

# Jahan Khajavi

## *Feast of the Ass*

Drawing extensively on Iranian poetic traditions and the history of their reception in English translation, *Feast of the Ass* presents a series of verses that play in the fields of love poetry's address. Khajavi irreverently ruffles the "classical grandeur & quiet dignity" of inherited forms in order to consider the poet's relationship to death, literature, race, religion, and sexuality, his "queer shoulder / set not to the wheel—so long, Solon!—but turned on to some bolder / axon."

// Anyone with an ear can array stresses and rhymes. Language tends to catch on these points, stringing ropes of resonance at angles across each line of verse. Some of us like to play at getting caught in that web, but are you pervert enough to keep reading when the poet tightens the ropes? Khajavi torques the poem about a double edge of humor and tenderness, proving to be the best kind of pervert, the kind who binds us with words to remember we were always bound in each other, so we find ourselves at once "there & them & then."

— FARID MATUK

// My mind is blown as I read this fabulous, fierce first collection by Jahan Khajavi. Queer, cunning, quirky, the poems are subtly imbued with the ghosts of Ginsberg and Wilde. They nearly burst at the seams (semes) with wordplay and wide-ranging imagery, but their artful containers show a poet deeply read in the traditions, a poet capable of wilfully and skilfully rhyming Persians and perversions, patois and fatwa. The lines are lyrical and lewd, and often simply lovely: "These brimstone shaded poppies must be heaven sent— the garden setting fire to the palace gates." The sacred and profane (aren't they the same?) roll in the rumped sheets, "a mosque as scented martyr sainted as your hair." Anyone who's ever wished to write a ghazal or a rubaiyat: read this book and learn. This Feast is indeed a Feat.

— MOIRA EGAN



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**Jahan Khajavi** (1986, Fresno / which is Morrissey Central, Morrissey says so) / writes wildly amusing & explicit queer / poetry, wrote *Vogue*, in Rome with Pope Francesco.