

Version 1

The gate appears in this poem, and in some of Yassi's other writings, as a magical entrance into the forbidden world of all the ordinary things students had been denied in life.

Yet the green gate was closed to Yassi, and to all students. Next to the gate there was a small opening with a curtain hanging from it. It was an aberration that attracted attention, because it did not belong there: it gaped with the arrogant authority of an intruder. Through this opening all students went into a small, dark room to be inspected. Yassi would describe later, long after that first session, what was done in this room: "I would be checked to see if I have the right clothes: the color of my coat, the length of my uniform, the thickness of my scarf, the form of my shoes, the objects in my bag, the size of my rings and their level of attractiveness, all would be checked before I could enter the campus of the university, the same university in which we were to study. And to professors, the main door, with its immense portals and emblems and flags, is generously open."

That small side opening was the source of endless tales of frustration, humiliation, and sorrow. It was meant to make the students ordinary and invisible. Instead, it brought them into focus and turned them into objects of curiosity.

Original

"The gate appears in this poem, and in some of her other writings, as a magical entrance into the forbidden world of all the ordinary things she had been denied in life.

Yet the green gate was closed to her, and to all my girls. Next to the gate there was a small opening with a curtain hanging from it. It was an aberration that attracted attention, because it did not belong there: it gaped with the arrogant authority of an intruder. Through this opening all the female students, including my girls, went into a small, dark room to be inspected. Yassi would describe later, long after that first session, what was done to her in this room: 'I would be checked to see if I have the right clothes: the color of my coat, the length of my uniform, the thickness of my scarf, the form of my shoes, the objects in my bag, the visible traces of even the mildest makeup, the size of my rings and their level of attractiveness, all would be checked before I could enter the campus of the university, the same university in which men also study. And to them the main door, with its immense portals and emblems and flags, is generously open.'

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Nafisi, A. (2004). *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A memoir in books*. Random House Trade Paperbacks.