

Azar Nafisi

Azar Nafisi has gained international recognition for her human rights advocacy, especially on behalf of Iran's young women. Her best-seller, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, is a compelling account of her experiences as a former university professor who secretly taught a group of women students at her home in Tehran during the Islamic revolution. The book has been translated into 32 languages and has won numerous literary awards, including the 2004 Non-fiction Book of the Year Award from Booksense, the Frederic W. Ness Book Award and a 2006 Persian Golden Lioness Award for literature from the World Academy of Arts, Literature and Media. She has lectured and written extensively in English and Persian on political implications of literature and culture, as well as on human rights issues. She is a regular contributor to *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

A native of Iran, Nafisi attended school in England before coming to the United States, where she earned a Ph.D. in English and American literature at the University of Oklahoma. She returned to Iran in 1979 to teach English literature at the University of Tehran. Her teaching career was interrupted when she was expelled from the University for refusing to wear the mandatory Islamic veil. She returned to the United States in 1997. She currently is a visiting professor and director of the Dialogue Project at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Her forthcoming book, *Things I Have Been Silent About*, is scheduled to be published in 2008.