**Mullah**

Sareh Donaher

mosques brimming with morning disciples in sunrise prayers

my family at home making tea

my aunt plays her Beatles record while my mother is scorned for wanting to attend mosque

*it’s too political a place*

*you don’t need a mullah to lead you to God*

*you are a child of the universe*

*Khoda means God within self*

*search within yourself for the answers*

later, sisters walk to school, hand in hand

my mom’s gaze traces

horseshoe arches

pillars of brickwork

tall minaret

mullahs stare back, thumbing their prayer beads beneath their shawls

plotting away her freedom, one bead at a time

simply counting the days