

I wish there were violets under the snow everywhere



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## I wish there were violets under the snow everywhere

It's sunny. And being sunny is weird. Your class team and ours both have physical education. We all are wearing our sports apparels under our school uniforms. We have also taken off our scarfs. Your long hair has a nice color. Mommy braided your hair in the morning. None of you noticed that I patted my very short hair. My hand was cool and damp. The back of my neck also got damp and cool.

Mom sat down on her seat again. Her hand was hurt. I said: "Don't get up. Your hand is hurt, so is your back. You should not be standing up. Otherwise, your back will start aching again like before."

I said: "I'll braid for you."

You said: "No, you cannot braid well!"

Mom had taken the fingers of one hand in her other hand and was massaging them.

The doctor had said: "Cholesterol has accumulated in the blood vessel walls."

You unbraid your hair. Your hair spreads around your shoulders. You get away from all. You stand in the middle of the courtyard. The girls come towards you and surround you. They pat your hair. You turn around and your hair

turns too. It glitters in the sunshine. The girls clap and cheer you. Your eyes are shining.

Now we are in a house that has a courtyard. I mean our old house. I sit next to the pond. I count the snowflakes. I'm cold. Our house is big. There is an angel in the middle of the pond. One of her hands is up carrying an unlit torch. Her children are kneeling down before her feet. I raise my hand and open it. Snowflakes are coming down into my palm. They are pretty. But they will go off soon. They all look like flowers. I think I deceive myself in this way. Actually, I am good at deceiving myself. I think I'm skilled at doing so. I want violets. I wish the stories were true, especially the story of "Twelve Brothers" in our literature book. Mom calls in me. I enter the room. Mom's hand is dirty and she asks a small bowl to stir egg. She puts the mixture of ground (mashed) chickpeas and myrtle in between your long hair. She has mashed the chickpeas herself. At first, she used to grind them but the grinder is out of order now. Her hands are in pain. She is very careful not to pour the pea powder on the carpet and be wasted. I'm touching over my hair. How short it is. Why my hair is always short and yours is always long?

I say: "Mom, are you going to put this pea mixture on my hair?"

Her hands are painful because she has mashed chickpeas too often. She doesn't reply. That is, she has not heard. I say: "Why don't I have any portion of this chickpeas mixture?" I hear quietly as you do not hear: "What did your mother do, why should I do?" I don't say anything.

Someone in my heart says: "Mom... Mom..." Do you admit that this word is one of the gentlest words in the world; gentle like either the velvet or the violet flower that stepmother asked her husband's child to bring it for her?

Ms. Jalili, who has been the PE coach since we were in elementary school up to high school, blows her whistle to start the contest. Our class team competes with yours. You're running. Your long hair has distracted everybody. You have used perfume. Which team is really stronger? Yours or ours?

It was early morning. You had a math exam. It was snowy again. Indeed, all my life is completely snowy. But its snow melts as soon as it hits the ground. The violets would be found under my feet. There is not also "Twelve Brothers". Mom woke me up to make questions for you. I was cold. You were asleep beside the fireplace, next to Mom and Dad's mattress, but I was at the bottom of the room. It was cold over. But I was used to it. I thought the right way is that and there is no other way. Well, how many years am I elder than you? Only two years. My eyes burned. I wanted to say: "It's none of my business!" I laid down. I did not know (learn). Daddy said: "The elder sister is sleeping instead of helping her younger sister." I got up and wrote down questions. I handed them to you and went back to sleep. You also slept. Mom was asleep. I woke up because my dad kicked me and asked me: "why are you asleep? This innocent child has an exam. Whom we have taken into account!"

I woke up. But daddy kept beating me with his slippers. I do not know why these slippers were so heavy?

My face was red in school. Ms. Jalili put her hand under my chin. She raised my head and patted it. I wanted to have long hair. But her hand reached the back of my neck very soon. She said: "What's up?" I said: "Nothing! My bike slipped over the snow and I fell down." She laughed. But her laughter was bitter and said: "Wow, what a cruel bike!" Her hand was tender and I wished she were my mom. I still thought that the sound of my crying has probably been spread from our home, which was at the end of the alley up to their home, which was in its beginning. Then I thought I should learn to cry slowly. What is the use of crying aloud whereas it is not heard by the one who must and it is heard by the one who must not?

I wish it would be possible to choose our moms and dads and the place where we were born. It was still snowy. I was looking at the snow through the window meanwhile Ms. Jalili called the girls to tell memory, to read a poetry or to tell the class about their dreams instead of doing exercise. I asked Ms. Jalili: "What's your dream?" -I never forget it- She patted her stomach. But nobody understood it. Only I saw that. She said: "Will be a mom! My baby will be like you!" I laughed and asked: "Like me?! So what about Naghme? She's much more beautiful than me!" She didn't say anything.

The game has started. It's the first time that our classes are playing against each other. Both teams are the strongest teams in our high school. But we had never competed

against each other, in the past. It's been a while since the game started. But none of us has succeeded in throwing the ball into the basket yet. Our coach frequently looks at me and smiles.

It was late. I went out to buy some bread. It was still snowy and there were no violets. There was a bride's car parked in front of our coach's home. The coach got off the car. She looked very pretty in her beautiful wedding gown.

The first round ended. We drew even in our faults and scores. Mrs. Jalili stood in line. She patted her stomach. I soon realized that she was pregnant. But I did not tell anyone. I thought to myself: her dream has come true. If they asked her baby: "What would you like? How would you like your parents to be and where would you like to be born?" The baby would certainly choose them to be her/his parents and would also love this house.

We are sitting in the courtyard. Everyone gasps. It's the break gap between the two rounds of the game. I have leaned against the wall. My team is sitting in the shadow of a tree. I like sunny weather. But I love the sun lighting which is leading from the edge of the leaves. A cricket sound is heard from one place. A grasshopper is spinning around us. One of the girls says: "Unless the grasshopper likes us." Everyone laughs. You are coming to me. You want my water flask. I give it to you. I still have not drunk from it. One of the girls says: "You are there for her. Aren't you?!" I laugh. I say: "Well, she supports me too." One says: "Good for you. Having a sister is so great. Isn't

it? Especially she is so pretty and graceful. It is obvious that she is also kind!"

Mrs. Jalili was no longer a sports coach. She was a schoolmaster. Her belly had grown very big. When she walked, her breathy voice was heard. She did not look at me anymore. It was as if she had forgotten that there was Leila.

Mom said to you: "Do not move, let's go to the bathroom!" You were bored. I went back to the yard to play with the snow which went off and there were not any violets under them. You said: "Are you going to play with me?"

I said: "No, I'm bored..."

Mom looked at me. I said: "Okay."

You said: "Make a snowman!"

I said... But my mom said: "No, you'll catch cold!"

I said: "Well, I'm going to the snow..."

You cried and said: "I'm tired. Mommy! This bad Leila is not going to play with me!"

Now when I think, I know actually I was born as a bad girl. I'm also guilty. I make you comfort by telling that I'm in charge of all the sins committed in the world.

How much I hate your crying. Know, crying should also be tender and velvety, like violet flowers. But your crying is just like a violet flower. I'm fed up with your crying.



We used to play together. But I kept losing. I had learned that I'm older and I don't have a mother, so I just had to lose. I was looking at snowflakes. "How pretty they are!" As soon as they hit the ground they melt. They do not know anything about the ground and reaching. I wish they wouldn't melt. It was then hoping to find the violet below them.

A small grasshopper with black and white lines is jumping around us. I'm afraid of grasshoppers and all other insects in the world.

Mom had come to the school to justify your absence. When I saw her, I went toward her. You stayed with your friends. Mrs. Jalili, who was the schoolmaster, said: "Your daughters are very good. But the elder one is a lot better. She is not spoiled. She is neat and accurate. She also cries for nothing. But your little girl is just crying and shows everyone her pretty hair. But truly, your elder one is also more beautiful." I looked at my mom. Her breath was steeper than Mrs. Jalili and she was pale. She looked at me. I did not like her look. I was back to you and our friends.

We should stand up. We should start the game. The lower branch of the overhead tree gets stuck in my collar.

Mrs. Jalili did not come to school. She was on maternity leave. An announcement on a banner has been posted at the beginning of the alley. Another banner has been posted on their entrance door. Her husband lost his life in a car accident. So easy. Did not ask her child whether you want your dad to be dead or to stay alive? Her baby was born. But Mrs. Jalili never saw her own baby as her husband's

family took him away. Now, doesn't her child ask them "Did my mom die when my dad died?" Surely he also has a discontent due to why they did not ask him: "When would you like to be given birth to? And where do you want to come into this world?"

Mrs. Jalili did not come to school for one year. I was completely out of her mind. One night I dreamed of her. It was snowy in my dream. "Twelve Brothers" sent her a large violet flower bouquet. I also stood in their house and I was knocking on the door. But nobody answered. We passed through the beginning of our alley in the morning. I knocked. She opened the door. It was snowy. I took a snowflake on my palm. It went to go off but I sharply pointed to her and I said: "See, whatever you do, it still goes off. You can find violet flowers only in the stories. Everyone is waiting for you, including me. Aren't you coming back to school?" She came the next day.

My uniform frequently goes up and down; I guess there is a tiny piece of a tree branch in it. I keep playing. But the broken branch does not make me feel comfortable. Naghmeh shoots the ball in the net. Not scored. I throw it. It becomes scored. All cheer me. Naghmeh is watching me. Her eyes are glaring. Mrs. Jalili whistles for me. She is laughing. Nobody knows, but I know that she was married again some time ago. And she has a baby in her stomach.

Everybody keeps cheering. They whistle. Naghmeh rolls up her hair to run better. I have been sweating on the back of my neck. The tiny tree branch annoys me a lot and

keeps jumping up and down. Time is over. I still think I wish Mrs. Jalili were my mom. I wish I had her baby, I don't mean her first one, but the one which she is carrying in her womb. I wish I would be born again.

The players of both teams shake hands. I ask Naghmeh to get the tree branch out of my collar. She touches my back from over the uniform. She immediately shakes the other side. Her hairclip opens, and again the hair spreads around her. She says: "There is something in your collar, I'm scared." She is right. It jumps up and down. The girls get away from me. Mrs. Jalili steps towards me. I hold the back of my uniform to stop the thing from going up and down. Mrs. Jalili lifts the back of my uniform. She throws away something by her hand. It falls down to the ground with a dry sound. We can hear the sound of Mrs. Jalili's shoe being dragged on the ground. I look at it. It is that striped grasshopper. Naghmeh is coming close to me. She gives me the empty water flask. I look at her. Her hair shines under the sun. But her eyes are angry with me. I think of Mrs. Jalili's baby. I wish he would never learn to cry and huff and I wish he would never look for violets.



**Mozghan Babamarandi** has started writing for children since ۱۹۹۵ focusing mostly on teenagers. She is a well-known figure in Iranian children & teenagers' literature and her books are published by famous Iranian publishers. Her stories reflect her own childhood. Her books contain ethical and social themes. She is fond of short-story format and this is the prominent format of her books which are published in Iran.. At the time being, she lives in Tehran. She is the author of more than ۷۸ books of novel and collection of stories for children and young Adults .Among her books are:

### **Children & Young Adults Stories:**

۱. **The news presenter was silent**, Rowzaneh Publication, ۲۰۱۸
۲. **I was my grandma's mom**, Peidayesh Publication, ۲۰۱۸
۳. **Daddy's Laugh Paint**, Monadi Tarbiat Publication, ۲۰۱۷
۴. **In the name of god, Raise exam sheets**, Monadi Tarbiat Publication, ۲۰۱۷

۵. **The yard was full of bird and song**, Monadi  
Tarbiat Publication, ۲۰۱۷
۶. **Ghelghelak's cocoon was beside grandma**, Amir  
Kabir Publication, ۲۰۱۶
۷. **Whish under the all snow was viola**, Soroosh  
Publication, ۲۰۱۵
۸. **The Story of Situation and Wishes of an Ass**,  
Peidayesh Publication, ۲۰۱۵
۹. **The aunt oldwoman liked storytelling**, Elmi-  
Farhangi Publication, ۲۰۱۵
۱۰. **The Seven Steps**, Soroosh Publication, ۲۰۱۲
۱۱. **My mother is lost**, Institute for the Intellectual  
Development of Children and Young Adults  
Publication, ۲۰۱۲
۱۲. **I will become a Spiderman like Rostam**,  
Institute for the Intellectual Development of  
Children and Young Adults Publication, ۲۰۱۲
۱۳. **Even the Sun Cried**, Amir Kabir Publication,  
۲۰۱۲
۱۴. **My Indian Name**, Soroosh Publication, ۲۰۱۲
۱۵. **Lady Poetess and Mr. Beethoven**, Peidayesh  
Publication, ۲۰۱۱
۱۶. **Let's go paint the sky**, Madrese Publication,  
۲۰۱۱
۱۷. **Every Year Before the First Bell**, Beh Nashr  
Publication, ۲۰۱۱
۱۸. **What is the taste of secret?**, Elmi-Farhangi  
Publication, ۲۰۱۰

۱۹. **A Shying Guest**, Elmi-Farhangi Publication,  
۲۰۱۰
۲۰. **Only the father can awakening me from sleep**,  
Institute for the Intellectual Development of  
Children and Young Adults Publication, ۲۰۱۰
۲۱. **Sun Passed Me and Moonlight**, Amir Kabir  
Publication (Shokoofe), ۲۰۰۹
۲۲. **Hi Grandpa**, Madrese Publication, ۲۰۰۸
۲۳. **Even Men Sometimes Crying**, Madrese  
Publication, ۲۰۰۸
۲۴. **The Butterfly Was My First Word**, Soroosh  
Publication, ۲۰۰۸
۲۵. **All Stars for You**, Madine Publication, ۲۰۰۱
۲۶. **Gold Fountain Pen**, Madrese Publication, ۲۰۰۱
۲۷. **A Gift for Narges**, Farhang Eslami Publication,  
۱۹۹۶

- And ۸ story books in print.

- She has more than ۱۰۰ **published stories** at prestigious magazines for children and young adults in Iran like Doost, Salam Bacheha, Roshd, Soroosh, Docharkhe, Baran, etc from ۱۹۹۰ to present.

Babamarabdi was awarded many literary prize including:

- Winner of Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults ۱۶<sup>th</sup> Festival for novel “I will become a Spiderman like Rostam”, ۲۰۱۳

- Winner of Salam Bacheha Festival for book “Hi Grandp”, ۲۰۰۹
- Appreciation of the book ” Gold Fountain Pen” at Roshd Educational Festival, ۲۰۰۳
- First Prize in story for “Hi Grandpa” at Press Festival, ۲۰۰۱

### **Other Career Successes:**

- Top Trainer Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Tehran Province, ۲۰۰۹
- First Prize in Drama for the Play “I Miss the Sun” at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults ۵<sup>th</sup> Puppet Show Festival in Tehran Province, ۲۰۰۳
- Third Prize in Music Selection for the Play “I Miss the Sun” at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults ۵<sup>th</sup> Puppet Show Festival in Tehran Province, ۲۰۰۳
- First Prize in Directing for the Play “The Man Had No Lips” at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults ۴<sup>th</sup> Puppet Show Festival in Tehran Province, ۲۰۰۲
- Top Trainer Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in the country, ۲۰۰۱

- Top Trainer Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Tehran Province, ۱۹۹۹
- First Prize in Stage Design for the Play “Aunt Cockroach” at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults First Puppet Show Festival in the country, ۱۹۹۹
- Storytelling Festival Winner of Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Tehran Province, ۱۹۹۸
- The use of the my novel **Only the father can awakening me from sleep** as one of the references in the book **Fatherhood in contemporary discourse** by Anna Pilinska, Cambridge

### **Other artistic activities:**

- Jury member in Drama Festival The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Tehran province, ۲۰۱۶
- Jury member in Razavi Festival stories and memories The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, ۲۰۱۴
- Jury member in Drama Festival trainers of The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in the country, ۲۰۱۰



- Jury member in Drama Festival trainers of The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in the country, ۲۰۰۶
- Jury member in torytelling competition The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in the country, ۲۰۰۵
- Jury member in Theatre Festival Ministry of Education in Karaj, ۲۰۰۱
- Designer scene in the play “Sabr e Zard” in Chahar Soo Hall at the City Theatre, ۲۰۰۱