

## Jaleh Esfahani A Biography

Jaleh Esfahani was born in Esfahan, Iran. Her father was a landowner and her mother, a housewife. Jaleh finished Behesht Aeen high school in Esfahan and then worked for a few years. In 1945, she moved to Tehran, where she was accepted at the Faculty of Literature, Tehran University. Shortly afterwards she married Shams Badi, a young army officer.

Jaleh had been born a poet. Her first piece about her doll was written at the age of seven. At thirteen, she wrote a full piece. The first collection of her poetry was published in 1944. In <sup>1946</sup> the same year she attended the first Iranian congress of poets and writers in Tehran, with around 2000 audiences. She was the only female poet who read a piece at the congress.

Consequently, Jaleh's husband went under persecution for his political views and was forced to leave Iran in 1947, taking his young wife with him. Jaleh never had the chance to decide whether she was willing to go or to stay. The couple settled in Baku, Azarbaijan, where Jaleh learnt Russian and Azari languages and got a BA from Azarbaijan State University. Eventually, Jaleh and his young family, (two sons, Bijan and Mehrdad) moved to Moscow, where she got her PhD in Persian literature from Lamanosov University, Moscow. From 1960, she worked at Maxim Gorki International Academy of Literature until she left Russia for Iran in 1980. Jaleh's husband also got his PhD and became a well-known academic and historian in the Soviet Union.

Jaleh has been the most active female poet in the history of Persian literature. She has published more than twenty volumes of poetry, most of which had been translated into Russian, Azari and other Middle Asian languages. Some of her work has been translated into Chzeck by Professor Irjy Betchka, and some into Kurdish and Arabic. Apart from writing poetry, Jaleh had translated the works of Azari poets into Persian. Over years in the former Soviet Union, and as the only female Iranian poet, Jaleh had represented Iran by attending literary congresses and conferences and presented papers on Persian literature. She had been known as the face of the Iranian literature throughout the Soviet Bloc, especially Afghanistan and Tajikestan.

In 1980, Jaleh returned to her homeland after many decades but in the turmoil of the revolution she left Iran for London, where she has been living to the present time. She is actively writing poetry and assisting young poets to promote their work.

Publications:

Research work:

- 1- Nima Yushidge, the father of modern Persian poetry (in Russian).
- 2- What is modern poetry? A comparative study of Iranian, Afghan and Tajik poets.
- 3- A study of the work of Aref Ghazvini, the avanguard Iranian poet of early twentieth century.
- 4- Translation of a number of Azari plays into Persian.
- 5- Translation of a selection of Persian poetry into Russian.