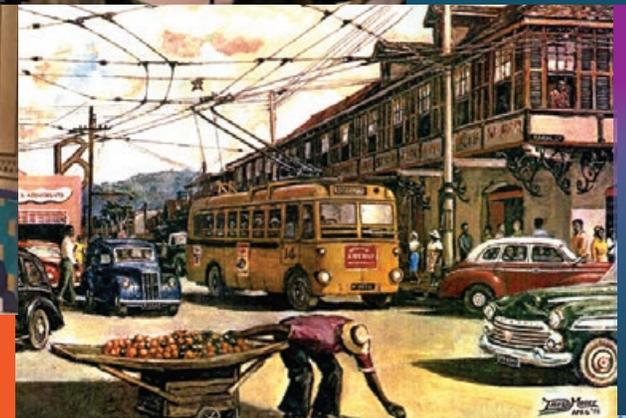
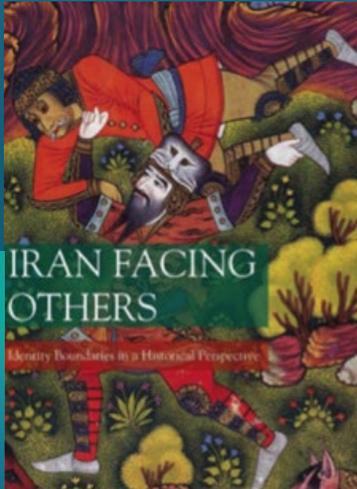
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کانون فرهنگی ایرانی

PCC

PERSIAN CULTURAL CENTER

www.pccus.org



Editorial
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Editorial
Editorial
EDITORIAL



By: Shahri Estakhry

A New World

Time these days is playing games with me, and I feel like I always must to be on constant alert. I look at the new world around me and much of what I see is no longer recognizable to me.

The world is under siege of natural disasters... floods, fires, earthquakes, as well as human created ones such as wars. According to the United Nations, the human neglect is now represented by 800 million people living in famine and millions dying from different curable and non-curable diseases. This is a dire image of the new world, but an accurate one.

These facets of the new world would seem to imply that the majority of people are after their own self-interests only, and the voices of those who still believe in human endeavors and humanity as a global family are becoming an echo from a distant past.

Of the 193 nation members of the United Nations, only two did not sign the Paris Climate Accord: Nicaragua and Syria... until this past June when President Trump declared that the United States was going to withdraw. How many more natural disasters do we need to wake us up to our new reality? It seems that the recent devastating floods in Texas, Florida, US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico that have led to millions and millions of people suffering tremendous losses to their homes and properties, as well as lives lost – are not enough. Nor are the breaking heat records this summer and the unbelievable fires in multiple western states. I suppose, for the climate change non-believers will become believers and then activists only when such disasters hits them personally. I still don't understand what it is that blocks people's minds so they don't see the realities in front of them. Who can I scream to for HELP?

I was researching climate change and came across: *The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth* by Tim Flannery. The book is reviewed by Frederick S. Goethel (a professional and well known reviewer) calling it "The Definitive Book on Climate Change". He writes "This book was recommended to me by one of Canada's leading advocates for saving the Polar Regions. He told me I should read this book if I wanted to read the best book that has been written on climate change. I was skeptical, but he was right. This is the best book I have found on the subject of climate change.

The author, Tim Flannery, is a well recognized scientist himself. He begins the book by discussing his reservations about global warming, how scientists are supposed to be skeptical and how much data must be present before scientific consensus can occur. From there, he explains how he was convinced that climate change was real.

In the book, the author starts discussing climate change from many different scientific aspects. Although some of the science is tough, even for science majors such as myself, the specifics of the science involved are used more as examples, allowing readers with less of a scientific background to understand exactly what is being said. The author does a great job of utilizing a number of sciences, including anthropology, biology, chemistry, physics, climatology, meteorology, geology, oceanography and more to prove the argument that climate change exists from every angle.

In addition, he does a great job showing how something happening in one place may affect a totally different region of the world. He covers climate change around the globe in a comprehensive manner, and shows how different peoples will be affected.

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PCC NEWS



Jong-e Farhangi Report

Jong-e Farhangi is a cultural variety show that has been a monthly program on the IAC stage for almost three years. It took some time till Jong found its own audience and followers but find it did. Jong emphasizes on arts and culture. The program guests use Jong's podium to share their views on a variety of subjects with an eager audience.

San Diego Jong-e Farhangi- September 8, 2017

The July program, hosted by Reza Khabazian, featured three guests. The first guest was Dr. Hossein Motlagh, discussing the effects of the Persian Constitutional Revolution's literature and poetry. Then young musician brothers, Matin and Misagh Eshaghi shared their memories and experiences of learning Persian music and proceeded to playing a few authentic pieces for the audience.

San Diego Jong-e Farhangi- October 13, 2017

The OctoberJong program got canceled due to the Mehregan Festival programs.



Mehregan Festival 2017

Mohsen Namjoo Concert- September 16, 2017

Mohsen Namjoon on Setar and vocals and Yahya Alkhansa on Drums took to the stage at Qualcomm's Q hall. The concert was sold out well in advance and the duet did not disappoint a very attentive audience.

Death Enters- October 1, 2017

Death Enters directed by Manije Mahamedi is an adaptation of a work by Woody Allen. Mansour Taeed and Mohammad Eskandari played the comedy on the stage of Avo Playhouse in Vista. The audience stayed engaged and excited throughout the show.

Triton Concert- October 7, 2017

The quartet went on stage at the Iranian American Center with music pieces arranged by Salman Mohammadi. This is also a sold out event.

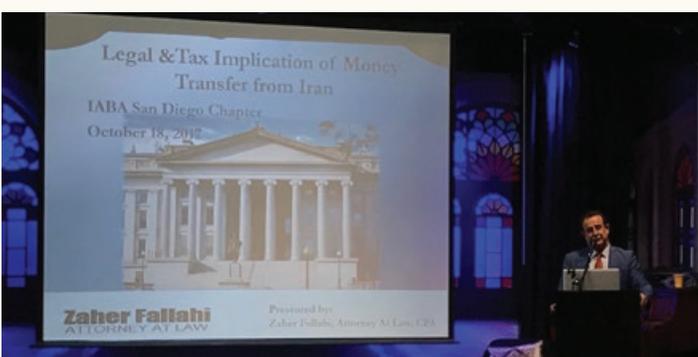
Hafez Day- October 12, 2017

San Diego Central Library and Persian Cultural Center of San Diego celebrated Hafez Day on the same date as the Iran National Commemoration Day of Hafez. The fourteenth century pinnacle of love and wine in Persian poetry is to this day celebrated for his controversial views on wisdom and philosophy. The program opened with Persian music, Mehregan Spread and Shiraz food on the library terrace, and was followed by speech, poetry, music and dance in the main auditorium.

PCC's Board Meetings

Persian Cultural Center's board of directors holds its meetings every second Wednesday of the month at IAC. The September meeting took place on September 13th and the October meeting on October 11th.





OFAC Meeting- October 18, 2017

On October 18th, the Iranian American Bar Association (IABA) San Diego Chapter and Persian Cultural Center (PCC) of San Diego co-hosted a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) event regarding the Legal and Tax Implications of Transferring Money from Iran to the United States. The distinguished guest speaker of the event was Mr. Zaher Fallahi, a Tax-Attorney, CPA and OFAC specialist. The event, which was free to members of the community, had an amazing turnout with over 75 people in attendance. Mr. Fallahi's presentation covered a wide-variety of topics, from information for those needing OFAC licenses, to consequences of bringing money to the United States without following the proper procedures. Mr. Fallahi also spoke about the difference between general and specific OFAC licenses, and when each kind of license would be appropriate. We want to thank Mr. Fallahi for coming down from Orange County for this presentation. We also look forward to hosting more collaborative events between IABA and the PCC.

Movie and Discussion- September 1, 2017

For the month of September, the Movie and Discussion group of the Persian Cultural Center of San Diego screened the movie "A Cube of Sugar" a 2011 production, directed by Reza Mirkarimi. As was mentioned by Mahmoud Pirouzian in his introduction, the movie teaser was made by Majid Majidi, the announcement by Rakhshan Banietemad and the poster design was by late Abbas Kiarostami. It is the first super 16mm Iranian production that was selected as the Iran entry for the Best Foreign Language Oscar at the 2013, 85th Oscars but the Academy Awards was boycotted by Iran. The screening was followed by a group discussion by the audience.

The October movie was "The Song of Sparrows", produced in 2008 as the fifteenth long movie directed by Majid Majidi. Reza Naji won Berlin International Film Festival's Silver Bear for Best Actor and, Asia Pacific Screen Awards for Best Performance. The movie and its awards and credits were introduced by Sara Alagheband and the screening was followed by a group discussion by the audience.

Docunights #41- September 6, 2017 and #42- October 4, 2017

Docunight is a documentary screening program held in more than twenty cities across the North American, concurrently on the first Wednesday of the month. The documentaries are either made by Iranian film makers or are about Iran and Iranians

The documentaries "Out of Focus" (2014- 52 min) and "Promised Land" (2016- 24 min) were both directed by Shahriar Siami Shal.

The documentary "Iran's Arrow" (2017- 78 min), directed by Shahin Armin and Sohrab Daryabandari, is about the 38 year production of Iran's Paykan and its impact on the society. The movie won the Best Documentary Award of the San Fransisco Iranian Film Festival 2014. Shahin Armin was present at the San Diego screening and answered the questions from the audience.



Nine Books to Better Understand Nationalism in Iran

The study of nationalism as a historical phenomenon has developed quite an extensive body of scholarship. I once tried to compile a thorough bibliography on nationalism and soon gave up after I realized the volume of books (not even articles) that deals with the subject was simply too staggering. The study of nationalism in Iran has grown into a robust subfield in many different languages and with many diverse participants who have explored such diverse issues as military history, the constitution of state and society, the rise of modern education, the formation of race thinking, the development of ethno-linguistics, the changing conception of land, the modern appropriation of ancient history in the service of nation-building, and the list goes on.

I am invested in the question of nationalism in Iran because my dissertation project intersects with its history. In it, I examine the creation of Persian Literature as an academic discipline and literary institution in the early decades of the twentieth century in Iran and Afghanistan. I argue that while there has been a concept of the literary (imaginative works of aesthetic and social value) in all cultures and time periods, the notion of literature - or *adabiyāt* in Persian - is unique to the early twentieth century. *Adabiyāt* masks itself as timeless, claiming to have always existed in this conceptual form. But in reality, the concept of literature is attached to particular historical and political sites.

Adabiyāt is similar to nation-state as a political model for the latter also masks its own novelty. One of the aspects of the nation-state is the re-creation of a collective ethnic consciousness (*We are Iranians! We are Afghans!*, etc). This collective consciousness is tied to a particular period marked by the emergence of the printing press, public education, maps and political borders, and the constitution of such novel concepts as the state, society, culture, and literature. We may disagree on how this collective consciousness has taken shape, but we need to proceed with caution when applying it to historical events that took place well before the advent of nationalism.

For instance, *Shu'ubiyya* (from *sha'b* meaning branch, people or nation) was a social movement that began in the eighth century and was waged against elite Arab political dominance in the 'Abbasid Caliphate. It was broadly a rejection of imperial Arab superiority in the court and called for a restructuring of political power to make more visible the cultural contributions of Muslims of Persian linguistic heritage. Using a vocabulary developed in the age of nationalism, many Iranian intellectuals characterize the *Shu'ubiyya* movement as a popular "Iranian" uprising against their "Arab" adversaries. They also do so in the shadow of a highly racialized understanding of who is "Iranian" and who is "Arab," which is the hallmark of racism. One must remember that this movement took place within an imperial - and not a national - context wherein a select group of elites vied for power. In the eighth century, there was no continuous and fixed Iranian or Arab consciousness as many nationalists would have us believe.

Such false and anachronistic characterizations ultimately

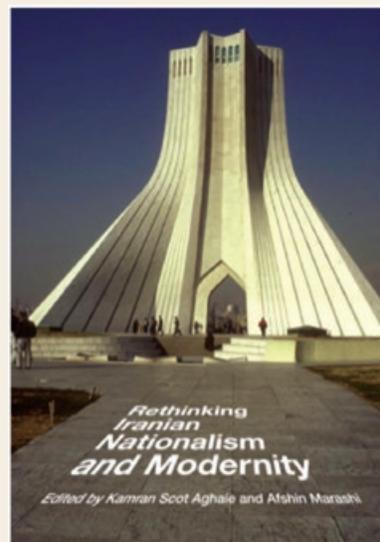
rely on uncritical and ideological readings of history. I admit that I am out of my depth talking about the *Shu'ubiyya* movement, but historical studies on nationalism have armed us with robust critical tools with which we can ask historically sensitive questions: How did the *Shu'ubiyya* resonate among the masses? Was "Iranian" or "Ajam" a distinctly *ethnic* category in the eighth century? If so, what were the criteria of inclusion and exclusion? These are questions that are addressed by scholars of early Islamic history such as Roy Mottahedeh and more recently in Sarah Bowen Savant's *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

The following list bites into only a sliver of recent English-language conversations on nationalism in Iran. This subfield is vast and growing. One brief look at the bibliography of any of the books recommended here will exhibit the depth and breadth of sources on nationalism in different disciplines and languages. I could say that these studies are even more important today as we are witness to a surge of xenophobic nationalism in the United States and across the world. But the truth is that these developments have been in the making for much longer than we cared to notice. None of the following studies will have the "final word" on nationalism in Iran. It is a highly complex subject and as we continue to debate it, more nuanced understandings of it will take form. These books may all be focused on Iran, but the methodical questions they ask are the product of generations of scholarly debate devoted to better understanding nationalism as a historical phenomenon, one that conditions the world in which we live.

***Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity* (University of Texas Press, 2014)**

Edited by Kamran Scot Aghaie and Afshin Marashi, this volume contains fifteen essays on different aspects of nationalism in Iran, ranging from the erasure of premodern sexual norms to the

creation of new histories in the Islamic Republic of Iran. These essays reevaluate the state of scholarship on Iranian nationalism and forge new paths in its study.



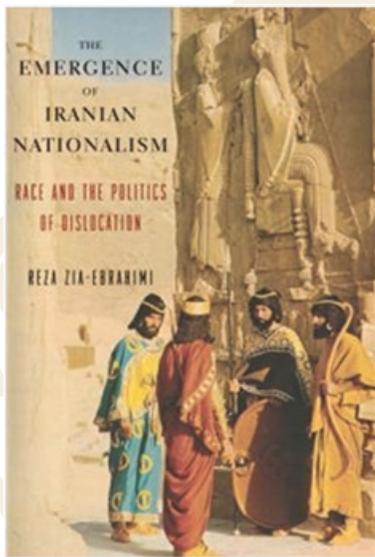
***Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (University of Washington Press, 2008)**

In his book, Afshin Marashi asks: how was Iran transformed from a traditional monarchy into

a modern nation-state? He argues that this transformation took place between 1870 and 1940. Marashi analyzes this historic transition and examines the political, social, and cultural forces that made it possible.

***Frontiers Fiction: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1946* (Princeton University Press, 1999)**

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet observes that the notion of land -*zamin*- has been largely neglected by scholars of nationalism in the development of the Iranian nation-state. In her book, she argues that Iranians used the loss of land during the reign of the Qajars (1789–1925) as a means to imagine Iran as a shared community. *Frontiers Fiction* covers a period that begins with Iran’s territorial loss to the Russian Empire in the 1810s and 1820s and ends with British and Russian forces de-occupying Iran in 1946.



***The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation* (Columbia University Press, 2016)**

In his recently published study, Reza Zia-Ebrahimi focuses on the role Mirza Fath ‘ali Akhundzadeh (d. 1878) and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (d. 1897) played in forging a distinct political vision Zia-Ebrahimi calls “dislocative nationalism.” Based on this vision, the introduction of Islam in Iran was a deviation from its

pre-Islamic glory. The author examines the history of Aryan race thinking in Iran and bravely confronts the racist strands within Iranian nationalism.

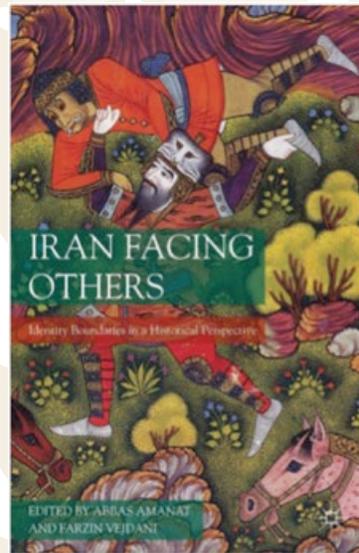
***The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* (Cambridge University Press, 2012)**

Beginning with the Constitutional Revolution in 1905, Ali M. Ansari shows us how Iranian monarchs borrowed and adapted certain European myths as they forged their vision of an Iranian nation. Ansari examines an impressive body of primary sources - including the *Shahnameh* - in Persian and other languages in order to analyze the formation of such key ideas as “progress” and “civic and national pride.”

***Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2015)**

What was the role of cultural and literary institutions, associations, and networks in the production and circulation of a coherent national Iranian history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? This is a question that Farzin Vejdani answers in *Making History in Iran* by focusing on the

contributions of scholars and educators who composed literary and historical textbooks and surveys, translated into Persian important works of literary histories, trained teachers, and designed school curricula. This book looks at the way these men and women collectively participated in the standardization of history in Iran.



***Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)**

Edited by Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani, this collection of twelve essays makes more visible the methodological challenges of studying nationalism in Iran. How does the *Shahnameh*’s conception of Iran in the tenth century differ from what cohered into a unified (yet contested) notion of Iran? How has Iran’s diverse ethnic and linguistic population informed the formation of Iranian identity?

These are some of the questions addressed in this volume.

***Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity* (Paragon House, 1993)**

Mostafa Vaziri’s *Iran as Imagined Nation* is broadly modeled on Benedict Anderson’s famous study *Imagined Communities* wherein Anderson argues that nation-states were built upon an imagined - meaning invented - sense of shared history and culture. In his book, Vaziri examines the construction of modern Iranian identity and the constitution of Iranian national historiography. He argues that Iranian nationalism is the product of Orientalism, a paradigm that set to establish notions of Western racial superiority. Some of Vaziri’s problematic conclusions and overall polemical approach have been critiqued by scholars, primarily for understanding Anderson’s idea of *imagined* to mean false or unreal.

***Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (Palgrave, 2001)**

Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi’s *Refashioning Iran* challenges studies on modernity that exclusively focus on European intellectual production. He examines the contributions of Persianate scholars in the creation of the field of Orientalism. The history of Orientalism is not marked by one way traffic with European scholars studying the “Orient,” but rather “a reciprocal relation” among European, Iranian, and Indian scholars. *Refashioning Iran* calls for a rewriting of Iranian history.



You may reach Aria via ariafani@berkeley.edu



The Perils of Conforming to Holiday Tradition Traditions

By Leily Rezvani



My dad's first Thanksgiving in America was spent in front of a TV watching American football. He was studying at UCSD and some of his classmates who had decided to not go home for the holiday invited him for a casual Thanksgiving dinner. The experience was not enjoyable—not only because my father was homesick, but also because he could not connect to the tradition. His perception of the holidays changed for the better the following year. One of my father's Iranian friends invited him over for Thanksgiving dinner after he expressed his unfavorable opinion of the holiday. With his friend's family, my father enjoyed Thanksgiving with an Iranian spin to it. Instead of green bean casserole, they had *baghali polo*, and instead of stuffing, they had *fesenjoon*. Due to the change, my father was able to immerse himself in the holiday. Since he and the family he was with did not try to conform to traditions they did not relate to, they had a far more memorable Thanksgiving dinner experience.

Conversely, my uncle embraced his first Thanksgiving with open arms, even though there was nothing close to an Iranian spin on it. He had moved to the U.S. alone at the age of fourteen to attend a boarding school in San Francisco. For Thanksgiving, my uncle accompanied one of his American friends to his home in Colorado and was met with warmth and hospitality. The family he spent Thanksgiving with was enthusiastic about his culture as much as he was about theirs. They taught my uncle about the holiday: everything from its history to the significance of the gravy. Similar to a sponge, he absorbed every lesson they taught him. However, the most important lesson my uncle absorbed from their family was the importance of their family traditions during the holiday. My uncle learned that blending traditions to create new ones is a concept that transcends borders and nationality, and, ultimately, unites individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Like many others families, my family has tried to assimilate to the American culture, specifically its holidays. Once my family realized the significance of finding a balance between the two cultures, they introduced us to a holiday season different from the ones our friends were experiencing. Growing up, I lacked appreciation for the cultural spin my parents insisted on having for Thanksgiving. Being forced to adapt to a tradition I knew nothing about caused me to have an identity crisis of my own. Every Thanksgiving, I protested by refusing to eat *ghormehsabzi* with my turkey and sitting down while everyone else danced to Iranian music after dinner. Therefore, one Thanksgiving I made a deal with my parents: we would celebrate Thanksgiving the "real" way. They agreed, however there still had to be Iranian dancing. After dinner, even though I was full from the multiple servings I ate, I nonetheless felt empty. My whole childhood, I had wanted to be a part of an idea that I could not grasp. It was not until I disregarded my culture that I appreciated its significance. Understanding

the idea of American holiday traditions was unattainable since I could not fathom what they were. Once I found that traditions are multidimensional and versatile, I was able to embrace the holidays like my father and uncle once had instead of trying to conform to ones that were foreign to me.

Each holiday season, some immigrants, especially newly-arrived ones, experience a form of identity crisis. Despite the fact that they belong to the U.S., during the holidays, many feel displaced because they are expected to conform to traditions with which they cannot connect. Regardless of what race one belongs to or how long they have called America home, everyone has the power and responsibility to modify old customs instead of adapting to them. After all, the traditions people create define America and the holidays it holds dear to its history.

Leily Rezvani is a senior in high school and the Youth Outreach Director of License to Freedom, a nonprofit that provides free legal services for refugee and immigrant victims of domestic violence.

Continue from page 3

Finally, the author discusses what is being done and by whom. He points out the lack of effort to change in the US, as well as in Australia and other countries. He presents good arguments for the slowing global warming and for the economic benefits that countries would enjoy.

This book is the best and most comprehensive I have read on global warming. If you are looking for a book that covers all aspects, this is for you. If you would prefer ranting and raving, don't look here, as there is very little of that present. Finally, if you are in doubt about global warming this book may very well change your mind, or at the very least give you something to think about seriously."

It is a NEW WORLD and each of us is responsible to educate ourselves on how to be able to preserve what is left of it for the future generations...Our children!

Events in San Diego

Persian Cultural Center

Tel: (858) 552-9355 Fax & Voice: (619) 374-7335
www.pccus.org

Persian Comedy Night with K-VON

Saturday, November 4, 2017 6-8pm
IAC: 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121

Concert Honarjayan

Saturday November 11 at 7pm at IAC
IAC: 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121

Yalda Celebration

Saturday, December 16 at Sufi Restaurant
Tickets: 858-552-9355

Art Exhibition Open to Public

From 9:00 am to 3:00 pm (Monday to Friday)
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

Movie and Discussion,

First Friday of the month at the Center
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

DOCUNIGHT

First Wednesday of the month
at the Iranian-American Center (IAC) at 7 pm
Documentary films about Iran or by Iranians

Jong-e Farhangi

Wednesday November 15, 2017 at 7pm
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

Setar Class by Kourosh Taghavi

Registration and info: (858) 717-6389

Tombak Class by Milad Jahadi

Registration and Info: (858) 735-9634

Daf Workshop

Sundays 11am-12 at Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD)

Iranian School of San Diego

858-552-9355

Yalda Celebration, December 9, 2017 Ranch Bernardo Club

Branch I, Sundays from 9:30am-1pm

Mt. Carmel High School

Branch II, Thursdays from 6-8pm

Mt. Carmel High School
Mount Carmel High School
9550 Carmel Mountain Road • San Diego, CA 92129

Persian Dance Academy of San Diego

(858) 552-9355 www.pccus.org

Dollar a Month Fund

Tel: 858-552-9355 • www.dmfund.org
www.facebook.com/DollaraMonthFund

Association of Iranian-American Professionals (AIAP)

Tel: (858) 207 6232 • www.aiap.org
Last Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM
at Sufi Mediterranean Cuisine
5915 Balboa Ave, San Diego, CA 92111



ISTA (Iranian Student Association at UC San Diego)

www.istauscd.org

House of Iran

House of Iran Balboa Park
Balboa Park, Sundays 12:00-4:00pm
www.thehouseofiran.com

Iranian-American Scholarship Fund

Tickets: 858-552-9355
Tel: (858) 552-9355 • www.iasfund.org
www.facebook.com/Iranian-AmericanScholarshipFund

Mehrgan Foundation

www.mehrganfoundation.org Tel (858) 673-7000

PAAIA

Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian-Americans
www.paaia.org

NIAC

National Iranian-American Council
www.niac.org

Book Club Meeting

Last Saturday of each month
Iranian-American Center (IAC)
6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Tel (858) 552-9355

Iranian-American Life Science Network (IALSN)

www.ialsn.org

For latest events in San Diego visit:

www.chekhabar.com

Balboa Park December Nights

Dec 1 - Dec 2, 2017, 12:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Friday's fun starts at 3:00 PM.

ESCONDIDO TAMALES FESTIVAL

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SAN DIEGO VETERAN'S DAY PARADE

Veterans Museum and Memorial Center
Nov 11, 2017 • 619-239-2300

71ST ANNUAL MOTHER GOOSE PARADE

FREE 619-333-0771 Nov 19, 2017

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HELP US END HOMELESSNESS IN SAN DIEGO.
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TIMED & UNTIMED OPTIONS FOR YOUTH & ADULTS: \$35-45
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53RD ANNUAL NORTH PARK TOYLAND PARADE & FESTIVAL

FREE • Dec 2, 2017

LITTLE ITALY TREE LIGHTING & CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

FREE • Dec 2, 2017

CHULA VISTA STARLIGHT PARADE

FREE • Dec 2, 2017

CORONADO HOLIDAY PARADE & OPEN HOUSE

Coronado Historical Association
Dec 1, 2017
FREE 619-435-7242

ENCINITAS HOLIDAY PARADE

FREE • Dec 2, 2017

37TH ANNUAL OB HOLIDAY PARADE

FREE • Dec 2, 2017



Visit Our web site at www.pccus.org

The Science of Nutrition

Vitamin K

By Mohammad Ahrar, Ph.D.



Introduction

Most vitamins are produced by plants and found in plant sources, such as fruits and vegetables.

Some vitamins are also found in the byproducts of animals that consume plants. There are thirteen known vitamins. Four of them are considered fat soluble, and the rest are water soluble. Absorption of fat-soluble vitamins in the digestive system requires the presence of fat in the diet. Vitamins A, D, E, and K, are fat-soluble vitamin. In previous issues of the *Peyk*, we discussed the importance and health benefits of vitamins A, D, and E. In this article, we will review the functions and health benefits of vitamin K.

Characteristics of vitamin K

The term Vitamin K commonly refers to a group of fat-soluble compounds which come in five forms, K1 through K5. Vitamins K1 and K2 occur naturally, while vitamins K3, K4, and K5 are synthetically produced. Most vitamin K supplements in the market are synthetic. (2)

Vitamin K1 (phylloquinone) is produced by plants via the process of photosynthesis. It is largely found in leafy vegetables and plants, such as kale. Vitamin K2 (menaquinone) is found in animal products, such as meat, milk, cheese, eggs, and liver. In humans, Vitamin K2 is produced by bacteria in the large intestine. All forms of vitamin K are first absorbed in the intestine, then largely stored in the liver and adipose tissues, before gradually entering the blood stream to be used by different tissues and organs of the body. Approximately half of the human body's vitamin K needs are met through food sources, and the other half are met through bacterial synthesis in the gut.

Role of vitamin K

The role of vitamin K is mainly for blood clotting and preventing blood loss. Blood clotting is a natural phenomenon in the body to prevent hemorrhage. Chemicals (factors), proteins, enzymes, and the mineral calcium are essential for blood clotting—vitamin K is necessary for production of many of those factors and proteins in the liver that are the key requirements for blood coagulation. Without adequate vitamin K, bleeding may not easily stop.

Possible health benefits of vitamin K

Besides the role of vitamin K in normal blood clotting, recent studies have shown that vitamin K facilitates production of a hormone called osteocalcin by bone-forming cells (osteoblasts) in human bones. This hormone is essential for mineralization and

strength of the bones, and can delay osteoporosis, but the research is conflicting and there is not yet enough data to recommend using vitamin K2 for osteoporosis. (2)

Other studies indicate that osteocalcin acts as a hormone to activate beta cells in the pancreas to release more insulin, while simultaneously directing fat cells to release a hormone called adiponectin. This hormone, in turn, increases the effectiveness of insulin in the cells and promotes energy utilization in muscles. Vitamin K has many other benefits, including stimulation of the production of testosterone in males, which has a beneficial effect on male fertility; a potential protection against hip fractures in women who ate large quantities of green vegetables rich in vitamin K (3); improved memory in older adults with increased blood levels of vitamin K (3); and a possible protection against stroke, as vitamin K may help lower blood pressure by eliminating the build-up of several minerals, including calcium, in the arteries (mineralization naturally occurs with age which is a major risk factor for heart disease) (3,4).

Deficiency of vitamin K

Vitamin K deficiency is very rare in adults, but is common in newborn infants. Newborns are prone to vitamin K deficiency because their gastrointestinal tracts are sterile and bacteria have not been established there. For this reason, usually a small dose of vitamin K is given prophylactically at birth.

Deficiency of vitamin K can also occur in people after long-term treatment with antibiotics, as most antibiotics kill the intestinal bacteria that synthesize vitamin K. It takes time for intestinal microbiota to establish again. Vitamin K deficiency may also occur in people having problems with absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, or those who have Celiac disease, cystic fibrosis, and intestinal worm (*Ascaris*) infection. People on restricted low-fat diets may also show the symptoms of vitamin K deficiency.

Anticoagulants, such as coumadin, interfere with formations of a vitamin K-dependent clotting factor in the liver. Deficiency of vitamin K, therefore, hinders production of clotting factors that are necessary for normal blood clotting.

Signs and symptoms of vitamin K deficiency

The symptoms of vitamin K deficiency include bleeding and delay in blood clotting. In severe cases of vitamin K deficiency, blood does not clot and any external or internal injury can result in severe blood loss, which requires hospitalization.

Risk factors for vitamin K deficiency

Risk factors for vitamin K deficiency include excessive alcohol consumption, malnutrition, taking drugs that interfere with



vitamin K absorption, and diseases that hinder absorption of vitamins and other nutrients in the digestive tract. Vitamin K can interact with several medications, including blood thinners, antibiotics, cholesterol-lowering drugs, and weight-loss drugs. Taking these medications for a long period of time may increase the risk of vitamin K deficiency. (3) A sudden increase or decrease in vitamin K intake can interfere with the effects of blood thinner drugs. So, if you are taking blood thinner medications, such as warfarin and coumadin, you need to consult with your doctor before taking any vitamin K supplement.

Recommended daily intake

The turnover of vitamin K, from the time of intake to the excretion time, is about 3 days.

Most people get enough vitamin K from their normal diets that there is no need to take a vitamin K supplement. For this reason, pure vitamin K is not typically used as a dietary supplement, and usually is provided only in a mixture with other vitamins. The recommended daily intake of vitamin K for people of different age group is shown in the table below.

Group	Adequate Intake
Children 0-6 months	2 micrograms/day
Children 7-12 months	2.5 micrograms/day
Children 1-3	30 micrograms/day
Children 4-8	55 micrograms/day
Children 9-13	60 micrograms/day
Girls 14-18	75 micrograms/day
Women 19 and up	90 micrograms/day
Women, pregnant or breastfeeding (19-50)	90 micrograms/day
Women, pregnant or breastfeeding (less than 19)	75 micrograms/day
Boys 14-18	75 micrograms/day
Men 19 and up	120 micrograms/day

Natural sources of vitamin K

Natural food sources of vitamin K include vegetables like spinach, kale, and broccoli, and oils such as soybean oil and canola oil. The amount of vitamin K1 in some selected foods is listed in the next table.

Food item	Microgram/100 g
Collards	440
Spinach	380
Soybean oil	193
Broccoli	180
Cabbage	145
Canola oil	127
Lettuce	122
Olive oil	55
Dry lentils	22
Cucumber	20
Carrots	10
Tomato	6
Eggs	2
Fish and meat	< 1

Adopted from reference # 1

Note: It is always a good idea to obtain daily vitamin needs from a variety of foods, and use supplements only when necessary.

Overdose and toxicity of vitamin K

Toxicity from vitamin K is rare and unlikely to occur when eating normal foods that consist of vegetables and some animal products. However, toxicity is possible when taking excessive amounts of vitamin K via supplements. (3)

References

- 1- *Modern Nutrition in Health and Disease*, Maurice E. Shills, et.al, 10th ed. Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2006.
- 2- *Nutrition and Diet Therapy: Evidence-Based Publications*, Lutz, Carroll and Przytulski K. 2006. 4th ed. F. A Davis Company, Philadelphia.
- 3- <http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-and-supplements/supplement-guide-vitamin-k#1>
- 4- www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/219867.php



Nush-e Jan

With special thanks to a great cook and friend Toba Mohabati from Toronto, Canada.

Ash Kadou (Zucchini)

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion
- 4 to 5 pieces of garlic
- 4 green zucchini
- 1/3 cup rice
- 1/4 cup split peas
- 2 chicken thighs
- 1 cup of chopped cilantro
- Salt/pepper to taste
- 6 cups of water

Directions:

1. Dice the onion and sauté
2. Add chicken, rice, and peas to pan
3. When chicken is cooked, add diced zucchini
4. Put cilantro in during the last minute of cooking, then turn off the heat



Lima Bean Meat Ball (Kofteh Baghela)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb of lean ground beef *
- 2 eggs *
- 1/4 cup chickpea flour *
- 1 lb peeled lima (fava) beans *
- 1 cup chopped dill weed *
- 1 medium size onion, diced
- 4-5 pieces of diced garlic
- 2 tablespoons of tomato paste
- 1 cup of water
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- Salt/pepper to taste



Directions:

1. To make sauce – sauté the onion, then add garlic, tomato paste, turmeric, salt and pepper, and water
2. Mix all other ingredients * well by hand and make medium size meat balls
3. Put meat balls into sauce and cook for on low heat for at least 90 minutes



Public Announcement

October 2017 Residential Messaging from SDG&E®

High usage charge starts November 1

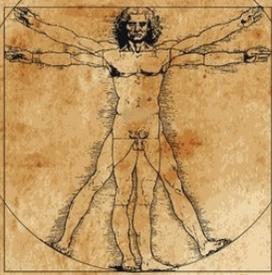
As part of California's continued efforts to encourage people to use less energy, a new State-mandated High Usage Charge (HUC) goes into effect November 1, 2017. This charge will apply to residential customers whose electricity use is more than four times the amount of their Baseline Allowance. Understanding your Baseline Allowance may help you manage your energy use to avoid this charge. Use this calculator to find out your Baseline Allowance. The HUC is a higher price per kilowatt-hour above tier 2.

Proposed rates effective November 1, 2017 through May 31, 2018		
Tier 1	Tier 2	High Usage Charge
21¢/kWh	37¢/kWh	43¢/kWh

*Winter rate period end date will change from April 31 to May 31 effective Dec 1, 2017.
** Please note that these rates are not yet approved by the Californian Public Utilities Commission and are shown for illustrative purposes only.

By subscribing to High Usage alerts, you'll know in advance that your usage will trigger the high-use charge. These alerts will let you know both before and when you start getting charged for high usage. You can choose to receive email or text alerts at sdge.com/alerts.

If eligible the Energy Savings Assistance Program can help. For more information about the High Usage charge visit sdge.com/highusage.



By Sanaz Majd, MD

7 Treatment Options for Menopause

7 Treatment Options for Menopause

Menopause has got to be one of the most challenging physiological transitional periods (no pun intended) in humans, let alone women. Is it any surprise? It's no secret that the female anatomy is a much more complex one (sorry, guys), with a few extra organs women carry. With a uterus, two ovaries, varying levels of circulating female hormones, and the entire fertility phenomenon, there's a lot that can go off kilter.

What is Menopause?

Menopause is defined as the lack of menstrual periods for one year continuously. That's it, it's as simple as that. It is not diagnosed with a blood test, contrary to popular belief. And "hormone tests" are actually misleading in menstruating women during perimenopause, as the levels tend to fluctuate throughout the cycle. The average age for women in the U.S. to enter into menopause is 51, but most people hit menopause somewhere in the range of 45 to 55.

This cessation of monthly bleeding reflects the decline of the female feel-good super hormone called estrogen. This is the hormone that feeds our vaginal tissue, our bones, and our stamina – it's the female mojo, if you will. Estrogen production of the ovaries begins to decline in our 40s, until shutting down menstruation and ovulation (or release of the egg) completely. Menopause also signifies the end of fertility since the ovaries no longer produce eggs. Many women are ecstatic about this notion, but others may have a tougher time saying goodbye.

Symptoms of Menopause

Aside from hot flashes, which are one of the most potentially debilitating manifestations of menopause (as those of you who have experienced them can attest to), other symptoms are a little more vague yet nevertheless frustrating:

- Mood swings
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping
- Hair loss
- Weight gain
- Low libido
- Vaginal dryness & irritation
- Pain with intercourse

We have to be careful because numerous other medical conditions can mimic one or more of these symptoms. So it's always important to see your doctor to rule out those other entities. But, the truth is, unfortunately these symptoms are quite

normal and common in menopause. It becomes a medical concern when any one of them causes diminished quality of life, however. At that point, we really should consider fighting them back.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

I wouldn't be forthcoming if I told you that there's something else that is more effective at treating hot flashes than HRT. There isn't. HRT is the most effective treatment for debilitating hot flashes, hands down. And before 2002, nearly every set of ovaries shutting down was thrown HRT.

Yet, a new landmark study you may have already even heard of, called the "Women's Health Initiative," changed all that around. The study showed an increased, albeit slight, risk of several serious medical conditions in those who take HRT:

- **Cardiovascular disease:** Strokes and heart attacks are the number one cause of death in both men and women in the U.S.
- **Breast cancer:** HRT can feed a cancer with hormone receptors on its surface, like some breast cancer.
- **Blood clots:** We've known that hormonal contraceptives (which are at a much higher dose than HRT) can cause blood clots, but now have learned that HRT (even at super small doses compared to birth control) can do the same.

Nevertheless, if the pros outweigh any cons for you, then by all means, fill that prescription. HRT is now prescribed on a case-to-case basis. Quality of life is important.

Non-Hormonal Treatment Options of Menopause

However, if you decide the risk is not worth it, here are a few other options you can explore with your doctor:

Antidepressants

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), such as *citalopram* and *paroxetine*, have been shown to alleviate hot flashes in multiple studies. In fact, there is a new medication on the market—a low dose of *paroxetine* (7.5mg)—that has been approved by the FDA specifically for menopausal symptoms. As an added bonus, antidepressants also help with mood changes.

Venlafaxine is another antidepressant studied and found to be effective for menopausal symptoms. In addition to increasing serotonin levels like the SSRIs, this form of antidepressant also increases norepinephrine and dopamine levels. Venlafaxine may be more activating than the SSRIs, and great for those with fatigue and depression.



Options for Menopause

Options for Menopause

Anti-Hypertensives

The blood pressure medication called *clonidine*, via a pill or a patch, is also used to reduce hot flashes. However, its potentially uncomfortable side effects (dry mouth, constipation, dizziness) may be a barrier for some.

Anti-Seizure/Nerve Pain Meds

Gabapentin is another generic alternative to treat hot flashes. It is a medication that is also used for nerve-type pain (think shingles) or seizures. It is sedating, and therefore particularly useful for women who experience nighttime hot flashes that interfere with sleep.

Vaginal Suppositories

As our estrogen levels decline, they also stop feeding the vaginal tissue, rendering it dry. We call this “atrophic vaginitis,” because the vaginal tissue “atrophies,” meaning degenerates without estrogen. This can lead to irritation, mimic symptoms of urinary tract infections, and cause pain with intercourse.

If vaginal dryness is your most bothersome issue, you’re in luck. There’s often no need to use a pill to treat it. There are prescription estrogen suppositories that can directly attack the problem. Leak of the estrogen from the vaginal tissue into the blood stream is minimal, therefore, less risky than HRT. The suppositories may take up to 8 weeks to be effective, therefore consistent use is vital.

Over-the-counter (OTC) lubricants and *Replens* (a vaginal moisturizer) are other vaginal dryness topical options.

Bioidentical Hormones

Bioidentical hormones, hormones derived from estrogen derivatives in plants and soy that are modified to structurally mimic human estrogen, have gained a great deal of media attention in recent years. They are without prescription, however, and therefore not FDA regulated. We don’t have substantiated evidence to determine their risks. It is thought that the risks are similar to HRT given that the estrogen component binds to the same receptors and essentially serves the same function.

Not everything that is “natural” is actually safer or better. If you consider bioidenticals, please use with great caution.

Soy, Herbals, Evening Primrose Oil, Ginseng, Chinese Herbs, Etc.

You may have come across other alternative medicine treatment options for menopause. However, their safety and efficacy have not been well established. They are not FDA regulated, and research studies have not shown many to be more effective than placebo.

And they are not without risk. For example, OTC Black Cohosh is one common herbal preparation used for hot flashes that carries a risk of liver toxicity. Again, just because something is “natural” doesn’t mean it’s safe or effective.

When to See Your Doctor

- Vaginal bleeding *after* menopause, or increased vaginal bleeding in any way (increased duration, heavier flow, spotting/bleeding in between periods, etc.) during the perimenopausal stage
- Cessation of periods < age 45
- Diminished quality of life from menopausal symptoms

Dr. Sanaz Majd is a board-certified family medicine physician who podcasts and blogs at <http://housecalldoctor.quickanddirtytips.com>.



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How Did I Get Here?

Dear readers,

We think it is important as the first generation of Iranian-Americans, we gather our stories of how we got here.

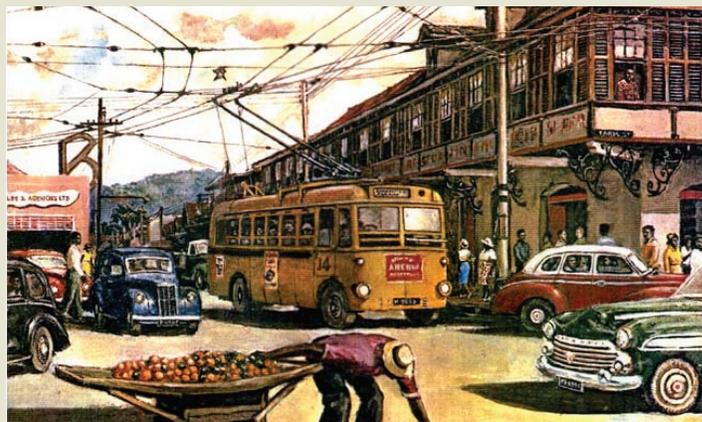
These would be a part of our collective history, for us and for future generations. We sincerely ask you to send us your stories. Regardless of how long or short your stories are, in English or Persian, we will print them in Peyk and archive them. Here is the second story of this series. The first one was by Mr. Afshin Mehrasa that was published several months ago. Please send us your stories.

Trinidad - Part 2

By Ali Sadr

...We drove through the terminal loop, then he exited the airport and entered a freeway. I could see the TWA sign behind us. "We passed it; there it was!" I exclaimed. He ignored me. Then he sped up onto the freeway. I realized what was going on, but played dumb. I reminded him that my flight to Denver was only an hour away. He suddenly turned toward me and said "shut up!" Soon he slowed down and parked on the shoulder, and angrily asked me how much money I had. I asked him how much the fare was. I was trying hard to be calm and dumb using my best English. He turned toward me in a way that ensured I could see the pistol in the holster under his jacket. "Give me your Goddamn money!" he screamed. I jumped back and pulled my wallet out and opened it towards him. There was only \$45 in it. I thought of jumping out of the car, but what about my suitcase in the trunk? He grabbed my wallet, pulled the money out and demanded "the rest Goddamnit!" (When we were still a couple of hours from New York I had gone to the airplane bathroom to freshen up, like everyone else. I also put all of my money, except \$45, into my boots. Just in case!) He yelled again. "The rest!" I calmly explained that was all I had. He was furious. "You fucking Arab, you come to America with \$45?" Of course he was using many other expressions, which I knew were not nice, even though I didn't understand them all. I just stared at him and tried to keep calm. "My cousin is in Denver and my parents wired him my money. They said it was not safe to carry the money on me!" I explained. I think my story was convincing because he stopped yelling. He then got quiet. Did I say that I was really scared? Would he buy it? What if he asked me to take off my shoes or open my suitcase? Or just push me out of the car, in the middle of nowhere? For about a minute no one said anything. He was holding the wheel with both hands and staring forward. My heart had come up to my throat. But I knew I had to continue my act. I finally said if I missed my flight I had nowhere to go in New York. Without looking at me he took the money and threw the wallet back to me with a couple of nasty words. I took the wallet and told him that I hadn't eaten for a while and that was all the money I had. He stared at me,

and then he shook his head. He probably couldn't believe that I was that dumb! He threw me a \$5 bill and stuffed the rest into his pocket. Suddenly he stepped on the gas pedal and entered the freeway, exited at the first exit, made a u-turn over a bridge ending up in the opposite direction, towards the airport. Neither one of us talked. He banged on the steering wheel a few times out of frustration. He slowly came to stop in front of the TWA terminal. I got out. He opened the trunk. I grabbed my suitcase and thanked him. He didn't say a thing, just took off. I was going to throw up. I grabbed my suitcase and started running towards the entrance. Suddenly I came face to face with a huge black cop. I got excited and started to explain to him what just happened to me. I even pointed out the limo to him which was still stuck in the bottleneck of the terminal. I said "that guy, black car, gun, my money..." He calmly listened and shook his head. He kept looking at me and looking at the car. I was sure he could see it better, since he was at least one foot taller than me. Then he looked at me and said, "You better hurry up; you'll miss your flight." He continued with a very calm voice, "You're lucky he didn't kill you!" He said something about my suitcase and walked away. I felt sick to my stomach. The next thing I remember I was on the plane trying to eat something. There were a number of very loud cowboys smoking cigars behind me. I was trying to make sense of what had just happened to me. I already hated America. I wanted to go back so badly. I was going to



cry or throw up or something. I was so lonely!

A cold breeze swept through the street. There were hardly any street lights. I was already out of breath, climbing uphill with my luggage in the direction that supposedly would take me to the college. I stopped to take a breath. "What is going on? What kind of college is this? Are they all sleeping at 11 o'clock?"

I'd spent the night before in Denver to take the Greyhound bus to Trinidad the next day. My friend Ahmad had told me that in all airports there is a panel with pictures of the local hotels, and a phone. "Just pick up the phone and punch the number next to each hotel picture; they will come and pick you up," he explained. It took me a few tries until I hooked up with a hotel whose rate I understood. A nice lady on the other end of the line asked me to wait for fifteen minutes, exit from door number three, and meet her in a gray van. I didn't wait and just walked out. It was so refreshing, a light rain! I stood in the rain thinking I would go back the next day and head back to New York and home. That was it! I already had my dose of America and didn't like it. No, I didn't at all. I was so depressed and wanted to cry so badly. But crying? No, not me! I was deep in thought when I heard a young lady, with big eye glasses and long blond hair, talking to me. She said my name, of course the best way she could. I acknowledged. She helped me to put the suitcase in the back of the van. I was the only passenger. As soon as I got in, I heard the radio playing a very familiar song; "Rocky Mountain High,

Colorado” by John Denver. This was the only familiar thing I had felt in a long time. I suddenly calmed down and felt safe. The lady with big glasses kept smiling and asking me routine questions about the flight and how long I was planning to stay. I told her I planned to go to Trinidad. She showed me the hotel restaurant and got me registered. She was so kind and helpful. I thanked her and went to my room. I locked the door and sat on the floor. “What do I do?” That was all I could think about. I finally convinced myself that if I got some rest I would be able to think more clearly. I was hungry but I didn’t want to leave my room. I was so scared. I got my money out and counted. I remembered that guy’s face when I told him I only had \$45 and when he gave me back \$5. I started laughing. Wow! What an experience! I couldn’t wait to write to Ahmad and tell him the guy who robbed me was white, clean-cut, and good looking!

I couldn’t sleep. My mind was going in a million different directions. I opened the suitcase and pulled one of the pistachio bags and ate almost the whole thing. I tried so hard to get some sleep. No way! I didn’t know about jetlag at the time. I watched TV all night. Finally, as soon as I heard some noise outside, I took a shower and dressed up and went to the hotel restaurant. A waitress gave me a menu and poured me some coffee. I looked at the menu. I didn’t recognize any item, except scrambled eggs. I pointed to that on the menu. She said scrambled eggs and asked me whole bunch of questions. I did not understand a word. I just repeated with a broken voice “scrambled eggs please!” Before she left, she poured me more coffee. I hadn’t asked for it. I drank some more. She came back and poured some more. I said “No thanks.” She ignored me or didn’t hear me. She brought me my eggs and toast and poured more coffee. I thought I was probably going to pay at least \$10 just for coffee! The next time she came with the coffee pot I almost yelled “No coffee!” She jumped back and said “Ok, gee what a . . .” and left. Other customers were looking at me with surprise. Finally, she brought me the check and kept her distance. She looked upset. I checked my bill. The total for coffee was 25 cents and written in large letters were the words “Refills Are Free!” I was so embarrassed!

Where the heck was this college? A Ford Mustang drove by, headed toward the 7-Eleven. I thought I heard some Farsi words, and thought about going back to the store and asking for help. But I decided against it as I was almost half way to the top of the hill. I was straining to see some signs in the dark that resembled some sort of office or college building. Nothing! Just dark black walls on both sides. A few windows were still lit. I was stopping every 15-20 steps to catch my breath and put the suitcase down. I felt my arms were at least one foot longer. Still no sign of civilization—what kind of town was this Trinidad?

I’d missed the two o’clock bus. The next one going to Trinidad would leave at 6 o’clock. At the Greyhound station, they let me leave my suitcase in a storage room. I thought my English was okay. So full of confidence, I told the clerk at the station that I was going to college in Trinidad. He just stared at me, then said “What?” There went the confidence! I tried to say it better and clearer. But it came out worse. The more I tried, the worse it got. With no self-esteem and total frustration on my part, somehow the clerk finally got it. He told me I had a few hours to kill. He gave me a map of downtown Denver and marked several locations of interest. He told me to be back by 5:30. I went to see the state Capitol Building which was one of the pictures on the map. It was nice, but I started to get nervous and decided to go back to the bus station and wait there. I was tired. I hadn’t slept for several days and had no energy left for sightseeing. Besides, I didn’t want to miss the bus again.

Even until that morning, I was committed to going back home. I had convinced myself, “So what, I can be like my classmates. Even if

they send me to “*Dhofar*” to fight, I will be with my friends. It would only be for two years. I can’t stand this country.” Then at the lobby I saw the young lady who had given me a ride the night before. She said hi and asked how I liked Denver. We talked for about 15-20 minutes until someone asked for a ride and she left. But when we talked, she was so kind and reassuring that it really calmed me down. When she found out that I was there to go to graduate school at Syracuse, she was really impressed. She told me I must be very smart. She said, “Going to a different country alone, to a graduate school, to study in a different language was really phenomenal.” That was it. She pumped me up with self-seem. I decided that I could do it and I was here to stay.

Deep in thought and just one block away from getting back to the Greyhound station, a group of young men started coming towards me. I recognized them as Indians, with long hair, some braided, some just loose. Their leader was obviously drunk, with watery eyes and dripping nose. He came straight towards me and asked for money. There were 5 or 6 of them. They surrounded me. They were speaking their own language amongst themselves but English to me. Their leader yelled “Give me your money!” I responded in Persian that I don’t have anything. They looked at each other. He asked if I understood English. I said, very little. The chief pulled out a quarter out of his pocket and showed me, “Money.” He was getting mad. A group of people appeared on the opposite sidewalk. They weren’t paying any attention to us. Cars were going by and no one was even looking. I had no choice but to continue my act and stay calm. I started searching my pockets and found a quarter and few pennies. One of them was staring at my briefcase. I continued in Persian and held up the quarter and said “pool- thank you.” They spoke to one another in their own tongue and said something to me. They argued and one of them grabbed my briefcase. I resisted and held it up close to my chest. The chief told them to leave me alone. I started walking fast toward the bus station. I almost peed in my pants. . . I was thinking “Why me? Is this kind of stuff happening to everyone or is it just me? How could I get robbed twice in twenty-four hours? What kind of country is this?” When the bus driver was putting my suitcase in the baggage compartment I told him I was going to Trinidad and asked him to wake me up if I was asleep. I was almost at the top of the hill. I had no idea how much farther I had to go. Then, like a ray of sunlight breaking through the clouds, I heard someone in the dark screaming in Persian, “Hassan shampoo yadet nareh (don’t forget the Shampoo!)” I dropped my suitcase and ran towards him. Poor guy. When he saw me, he jumped back. I said “Salaam!” and hugged him. He was obviously shocked. I introduced myself and told him I hadn’t spoken Persian for days and I was so thrilled to see him. He calmed down and said, “Khosh oomadin (welcome).” He said he would take me to the dormitory right away. I asked where everybody was. Why was the town deserted? He said “it is Sunday night, what do you expect? You will see in the morning that it is not as bad.” He helped me with the suitcase. He said he and his friend Hassan lived off campus but their room did not have a shower, so they went to the dormitory to take a shower every night before the lock down at midnight. He said, “Welcome to Trinidad. This is a hell hole. There is nothing to do. There are only two bars that they call ‘Lounges.’” He said there were always fights between whites, Chicanos, and local Indians and that students usually got caught in between. He said that they just had to cope with it until they finished their junior college and transferred to universities. He advised: “Don’t get stuck here. Leave as soon as you can.” And I did – indeed.



Low Hanging Fruit

By Marriam Zarabi



Those pears are beautiful—the pear tree is just like the one we had in our backyard while I was growing up in Iran! We should pick one.

Dad, we can't walk into someone's yard and pick their pears. I think the tree belongs to the neighborhood. The limbs are hanging onto the street.

Come on Dad, let's keep walking.

Don't you want a delicious pear? It is great for your digestive system, mom says it is good for your skin, and they are so delicious. I'm sure she could bake something—or even make torshi! Pickled pears are great with some of our rice dishes. I bet Mom wouldn't mind pickling them for us.

Okay Dad, *hala bebinim chi mishe*, let's continue on our walk and see what happens.

For a week over the summer, I would join my father on his daily walk. We would explore the residential neighborhood we were visiting, taking a walk through the small downtown area, and making our way back to the residential area. Our route was laborious and beautiful—each incline gave way to incredible views of the Pacific Ocean and the houses on the hills overlooking the water with a backdrop of a mountain range. The most hypnotizing view was at the very top of a residential hill; standing at the top of the hill and celebrating our achievement yielded a feeling of simultaneous fortification and inadequacy as we embraced a view that shared a story of so much beauty, time, and history.

Every day for a week, my father would make a comment about picking pears from a beautiful pear tree located at the top of a hill. The pear tree was growing in a residential yard, and its branches dangled into the street. The most tempting part of the pear tree was its location—carefully nestled on the bend of a curved street, at the top of a hill. The pear tree sat glimmering in the sun at the bend, as if mocking your laborious achievement with untouched and unattainable ripe fruit. Walking with my father was not only physical exercise, but his relationship with fruit—and the way in which he thinks with his stomach—made for a workout in rhetoric and debate as I persuaded him, day after day, not to pick the fruit. Variations of “Dad, it isn't the right thing to do. Dad, let's wait until next week and see if the pears are more ripe. Look at that bird—did you see the colors of its wings?” were barely distractions, but they carried us from the bend to the rest of our walk.

One morning, my father's quest was evident:

Have you ever had baked pears? I was looking at Mom's Better Homes and Gardens magazine and it seems like it is enjoyed during Thanksgiving. With ice cream. I think we should try it!

That does sound good! Maybe we can brainstorm with other fruit while we walk.

As we turned the street corner, we noticed a man and a woman picking the low hanging fruit. The man was balancing the woman on his back as she reached her arms above her head, carefully selecting the ripe pears. I knew this display of fruit-gathering would not go unnoticed by my father, and braced myself for his reaction.

Eh, look at that! Didi hameh mikanan? See, everyone picks the pears! No one is bothering them.

Dad, it isn't nice to pick other people's fruit. I don't think it is neighborly.

I'm sure they are neighbors! No one is saying anything.

Later that week, I stayed home and my dad braved our route on his own. As he reached the top of the bend, he says he carefully and quickly looked around for incoming traffic and other walkers. When no one was in sight, he made his way toward the tree. Greeting the tree with a smile, he studied the curves in its branches and let his eyes carry his stomach to the most ripe and most visually appealing pear. As soon as he spotted the one, he formed a strategy as to how he could best extend his arm to reach the height, and pull on the branch without disturbing the pear. Just as he reached his arm, he heard a car engine making a strong effort up the hill. Thinking the car would drive by, he didn't give it much thought, until he no longer heard the car engine.

Agha-e, golabi ro nakan—don't pick the pears.

My dad turned around. The driver of the car was stopped along the curb of the curved street, looking at him. My dad was shocked, and the only thing he could think to say was: *Are you Iranian?*

Na pass, how else would I know how to speak Farsi? I have been here for 30 years. Halaa ke kandi, eybee nadareh. Now that you have picked a pear, don't worry, but be careful not to get a stomach ache. I ate one last week and got a horrible stomach ache. My wife pickled the ones I didn't eat and they turned out delicious though!

Oh, thank you for the words of advice.

No problem, see you around!

The man drove up the street, waving from his open window. My father chuckled and immediately picked a low-hanging pear. He walked home studying his prize, reflecting on the pear tree from his childhood home, and about the man offering his words of caution. My father returned home smiling at the pear and chuckling as he walked into the kitchen.

Dad, you picked a pear? C'mon Dad!

Just wait—I have a story for you all.

We eagerly listened and embraced the coincidence of the story with shared laughter. As the story came to a close, my father began to prepare tea in the kitchen. After a few moments of collective silence and reflection, my father quickly returned to the living room, where he had just finished his story.

You don't think the man wanted to save all the pears for his torshi, to pickle, do you?

It took us less than a minute for our laughter to begin anew.

Marriam is a young professional exploring her dual identity through narrative and written prose, often writing about her personal experiences as a second-generation Iranian growing up in Kansas City. This story is based on true events she experienced while vacationing with her family.