

Go-Between in the Land of the Free

I have unlearned so many histories
I can't remember them all but they pile up
To the roof of my mouth waiting
To slip out
If i slip up.
He says he doesn't like stories of victimization but i think that's because
He's never been a victim
a survivor
Falling from his pedestal he sees
Equality as oppression.
He sticks out here but
So do i
Only i have nowhere to run to no homeland to make a tribute to
I am a go-between between two worlds that i am not a part of
That will never be mine to claim
All i know of my homeland i mean the homeland that could have been mine i mean the
homeland that was never mine
Are the words of my father and how he used to alter his own
Name to make it fit better in english mouths and how
My uncle still does
But both of them sound different on the phone talking to strangers.
All i know are my stepmother's tales of the purple-flowered tree in her garden in her village
In the village she will never return to in the mountains of Mazanderan
Mazanderan the demon land in the Shahnameh
But the only demons I see are the ones who remind me that reading the shahnameh cover to
cover won't make me a part of the world it describes
I mean i'm reading it in english after all—
I can't even understand the ancestors i should be praising instead i understand i am looked
upon with pity hearing the words of a foreign and familiar tongue
Float around me as i struggle to stay afloat
Listening to my mother struggle with her history as a go-between but
i don't want her history to become
My history i will make my own history but how will i start if i
Have a foot in two places that are moving apart
All I know is to listen to a
familiar foreign tongue
Whose words I know
are not for me
Whose words I know
Will never be for me
Man nemedoonam

And that is all i know.