



# Ezzat Goushegir

Long time Evanston resident, Ezzat Goushegir is a trilingual writer, who has published twelve books in Farsi. Her English and Persian plays have been performed around the world, received awards, and have been translated into French, Arabic and Mandarin. Her play “My Name is Inanna” was produced by Red Tape Theatre in Chicago last year. Among her many activities, she was a Fellow Writer in the Iowa City International Writing Program, a Writer-in-Residence at the University of Maryland, a co-director and dramaturge of a reading series at New Federal Theatre in New York. She teaches at DePaul university and is also a regular contributor to English and Persian language literary journals around the world.



## Little Joan of Arc with Red Lipstick, Pink Nail Polish and Orange Dress



What day is today?

Yesterday,

On screen in hospital's Cardiac Room,

I saw my little heart,

Was still pounding in its lonely cage

Under thin layers of bones and skin

Clouded by roaring fumes...

Longing for a tender touch,

I gazed at it like a little planet hovering in empty space,

Living within itself in a mystifying way.

Childlike it was,

lucid innocence.

With its infinite patience.

I said: Thank you, my heart.

Before wearing my orange dress,

Embraced by daylight,

I woke up to my older sister's tender voice on the phone

How is your little heart?

I said: It's still beating. Thank you, my sister.

Today,



At eight fifty-eight I dial a number not expecting a human voice



A woman with a Latino accent picks up the phone:

- This is Carlotta, may I help you?
- Carlotta, I believe there is a mistake in my file!

(I can't act the way other people act...I know life is a theatre)

After a while Carlotta says:

- You're right! I fixed it!

(I can't believe on Monday morning something can be fixed that easily!)

I don't say: Are you sure?

Instead, I say: Thank you, Ms. Carlotta

I don't say: Thank you for your soothing voice that caressed my heart.

I fetch my orange dress from the closet.

Dark green snake veins swell on my hands

Estranged in a tangled, labyrinthine forest

Looked for a meadow to escape out of this maze

My pink nail polish is their comfort zone

Thank you, my hands, for your healing touch,

Your rapturous energy you exude every day

And the food you bring on the tables.

Before wearing my orange dress

I was burned sixty times

And I have risen from Joan of Arc's ashes, each time.

That's why I like my orange dress.

I cross the road while the cars are all stopping for me

Admiring my orange scarf floating in the air



Thank you, cars for your recognition of colors!

What day is today?

I know many would laugh when I thank even the invisible growth of grass

Let them laugh

I laugh with them no matter what their reasons are

I know that I have risen from Joan of Arc's ashes

And I know that I like my orange dress,

My red lipstick and pink nail polish.

What day is today?

What happened yesterday?

Or the day before yesterday?

Oh, how small I am!

In my ordinary life...

With all the bright colors I wear,

I can barely be seen!

Was it yesterday or today,

The shooter said, "It's time to die" and then shot the teacher?

And the little Joan of Arc smeared blood on her face to play dead.

Was it yesterday or today,

That the teacher's husband died of a broken heart?

Oh, how small I am



When I cry out: Enough. Enough. Stop. Stop.

And my heart is still pounding.



What day is today?

eplart@cityofevanston.org | 1703 Orrington Avenue, Evanston, IL 60202 | 847-448-8101

