

the world and unused to the intimate presence of a male.

When my dad came home to us, we were living in a small one-room “apartment” with no kitchen and a bed in one corner with our bedding all piled on top of it. Our room was on the second floor of an apartment building with multiple rooms and many tenants. There was one toilet, or rather a hole at the bottom of a closet on the first floor that all the neighbors used, and of course there was no bathroom. Dad returned to share our room which was already too close and uncomfortable for the three of us.

Dad was a stranger especially to my sister Roozan who was only three-and-a-half years old when he was abducted. Today she remembers with some compunction how he would wake up first and light the heater to warm up the room before we awoke. He would turn the flow of kerosene to the max and the metal body of the oil-burning heater would turn red and growl like a bear, scaring Roozan. “Mom, tell that man not to do that!” she once yelled, putting all her resentment, estrangement, rage and fear in her voice.

The four of us had an arduous road of adjustment and catching up to travel.

I was in the eleventh grade and doing extremely well in school. In fact, I was the only student to represent my tenth-grade class at Reza Shah Kabir High School the previous summer at a girls camp held on the shores of the Caspian Sea in the presence and under the auspices of Empress Soraya. The camp was organized for tenth-grade high achievers from all the schools in the country. That summer had been very special for me: first a visit