Poetry Reading & Conversation with Iranian poet Mehdi Moussavi

Moderated by Dirk Wiemann (University of Potsdam)

Wednesday 11 November, 6-8 p.m.

Written in exile, ***The Last Kiss*** is a bilingual poetry collection in Farsi and English by one of Iran's most loved contemporary poets. Persecuted by the regime for his uncompromising voice, Mehdi Moussavi was forced to flee his country and now lives in Norway. ***The Last Kiss*** is his first collection written outside Iran, published in a bilingual Farsi–English edition.

He is the founder of Iran's Postmodern Ghazal movement, which brought contemporary social and political themes into dialogue with classical Persian poetic forms. His writing challenged both literary conventions and the restrictions imposed on artistic expression in Iran, while his underground poetry workshops helped influence a generation of younger Iranian writers.

The Last Kiss is more than a translation. Working closely with Mousavi, translator Fatemeh Ekhtesari and editor Dr. Samuel Tongue have undertaken an intense process of cultural and linguistic research to bring the deeper layers of meaning and imagery into English.

The result is a collection that conveys not only the words, but also the texture, rhythm, and emotion of the original.

These poems speak of rebellion, longing, and the struggle to find a new home in exile. Readers glimpse the everyday lives of Iranians living under repression, and the intimate pain of leaving behind family, friends, and an entire life.

Mousavi writes of love, separation, and the exile's search for belonging, while holding fast to the memory of a homeland that cannot be forgotten.

The Last Kiss is both personal and universal — a testament to poetry's power to resist silencing, preserve memory, and carry a voice across languages and borders.

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