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Young Poet Exiled From Her Village

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Persian poetry has a long history of fighting injustice and discrimination, dating back centuries. From Jalaluddin Rumi Balkhi and Rabia Balkhi to modern poets such as Forough Farokhzad, many have raised their voices through poetry to attack injustice. These poets often touched on taboos that no one dared speak of, fearing punishment from kings and other rulers.

Karima Shabrang is a new sword in the battle for justice and equal rights for women in Afghanistan. Shabrang soon came up against people who do not believe women should be equals. Shabrang was born in Baharak in the Badakhshan province. She studied Farsi/Dari literature and poetry at Kabul University. After graduating, she moved back to her village and started to work as a school teacher.

Shabrang was not yet known as an Afghan poet. She never showed her creative work to anyone until her first book hit the market and shocked everyone who read just a few pages. In Baharak village, Shabrang had enjoyed a peaceful life. She had the chance to publish her first poetry book titled Beyond Infamy.

Her work breaks taboos and carries a depth and darkness. As leading Afghan poet and professor Partaw Nadery said, Shabrang writes in pain and blood. In much of her work, Shabrang shows what it is like to be a victim of sexism. She was working as a teacher when her book was first published. She did not realize how people would react to her poetry.