

## Persona by Zoe

Beyond the reach of time  
a young woman dances freely on a rugged cliff.

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London, Winter 1977,  
aged twenty-five, slender  
extroverted  
exuding enthusiasm  
the woman came  
she went on, looking for social justice.

I know you don't want to hear it, but I told you so.

Tehran, Spring 1983,  
thirty years old, carrying a promise,  
bearing the fruit of the future.  
But Evin prison wasn't the land  
to grow a life.  
She was adamant yet demure,  
the steps of insurrection were close and loud,  
they all had hoped for freedom.  
The savagery of the regime  
was far beyond comprehension.  
She wondered if she was naïve.

Don't judge me, no! Don't tell me I told you so.

London, Summer 1993,  
the woman sits on the edge of a moral dilemma  
juggling her desires, still pushing for her dreams

finding it too delicate to open her suffocated love and emotions.  
She burns aloe wood and plays the lute, musing...

Her obituary will say:

“That woman led a courageous life,  
She did things that no-one else could do in her circumstances,  
She achieved a great deal,  
She was kind and caring,  
But she was either too lonely or selfish.”

A passer-by will raise his hat where she's laid to rest  
a sad smile on his lips whilst bowing his head.  
And others will speculate, “Who was she? We didn't know her”.

London, Autumn 2020,  
The grown up woman has descended the cliffs,  
She is standing on the edge of a cold season.

Did I live?  
Why did I forget the scent of pomegranate blossoms?  
Why didn't I smell the burning scents within me?

The light emerges, too bright for her eyes.  
She goes to the small pond in the garden  
beams with joy  
as she catches a deep scent of the cyclamen flowers.  
She remembers the lyrics of a verse from Hafez;  
“Ever since happiness heard your name,  
it has been running through the streets  
trying to find you”.

I knew this day would come.