

## **My Grandmother**

Became a grandmother  
Old, ailing,  
From walk it  
Get tired.  
Grabam pilot  
I will soon I  
Plant a tree  
In the plane.  
Not will rock it  
Will not cacino her,  
Rest it  
Finally.  
Tell grandma:  
"Ah Yes my granddaughters,  
Ah Yes my pilot!  
Well done!"

## **My Grandmother II**

I with his grandmother  
've been friends a long time ago.  
It all diversions  
With me at the same time.  
I don't know boredom,  
And all I wished for it.  
But grandma's hands  
Love only stronger.  
Oh, how many hands these  
Wonderful do!  
Patch, knit, mark,  
What they make.  
So thick smear foam,  
So thick pour Mac,  
So roughly rubbed steps  
Caress gently.  
Prompt - see  
Ready all day long  
They dance in the trough,  
To hang around the pantry.

The evening will come - shadows  
Weave on the wall  
And fairy-tale-dreams  
Tell me.  
To sleep the night light will Shine -  
And then suddenly fell silent.  
Smarter than them there is no  
And there is no kinder to the hands.

### **Perhaps**

Perhaps you became so small, Armenia,  
So we could carry you in our hearts.  
Perhaps you changed into charred parchment  
So we would tremble lest you fall apart.  
Perhaps your handful of soil is meant  
As talisman, lesson and exercise.  
Your name became the symbol, perhaps,  
For purification in a world of lies.

### **The Love To Motherland**

They bottomless – deeps of the love of each mother,  
Therefore this love's highly praised.  
But, a she-bear loves her children, rather, --  
Her silly and clumsy cubs.  
Bright is the loving hearts' clear fire,  
And sore is the parting wind.  
But he-dove, too, falls in sadness, entire,  
Losing his girl-friend behind.  
But, such a love is in men' hearts boiling  
Which nature's not able to rise:  
It is the light of the motherland's calling –  
The light of the parental hearth.  
No, not the blood or instinct, wild and bared,  
Drove men to these heights above.  
Long was the way of the kids of the planet  
In search for this crystal love...

### **The Walnut Tree** *(to the diaspora)*

There is a walnut tree  
growing in the vineyard  
at the very edge of the world.  
My people, you are like  
that huge ancient tree  
with branches blessed by the graces  
but sprawling  
over the small corner of land,  
roots and arms spread out  
and spilling your fruit  
to nourish foreign souls.

**For Maria Petrovich**  
*(her Russian translator)*

No one to help carry this burden down.  
No one to sort the right and wrong.  
Only you, who wept Armenian tears  
could translate my sorrow to song.

**Our Love**

Because you are not truly ours,  
yet ours, we love you  
with a lover's love,  
Armenian world.  
Ours, the way the blood  
coursing our veins  
is ours,  
and not ours the way  
the sun crowning Ararat it  
unowned.  
Unownable as  
the manna settling  
on the Sassoun woods,  
unpossessed as the wind  
that strokes the field  
of Moush, unheld.  
You are near enough  
for us to hear the beat  
of your heart, almost feel it,  
under our rough hand,

and separated by borders  
you are distant,  
rising like the cathedral  
of Ani out of red ruins.

O the unholdable mirage,  
we reach endlessly  
while you leave endlessly  
to go away.

Not with a household  
family love  
but with a lover's grieving  
we love you,  
Armenian world,  
Armenian soil.

### **Far From Home**

The language of love  
is the same in each land.  
"I love you" even in Armenian  
you understand.

But my sudden homesickness  
I cannot translate  
how I miss Armenia's stones  
in this festive place.

For you – Ararat is biblical,  
Noah's mountain alone.

For us – cradle and gravestone,  
breath, joy and pain.

The century old sorrow  
that flows in our blood –  
even told in your own tongue  
remains unexplained.

### **If I Don't Love You**

If I don't love you, (and I don't love you),  
why is winter so much like spring this year  
and why is the pale sun blazing such heat  
and why does the overcast sky seem so clear?

If you don't love me (and you don't love me)  
then why do the passers-by float by

on your street with such strange smiles and  
why don't the houses and sidewalks stay in place?  
If I don't love you and you don't love me  
then why was this warring world gentled  
and why do the stars suddenly scorch the sky?

### **Come Back Safely**

Even to say good-bye  
even if it's the last time  
even reluctantly  
even to hurt me again  
even with the harsh acid  
of sarcasm that stings  
even with a new kind of pain  
even fresh from the embrace  
of another. Come back, just come back.

### **Autumn**

Like grapes of late autumn  
overlooked by the harvesters' eyes  
you sweeten like raisins,  
like gold incense, sun dried.  
Purified by rare light  
freed from harvest and tax  
you store the sun's heat,  
you eat the cold frost.  
You who outlasted spring's  
flowering, summer's fruit  
to be plowed back to earth, wild  
autumn songs of dry, wiry root.

### **Words For My Child** *(excerpt)*

With this sweet spring  
of melting brooks  
and waking buds and birds  
my little son begins to speak  
his first Armenian words  
softening the air

with ancient speech  
rejuvenated on his tongue  
like communion blessing us,  
his first words have sprung.

The treasure  
I pass along to him,  
holy jewels of our race,  
fashioned by light of old stars,  
syllables that mark our place,  
like Haig's arrow  
flying through time  
shaped like St. Mesrob's art  
into script and history  
making light of dark,  
kept as balm to heal  
the exile's wounded heart,  
cheers the soldier  
on the field; and joins those torn apart.  
This language my young mother sang  
in lullabies to me  
has reached, my son, to you.  
Keep it refreshed, made new.  
Protect it as you'd protect me  
from any cut or wrong.  
Keep it, my son. Forget your mother  
before forgetting your mother tongue.

### **Warmth**

I walk lighting the street  
with your fire.  
You burn too, but with hers.  
I ache for, laugh with,  
lean towards your words.  
You bend too, but to hers.  
On the inside of my dream  
is your face. On the inside  
of your dream is hers.  
That's it. That's life.  
Let's live it loving.  
Let the world turn  
not remembering us,

me, with your fire,  
you with hers.

### **Armenian Eyes**

Wherever the place, in whatever face  
you are unmistakable, Armenian eyes,  
uniquely shaped, uniquely sized,  
always recognizable, Armenian eyes.

How could you survive  
what Armenian eyes have seen,  
how could you stay open  
where Armenians have been  
and remain as you have,  
both gentle and mild?  
I am always amazed at  
your tranquility, Armenian eyes.

### **When The Telephone Rings And No One Answers**

There are a thousand kinds of sighs,  
shrill, bass,  
pressed from water,  
from lungs,  
pressed from stones, trees, and winds.  
And as if there weren't enough moaning,  
men stretched metal wires house to house  
so that the ring of a telephone  
can interrupt the laughter  
in a room, while in another place  
a hopeless girl drops the receiver  
into its cradle and her head  
into a deaf pillow.

### **What I Notice**

You ignite it, hold it lightly, as if to show something about us you want me to know.  
You exhale warmth that would burn me, flicking ash, breathing slowly,  
out of habit, just to pass time, alleviating boredom.  
You don't inhale but put it down to forget and fail to finish, smoking only part of each cigarette.

### **In the Sevan Mountains**

Alone, and spun in spills of sunshine,  
I stood astride the hush of Sevan's hills:  
high, so high that an eagle  
tipped my shoulder with his wing  
while I stood whorled in scud-mist.  
And the world looked mighty, mighty and endless.  
Then, in a moment, unseeing the slow, still space,  
I looked down - at a small house,  
and tracks along a rutted slope -  
And I needed people.