

## **Curriculum Supplement for Selected Poems from**

*Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond*

**Focusing on poetry from Afghanistan, Tibet, Kurdistan, Kashmir, Sudan, Japan, Korea, and China**

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# Afghanistan

A. Read Nadia Anjuman's "The Silenced" from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.):

"The Silenced" by Nadia Anjuman

I have no desire for talking, my tongue is tied up.  
Now that I am abhorred by my time, do I sing or not?  
What could I say about honey, when my mouth is as bitter as poison.  
Alas! The group of tyrants have muffled my mouth.  
This corner of imprisonment, grief, failure and regrets—  
I was born for nothing that my mouth should stay sealed.  
I know O! my heart, It is springtime and the time for joy.  
What could I, a bound bird, do without flight.  
Although, I have been silent for long, I have not forgotten to sing,  
Because my songs whispered in the solitude of my heart.  
Oh, I will love the day when I break out of this cage,  
Escape this solitary exile and sing wildly.  
I am not that weak willow twisted by every breeze.  
I am an Afghan girl and known to the whole world.

Translated from the Dari by Abdul S. Shayek

## B. Identify Afghanistan on a map



**C. Introduce the term *hijab*.** Explain that the word comes from the Arabic word *hajaba* meaning to hide from view or conceal. Explain that within Islam, many women observe hijab, which is the covering of the head and body. Depending on the culture, this can range from loose scarves to veils to full-length coverings, such as the burqa worn by many Afghan women. Hijab also has a much broader meaning though beyond merely a covering. It includes a person's behavior, manners, speech and appearance in public.

### **Gender Roles**

Discuss gender roles in Afghanistan and the rights of women. Some useful links include:

Islam for Today

<http://www.islamfortoday.com/ruqaiyyah09.htm>

[http://www.islamfortoday.com/womens\\_rights\\_references.htm](http://www.islamfortoday.com/womens_rights_references.htm)

The Situation of Women and Girls in Afghanistan: Report of the Secretary-General  
A United Nations report from 2003.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/12954335d77e0dddc1256cdf00482910>

Resources on Women in Afghanistan

<http://www.academicinfo.net/afghanwomen.html>

**D. Provide some facts about Afghanistan**, like these taken from <http://www.cal.org/co/afghan/> by Barbara Robson and Juliene Lipson with Farid Younos and Mariam Mehdi

### ***The People***

There has never been an accurate population census taken in Afghanistan, but the most common estimate is approximately 26 million. A staggering 5 million Afghans—one out of five people—are thought to be in refugee camps along the country's borders and in neighboring nations. Pakistan has given refuge to 3 million Afghan refugees.

### ***Pashtuns are the dominant ethnic group.***

The Pashtuns, or Pushtuns, constitute an estimated 38% of the population of Afghanistan, and as such are the ethnic majority. Though their origin is unclear, their legends say that they are the descendants of Afghana, grandson of King Saul. Most scholars, however, believe that the Pashtuns probably arose from an intermingling of ancient and subsequent invaders. Pashtuns are Caucasians, of medium height, with strong, straight noses, black hair, and dark eyes, although there is a high incidence of blue, green, and gray eyes: The young girl with the unforgettable blue eyes featured in many National Geographic publications and posters is a Pashtun, or Pashtana, the feminine form. The language of the Pashtuns is Pashto, also spelled Pushto, Pushtu, Pashtu, and sometimes Paxto.

The Pashtuns are Sunni Muslims, but their Islamic beliefs and behavior have often been tempered, and distorted, by cultural values that are sometimes at odds with the teachings of Islam, as in their treatment of women under Taliban rule. Distinctive tribal customs and traditions form an integral part of the Pashtun society. Pashtun cultural values are reflected in a code of ethics—called simply Pashto in Pashto, and Pashtunwali ('the way of the Pashtun') by non-Pashtuns—by which Pashtuns are required to live. Westerners are fascinated by the idea of the Pashtunwali, and Pashtuns correspondingly expand on the concept to suit their listeners.

Pashtunwali is followed religiously, and it includes the following practices: *badal* (the right of blood feuds or revenge), *nunawati* (the right of a fugitive to seek refuge and acceptance of his bona fide offer of peace), *melmastya* (hospitality and protection to every guest), *tureh* (bravery), *sabats* (steadfastness), *imamdari* (righteousness), *isteqamat* (persistence), *ghayrat* (defense of property and honor), and *mamus* (defense of one's female relatives).

The Pashtuns have traditionally been small farmers and seminomads, although their way of life and their rough tribal governmental system has been completely disrupted by the events of the last 20 years. More than 1 million Pashtun Afghans fled to refugee camps in Pakistan following the Soviet invasion.

***Dari is the name given to the dialects of Persian spoken in Afghanistan.***

The historical influence of Persia, now Iran, on the peoples of Afghanistan can be seen by the number of ethnic groups who speak Dari, the name given to the various dialects of Afghan Persian. The Tajiks are the largest and most influential of these groups.

Believed to be the original Persian population of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, the Tajiks live in an area stretching from northern Afghanistan, across the border from Tajikistan, into the Hindu Kush. They often identify themselves by the particular valley they live in or near. The Afghan Tajiks are light-skinned Caucasians with aquiline noses and black hair. They share the Caucasian looks of the Iranian peoples, as well as their language. Tajiks constitute an estimated one-quarter of the population of Afghanistan. Half of the Afghans who have fled to Pakistan since 1979 are Tajiks, and approximately 65% of Afghan refugees in the United States belong to this group.

The Tajiks are 99% Muslim. Most are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi sect, but there are a few Ismaili Shi'a Muslims living in the remote mountain areas. (A few Ismaili Shi'a Tajiks have been resettled in the United States). They are devout Muslims, strong in their faith.

A second Dari-speaking group, the Hazaras, are a Mongolian people thought to have arrived in Afghanistan in the 13th and 14th centuries. They have traditionally been nomads, moving their flocks of sheep, goats, and camels from pasture to pasture in the Pamir Knot and southward into the high pasturelands of the Hindu Kush. There are about 5 million Hazaras, making up about 19% of the country's population.

A third group, the Farsiwan (also called Parsiwan or Parsiban) are farmers who live near the Iranian border, although some have moved east to the larger towns of Herat, Kandahar, and Ghazni. The Farsiwan, who number about half a million, are ethnically and linguistically indistinguishable from the Iranians across the border.

Other Dari-speaking ethnic groups in Afghanistan include the Qizilbash, well-educated urban Afghans descended from the military and administrative personnel left behind by one of the khans, or rulers, who briefly conquered some of the Pashtun tribal areas in the 18th century; the Aimaqs, another Persianized central Asian group; and the Moghols, scattered through central and north Afghanistan.

***Descendants of Genghis Khan's armies live in the north of Afghanistan.***

In the 13th century, Genghis Khan cut a great swath across central Asia, through what are now the countries across the Amu Darya from Afghanistan–Kirghizstan, Tajikstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—and westward into what is now Turkey. When Britain and Russia decided that the Amu Darya was to be the northern border between Afghanistan and Russia, the Kirghiz, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmens on the southern side of the river became Afghans. Except for the Tajiks, these peoples speak Altaic languages, which are very similar to Turkish and a completely different group of languages from the Iranian languages.

The Uzbeks are the largest of the Altaic groups. About 1 million Uzbeks live as sedentary farmers in northern Afghanistan across the Amu Darya from Uzbekistan. Most Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi branch and have mingled many traditional beliefs with their Islamic practices. Although they are generally not orthodox Muslims, Islam is an integral part of their cultural identity. The Turkmens are a seminomadic people, and a few live in Afghanistan across the border from Turkmenistan. Finally, there are some Kirghiz living in the Pamir Knot, adjacent to Kirghizstan.

The Altaic peoples have contributed a great deal to Afghan culture. The Uzbeks are thought to have introduced the famous game of *buzkashi*, a kind of polo in which teams of horsemen try to capture the headless carcass of a calf or goat and carry it across a goal line. The Turkmens are known across the world as master rug weavers—the flag of new Turkmenistan includes an inset of typical Turkmen carpet design—and brought the rug weaving industry into Afghanistan. They also introduced the qaraku sheep, whose pelt is highly valued and constitutes a successful Afghan export.

### ***The Sunni and the Shi'a***

Islam is divided into two sects, the Sunni (or Sunnites) and the Shi'a (or Shi'ites). The split between the two occurred when an originally political movement claimed Ali, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law and the fourth caliph, as Mohammed's legitimate successor. In time, this developed into a separate branch of Islam, the Shi'a, with theological, legal and devotional differences from the majority Sunni.

Sunnis constitute about 90% of the Muslims in the world. Iran is one of the few Islamic nations with a majority of Shi'a, Iraq being another. In other countries, including Afghanistan, there are pockets of Shi'a, many of whom have suffered discrimination and persecution for their beliefs. The Sunni-Shi'a split is frequently cited as the basis for political or military action. Shi'a Iran has expressed concern, for example, over the fate of the Shi'a groups in Taliban Afghanistan and consequently supported the anti-Taliban forces in the north.

The Sunnis are strictly orthodox in their obedience to the Koran and in the emphasis they place on following the deeds and utterances of the Prophet. Sunnis follow one of the four legal schools: the Maliki, Shafi, Hanafi and Hanbali, which differ on the relative importance given to the consensus about the views expressed in the hadith – the sayings of the prophet Mohammed – and the freedom of interpretation given to judges. The Hanafi school of Sunnism, to which most Afghans belong, is the most tolerant school concerning interpretation of the hadith. Founded in Baghdad in the eighth century, it became the dominant Sunni legal school under the Ottomans, and is now the most widespread in the Islamic world.

A dispute over succession to leadership of the Shi'a in 765 separated the two principal branches of that movement – the Imami Shi'a, who are now the dominant religious group in Iran and northern Iraq, and the Ismaili Shi'a, found mostly in India and led by the Agha Khan. Both of these sects are represented in Afghanistan. The more unorthodox Shi'a believe that the imam, a Muslim leader, must be a descendant of Ali and that he has exclusive authority in secular and religious matters. There are subgroups of Shi'a who differ among themselves as to the true line of imams.

The branch of Islam followed in Afghanistan corresponds fairly closely to ethnic group.

### ***The Five Pillars of Islam***

Whether Sunni or Shi'a, all Muslims recognize five basic religious principles that must be observed in daily life. Often called the pillars of Islam, these principles are the Shahadah (profession of faith), the Salat (constancy in prayer), the Zakat (giving of alms), the Sawm (fasting), and the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).

### *The Shahadah*

A Muslim is required, at least once in his or her life, to affirm out loud and sincerely, "There is no god but God, and Mohammad is his prophet."

### *The Salat*

The most important of the five pillars is that Muslims must pray five times a day, either in a congregation or alone, at sunrise, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nighttime. Muslims may pray anywhere that is clean, and many devout Muslims carry prayer rugs with them to ensure a clean spot. Traditionally, the call to prayer was announced by muezzins who chanted from the minarets of mosques at the appointed times each day. Today, most of the calls to prayer are recorded and broadcast. Before praying, Muslims must wash at least their hands, face, and feet.

During prayers, Muslims must face Mecca. Each prayer begins in a standing posture, during which verses from the Koran are recited – in certain prayers aloud, in others silently. The standing prayer is followed by a genuflection and two prostrations in which the worshipper kneels and touches his forehead to the floor.

On Fridays, the prayer just after noon is more elaborate, resembling more a Christian church service, with special prayers and a sermon that usually consists of a verse from the Koran in Arabic, followed by a discussion of that verse. The discussion can be moral, social, or political in nature.

### *The Zakat*

Traditionally, the third pillar was an obligatory tax on food grains, cattle, and cash paid after one year's possession. Payment of zakat has evolved into a general requirement to help the poor and do other charitable acts, although some Muslim countries are seeking to reintroduce zakat as a tax.

### *The Sawn*

The fourth pillar of faith is obligatory fasting during the month of Ramazan (the Afghan pronunciation of Ramadan), the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar. During Ramazan, a healthy adult must refrain from eating, drinking, and smoking from sunrise to sunset.

### *The Hajj*

The final pillar is the pilgrimage to Mecca that every able-bodied Muslim must make once in a lifetime, assuming that the individual can afford it and can leave his or her family. After having made the pilgrimage, one gains the title Haji.

Afghans are mostly Hanafi Sunnis.

## **E. Re-read the poem with Nadia Anjuman's biography in mind:**

Nadia Anjuman was born in Herat City in Afghanistan 1980. She graduated from Maleka-e-Jalali High School in Herat and attended Herat University. She majored in Journalism at the School Of Literature. She published her first and last poetry book (Gul-E-Doudi), *Black Flower*, in 2005. She died as a result of domestic violence on November 11, 2005, leaving behind a six month old son.

**Other good resources include:**

BBC News

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in\\_depth/afghanistan\\_elections/html/1.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/afghanistan_elections/html/1.stm)

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/1162108.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1162108.stm)

UC Berkeley Library

[http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/SSEAL/SouthAsia/afghan\\_US.html](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/SSEAL/SouthAsia/afghan_US.html)

U.S. Department of State

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>

Asian Educational Media Service

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/index.html>

# Tibet

**A. Read Tenzin Tsundue's *Exile House* from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.):**

"Exile House" by Tenzin Tsundue

Our tiled roof dripped  
and the four walls threatened to fall apart  
but we were to go home soon,

we grew papayas  
in front of the house  
chilies in the garden  
and *changmas* for our fences,  
then pumpkins rolled down the cowshed thatch  
calves trotted out of the manger,

grass on the roof,  
beans sprouted and  
climbed down the vines,  
money plants crept in through the windows,  
our house seems to have grown roots.

The fences have grown into a jungle  
now how can I tell my children  
where we came from?

**Note:** *Changmas* are flexible and flourishing trees usually planted as fencing

**B. Use the ideas in Judith Kneen's curriculum advice in *The Guardian* to introduce Tibet and to supplement a close reading of the poem that delves into the relevance of the trope of going home in Tibetan history.**

Judith Kneen

*The Guardian*, Tuesday 1 April 2008

The Olympic torch has been lit and is circling the globe, ready to reach Beijing at the beginning of August, when it will open a sporting spectacular, announcing to the rest of the world that China has arrived. Unfortunately for China, the unrest that has been smouldering in Tibet over the past 50 years has also flared up, fanning fears in Beijing that politics will overshadow the Olympics.

At the heart of the conflict is the deadlock between a people who believe that they are not Chinese and a huge political state that is not known for tolerating ethnic difference. It's a timely opportunity to turn classroom attention to such issues as human rights, religious practices and whether politics should interfere with sport, and provides material for subjects such as RE, citizenship and geography.



### ***Roof of the World***

Tibet, the high, remote home of the Himalayas, has around 2.6 million inhabitants and accounts for about one-eighth of China's land mass. Let students research Tibet's geography before asking them to produce a series of postcards giving a flavour of the region.

In the 1950s, China enforced long-held claims to Tibet, violently quashing the opposition. The current clashes are believed to be rooted in Tibetan protests at Chinese suppression of their culture. Amnesty International has been concerned with China's human rights record, including use of torture and "re-education" through forced labour. An example of Chinese suppression includes the case raised by Amnesty of four Tibetan teenagers at risk of torture because they exercised their right to freedom of expression ([amnesty.org.uk/news\\_details.asp?NewsID=17486](http://amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=17486) or Appendix A, below). Direct students to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ([unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.pdf](http://unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.pdf)) and ask them to create posters that illustrate some of the individual rights.

The Tibetan flag provides a simple way of illustrating Tibetan restrictions. It's a striking and richly symbolic flag. Encourage students to consider what the components of it might represent before comparing their ideas with the explanation found at [tibet.com/flag.html](http://tibet.com/flag.html). Its symbolism is deepened by the fact that the flag has been banned in China, making it representative of resistance and independence.

Possessing a photograph of the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet, is also illegal, punishable by imprisonment. Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th reincarnation of the Dalai Lama according to Tibetan Buddhists, was recently described by China's state-run media as "a wolf in a monk's robe, a monster with a human face but the heart of a beast" - an image at odds with his rather modest and benevolent persona in the western media.

Received by world leaders (including a proposed visit to Gordon Brown) and winner of the Nobel peace prize in 1989, he has become the world's most famous Buddhist monk. Enable students to find out more about Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism in particular through the BBC religion pages ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country\\_profiles/4152353.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/4152353.stm) and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/> ). A mind map or other concept map is a great way to collate ideas; find examples at <http://mind-mapping.co.uk/mind-maps-examples.htm> .

Ask students to form their own ideas about him by reading some or all of his Nobel prize acceptance speech ([http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1989/lama-acceptance.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1989/lama-acceptance.html) ). Challenge them to extract what they consider the most important words from each paragraphs, up to a maximum of three words. They can then use the bank of words they have created to write a prayer or poem expressing what they feel are some of the Dalai Lama's concerns and messages.

### ***Missing since 1995***

Second in importance to the Dalai Lama is the Panchen Lama. Each of these key figures is responsible for finding the reincarnation of the other. Consequently, the Chinese government has sought to control the process by spiriting away the Dalai Lama's choice of Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, when he was only six years old, and making their own appointment. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima hasn't been seen since his disappearance in 1995, despite calls by the UN, the EU and human rights groups for information. View the Free Tibet site on the issue (<http://www.freetibet.org/campaigns/panchen-lama-campaign-0> ) and ask students to write a letter to the Chinese embassy seeking more information about the missing young man. They can gain tips for this sort of letter from the Amnesty site (<http://amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=949> ).

# Kurdistan

**A. Read Dilawar Karadaghi “A Child Who Returned From There Told Us”** from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.):

“A Child Who Returned from There Told Us” by Dilawar Karadaghi

Anfal stopped us on the way to dating  
searched our pockets, tore the letters, set fire to the pictures,  
locked the songs away from our voices.

Anfal stole our school’s ‘good morning’,  
‘good evening’ of the neighborhood,  
‘good night’ of our woolen quilts,  
snatched greeting from the lovers’ lips,  
withered the flower on the collar of Mamleh’s songs,  
crushed Sia Chemana in Kakemem’s throat,  
wrecked the play-house of the little Khatuzins.

Anfal entered while we were still eating.  
A banquet of love had drawn us together.  
Twilight was slinking against confidence,  
salving yesterday’s pain.  
A night of affection was whistling beyond the window.  
Suddenly the lamps were killed  
the evening flew away,  
the night screamed,  
the sun said its last goodbye to the green conifers  
at the edge of the village.

Aaie, Anfal separated wood from stone,  
toddlers from their babble,  
trees from birdsong,  
the sky from stars,  
the village from the mountain,  
the river from its murmur.

Waie, Anfal deceived the trees  
set out to hunt the moon,  
poisoned the honeybees,  
planted mines in the fields and the roads,  
strangled the wheat stalk.

Anfal said, don't worry children  
It's just a trip and you will be back.  
Anfal said, we will picnic  
and chewed two green villages on the way,  
tore our letters on the way,  
set the pictures alight,  
stole 'hello' from the children's mouths.

Anfal lied to us, it was no picnic.  
It was darkland, just darkland.  
We were 182,000 stares  
unable to see each other,  
we could only hear each other's heartbeat.  
Anfal could see all of us  
but did not hear our heartbeat.

Anfal blindfolded us with a black cloth  
And grinned as it asked us:  
Tell me, children, what do you see?  
We said: nothing! Nothing but darkness.  
Anfal closed the sky above our heads  
and gathered the earth below our feet.

Anfal separated us, lined us up  
and said: open your hands, children.  
With a wet cane, it delivered  
182,000 blows to our palms  
our fingers fell off.

Anfal filled our eyes and breath with dust.  
separated wood from stone  
and everything from everything else.  
Anfal said: look, children, what do you see?  
We said: nothing but the desert.  
Anfal lied. We saw nothing but the desert.  
We heard nothing but our own heartbeats  
as we were dying.

Translated from the Kurdish by Choman Hardi

**Vocabulary:**

Mamleh—mother

Sia Chemana—a popular Persian song

Khatuzins—Kurdish name for a boy

**B. The Kurds** are the largest ethnic minority in the world without a nation-state and they have been subjected to centuries of forced migration and forced genocide. Read this article on the al-Anfal Campaign and genocide at: [http://www.gendercide.org/case\\_anfal.html](http://www.gendercide.org/case_anfal.html)

# Kashmir

**A. Read Amin Kamil's "In Water" and Agha Shahid Ali's "Ghazal"** from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.):

"In Water" by Amin Kamil

You're fraught with words, better go sit in water;  
For they swell with meaning and glow more in water.

Look for the heart in the chest and roast it on embers  
Look for the blood in the liver and drink it in water.

Tomorrow Kashmir will stretch in the sun like a desert,  
The day after Ladakh and Leh will float in water.

Under the hollow banks frightened waves take refuge;  
Lord Jaldev is born with fire in water.

At mid-day, even the sun gets soaked in sweat;  
At the end, even the moon catches fire in water.

Even in excitement, sometimes, people set towns on fire;  
Even for fun, sometimes, people pour poison in water.

The lost cow is looking for the elevensome, would someone tell her?  
Five drowned in dry land, six are aflame in water.

The peddler of ghazals, this Kamil, makes fiery calls  
But the fatefrost people are coldly sleeping in water.

Translated from Kashmiri by Muneebur Rahman

“Ghazal” by Agha Shahid Ali

What will suffice for a true-love knot? Even the rain?  
But he has bought grief’s lottery, bought even the rain.

“our glosses/wanting in this world” “Can you remember?”  
Anyone! when we thought the lovers taught even the rain?

After we died—That was it!—God left us in the dark,  
And as we forgot the dark, we forgot even the rain.

Drought was over. Where was I? Drinks were on the house.  
For mixers, my love, you’d poured—what?—even the rain.

How did the Enemy love you—with earth? air? and fire?  
He held just one thing back till he got even: the rain.

This is God’s site for a new house of executions?  
You swear by the Bible, Despot, even the rain.

After the bones—those flowers—this was found in the urn:  
the lost river, ashes from the ghat, even the rain.

What was I to prophecy if not the end of the world?  
A salt pillar for the lonely lot, even the rain.

How the air raged, desperate, streaming the earth with flames—  
to help burn down my house, Fire sought even the rain.

He would raze the mountains, he would level the waves;  
he would, to smooth his epic pilot, even the rain.

New York belongs at daybreak to only me, just me—  
to make this claim Memory’s brought even the rain.

They’ve found the knife that killed you, but whose prints are these?  
No one has such small hands, Shahid, not even the rain.

**B. Discuss the ghazal form** (see: <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5781>)

The Ghazal  
by Agha Shahid Ali

A poem of five to fifteen couplets. The name rhymes with "guzzle."

No enjambment between couplets. Think of each couplet as a separate poem, in which the first line serves the function of the octave of a Petrarchan sonnet and the second line the sestet—that is, there must be a turn, or volta, between lines 1 and 2 of each couplet. Thus, certain kinds of enjambments would not work even WITHIN the couplets, the kind that would lead to a caesura in line 2. One must have a sense that line 2 is amplifying line 1, turning things around, surprising us.

Once again, ABSOLUTELY no enjambment between couplets—each couplet must be like a precious stone that can shine even when plucked from the necklace though it certainly has greater luster in its setting.

What links these couplets is a strict formal scheme. (I am speaking of the canonical form of the ghazal, shaped by the Persians in, I believe, the twelfth century.) This is how it works: The entire ghazal employs the same rhyme and refrain. The rhyme must always immediately precede the refrain. If the rhyme is merely buried somewhere in the line, that will have its charm, of course, but it would not lead to the wonderful pleasure of IMMEDIATE recognition which is central to the ghazal. The refrain may be a word or phrase.

Each line must be of the same length (inclusive of the rhyme and refrain). In Urdu and Persian, all the lines are usually in the same meter and have the same metrical length. So establish some system—metrical or syllabic—for maintaining consistency in line lengths.

The last couplet may be (and usually is) a signature couplet in which the poet may invoke his/her name in the first, second, or third person.

The scheme of rhyme and refrain occurs in BOTH lines of the first couplet (that is how one learns what the scheme is), and then in only the second line of every succeeding couplet (that is, the first line of every succeeding couplet has no restrictions other than to maintain the syllabic or metrical length).

**C. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two ghazals, keeping in mind Kashmiri history.**



**D. Use the following resources to supplement the discussion:**

Guide to Understanding Kashmir

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/kashmir/front.html>

INDIA AND PAKISTAN: THE CONFLICT OVER KASHMIR by Levi Anthony

<http://www.edusolution.com/ourworld/kasmir/kashmir2.htm>



# Sudan

**A. Read Al-Saddiq al-Raddi's "Song"** from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.)

"Song" by Al-Saddiq al-Raddi

Facing down wind in a dust-storm,  
wrapped up in his cloak  
and wearing a hat that can't make him vanish —

this skinny man  
scans the horizon,  
gathering — but not quite yet — flowers  
until the moment you meet

(...but stuck in this narrow alleyway  
among mountains of rubbish  
he longs to lift up his beak  
unfurl his wings  
and take flight...)

Translated from the Arabic by Hafiz Kheir and Sarah Maguire

**B. Read Richard Lea's article about Sudanese poet Al-Saddiq al-Raddi**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/oct/16/voicesofprotest.poetry> (and below)

'There is a Sudanese culture' by Richard Lea

In the face of Sudan's long conflict between the supposedly Arabic north and African south, Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi's poetry blends influences from both.



A wider perspective ... Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi. Photograph: Crispin Hughes

The Sudanese poet Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi is worried about the direction our conversation is taking. He shakes his head and speaks to our interpreter. "It's heading too much towards the political side and I'm not really an expert," he says. "The cultural side is a lot more important."

He's trying to explain how his generation of poets in Sudan have grappled with the country's dual identity - its unique position as part of the Arab world and part of Africa. He's at the centre of a web of multiple identities, a complexity he feels is never reflected whenever Sudan's troubled political situation is discussed.

"In Sudan, Arabic, Islamic and African cultures do not exist in isolation," he says, but politics tends to reduce such nuances to bald oppositions.

The state places Sudanese culture within a larger Arabo-Islamic context, he explains. "My generation is beginning to realise the fact that there is a Sudanese culture, and this culture is quite rich. The Arabo-Islamic tradition is part of Sudanese culture - the other part is about the local African experience."

He's launching a translation project to build bridges between Sudanese writers working in Arabic, English and the 300 African languages spoken in Sudan, such as Hausa and Dinka.

Sarah Maguire, a poet herself and the director of the Poetry Translation Centre at London's School of Oriental and African Studies, sees Al-Raddi's work as an "assertion of his African identity", an assertion which she says is a direct response to policies introduced by president Omar al-Bashir since he seized power in a military coup.

"The whole thrust of Bashir's regime ever since it came to power in 1989 has been to impose an Islamic-Arabist agenda on the whole of Sudan," she explains.

Over the past 17 years this project has shaped the cultural climate for Al-Raddi's generation. "In order to disrupt this conformity of Arabic and Islamic identity which is being forced onto them, they are turning to their own heritage and asserting that," she says. Al-Raddi's work "as a poet is part of that assertion of his African identity, through trying to make connections, particularly with people in the south who come from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds."

His poetic voice is very unusual in contemporary Arabic poetry, she says. "There's a problem with a lot of poets writing in Arabic," she continues. "A lot of it is full of bombast and self-aggrandisement and showing off." She finds a "modesty about where [Al-Raddi] positions himself in relation to the world", a "sense of having a wider perspective on things".

His friend and colleague, the Sudanese poet Afeif Ismail, describes Al-Raddi as one of the best known poets in Sudan, Africa and the Arab world, whose work is a "mystery waiting to be solved".

"His poetry shows a great love of the beauty of African nature," says Ismail, and shows "great skill in enlivening classical Arabic vocabulary with modern idioms. Only when you have observed his many clever, tiny brush-strokes does the whole picture emerge."

It's a body of work shaped by a remarkable process of composition, a way of working which Al-Raddi says is "entirely internal". He begins with an image, a "single word" or sometimes a pattern of words that "creates a certain rhythm" and then works on it in his head.

"Whatever I do in my everyday life it's always there," he explains. "Sometimes working on a single poem could take a few months, just churning, working on it almost line by line - always, non-stop. After that, once the poem is completed in my mind, I write it down."

Al-Raddi has been publishing poetry since he was 15, when his poem *The Wind* was published in the literary journal *Al-Sahwa*. Born in 1969, he grew up in Omdurman, Khartoum, where he still lives. According to Ismail his "exceptional talent" was recognised in his early days at school, and he even owes the name Al-Raddi to the famous Arabic poet Ali-Shreif Al-Raddi.

Since 1993 he has worked as a journalist covering culture and the arts, and was recently appointed cultural editor of the left-wing daily newspaper *Al Sudani*. He spends much of his time looking for artists working below the radar.

"Just like in many other Arab countries, intellectuals in Sudan are under pressure from the state and from censorship," he says. Those doing "strong, genuine, radical, vital" work are "always to be found away from any sort of visibility, since the state controls the cultural establishments".

At the moment the visual arts are particularly strong in Sudan, particularly painting. Artists "have more freedom", partly because it's "more difficult to say what a painting is about".

"It must be understood that not all the problems are state-related," continues Al-Raddi. "Part of the problem is the lack of proper cultural institutions." Paintings also don't need translation, helping painters to "tap into networks which already exist within the Arab world".

It's because of the lack of established cultural institutions that when it comes to literature, "poetry has the loudest voice".

"For example when it comes to the short story or the novel you need a good literary magazine," he says, whereas with poetry "you could deliver it orally" - possibility which Al-Raddi has spent the last 17 years putting into practice.

"In the beginning I published poems in newspapers and magazines," he says. "But after the coup in 1989 publishing was not so easy, so myself and other poets would deliver the work orally - on the spot - all over Sudan."

The recitals would often just begin, unheralded, in the street. "Sometimes we wouldn't take any papers," he explains. "This was a way of moving outside the state's control," he continues. "Sudan is a huge country."

They would arrive in university lecture halls and fill them to bursting point, drawing huge audiences from all walks of life. "Sometimes 3 or 4,000 people would come," he says. "Occasionally it was hard - especially when there were political crises - but if I was stopped then others in other places would be able to continue."

I ask what it is about his poetry that makes it so difficult for the regime to tolerate - and we're back to politics again. He's uncomfortable with the focus the western media have placed on the time he has spent in prison, and on the censorship of his work.

"There are poets who are political activists and members of underground organisations," he says, "and there are poets like myself who do not participate actively in underground organisations, but who have strong political views and a strong vision which has sometimes landed them in trouble."

He wants to distance himself from writers who have used political confrontation as a tactic to raise their profile. "There are poets all over the Arab world, in Sudan, and in the west as well, of a lower calibre

whose work has broken the three taboos - God, sex and politics - and they have gained prominence because of that," he says, though the subject is so sensitive he is unwilling to give any examples.

And he doesn't want to talk about the political situation - the civil war which has been waged intermittently for the last 50 years and the ongoing conflict in Darfur - which he feels is already "out there". He's found that western audiences are keen to "get to know about the other side of Sudan, away from wars and famines" and other "images of strife".

He's "very happy" to have the chance to perform his poetry alongside Sarah Maguire at readings in London and Brighton. He hopes that British audiences will relish the chance to find out about a side of Sudan little covered in the western media, and is looking forward to the performances. "When I have a live audience [in front of me] I renew my experience of the poem," he says.

Al-Saddiq al-Raddi, from Sudan, doesn't speak English. One of his translator Hafiz Kheir speaks Arabic and English, while the other, Sarah Maguire, only speaks English. How do you think the meaning and movement of the poem might have changed in translation?

**C. Discuss the lyric and translation.** How do you think the partnership with translators Sarah Macguire and Hafiz Kheir might have helped give shape to the poem?

# China

A. Read Bei Dao's "Black Map" from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.)

"Black Map" by Bei Dao

in the end, cold crows piece together  
the night: a black map  
I've come home—the way back  
longer than the wrong road  
long as a life

bring the heart of winter  
when spring water and horse pills  
become the words of night  
when memory barks  
a rainbow haunts the black market

my father's life-spark small as a pea  
I am his echo  
turning the corner of encounters  
a former lover hides in a wind  
swirling with letters

Beijing, let me  
toast your lamplights  
let my white hair lead  
the way through the black map  
as though a storm were taking you to fly

I wait in line until the small window  
shuts: O the bright moon  
I've come home—reunions  
are less than goodbyes  
only one less

Translated from the Chinese by Eliot Weinberger

## **B. Living in Exile: Explore Bei Dao's biography**

Zhao Zhenkai was born in 1949 in Beijing: his pseudonym Bei Dao, literally, “North Island,” was suggested by a friend as a reference to his provenance from Northern China and his characteristic solitude. Both his father, an administrative cadre, and his mother, a medical doctor, came from traditional, middle-class Shanghai families. During the Cultural Revolution, he joined the Red Guard movement, expecting a spirit of cooperation between the Chinese Communist Party and the country's intellectual elite; but like many other middle-class youth he soon became disillusioned and was later sent to the countryside, where he became a construction worker. By 1974, Bei Dao had begun a sequence of poems which probed the boundaries of the official literature of his time and were to become a guiding beacon for the youth of the April Fifth Democracy Movement of 1976, a peaceful demonstration in Tiananmen Square. He became one of the best-known of the so-called “misty” poets — a term applied by the authorities in an attempt to dismiss their avant garde challenge to socialist realist hegemony. In 1978 he and colleague Mang Ke founded the underground literary magazine *Jintian* (Today), which ceased publication in 1980 under police order. In the early 1980s Bei Dao worked at the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing. He was the key target in the government's Anti—Spiritual Pollution Campaign, but in 1983 he managed to meet secretly the American poet Allen Ginsberg, in China as part of a group of American authors. Bei Dao noted that Ginsberg was mostly interested in Bei Dao's dissident status: later they met several times, among others in South Korea, where Ginsberg upset high officials with his questions about Korea's human rights. In 1989 Bei Dao signed a letter with 33 intellectuals to the NPC and the Central Committee, which led to a petition campaign that called for the release of political prisoners, among them the democratic activist Wei Jingsheng. At the time of the massacre in Tiananmen Square, Bei Dao was in Berlin: some of his poems had been circulated by students during the democracy movement, and he was accused of helping to incite the events in the Square. He decided to stay in exile.

# Korea

**A. Read Ko Un's from Excerpts from *Flowers of a Moment* from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.)**

Excerpts from "Flowers of a Moment" by Ko Un

At sunset

only one wish—  
to become a wolf  
beneath a fat full moon

\*

I have spent the whole day being someone else's story again

and as I journey homeward  
the trees are watching me

\*

In Mount Kariwang in Chongson, Kangwon Province  
the falling streams  
are busy, but busier are  
the minnows, the carplings  
swimming upwards  
against the current

\*

Rowing with just one oar  
I lost that oar

For the first time I looked round at the wide stretch of water

\*

Outside the cave the howling wind and rain  
Inside  
the silent speech of bats filling the ceiling

\*

"I've come, dear.  
Harsh winter's over now"

His wife's tomb laughs quietly

\*

Yes, some say they can recall a thousand years  
and some say they've already visited the next thousand years  
On a windy day  
I am waiting for a bus

\*

We went to Auschwitz  
saw the mounds of glasses  
saw the piles of shoes  
On the way back  
we each stared out of a different window

\*

Following the tracks of an animal in the snow  
I looked back at my own tracks

\*

Two people are eating  
sitting facing each other

An ordinary everyday thing  
and at the same time  
the best thing

Like they say, it's love

\*

Without a sound

resin buried underground is turning into amber  
while up above the first snow is falling

\*

Along the path  
a roebuck  
is quietly contemplating the moon in a stream

\*

The beak of a chick pecking at feed—  
my studies are far from complete

\*



When the stalls were closing last market day  
I suddenly glimpsed  
Samman's ma who died last year  
I suppose she came back to do some shopping

\*

Mother hen outside the egg  
baby chick inside the egg—  
the two are really one single body

\*

What's it all mean?  
Peach blossom petals  
have been drifting all day long into the empty house

\*

Thirty years ago  
a starving woman saw  
a thousand sacks of rice in a mirage

\*

Everything outside my door  
is my teacher

Master horse dung  
Master cow dung

Master children's freckles

\*

That business tycoon's tremendous mansion—  
the despair of beggars  
the hope of thieves

\*

Why?  
Why?!  
Why!?  
A bright day  
busy with questions from a five-year-old

Surely that child knows  
that without those Why's  
everything would be nothing

Translated from the Korean by Brother Anthony of Taize, Young-moo Kim and Gary Gach

**B. Read about Ko Un's life and views on poetry:** <http://www.koun.co.kr/koun/koun.html> (excerpted below)

“That gray-hued world was a place that I found impossible to turn my back on as a boy with only one wish - the dream of becoming a poet. My experience as a child had been bleak, for I spent my young days in a country that was colonized by another country.

“When I entered elementary school after quitting the private school where I studied Chinese classics, the Korean language class had been abolished and replaced with Japanese. It was not only in school but also at home that we were forced to use Japanese not Korean.

“During the early days of imperialism, Japan implemented a policy of depriving Joseon of its sovereignty and physical resources, leaving the language as a matter of self-regulation. However, it must have been later realized that once a country loses its sovereignty, a narrative fills the gap and this narrative and culture may become the force behind the recovery of the lost sovereignty.

“When defining a people, one naturally asks whether they have a language of their own. So the Korean language and writing-system were identified as heritages that the cruel Japanese colonial rule found necessary to purge.

“Implemented along with the policy of abolishing the Korean language was one transforming Korean names into Japanese ones. At the core of the Japanese colonial policy for Korea was this changing of Korean names into Japanese ones. My name when I was a first grader at elementary school was Dakkabayai Doraske.

“After Korea was liberated from the Japanese rule, our Korean language and literature found their rightful place back in my happiness. Other than that, I knew nothing about the ancient song called Jeongeupsa, or about Yi Je-Hyeon, Kim So-wol, or Yi Sang.

“In a nutshell, I never belonged to any group of people who studied the poetry of ancient times or the middle ages in universities. When I realized that poets are people who enjoy unbridled freedom, being liberated from all the shackles and yokes of academic tradition, I found that I was not a student learning Korean literature but a poet.”

# Japan

A. Read Tada Chimako's "Calendar in Verse" from *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Co.)

"Calendar in Verse" by Tada Chimako

I who wait for myself  
I who do not appear  
Today, I turn another page of the sea  
Close my mouth, and toss away a dead clam

A morning that does not break	A white shore
A womb that does not bear	A broken oar

I who wait for myself  
I who do not appear  
Today, I turn another page of the horizon  
And toss away a snake far too light

A morning that does not break	A useless umbrella
A suspicious chuckle	A cold piece of fried food

I who wait for myself  
I who do not appear  
Today, I turn another page of sky  
And toss away sooty stardust I have swept up

A morning that does not break	A patch of teary grass
I turn them	And turn them
But still I do not appear	
I who wait for myself	
A world of imaginary numbers	A love with no arms

Translated from the Japanese by Jeffrey Angles

## Appendix A

[http://amnesty.org.uk/news\\_details.asp?NewsID=17486](http://amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=17486)

### **China: Four Tibetan Children at imminent risk of torture**

*Posted: 15 October 2007*

Four Tibetan children aged 15 years, detained since 7 September in Gansu province, are at grave risk of torture and mistreatment on suspicion of writing pro-Tibetan independence slogans, said Amnesty International today. A fifth child, 14 years old, is in hospital suffering severe head injuries received in detention.

Amnesty International has received reports that electric prods have been used on the children and that Chopa Kyab, one of the children still in detention, is being taken away at night and has been severely traumatised by his treatment.

On 7 September some 40 children were detained by police in Xiahe county, Gannan prefecture, Gansu province, for exercising their right to freedom of expression. All but seven of the children were released from police custody within 48 hours. Two of these seven children, aged 14 years old, were later released after payments were made by their families to the police, believed to be in the amount of 2000 yuan (US\$250). Another boy, aged 14 years, believed to be called Lhamo Tseten, was allowed to go to hospital for treatment of severe wounds to the head received in detention, also after payments to the police.

Public Security Bureau officials are reportedly demanding payment for the release of the remaining four boys still in custody, said to be more than 20,000 yuan (\$2500). It appears that the police will not release any of the boys until full payment is made for all of them. However, children released after payment by their families may be rearrested shortly after, in a pattern previously observed by local residents.

Amnesty demands the immediate release of the four children still in detention, and calls on the Chinese authorities to launch an investigation into the brutal treatment of the children, and into the reports of corrupt practices by local police demanding payment from families for the release of those in detention. The children should be given immediate medical treatment and be protected from further abuse.

#### Background

Amnesty International has long-standing concerns about arbitrary detention without charge, trial or judicial review, as well as torture and ill-treatment of detainees in Tibet.

Freedom of religion, expression and association continue to be severely restricted in Tibet, and as result many are imprisoned for peacefully exercising their basic human rights. As elsewhere in China, arbitrary detentions, unfair trials, torture and ill-treatment remain commonplace.

For more information see: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/china>