

Teheran, February 2019

Dear visitor,

During the massive suppression of leftist political dissidents in the early 1980s in Iran, "Moon Walking" became a thing.

It was stunning and fulfilling to watch. Pretending you are walking ahead, but actually moving backward, as if the ground under your feet were slipping back, or a storm were irresistibly propelling you... You know, there was also another popular move while you were breakdancing: you encounter an imaginary wall and feel it with your hands. The advanced version was to pretend you are trapped in a glass box.

Stuttering bodies, flows, break beats, pauses, and locks. I still wonder if they were part of a ritual for coming to terms with the state of minds at the time... with glass boxes not being prisons, but protecting cells, what we nowadays call bubbles.

We move backwards. We do so in response to the specific contours and rhythms of our specific struggles. Some of us step back because we still can, some because we have no choice. It could be a provisional plot to recover force, or a gesture in saying no to compliance. Yet sometimes it's a matter of sheer survival. No elegance in the acts of withdrawal. No stage and no trace. You are violently pushed back.

Part of our mind says, let's not romanticize much about the potential of this backward move. After all, we are losing the ground!

But perhaps the desire to move backward is caught in the contradiction that it both affirms and breaks with the idea of defeat...

Ten years ago in post-2009, thirty years before that, in post-1979, twenty-six years before it in post-1953, in post-1911 and post-1905, they are standing at our back... among all those lunar tides.

Dear visitor,

To communally place trust in the move, we need spirits as much as plots.

We are so afraid of cycles and spirals. We think they are haunting structures. We try to "move on" from the mistakes and failures of our parents, their blockages and the irresolvable moments of their struggles. Yet when our turn arrives, we surprisingly end up with same blockages, restraints, and moments of speechlessness. But don't you think it is exactly at these moments that the haunting ghosts turn into friends for us?

\*

Azar

p.s.

2009: Green Revolution

1979: The Iranian Revolution

1953: CIA Coup in Iran

1905-1911: Persian Constitutional Revolution