Poetry occupies a specific place in Iran’s history, culture and everyday life. This is perhaps no different from other countries in the Middle East or the world at large; however, media and scholarly narratives often see an essential connection between Iranians and their poems, and use these texts to explain Iranian politics, morality, and the self. A variant of this approach considers poetry as a pivotal expression of political dissent and existential angst.

As a counterpoint to these narratives, this talk analyses the power of poetry in Iran by examining the constitutive relationship between poetry and social configurations in light of contemporary poetic practice in the city of Shiraz. Instead of a sociology of Iranian poetry, I propose a poetic sociology of Iran.