

Mahshid Amir-Shahi

1940–

Born into a well-to-do family from Qazvin, Mahshid Amir-Shahi attended secondary school and college in England, and received an M.A. in physics from Oxford. But once back in Iran, she embarked on a career of writing children's and other stories and producing translations, among them E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, James Thurber's *Legends from Our Times*, and P.L. Travers' *Mary Poppins*.

Kucheh-ye bonbast (The blind alley, 1966) was Amir-Shahi's first collection of short stories. Then came *Sār-e Bibi Khānom* (Bibi Khanom's starling, 1968) and *Ba'd az ruz-e ākher* (After the last day, 1969), from which the translated story "The End of the Passion Play" in *Modern Persian Short Stories* (1980) is taken. A translation of a story of hers called "String of Beads" was published in *Edebiyat 3* (1978). The collection *Be-sigheh-ye avval shakhs-e mofrad* (In the first person singular) appeared in 1971.

A divorcée in self-exile since the early days of the Islamic Republic, Amir-Shahi published an autobiographical narrative called *Dar bazar* (At home) in 1987 in London and Encino, California. It relates the author's experiences and reflections during her 1978–79 visit to Tehran, with a premise of disapproving consternation at the Iranian Revolution and a tone of unmitigated contempt for the Shi'i Muslim clerics involved in politics.

Amir-Shahi spent the 1990–91 academic year as a Rockefeller Fellow in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan. In 1995, a collection of her short stories was published in the U.S. as *Suri & Co.: Tales of a Persian Teenager*. The same year saw the Los Angeles publication of a novel, *Dar safar* (In A Journey). A novel in three volumes was published in Los Angeles from 1998–2001 under the title *Mādarān va dukhtarān*. Two subsequent works, *Dāstānhā-ye kutāb* (1998) and *Hazār bisbeh: majmu'ab'i az maqālāt, sokhanrāni'hā, naqd'hā va mosābabe'hā-ye Mahshid Amirshāhi* (2000), were published in Sweden.