**GUDIPARAN BAZI** (kite flying) has been a favorite pastime of Afghans since long before the Soviet invasion. For many, it is an art, for others an addictive hobby. Banned in Afghanistan by the Taliban, many expatriates brought their skills and love of the sport to their new homes.

The Gudiparan, literally translated as “flying doll,” is constructed of thin, tissue-like paper and bamboo. Sizes range from 3 ½ feet to as large as an adult human. Kites are flown in two-man teams. I mean that literally since Afghans consider this a male sport. One flies the kite and the other tends the charkha. The charkha is “an intricately designed wooden drum” around which the Tar (wire) is wound. The tar is critically important. A variety of wire materials are available. Wire preparation takes many hours. Dr. Sahar describes the process as follows.

*First shisha (a mold to coat the wire) had to be made. Basically glass was grounded (to make the wire sharp for cutting) and mixed with an adhesive material and mushed rice to make what was comparable to a paste in texture. The wire was coated with this mold and after it was dry, it is wound around the drum (charkha), where it is stored for use. The alternative coating method was called "dolai", where the wire was immersed into liquid "shisha" and coated. It was left to dry, then used. Usually 2 trees were used to wound the wire around until it was dry, then wound on a drum (Charkha). The coated wire is sharp - it is designed for kite fighting. Many children would cut themselves with this sharp wire - often to the bone. To avoid this, many wrapped a piece of leather around their index finger (called kilkak) to protect them.*

Basir Beria, Afghan fighter kite builder, consulted filmmakers during production of *Kite Runner* as their Kite Master. Beria traveled to China for production of the film and instructed the young actors in the art of kite flying and fighting. Beria constructed the kites used in the film.

Beria “has his own secret recipes for Tar and will occasionally color the mixture to produce purple, yellow, pink, orange, or green line. On the average it can take up to 7 hours to make 1,000 feet of "cutting" line. [He] shaves his own bamboo and uses tissue paper for his kite skin, he decorates it with bright geometric shapes, or his specialty, beautiful women with flowing hair and vivid eyes” (Hsiung).

*Photos of Basir Beria used with permission from Gina Hsiung. Thanks, Gina!*
Metaphor met’-a-phor

From the Greek, meta “beyond,” over,” and pherein “to carry;” figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that may actually have something important in common. Because metaphors are often sensory, they often speak to one’s emotions – pathos.

[T]he greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor." It is "a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.

– Aristotle, Poetics

Examples:

It’s raining cats and dogs! Ship of state
Life is a highway, I want to ride it all night long – Tom Cochrane “Life is a Highway”
No man is an island - John Donne
From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent.

- Winston Churchill

Hosseini makes use of metaphor throughout The Kite Runner. Some are simple; others are quite complex. Here are a few examples. How many more can you locate in the text?

✓ The two boys being fed from the same breast ~ brotherhood
✓ Kite fighting ~ war
✓ What about kites in general?
  o Kites are fragile ~ the relationships between father & son or friends are also fragile
  o How might a kite represent Amir’s life?
✓ Characters in the novel ~ metaphors for peoples and nations in Afghanistan’s history
✓ Hassan’s rape ~ the rape of Afghanistan by the Taliban
  o Hassan’s loss of innocence ~ destruction of a people’s confidence in their government

Many readers see my novel, The Kite Runner, as recent past, its tragedies and upheavals, its rich this book opened for them an intimate window stories about Afghanistan suddenly registered ask me if this was my intent in writing this first day, in March of 2001, when I sat to writing has always been, first and foremost, about simply because I was bewitched by a brutality and kindness, sin and forgiveness, a one rich, one poor, one flawed, the other pure, with kindness as the backdrop. It was always, first and last, about story.

- Khaled Hosseini, from his April 12, 2005 letter to
The American Place Theatre (University of Massachusetts Amherst)
Read these excerpts from the first half of *The Kite Runner*. Locate scenes later in the text that complement each one of these in some way. You may fine scenes that seem to continue or complete the metaphor.

I became what I am today at the age of twelve, on a frigid overcast day in the winter of 1975. I remember the precise moment, crouching behind a crumbling mud wall, peering into the alley near the frozen creek. That was a long time ago, but it’s wrong what they say about the past, I’ve learned, about how you can bury it. Because the past claws its way out. Looking back now, I realize I have been peering into that deserted alley for the last twenty-six years (Hosseini 1).

Hassan and I used to climb the poplar trees in the driveway of my father’s house and annoy our neighbors by reflecting sunlight into their homes with a shard of mirror. . . Sometimes, up in those trees, I talked Hassan into firing walnuts with his slingshot at the neighbor’s one-eyed German shepherd. Hassan never wanted to, but if I asked, really asked, he wouldn’t deny me. Hassan never denied me anything. And he was deadly with his slingshot (Hosseini 4).

During the school year, we have a daily routine. By the time I dragged myself out of bed and lumbered to the bathroom, Hassan has already washed up, prayed the morning namaz with Ali, and prepared my breakfast . . . While I ate and complained about my homework, Hassan made my bed, polished my shoes, ironed my outfit for the day, packed my books and pencils. I’d hear him singing to himself in the foyer as he ironed, singing old Hazara songs in his nasal voice. Then Baba and I drove off in his black Ford Mustang — a car that drew envious looks everywhere because it was the same car Steve McQueen had driven in Bullitt . . . (Hosseini 27).

It happened just the way I’d imagined. I opened the door to the smoky study and stepped in. Baba and Rahim Khan were drinking tea and listening to the news crackling on the radio. Their heads turned. Then a smile played on my father’s lips. He opens his arms. I put the kite down and walked into his thick, hairy arms. I buried my face in the warmth of his chest and wept. Baba held me close to him, rocking me back and forth. In his arms, I forgot what I’d done. And that was good (Hosseini 79).


