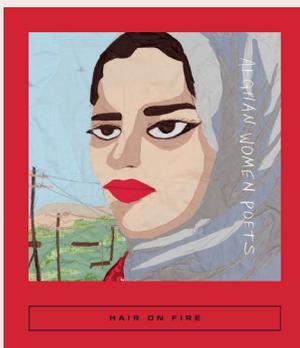


## HAIR ON FIRE: AFGHAN WOMEN POETS

1. *Hair on Fire's* cover image was created by Hangama Amiri, an Afghan-Canadian artist who works with textiles. How does this visible artwork interact with the written poems and the experiences, emotions, and ideas they represent?
2. What role does gender play in *Hair on Fire*, in specific poems and more generally? Within the context of the Taliban government in Afghanistan's current prohibition against girls going to school after sixth grade, what is the significance of women writing poetry?
3. In her introduction to *Hair on Fire*, Aria Aber describes being drawn to images of "regularity among ruins" (pg. 12). What scenes and details of everyday life stand out in this collection, and what role do they play in individual poems?
4. What different styles, forms, tones, and subjects are included within the collection? What does this multiplicity convey about what it means to be Afghan, or an Afghan woman?
5. Many of the poets in the collection, as well as Aria Aber and Hangama Amiri, live outside Afghanistan in the diaspora. How does each artist featured in the collection express her relationship to her home country? What distinctions are made between notions of the domestic home, the homeland, and/or the nation-state?
6. For Mariam Meetra (tr. Sabrina Nouri and Samantha Cosentino), "sadness / [...] / plays havoc with the beat of time" (pg. 107). How do these poets relate to time?
7. Mahbouba Ibrahim (tr. Zuzanna Olszewska) writes, "my homeland / is still my mother / who sold all her wedding gold / to buy me a plane ticket / so I could go / and stay alive" (pg. 51). What importance does the figure of the mother, as well as motherland and mother tongue, have for each these poets?
8. In Karima Shabrang's poem (tr. Sabrina Nouri and Samantha Cosentino), the poet says, "I want my steps / and the shadow of us / to make history" (pg. 95). What is each of these poets' relationship to history? What strategies do they use to speak to, "make," or intervene in history?



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