

FARNAZ FATEMI

Pleats

After a photograph by Shadi Ghadirian

Sister, let's fold time
back on itself, we can
pleat it. We'll push
our needle through the fold,
find silk pants and ruby thread,
pull the Qajar dynasty toward us
with our stitch.
Loop under to anchor, punch
the needle through again and look
for Forugh's poems.
We'll add a flourish and move on,
hips thickening with the ornament
of our history.
We'll go back and visit
the forced unveiling,
soak our fabric in the tears
of change—how quickly it absorbs—
when our sisters watched
their futures arrive, like we do.
We'll bring them code that needs
translation, miniskirts and thigh-highs,
words on the tongues of our men
we need to solve. This pleat
can turn under, part of the
structure of the dress
itself, pinned with a stitch
of our hair, to show it was us
there, whenever the unraveling comes.
When we reach back into
this orphaned future
in which we tuck ourselves, we'll pin
both sides of the *rusari* at our chins
(to free our hands) and slip things
into our hems: this smartphone,
that Excedrin PM, a degree
in computer science and math.
For what good they do.

Farnaz Fatemi is fortunate to write with others in Santa Cruz, California. Her poetry and lyric essays have been published in *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Delaware Poetry Review*, *Comstock Review* and other anthologies and journals, and have been recognized by the Litquake Poets of the Verge Writing Contest and Best of the Net Nonfiction, among others. More information at farnazfatemi.com.

ROLAND PETERSEN

Woman and Colored Rocks, 2004
Acrylic on canvas, 32 x 23 in



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