

LIFE IS TIME

FIRUZ FARAJEV

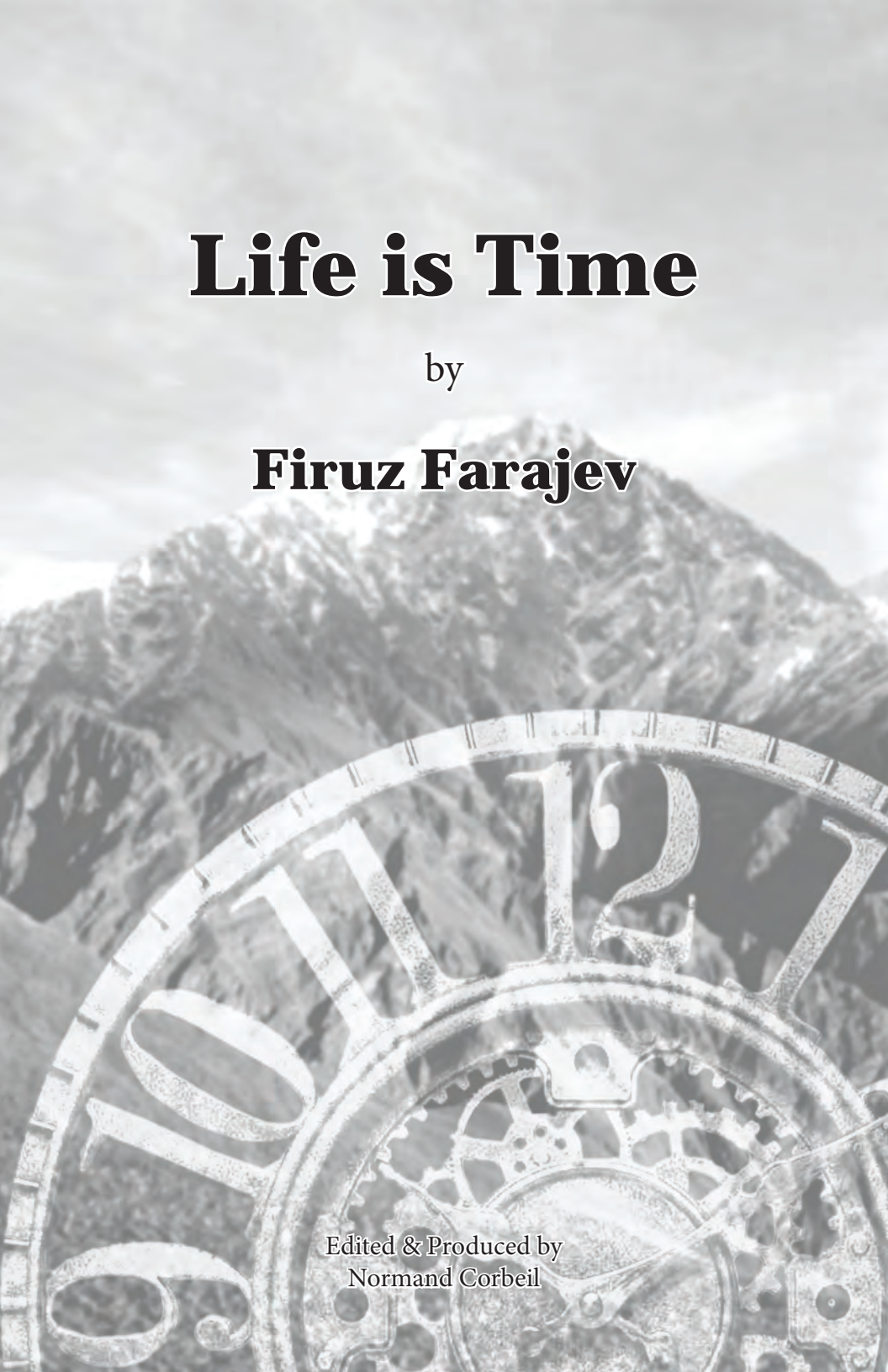


Life is Time

by

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I was somewhere before this life. Then I chose life. My life started 25 September 1992. I was born in the Azerbaijani region of Karabakh – in the city of Jabrayil.

I was born in the Soltanli village hospital. I am the first born child of my family. When i was born in a time of war. The Karabakh regional war raged around us. Later, my family moved to capital city of Azerbaijan - Baku.

25 March 1995

My family had second child - my brother.

1996

The first moment that I remember clearly in my life was waking up with brother crawling towards me and putting his hands my foot. He looked up at me and smiled. After a few moments my mother called to me. This was my very first memory that I could recall clearly and truly understand.

September 1999

I started school with the other children. After finishing grade one - my parents divorced.

Since I started school, I was constantly getting into fights with the other children in school. In grade two everyone started to look down on my situation. Because we were poor and our father didn't live with us. As well as school, I started to fight people in my neighbourhood. Once time during school hours, I had a fight with someone and broke my finger. For over a month my hand stayed in a cast. A doctor told me that it might become necessary to cut off my hand to deal with the injury. This was one fo the most frightening experiences of my childhood.

From 2002, I couldn't stay at home alone because I was constantly afraid. I would hear sounds that no one else heard and saw things that no one else seemed to see. I had a series of horrifying dreams that would keep me up at night. I tried to tell my mother many times that I was scared and what I was seeing and hearing. But she refused to understand what I was going through. Each time she would say that when I grew up that I wouldn't be scared anymore. Time went on as I grew up, but I was still scared all the time. It wasn't until I heard the words of the Quran for the first time that I found peace. I started listening to an audio version Quran on my phone, which I listened to everyday. I also would play the audiobook every time I went to sleep.

From that point on, I lived without my father in my life. In the second grade, I changed schools because we moved. My new school, Z. Ahmedov number 64, located in the Baku area of Ahmedli village. I studied in this school until grade 9 when I was given my tests for entry into college. I was able to pass all my tests and was accepted into the Baku Technical College for Traffic Management.

September 2008

I started my college education and was able to continue my studies without interruption.

February 2012

I graduated from college.

Summer 2011

That summer I visited my father in Nahchivan, Azerbaijan. This was the first time I flew in a commercial airplane. In 1996, I had taken a helicopter flight from my home to Baku, Azerbaijan. The walk through the airport in

Nahchivan was very interesting. Eventually, I reached my father's home, but were not able to fly his helicopter that summer because we didn't have permission.

When I went back home to Baku, my father came with me to visit. The flight back was interesting because we took a military airplane from Nahchivan. I was able to sit right behind the pilots.

I now had a copy of the Quran and did not have to listen to it on my phone. The change was remarkable, I was no longer getting into fights and wasn't scared all the time.

October 2011

I had a incredible dream. In my dream, my legs were covered by water. I wore long white robes. In front of me came a bright white light that dazzled my eyes. I looked in every direction and only saw blackness, except for in front of me where it was just the white light. In this light I started to make out people in the distance. Then I front of me I saw a man in a white robes like mine looking directly towards me. He had long black hair and a black beard. First, I thought that he was looking directly at me but he was looking just off to my right. I turned to see the sun shinning over a mountain with a single tree in a clearing. From a stream that ran by the tree stood an animal like a deer drinking from the water. I had always associated deer with water just like this scene, however, this deer seemed to have antlers. As I came closer, I saw that I was surround by water but I still moved forward towards the deer. After some time I got a pain in my heart that was so bad that I woke up from my dream.

This dream changed me profoundly, I started writing two other works - *Tree of life* and *Flower of life*. I began to isolate myself from others and people started to comment

that I had changed.

January 2012

I began to believe that everything had lost its meaning. In this dark place I started to believe that I would eventually die. To fight this feeling, I started to plan to visit the city of my birth - Jabrayil and die. I continuously felt I no longer had any hope left to keep me alive.

At this time, a letter arrived from the government that I had been enlisted into the Azerbaijani Army. In this letter, I was instructed to report to Tovuz - a city nearby. I was very happy, because I didn't have anyway to get to Jabrayil. This news could be used to get me closer to completing my plan. I knew that I had to be patient. Knowing that Tovuz shared a border with Armenia.

6 April 2012

I went to the train station and took a night train to the military training grounds.

On the night of 6 April, I began my training in the Azerbaijani Army. By 7 April, I was transferred to the army brigade. In Azerbaijan, all men of age are required to enlist in army. In this time, I was being to learn the realities of life. During this time I only thought of myself and paid no attention to anyone else.

May 2012

While I was training, I was involved in a fight with another soldier. The Captain took me to his room and asked me why I had been in a fight. He said if you had punched the other soldier in the head and he died, what would you have done? I told the Captain, I hadn't wanted

to kill anyone. The Captain replied, "What do you mean, if we send you to face the Armenians will you not kill them?. I said no. The Captain took me to the office for the senior rank soldiers. When I entered, an officer turned a book on his desk towards me. He instructed me for what I had said I could be sentenced to 8 years in prison. Afterwards, a group of officers began to speak to me and ask me many questions. They noticed that my responses to their questions were quotes from the Quran, so they decided to let me go back to the barracks.

4 June 2012

After two months of training, I was required to go the hospital because of a persistent injury due to the physical strain of the training. It was decided that I would need a surgery to correct the problem. The surgeon give me 6 injections and performed the surgery without any sedation. During the surgery, my heart stopped and I had to be revived.

Later in the month, there was an attack by the Armenians that left many of our soldiers dead. On the way to the washrooms, I saw one of the injured soldiers. Doctor was performing an examination, when I saw the injured soldier's hand go limp. Doctor pronounced the soldier dead and asked what his name had been. This was the first time ever witnessed someone die right in front of me.

Later I was given leave and I went home to Baku for rest. When I arrived in Baku, I realized that even though I was larger and stronger - my plan to die was still there.

5 July 2012

When my leave was over I returned to the base. Despite concerns from the upper ranks I was sent to the front lines. The Armenian position was 2 km from our

front line posting. Our post was code named *Deer*. There were other postings within a 100m of us. Three days after, I was sent to the front lines.

25 July 2012

I began to plan on how I would cross that border.

26 July 2012

That morning I made my escape over the border to Armenia which was now 500m away. I ran. After nearly 20 minutes of running, I decided to head for the closest village to my position. I reached the village of Kokhanabi. I stopped in the village to drink some water and then started to climb into the mountains. In the middle of the mountains, I stopped in a flowered meadow to lie down. There was no fighting, so I decided to stay for awhile to rest. I stood and resumed my escape. Soon, I reached the edge of a forested area. It was terrifying but I knew I had to keep going. After a half hour of progress through the trees I reached the Armenian trenches. Not knowing what to do I sat down to consider what to do next.

From my pocket I took a piece of white cloth, picked up a branch and tied them together. Now that I had a white flag which I could use to show that I came in peace and that I wasn't armed. Instead of going into the trench and not being seen from a distance, I walked along the top edge. After a short while I came to an intersection and didn't know which way to go. I picked up a pebble and spat on one side. Thinking that if it landed wet side up I would go forward and if it landed dry side up I would go to the right. After tossing it into the air it landed wet side up. So I started off forward again along the trench. Once again, I came to a split in the trench, not finding a stone, I used a branch to make the same decision as before. With the wet side up again, I went in the direction that it indicated. With

the rightward direction chosen I continued forward. The next branching of the trench had obvious traps so I just stood and tried to decide where to go. I spotted a soldier and tried to call him over, but he ran further into the trenches. With the white flag still in my hand they didn't open fire on my position. Having no other choice, I stepped down into the trenches and approached the Armenian soldiers. To demonstrate that I wasn't a threat to them I took off my clothes. This way, I believed, it would be evident from a distance that I wasn't a threat. From there I was taken in the nearest post where their bunks were located. The entire time that I was marched through the trenches no one looked at me. They gave water, bread and bologna, so I sat on the chair and ate.

The enlisted Armenian soldiers treated me well but the officer in charge chose to beat me. I was seated in a chair and the group of soldiers were grouped around me to keep me from escaping. Another officer ran up with an AK-47 in his hands and smashed the butt of the rifle into head until I couldn't even lift it. The officer searched me once more for weapons but found nothing. News of my arrival soon spread and more officers came from other posts.

A while later, four people approached – two in civilian dress and two in uniforms. I was taken to the brigade command center and was questioned. They asked for my orders and what my intentions were in coming to Armenian controlled territory. One of the officers provided a translation, because although I spoke a little Russian, I was unable to speak Armenian.

From the front lines I was taken to Icevan nearby. Once there, I stripped of any remaining clothes and dressed in regular Armenian uniform. From Icevan I was transferred to Yerevan. We entered a large building and I was terrified. I was being watched by people with shaved heads from behind iron doors set into the walls. At first I

thought that they Azerbaijani prisoners of war, but they were only Armenian soldiers. These soldiers had been arrested for various reasons and were being held in this building. After I marched past the other prisoners they shaved my head and i was allowed to have a shower and clean myself up.

I was interrogated again and taken to a cell. A person came to speak to me in Azerbaijani and told me that if I was ever to lie to them that they would cut off my fingers in punishment. I was scared that i would lose my fingers. This person who threatened me looked like a Secret Service officer. After this threat they interrogated again and again.

I never lied or tried to tell them what they wanted to hear. I did manage to keep some information secret and I thought that I would never see Jabrayil again.

Later, allowed to sleep and rest for what was left of the night once they were done interrogating me. The next day they blindfolded me and took me back to the border. From there I was shown all the mines that I had somehow not triggered. I believe that God had saved me from being killed as I approached the Armenian lines.

27 July 2012

Once again I was blindfolded and lead into the woods towards a group of Armenian soldiers. I was in a area that looked like canteen and was allowed to eat and drink. I was blindfolded and moved again. When the blindfold was removed it was night. A soldier forced my head to the ground and screamed at me. He demanded to know what was the reason I entered enemy territory. While on the ground, someone put a gun to my head. They were convinced that I was a spy and they started to beat the information out of me. I kept repeating that all I

wanted was to see Jabrayil and wasn't a spy. They dragged me into the trenches, pushed my head into the ground again and asked if I had any last requests. I said that all I wanted was to be taken to Jabrayil and they could kill me there.

They started talking among themselves and all I can understand was the word "gasoline". I thought they were saying that they didn't have the fuel to take me anywhere. They let me up off the ground and they pointed the horizon. They told me that over in that direction was Azerbaijan and then put a gun to the back of my head. The officer started counting to 3, I closed my eyes saying "Allah, I am coming" over and over. When he got to 3, a shot rang out and I felt a burning sting on my head. After the gunshot they started to slap me and rough me up. I opened my eyes but I was so confused. I was sure they were going to kill me. A voice came from an officer with 3 stars on his uniform, who was on the phone with a general who was ordering the soldiers to just kill me. The officer went against those orders and took me to Yerevan.

28 July 2012

A translator came to visit and explained that they were sorry for my treatment.

31 July 2012

An international Red Cross worker came to speak with me. We spoke in Russian but because I only had a basic understanding of the language it was hard to communicate properly. He told me that the next visit they would get someone that I could properly understand. Since the visit with the Red Cross workers there were no more beatings from those who were holding me. I never told anyone about my treatment by the Armenians. Despite what I was told, I never felt that I was really a prisoner of war. My treatment from them was fair and I was being well fed.

The Armenian soldiers started to treat me like I was one of them.

25 September 2012

I was once again, I was visited by a Red Cross worker and a translator, despite it being my birthday I never told them this fact. But they knew the date my files and had to explain that my grandmother had died on this day in 2009.

March 2013

Things began to change in the prisoner of war camp. I was told by the Russians that they considered me to still love my country and that I was a patriot. The reason was that I never spoke badly about Azerbaijan. The food became terrible and I was being watched like an enemy.

Summer 2013

One day I was in my room reading a copy of the Quran and I started to feel that someone was watching me. Before me stood a woman, she had blond hair and yellow eyes. She wore entirely white clothes. I lost all control of myself calling out "Go away demon!". Before she left, her eyes became more intense and I was terrified. But eventually she left without a word. A week later I was visited by another woman with normal dark hair and eyes. She wore dark robes and stood perfectly still. She stood watching me and smiled. I wanted to scream, but I wasn't able to make a sound. I covered my face with my hands – my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth. I stayed like that until one of my jailers open the cell door asking what was happening. I told him what I had seen. He told me that I was the reason that the spirit had come and they had heard the voice of the spirit that had visited.

Later I was allowed to watch TV and have a cigarette. I saw a female Russian journalist on the TV. She reported that thanks to the efforts of the Armenians, Firuz Farajev was saved from death. After this visit everything changed, were before I saw people with blue eyes they were now brown. In the sky there was a red star and the moon smiled at me.

I did not believe in magic but I could not ignore what I was seeing.

On the mattress of my bunk, there was now red and yellow stains that remained even after they changed the mattress. I didn't know how but something was making these stains. Back in 2012, the Red Cross provided me with copies of Quran, Incil, Torah and Tonack. The Armenians took away these book and would not allow me to read. But I was able to comfort myself by remembering the Al-Fatiha and An-Nas that I had memorized in Azerbaijani

August 2013

By this point, I really wanted to go back to Azerbaijan. The Armenians told me that if I did it would be a mistake. The Azerbaijani officials would ruin my life. I was told instead to choose a different country to go to instead of Azerbaijan. I didn't want to go anywhere but home, I needed to get away from the Armenians.

Because I was hearing voices in my head and seeing things, they took me to a military hospital for treatment. At the hospital, I was secured to the floor and injected. From a TV that I couldn't see, I could hear the voice of my brother coming out through the speakers. I thought that it was the Armenians who were playing a videos to drive me crazy.

28 August 2013

Before I was seen by the Red Cross workers, I was given a form with my request to be sent back to Azerbaijan. I was notified by the Armenian officers that if I went somewhere else that I would be able to leave right away. If I still wanted to go back to Azerbaijan I could, but I would have to wait a considerable time.

Instead of remaining a prisoner, I went wherever they told me. My eyes were blindfolded and they took me to the airport in Yerevan. I was met at the airport by a UN Worker who told me that I was going to Canada. I was given a copy of the trip details. Yerevan > Toronto > London. I thought that I going to England but they gave me a Canadian quarter with a caribou on one side. This was something that I had seen in a dream I had before.

I was escorted on the trip by a man with long hair. Together we went from Armenia to Austria. We had to wait for some time in Austria before we could continue. Then we flew to Toronto in a 8 hour flight. There were movies on the flight but because they weren't in Azerbaijani I could not understand them.

29 August 2013

We had finally reached London, Ontario. My escort dropped me off at the Cross Cultural Learner Center (CCLC). I was approached by two men, one a Iranian Azerbaijani and one a Iranian Persian. As we left, I told them my story and all the details of what had happened to me.

I was told that I would be staying at the Cross Cultural Learner Center (CCLC) and then I would be given a home in the community.

I confided to the one the translators that I was hearing voices in my head and after a lengthy discussion I was taken to a doctor for treatment.

I remained in the direct care of the CCLC for three months, after which I was moved between a number of apartments around the city of London.

December 2013

I finally found an apartment where I could stay permanently.

I had decided that I would try to keep all that had happened to me in the past. I would try to think about today and look forward to the future.

Remember that your worst day is someone else's dearly held dream. When I came to Canada, I only had the clothes on my back and I was in a strange new place. But I chose to remain positive and make the best of what I had been given.

Thank you
Firuz Farajev

Poems

TREE OF LIFE

Once upon a time, I happened to be in a place, I found myself between the trees. A large and huge tree caught my attention, top of the tree was out of sight. I wanted to see tree top.

Then I began climbing, while climbing towards treetop, I was breaking the branches below me with my feet. It never bothered me to do so.

As I ascended, I could clearly see surrounding area. I kept doing so, as I reached the highest branch, I broke the last branch.

Since there wasn't any branch left unbroken, I lost my balance, momentarily I felt that I will fall down, but I stayed put holding to the top of tree trunk. Surrounding was in dear view.

I didn't know what to do, since I couldn't come down and there was no room to go up. I stayed still and waited. There wasn't link to pass to another tree by side, I waited a bit.

As i was thinking of jumping down for a suicide, strong wind blew and got me to fly.

My reasoning was frustration since there wasn't anything new. The wind flow kept me flying for a year, a month and few days as it landed me to another treetop.

It was unfamiliar tree, Wind brought me there by flying over waters.

And now I began to descend on this tree. I try not to break any of branches, as much as I can, but such is life.

Sometimes you do things that you don't want to do, but it's out of your control. There was years ahead, avoiding fall to death I descended gradually and carefully, I can fall and die as I don't know when I will reach the ground.

Life goes on, I learned that God loves us all.

FLOWER OF LIFE

When I was a child many years ago, growing up like everyone else, then came a time to pick a flower.

I noticed a flower, it was very beautiful, but had no fragrance. I watched it for years, till I realized it wasn't for me.

Later on as I wondered around, I noticed flower fragrance, I followed the scent, I couldn't believe it, the source of scent wasn't beautiful and had some thorns too, I wanted to pick it, it wouldn't let me. As I realized that, I won't be able to pick it, so I distanced myself from it.

As I was leaving, I notice a flower already picked. It had beauty and fragrance, but it was already picked and tossed away.

I picked it up and smelled it and touched it, and hold it to my chest and went on for a stroll, but it didn't like me, so I dropped it off where I found it, life goes on.

I understood that I needed flower with beauty and fragrance and fruitfulness that I can hold on to and embrace and be proud of.

I don't know thereabout of that flower and if it's already been picked or not, but I believe I will find it.

When I find and pick that flower, and hold it to my chest, I will be most fortunate person in the world.

Poem # 01

I loved you like a flower
I loved with the fear of fading
I have loved you for years
I loved it even if I didn't hear your voice
I loved your soul even if I don't know
I've loved you like a nightingale loves you
I loved you from the first time I saw you
My turquoise i love you
Firuza I always loved you

Poem # 02

You are the deer I am the bird
You have horn, you can hurt
You don't want me to hurt
You know you can hurt
You told me I am the peace bird
You know this life anyone can hurt
You are the deer I can't hurt
You know I am firuz who was hurt
You are the deer I am the bird

Poem # 03

I am wind I like to fly
I am coming I am going
I am never stay
I am wind it's not my choice
I want to be water or fire
I am wind I am firuz

Poem # 04

I am dry tree want to see
I am how will be green
I want to be healthy
I want to be happy
I want to see loving God in me
I want to you know me
I want to you love me
I want to you see me
I am firuz you can see

Poem # 05

You are my deer
You are the I want to hear
You are not alone you here
You are in my dream
You are in my heart
You are in my thoughts
You are the I think about
You are came in my life
You are the I don't want to lose
I am firuz you are the my deer



MISTER NORM
MEDIA PROCTIONS