Some 20th Century Iranian Writers and Poets, and Their Works
Important Historical Events

- Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911)
- Reza Shah, 1925–1941 (WWI)
- Mohammad Reza Shah, 1941–1979 (WWII)
- US & UK coup d'état against Mosaddegh, 1953

Land Reform–Westernizations

- Islamic Revolution, 1979
Important Elements in Writings and Poems

- Bazaar, Middle Class, Merchants
- Religious Zealots, Clergy
- Shah, Monarchists
- Nationalist
- Communists, Tudeh Party, Intellectuals
- Cultural, Political, and Social Issues (Injustices)
Early Writers and Poets
Iraj Mirza (Jalal-ol-Molk), 1874–1926
Poet, Calligrapher

Major Works: Divan-e-She’r (Book of Poems)
Master of Colloquial Poetry, Satire
Criticism of Tradition, Fanaticism
Mohammad-Taghi Bahar, 1884–1951
“Malek-o-Shoara”, (Poet Lauriat)
Politician, Journalist, Historian, Professor of Literature

Founder of The Academy of Literary Association,
Most works are on History and Persian Literature.
He has two volumes of poems.
Mohammad Farrokhi Yazdi, 1887–1939
Poet, Politician
Publisher of the political newspaper Toufan “Storm”
Mohammad Hossein Shahriar, 1906–1988
(Behjat Tabrizi)
First Iranian Poet to write a large number of poems in Turkish
His poems are epic
Parvin E’tesami, 1907–1941
Poet

Major work: Diwan (Book of Poems)
Anecdotes, Fables, and Allegories about Life, Ethics, Education, Social Justice, Knowledge

1923-2005
Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, 1879–1956
Linguist, The Author of the Most Extensive Dictionary of the Persian Language

- Embassy worker in Balkans (1903)
- Published satirical column in political newspaper *Sur-e-Esrafîl* (1908)
- Exiled to Europe
- Member of Parliament (1911)
- Dean of School of Law and School of Political Science
- Fluent in French and Arabic
Ahmad Kasravi, 1890–1946
Linguist, Historian, and Reformer

- He was introduced to political ideas in Tbilisi
- Critical of both clergy (Shi’ism) and government
- Critical of Religion especially
- He was prohibited to publish under Reza Shah
- Supporter of Democracy
- Assassinated March 11, 1946
Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh, 1892–1997
The Father of Persian Short-Story

• Son of a progressive mullah who gave raging sermons (executed in 1908)
• Published his Major work *Yeki-Bood Yeki-Nabood (Once Upon Time)* in Berlin in 1921 (Deals with social and political conditions in Iran)
• Other works: *Sahra-ye-Mahshar (armagaddon)*, 1947
  *Talkh-o-Shirin (Bittersweet)*, 1955
  *Qair as Khoda Hichkas Nabood (none Existed But God)*, 1961
Modern Writers

20th Century
Sadegh Hedayat, 1903–1951
Iran’s foremost modern writer of prose and short stories

- He is the author of many short stories, novelettes, two historical drama, a play, travelogue, and a collection of satirical parodies.
- In his writings he attacked the clergy and the monarchy.
- He published *The Blind Owl* in Bombay (around 1939)
- Other Major works: *Buried Alive*  
  *Three Drops of Blood*  
  *The Stray Dog*  
  *The Pilgrim*  
  *Dash Akol*  

Père Lachaise Cemetery
Author of short fiction, drama, and novels
His greatest work: *Tangsir*
Other works: *The Monkey Whose Master Had Died* and *Patient Stone*
Simin Daneshavar, 1921–2012
Academic, Novelist, Fiction Writer, Literary Translator
First major Iranian female novelist

- Published her first collection of short stories in 1948
- Received Ph. D. in 1949
- Her Major work: Savushun (1969)
- Fulbright Fellow
Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, 1923–1969
Writer, Thinker, and Social and Political Critic
Colloquial Style

- Critical Essays -> *Westofixation (Occidentosis)*
- Short Stories -> *The Setar, The Postman, The Pilgrimage*
- Novels -> *A Stone Upon a Grave, The School Principle*
- Travelogues -> *A journey to: Mecca, Russia, Land of Israel, America*
Ali Shariati, 1933–1977
Sociologist (Sociology of Religion), Revolutionary

- Attended Teacher’s Training College in Mashhad
- High School Teacher in 1952 (His first arrest)
- Joined National Front in 1953
- Ph. D. in Sociology from Sorbonne (1964)
Samad Behrangi, 1939–1967
Teacher, Social Critic, Folklorist, Translator, Writer

- Children Books
- Pedagogical Essays
Mahmoud Dowlatshahi, 1940–
Novelist and actor

- His writings combine the poetic tradition of his culture with the everyday speech of villages
- His work explores the decline of rural lifestyle and poverty
Abdolkarim Soroush, 1945–
Reformer, Thinker, Rumi Scholar, and Professor of Philosophy
His Interest: Philosophy of science, Religion, and Islamic Law

He wrote on Religious Pluralism, Tolerance, Hermeneutics, and Clericalism
Modern Poetry
Nima Yushij, 1896–1990
(Ali Esfandiar)
Father of the Iranian Modern Poetry

- He emphasized current issues such as Oppression and Suffering in his poetry
- Works: an anthology, Contemporary Writers and Poets (1923), Afsaneh (Myth), Ay Shab (O Night), Mahbass (Prison), and four short Stories
Ahmad Shamloo, 1925–2000
Poet, Writer, and Journalist
The most influential poet of modern Iran
Major work: 13 volumes *Ketab-e-Koouceh (The Book of Alley)*

- His poetry is complex but has simple imagery familiar with Iranian. He brings together western modernist concepts and modern transformation of classical Persian poetry.
- Federico Garcia Lorca, Langston Hughes, Louis Aargon, and Nima influenced him
- Published more than 70 books, 16 volumes of poetry, 5 volumes of novels, short stories, and screenplays.
Simin Behbahani, 1927–
One of the most outstanding amongst contemporary Persian poets
Iran’s National Poet
“The Lioness of Iran”

- Her mother was a member of Association of Patriotic Women, Democratic Party, Women’s Association, and editor of *Future of Iran* newspaper
- She added theatrical subjects and daily events and conversations to her poetry
- President of The Iranian Writers Associations
- Nominated for Nobel Prize in Literature in 1999 and 2002
- She has more than ten volumes of poetry
Mehdi Akhavan-Sales, 1928–1990
Poet

- He came to fame with his third volume of Poetry *Zemestan* in 1956
- He used themes of epical proportion using far-fetched similes, metaphors, and symbols
- Imprisoned in 1953, released 1957
- Some of his works: *From this Avesta* (1965)
  *Autumn in Prison* (1969)
  *O You Ancient Land, I love Thee* (1989)
Sohrab Sepehri, 1928–1980
Poet and Painter

- He combined Western Concepts with Buddhism and Mysticism to create poems unsurpassed in Persian Literature
- He believed new forms were new means to express his thoughts and feelings
- Published *Hasht Ketab (Eight Books)*, the collection of almost all his poems in one volume in 1978
- Famous poems: *The Death of Color (1951)*
  *The Life of Dreams (1953)*
  *East of Sorrow (1961)*
  *The Lover is Always Alone(?)*
Forough Farrokhzad, 1935–1967
Poet and Film Director

- One of the Iran’s most influential female poets of 20th century
- Wrote controversial poetry with a strong feminine voice
- Famous works: *Captive* (1955)
  *The Wall, the Rebellion* (1958)
  *Another Birth* (1963)
Others

Fereydoon Moshiri, 1926–2000

Nader Naderpoor, 1929–2000

Siavash Kasraie, 1927–1996

Houshang Golshiri, 1938–2000