

It's like the metamorphosis of butterflies, but in reverse.

After takeoff from Geneva, shiny curls and spangled eye-lashes start disappearing under veils.



A few hours later, the phenomenon is completed: Long mantles carefully step out at Khomeini Airport.



It had all begun with this exotic idea: to be, for one week,

# A TOURIST IN IRAN

CHARPATE APRIL 2008

I had heard the story of a Swiss tourist who came wearing a bullet-proof jacket. Not really necessary for the kind of assaults you will experience in Tehran, Isfahan or Yazd:



PLEASE CAN I TALK WITH YOU?



WE SEE ONLY OLD TOURISTS FROM JAPAN

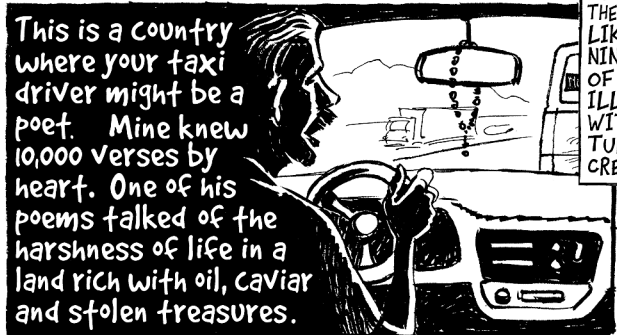


GEORGE BUSH THINKS WE ARE BARBARIANS

Rare are the Iranians who mention their "CRAZY PRESIDENT" in a whisper.



PLEASE, TELL THE PEOPLE IN THE WEST NOT TO BE AFRAID OF US



This is a country where your taxi driver might be a poet. Mine knew 10,000 verses by heart. One of his poems talked of the harshness of life in a land rich with oil, caviar and stolen treasures.

TREASURES FOR THE EYES ABOUND, LIKE THE STUNNING MOSQUES OF ISFAHAN, ILLUMINATED WITH BLUE, TURQUOISE AND CREAM TILES.



A REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS' STATION, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE IMAM MOSQUE.

29 years after the Revolution, the religious police are still watching. But they can't stop teenagers from taking liberties with the mandatory scarf. In isolation, this country has developed its own fashion. For men, a weird mix of 60s rock'n'roll hairdos and stretch T-shirts.



Things you'll find here look like Western brands, smell like Western brands - but are 100% embargo-certified.



In the bazaar, among 50-cent copies of all the movies and video-games you can dream of, I buy myself the Farsi version of an American classic...



Hey! How did this make it through the nuclear ban?!