

Account 7- Alma

Mehdi Navid

April 23rd, 2018

Alma is no longer here. She took her own life. It was just three years ago when I saw in Facebook that someone wrote Alma ended it all.

Did she really end it? I don't know. Hour later contradictory news spread and my head was spinning. I recalled ten or twelve years ago and Reza's death, an Afghan poet who fled from his country during the civil war, made it from Mashhad to Tehran and met Houshang

Golshiri¹. Golshiri offered him a job in his monthly magazine.

However, one year later near the evening, Barbad called me and said Reza suffocated in his sleep from the gas leak in his home. He died in his sleep. My feet shivered.

But Alma didn't suffocate; she took many pills at once and lied on her bed waiting. Apparently she had even closed her eyes. Except that one time that we met, I never saw her again. She had told a friend that she wanted to see me to talk about the book she was translating. I was sitting in a café when she showed up. Her eyes, like her voice, were sad, and even the way she shook my hand. Her teeth were trying to hide the bitterness in her face, but they were caught in an unintentional lethargy. I was dead sure at that time that she was just playacting. She said she was twenty two and moved from Sareyn² to Tehran to pursue her studies at the age of eighteen. But she didn't say her father was an army officer and how much she was plagued by him. She didn't say that she was thrown out of home as she had become a disgrace to her family and as she was thinking differently. She didn't say how her mother got old after this incident and this separation. She didn't see how her father hid her "suicide" from others in her funeral to save his honor and left her mother alone beside the grave. She showed me her translation, we talked about it and she asked me for advice to find a publisher for it. An hour later we left the café and took our own separate paths. Except exchanging emails, we neither saw each other anymore nor talked on the phone.

1

Houshang Golshiri (1938-2000) was an Iranian novelist and literary critic and one of the most influential writers of Persian literature in the 20th century.