

# *C R A V E*



Anna Muradyan  
Hatz VI (Bread VI), 2019  
Collage  
18"x24"

## **HYEBRED MAGAZINE**

**SPRING 2020, ISSUE 07**

# MASTHEAD

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# NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Dear Reader,

While all of us are quarantined inside our homes and thinking of our loved ones, we hope that you are well and taking care of yourselves. 2020 did not turn out the way any of us expected. I planned for 2020 to be a year of growth for HyeBred Magazine. We started this year by expanding our masthead. Our team now includes a total of 10 talented editors of very diverse backgrounds who have all worked hard to edit and publish HyeBred Magazine's seventh issue, "Crave."

In times like this, the written word and the visual arts become a safe haven. We may be locked inside our homes, but some may see this as a blessing, a way to throw themselves into their craft and channel the inner artist they have pushed aside for too long. We encourage you to continue working on your craft, whether that be writing, painting, sculpting or photography. We hope that when you read the contents of our seventh issue, you will get lost in a creative world and perhaps become inspired to create your own works to contribute to our future issues.

I would like to thank our talented contributors who have entrusted HyeBred Magazine with their work. I extend my sincerest gratitude to HyeBred's editors Nanor, Silva, John, Jolie, Haley, Nour, Florence, Gayane and Natalie, for their hard work and dedication to the arts and this magazine. I would also like to thank you, dear Reader, for opening up these virtual pages. HyeBred Magazine would not be where it is now without your unremitting interest and enthusiastic support.

All of us at HyeBred Magazine are thinking of you, praying for you, and wishing you health always.

Prayerfully, Աղօթարար,

Rafaella Safarian  
Founder & Editor-in-Chief

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# ARMEN BACON

## My mother's dolma and 90 other cravings

World peace. A good night's sleep. My mother's dolma.  
Baby kittens. Fresh carrot cake. Lavash. Lahmajoon.  
Wedding invitations. Armenian wedding invitations. Armenian weddings.  
Birth announcements.  
The beach. Walking barefoot in the sand. Finding sand dollars.  
Handwritten love notes from my grandkids.  
Unscheduled days. Free weekends. Rainy days with no place to go.  
Watching old movies. The Wizard of Oz.  
Singin' in the Rain. Casablanca.  
Upgrades to business class. Priority boarding. Carry-on luggage.  
Airport lounges. Traveling abroad. Safe landings.  
Orchestra seats. New York in June. The Tonys. Opening nights.  
Stage doors selfies with a best friend. Running into Robert DeNiro in Tribeca.  
My mother's dolma.  
My mother's dolma.  
My mother's dolma.  
Sleeping in. Reading the Sunday *New York Times* in bed.  
Sipping a cup of French roast. High thread count Egyptian sheets.  
A good belly laugh. A good cry. A good book. Good friends.  
Break downs. Breakthroughs.  
Clouds that look like marshmallows. The smell of fresh rain. New blooms.  
Rainbows. Sunflowers.  
An unexpected text smothered with heart emojis.  
Alone time with my daughter. Vaulted conversations.

The south of France. Foie gras. Ripe Camembert. French accents.  
French waiters. Bistros. Cafes.  
Croissants. Pain au chocolat. Café au lait.  
Baguettes. Warm baguettes. Baguettes with butter.  
Crossing the Bay Bridge. Sipping champagne in the St. Regis bar. Room service.  
Anything delivered by a florist.  
Anything sung by Audra McDonald.  
Anything sung by Barbra Streisand.  
Anything sung by Charles Aznavour.

My mother's dolma.

The smell of new babies. The smell of new cars. Navigation. Podcasts.  
Apple Play. Pandora. A full tank of gas. Ferraris.  
Family reunions. Remembering. Cherishing. Celebrating.  
Ninety-minute massages. Gift cards for ninety-minute massages.  
Feeling inspired.  
Feeling relaxed.  
Feeling safe.  
Feeling someone's trust.  
Feeling loved.

My mother's dolma.

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Armen Bacon's debut memoir, *Griefland – An Intimate Portrait of Love, Loss and Unlikely Friendship*, tells the story of two women whose words and astonishing friendship helped them survive the ultimate loss. Her second and third books, *My Name is Armen – a life in column inches* and *My Name is Armen – outside the lines*, have been praised as “pulling us all a little closer to each other.” Follow her journey on Twitter @ArmenBacon, Instagram @ArmenBacon and Facebook Armen D. Bacon.

# *ANNA MURADYAN*



Hatz VI (Bread VI) (2019)  
Collage  
24" x 18"



Window View (2019)  
Mixed media collage  
9" x 12"



Eating Seeds as a Pastime Activity (2019)  
Mixed media collage  
9" x 12"

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Based in Oakley, California, Anna Muradyan has a Bachelor's degree in Art and Psychology and is currently a graduate student studying Marriage, Family Therapy, and Art Therapy. Muradyan craved cultural connection, as she grew up isolated from her heritage. This connection was bridged through Armenian cuisine and the everyday rituals that take place at home over a cup of coffee. Recently dabbling into collage, Muradyan's art is colorful, and inspired by the palette of Soviet-era Armenian artists Minas Avetisyan and Martiros Saryan, and the classic displays of food by Wayne Thiebaud. These fluorescent color schemes have always come naturally to her, expressing her excitement and joy over sharing her culture through food.

<https://www.annamuradyan.com>



# ALEXIS TOLMAJIAN

## Pinch of Perfection

My mother sits before me,  
Gently folding each piece of manti with beauty and integrity.  
“Made with perfection, and to expect nothing less,”  
She says whilst splashing her fingers in water and flour.

I stumble each piece of dough in my hand as I try to keep up,  
Her fingertips working elegantly as if the food was art, The  
oven being the display and our mouths to critique. I begin to  
not only crave the crispy pieces,  
But the ability to perform with such grace.

I admire my mother and her presentation,  
For the determination and love in every piece is evident within  
its flavor.

A simple piece of manti is produced,  
Yet her character is exhibited through its recipe.

“Nothing less,” I whisper, yet hold on to for years to come.



Anna Muradyan  
Fortune Telling (2019)  
Mixed media collage  
9" x 12"

## Coffee Cup (Soorji Kavat)

A face peers back at me,  
as I stare into a small circular coffee cup.  
My grandmother carefully reads the ceramic,  
for my future is in the palm of her hand.

The winding line represents my long journey ahead,  
A horse is seen for my perseverance,  
A tree for my family and our strong roots,  
And a mountain for the obstacles I will overcome.

Yet, I still see a face,  
Its coffee ground eyes reading me like a book.  
My focus is narrowly bestowed on the figure,  
For I crave an answer, and reluctantly ask my  
grandmother to introduce me.

“I see a bright future,” she tells me.  
“I see with your very own eyes.”



Anna Muradyan  
Soorj (Coffee) (2019)  
Mixed media collage  
9" x 12"

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Alexis Tolmajian is an authentic American-Armenian with a passion for writing. She hopes to pursue a degree in Political Science and Global Studies to further work with her sisters and brothers in the Middle East.

# TAMAR MATIG

## Armenians in and from Turkey: Bolsa-HAYs

My Armenian identity is a badge I have proudly worn since I was little; I even recall reciting a poem in Armenian in kindergarten saying: “*Hay em yes, Hay em yes, Katch Vartanin tor-n em yes!*” I consider myself very *hayaser*: among both my Armenian and non-Armenian friends, I speak very passionately about Armenian history, culture and language and crave to learn more in order to teach more.

Being Armenian means the world to me – our beautiful alphabet inscribed on Toros Roslin’s illuminated manuscripts, the ruins of Ani, the *khatchkars* at Kechart Monastery, and our beautiful skirted Armenian cross all give me a strong sense of belonging and pride. I attended Armenian school for over 10 years and have a strong Armenian community and support system. I have dedicated my studies to Armenian and Ottoman Turkish history and have written a handful of academic work on the Armenian Genocide in particular. I have volunteered as an executive member of my university’s Armenian students’ association for over two and a half years now and through it have met some of my dearest friends. I sincerely believe in the unity of all Armenians everywhere – regardless of differences in nationality, politics or religion – and I aim to help build the bridge to dialogue and reconciliation between Armenians and Turks.

Aside from my craving and passion for Armenian culture, I crave something else.

I *crave* acceptance from the Armenian Diaspora, because I am not *just* Armenian; I am *bolsa-HAY* (Armenian from Istanbul, Turkey).

Armenians began to form a diaspora community long before the genocide took

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*Armenians began to form a diaspora community long before the genocide took place, gracing us with a variety of cultural backgrounds that influence our individual Armenian identity.*

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place, gracing us with a variety of cultural backgrounds that influence our individual Armenian identity. Outside of Armenia, we have strong communities in Argentina, Egypt, France, India, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, etc. However, we often forget about the Armenians from and still living in Turkey.

My family is from Turkey, and although I live in the diaspora, I was raised with both Armenian and Turkish influences. I am not your typical Armenian: I do not have the traditional -ian/-yan last name; I grew up listening to Turkish classics like Barış Manço and Zeki Müren rather than Harout Pamboukjian and Paul Baghdadian; and, above all, I regularly visit Turkey – my earliest trip being when I was a year old.

Growing up with a strong attachment to Turkish culture was not strange for me. I was well educated about the Armenian Genocide and the suffering of my people and family, but Turkey was not the same

foreign or distant concept to me that it represented to my classmates in Armenian school. Regardless, I was treated differently by some of my classmates because of my Istanbul-Armenian background. Going back to school in the fourth grade after summer break, our class discussed what we did over the summer and I had just returned from a trip to Turkey. I brought a photo album to school of me posing in front of Armenian schools and churches in Istanbul to show my class, as well as Armenian souvenirs for all of my teachers. While I was flipping through the pages of the photo album with my teacher and classmates (who, for the record, were not very interested) excitedly telling them about the Armenian community in Istanbul an Armenian classmate from the back of the room cried words that I will never forget:

“TAMAR-E TOURK E!”

Even at 10 years old, I knew I had a strong attachment to Turkish culture that I couldn't expect my classmates to understand; they had different backgrounds than I did, but this is not why the statement bothered me. It was not the word “Turk” that hurt me, rather it was the negative connotation behind it: I was associated with the group that my peers believed was the “enemy” – even though I am ethnically Armenian, *just like them*.

Because I am an Armenian who openly identifies with both Armenian and Turkish culture, I've received many comments of this nature. A few years ago, a very kind Armenian co-worker introduced me to her husband, saying “Even though Tamar is from Turkey, she is a very nice Armenian girl!” Not too long ago, I was referred to as an “Uncle Tom Armenian” by a fellow Armenian because of my attachment to Turkish culture. On another occasion, I had to defend myself and emphasize to an acquaintance – who was very turned off by my attachment to Turkish culture – that although I have a comfortable knowledge of Turkish language, music, history and culture, that “I am *bolsa-HAY*.” That I attended Armenian school; that I speak, read and write the same language as any other

Armenian; that *I am just as Armenian as they are*.

These are only a handful of the comments I've received, but they *sincerely* hurt me as those who make them put into question my own Armenian identity simply because I have an attachment to Turkish culture. Because of this, I felt the pressure to overcompensate and participate more than the average Armenian in my age group just to prove myself as an Armenian. Although I sincerely enjoy being an active member of the Armenian community now, what pushed me into it was this pressure to prove myself.

Through all of this, I realized that many (but not all) diaspora Armenians share this worry that acknowledging Turkey or Turkish culture, or any similarities that it shares with Armenian culture, would somehow make them less Armenian. Although I personally don't believe my attachment to Turkish culture makes me any less Armenian, I see that many diaspora Armenians treat me as if it does and as a result, they dismiss my

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What do I crave?

I *crave* the acceptance of the diaspora; I *crave* the feeling of being *a good enough Armenian* in its eyes.

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Armenian-ness.

I am not the first *bolsahay* to experience this mistreatment – the majority of *bolsahays* face this hostility in the Armenian community and the diaspora – but I find this is an issue that is not discussed and absolutely needs to be addressed.

The individual whose ideas I resonate with the most on this topic is Hrant Dink, who was a *bolsahay* journalist and the founder and

editor-in-chief of Agos, a bilingual Armenian and Turkish newspaper in Istanbul. He is remembered for his open mind and his determination to bring Armenians and Turks together. He openly encouraged dialogue and reconciliation between the two, but on January 19, 2007 he was shot and killed in broad daylight in front of Agos by a young Turkish extremist. His funeral brought together one hundred thousand Armenians and Turks, who marched the streets of Istanbul side by side in solidarity to the Surp Asdvadzadzin Patriarchal Church in Istanbul, mourning their “Aparig.” They held

up signs saying: “We are all Hrant, We are all Armenian” (“Hepimiz Hrant’iz, Hepimiz Ermeniyiz” / «Բոլորս Հրանդ ենք, Բոլորս Հայ ենք:»).

I began reading Dink’s works in detail a few years ago once I became more active in the Armenian community, and found that his voice was one that I resonated with in regards to Armenian identity, the Armenian community and our differing views. In the collection of his works titled “Two Close Peoples, Two Distant Neighbours,” I came across the following quotes:

*“In analyzing Armenian identity, we must first review the ways in which the concept of the “Turk” has played itself out in terms of both history and everyday life. There are, additionally, important differences in the “Turk” as conceptualized by the Diaspora Armenians, the Armenians of Armenia and the Armenians of Turkey. The Armenians of Turkey are still living with Turks, while Armenians of Armenia are their neighbours, but the majority of Armenians in the Diaspora live far away from them. And it is this distance that makes the trauma they suffer distinct. [...] For the Diaspora Armenians, the “Turk” is the Turk they left behind at a date in the past. That date is 1915, when they were subjected to genocide; that date is 1942, when they suffered “economic genocide” with the imposition of the Wealth Tax; that date is 1955, when, on September 6 and 7, a new form of vandalism came into play. The “Turk” they have in mind is one that can never change; they were unable to live together in peace in the past, and they never will. For the Armenians of Armenia, the Turk is again the Turk of 1915, except now they are living side by side. Whether they like it or not, they will continue to have to do so. But the Armenians of Turkey continue to live with the Turk. And while it is an enervating issue for Diasporan Armenians, for Armenians of Turkey, the concept of the “Turk” is medicinal.”*

Tuğba Çandar, “Hrant Dink: An Armenian Voice of the Voiceless in Turkey,” p. 275-76

*“One must accept that in a certain part of the Armenian world, there is not even the slightest tolerance for the word “Turk.” Therefore, both the concept of “Turkey Armenians” and that of “Armenian who speaks Turkish” are quite repulsive in their eyes. They think that they will become better Armenians by putting off Turkey Armenians in this manner. They are not aware of the fact that the real important thing is both to stay in Turkey, and to remain Armenian. Turkey Armenians are precisely those who have achieved this difficult mission. Despite all the pressures and hardship, they manage to remain on these lands where they have very deep roots, and to retain their identity while doing so. Although they should be congratulated, these hawkish groups unfortunately assign the status of the lowest class of Armenians to Turkey Armenians.”*

Hrant Dink, “Two Close Peoples, Two Distant Neighbours,” p. 93

My intent in sharing these quotes is not to further categorize and divide the Armenian world into types of Armenians based on their proximity to or distance from the “Turk,” but I believe these two quotes provide a strong and accurate explanation as to *why* Armenians think and act the way we do. This being said, I do not believe our different upbringings warrant any hostility between Armenians; I am a firm believer that our diversity is our strength and that we should make use of it to preserve our culture to pass it down to future generations.

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I must emphasize that *I don't believe that all Diaspora Armenians think this way* and treat *bolsahays* in this poor manner and that the negativity which I refer to is communicated by many Diaspora Armenians, but *not all*. Regardless, it remains a recurring issue that many modern *bolsahays* face. This being said, I don't expect the whole Armenian diaspora to understand the identity of *bolsahays* or the influence that Turkish culture has on our identity or our appreciation of it, but I think it is very wrong to treat us (for those who do) as outsiders or even traitors for an attachment to Turkish culture. We must not



Illustration by Lena Dakessian Halteh

forget that, back in its days, Istanbul (then Constantinople) was a center where Armenian culture flourished, especially in terms of art, literature and architecture. It's only recently (post-genocide) that the modern *bolsahay* is often viewed negatively. I strongly believe that if you are Armenian, and know Armenian, that you should speak Armenian; after all, Western Armenian is in danger of being extinct, according to UNESCO. It is for this reason that I get upset when I hear *bolsahays* who know Armenian solely conversing in Turkish – and it's not because it's Turkish in particular. I feel this way towards any other language. Overall, I firmly believe that it is our responsibility as Armenian youth to preserve and pass down our *mayreni lezu* to the next generation of Armenians and to ensure there is never a world without the Armenian language and culture.

In my experience, many diaspora Armenians are unfamiliar with the Armenian community in Turkey, especially in regards to the Armenian island in Istanbul, called Kınalıada. The island is one of four along the coast of Istanbul and serves as an *amaranots* – a place where people spend their summer months – where the majority of the population is Armenian. *Bolsahays* who have established themselves in other countries such as the US, France, or Venezuela all return to Kınalı for the summer to reconnect with their roots. The island has its own Armenian church called Surp Krikor Lusavoriç, has a beautiful garden decorated with *khatchkars*, and a children's playground dedicated to Hrant Dink. Although official signage on the island is in Turkish, Armenian is heard almost everywhere you go. What's even more amazing is that the minority of Turkish residents on the island have also learned Armenian since all of their close friends are Armenian.

It's facts like these that I wish people who

make ignorant and even hateful comments about *bolsahays* knew.

Armenians in Turkey are actively fighting to keep Armenian culture alive in Turkey, while the diaspora categorizes us as Turks or “Uncle Tom Armenians” simply because of the combination of Armenian and Turkish culture which shapes our identity. I wonder, would this be the same if, for example, a Lebanese-Armenian had a strong attachment to Lebanese culture? Personally, I don't believe it would; I believe it is because the diaspora is stuck on the concept of “the genocidal Turk” that it is hostile towards anything associated with Turkey – even if it is a fellow Armenian.

Armenians in Turkey preserve their culture through schools, churches, and even publishing houses. For example, Aras Yayıncılık (Aras Publishing) is an Armenian publishing house in Istanbul that publishes in both Armenian and Turkish classics such as works by Zabel Yesayan, Taniel Varujan and Zaven Biberyan as well as history books. Kumkapı, which is located in the Fatih district of Istanbul, is the Armenian center of Istanbul where there are schools, churches and the seat of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

All this being said, I am not at all implying that we forget the genocide and move on. Rather I emphasize that we open our minds and hearts, speak to one another, person to person, and bond over our cultural similarities to build this bridge of dialogue which we will cross, and arrive to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and reconciliation between Armenians and Turks. As Hrant Dink said: “There is quite simply no way to effect a solution without entering into a dialogue with Turks” (Tuğba Çandar, “Hrant Dink: An Armenian Voice of the Voiceless in Turkey,” p. 261).

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I am absolutely in love with my Armenian identity.

I am in love with our history, with our language, with our culture. Yet, I and many other bolsahays are often treated as the pariahs of the Armenian community...

I *crave* the acceptance of the diaspora.

I *crave* the feeling that I am a *good enough Armenian* in its eyes.

I *crave* the unity of all Armenians everywhere – regardless of differences in nationality, politics or religion.

Moreover, I *crave* what we can accomplish as the next generation of Armenians.

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Tamar Matig is a final year university student in Canada, studying History with a strong interest in the Armenian Genocide, Armenian and Ottoman/Turkish history, culture and identity and is inspired by intellectuals and scholars such as Hrant Dink, Hasan Cemal and Taner Akçam. She has volunteered as an executive member of her university's Armenian students' association for two and a half years, and is an active member of her local Society of Armenians from Istanbul, regularly writing articles for their Keghart magazine.



# *JULIE ASRIYAN*



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Julie Asriyan is an award winning creative and performing artist whose work has been featured in IndieWire Women & Hollywood, Huffington Post, NY Magazine, Adweek, Time Out NY, LA Magazine, and Armenia's Zham Magazine. As a visual storyteller Julie has served as creator, director, actor, producer and editor of film, music videos, web video and live theatrical projects. Her work in photography extends to portraiture, fashion, fine art photography and mixed media. Julie frequently collaborates with her sister, performing artist Kristina Asriyan (Kris Alberts). Born to an Armenian family of performing artists in the former Soviet Union, Julie and her family became refugees after fleeing the Baku pogroms, immigrating to the United States and settling in NYC in the early 90s. Julie's micro-short film HOME – an allegorical take on her personal experience of forced displacement – was named finalist in Creative Armenia x Director Terry George human rights film challenge. For more visit: [JulieAsriyan.com](http://JulieAsriyan.com)

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# *MARI MANSOURIAN*







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Mari Mansourian has been capturing moments through her lens since her young teens when her father passed down her first camera, a 70s Zenit, and the rest is history. She sees the world from her own unique viewpoint and perspective. Mari captures the essence of the moment through the colors and energy of the world around her. She has been an active member of the She Loves Artist Collective since 2016. Recent exhibitions include: She Loves art exhibition with over 40 fellow female artists in February 2017 at HNYPT in Los Angeles, MI\_YA SEEN photography exhibition at Armenian Arts Gallery in October 2017, The Many Faces of Armenians at Roslin Gallery in June 2018, Pure Not Proper at Coagula Curatorial in June 2018, Sense of Armenia photo exhibition at Armenian Arts Gallery in February 2019.

At the end of 2019 she reopened her studio Velvet Iris Photography with a new vision and passion, focusing more on unique portraiture. She aims to capture the true emotions, complex personalities and the spirit of her subjects.

“My eye is where I see my world through; express my passion through, and where I speak my mind and heart through. Live life with passion, conviction, and through love,” says Mari. Mari Mansourian can be found on Instagram: @herthirdeye @herthirdeye\_bw and @velvet\_iris\_photography

# JENNIFER YEDIGAROV

## Ներքին աշխարհ

Ինձ յիշեցնում ես այն հեռավոր օրերին երբ  
միայն մենք էինք միասին  
Եւ իրար թիկունք էինք տալիս

Հիմա մի պուճուկ քաշուել էս  
Կամ աւելի ճիշդ  
Ես եմ հեռացողը  
Ո՞վ գիտի...

Հիմա ո՞նց եմ ապրում առանց քեզ  
Ընդհանրապէս կեանքս կտրուկ  
Շրջադարձեր է անցել  
Ամենայն դէպս քեզ չեմ մոռացել  
Եւ վերջերս իրոք պակաս եմ զգացել

Քեզ պիտի ծանօթացնեմ իմ հետագայ  
աղջիկին  
Մեր միջեւ միացնող կապ կը ստեղծուի  
Նորածնունդ կը լինի  
Եւ յուսամ ընդմիշտ կը մնայ այդպիսի

Բայց ինչ-որ է...  
Գիտեմ դու եւ ես  
Լաւ սովոր ենք  
Մեր իւրայատուկ լեզուով խօսել  
Անխախտ բարեկամութեամբ  
Կը շարունակենք ապրել

Դու այ այդպէս, որպէս ես յիշում եմ  
Միշտ կը մնաս  
Եւ ես կը մնամ  
Ինչ-որ  
Կը լինեմ

## Inner World

You remind me of those distant days  
When it was only us  
And we supported each other

You've pulled away a bit  
Or, more correctly  
It's me who is pulling away  
Who knows?

How do I live without you nowadays?  
Generally, my life has  
Gone through many sharp turns  
Regardless, I have not forgotten you  
And lately I've been feeling truly empty

I will introduce you to my future daughter  
A connection will be established between us  
It will be a rebirth  
And I hope it stays like that forever

But whatever...  
I know that you and me  
We are very well used to  
Speaking in our unique language  
With our unbreakable friendship  
We will continue to live

You, just like that, just like how I remember  
you  
Will always be  
And I will remain  
Whatever  
I will become

## Կեանքի բնական պահը

Տարիներ անցան, որ քեզ նորից տեսայ  
Ուրախ էիր, ժպիտ կար երեսիդ, ծիծաղում էիր  
Վաղուց էր որ ես քեզի այս հանգիստ վիճակով  
եմ տեսնում  
Ի՞նչ եղաւ, բա:

Երջանկութիւնդ ինձ սկսեց ուրախացնել  
Քո հայեացքը իմ ցաւերը թերթեւացրեց  
Բայց միանգամից շփոթի մէջ ընկայ  
Որովհետեւ իմ տեսածը ինձ իրական էր  
թւում...

Սպիտակ էր զգեստդ  
Լոյս էր ճառագում քեզանից  
Եհիշդն ասած... տարօրինակ էր  
Ու լռութիւն լցուեց սենեակում:

Հանկարծ բերանդ բացուեց  
Ոնց որ սփոփիչ խօսքեր էիր ասում  
Մինչեւ որ հասկացայ ասում էիր մեկնելու  
Ժամը եկաւ  
Ու նորից կեանքիցս հեռացար:

## Life's natural stage

Years passed since I last saw you  
You were happy, smile on your face, you were  
laughing  
It's been so long since I've seen you in this  
peaceful state  
Well, what happened?

Your happiness began to make me happy  
The sight of you eased my pains  
But I was immediately confused  
Because what I saw seemed real to me...

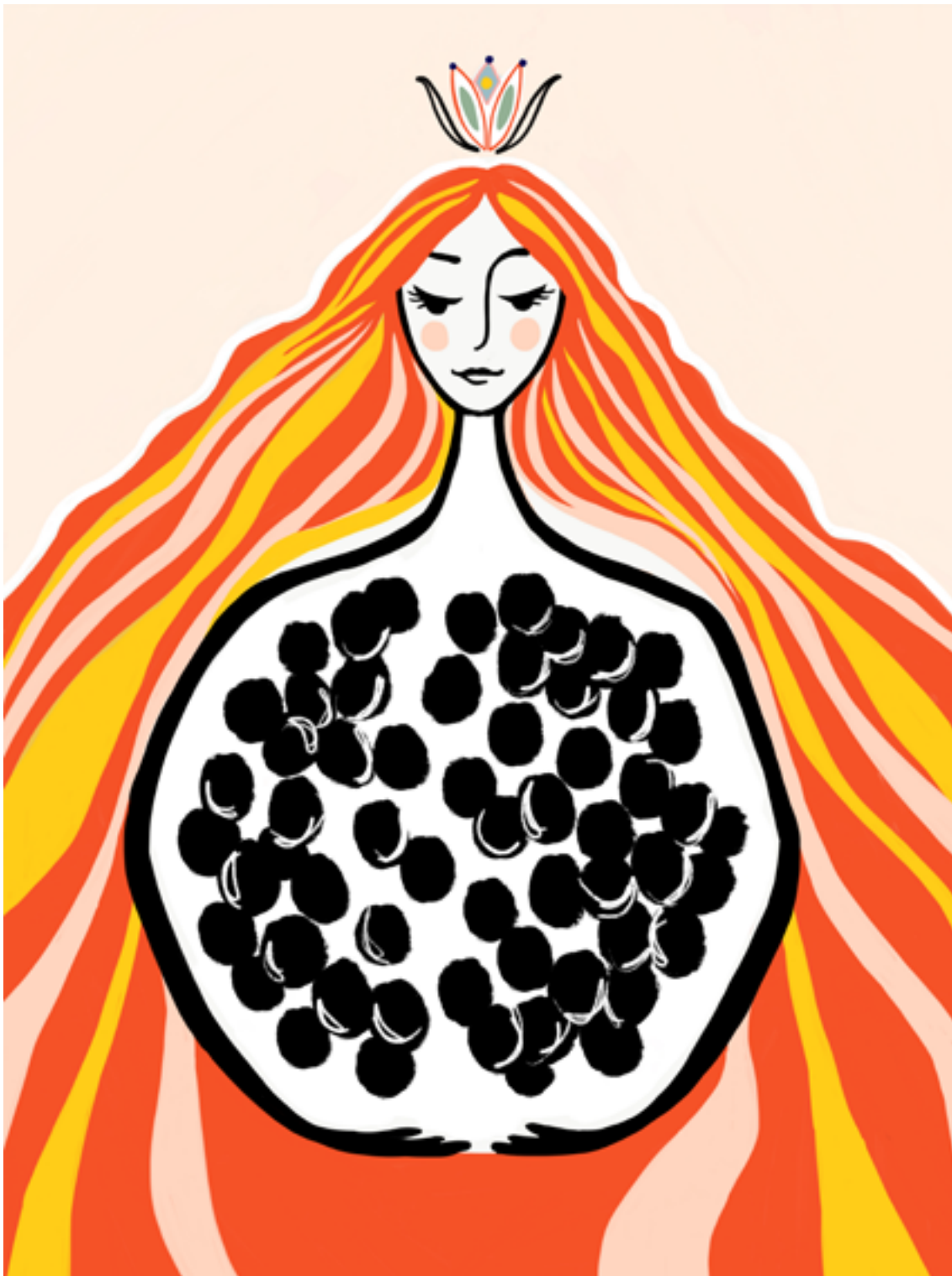
Your dress was white  
Light was radiating from you  
Truthfully... it was odd  
And silence filled the room.

Suddenly you opened your mouth  
As if you spoke consoling words  
Until I realized you said it was time to depart  
And once again you left my life.

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Jennifer Yedigaryov, born and raised in Los Angeles, CA, is currently a senior in her last semester at UC Berkeley majoring in Integrative Biology. She began playing the violin at the age of three and continues to be very musical. She has been writing Armenian poetry ever since she took an Armenian language class at UC Berkeley. Her professor's love for the language inspired her to give poetry a shot. Jennifer's parents are from Baku, Azerbaijan and fled to Yerevan, Armenia then the United States as a result of the Baku pogroms. Jennifer's mother passed away nearly ten years ago. The first poem was written during a time in Jennifer's life when she wished she had her mother by her side. Written originally in Armenian and translated into English, the second poem about old memories expresses a wish to reconnect with past relationships.

# *LENA DAKESSIAN HALTEH*









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Lena Halteh is a San Francisco-based writer, illustrator, Armenian dance teacher and mother of two, but she's best summed up as a storyteller. She graduated from UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism in 2016 and later launched Pom + Peacock, a folk-inspired art brand rooted in her children's uniquely blended Armenian and Palestinian heritage.

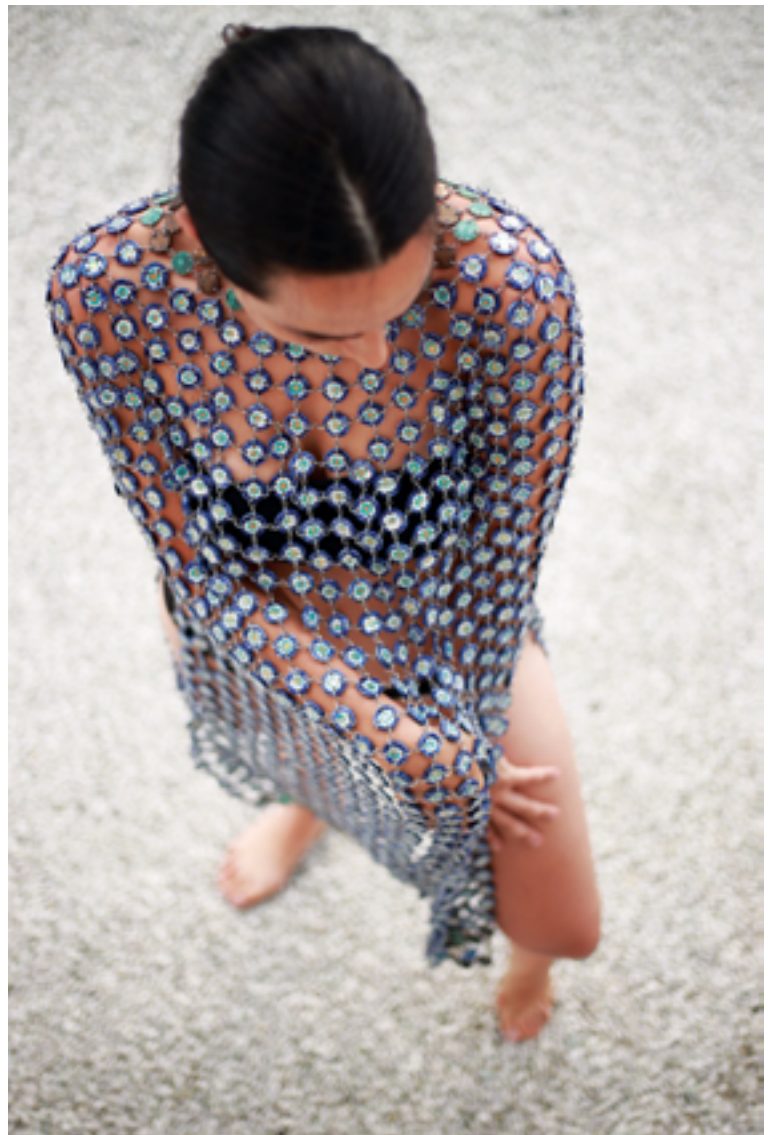
# *ALYAG MALKHASSIAN*



Ghost of Your Embrace (2019)  
Ceramic, Stainless Steel, Bronze  
2.5" x 20" x 47"



Ghost of Your Embrace is a 2500 shin-length ceramic chain-mail dress that is tied at the throat; it does not have holes for the arms becoming a cage as well as a protective shell for the wearer. This work is about the journey of acceptance, the healing of intergenerational pain and the paradox of life itself. These themes are shown in the 400 hours it took to bring this piece to life. Each piece a nazar (evil eye) represents past traumas, stories, ancestors, knowledge and the vast kaleidoscope that is the human experience which links each one of us together. The point of the piece is to be worn and to be removed. Just like a weighted blanket, it gives us comfort but we must unrestrain ourselves and create new realities. The weight mirrors that of the one worn by our families, by our mothers. Once removed, the feeling of the piece lingers on the skin like a memory. The wearer of this armour is naked, vulnerable yet protected within its constraints; we are cautioned to the thin veil separating us from the world and echoes that voluntary step into adulthood that moves us out of our past suffering and into the present.





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Alyag Malkhassian is an artist based in Montreal. Her obsessive tendencies have developed into minute, ornamental accretions exploring identity and storytelling and the merging of craft and art. She has exposed in places such as Aussenwelt, ArtGang, YES Business School for Creative Youth, ArtsAlive!, CTRLLab Gallery, VAV Gallery, Matahari loft, Concordia Armenian Cultural Association as well as being published in Yiara Magazine and Jerusalem Art History Journal and the first edition of Etiquette Magazine. She has curated and financed her own art show, Creative Flow, with twenty artists and musicians from diverse backgrounds. She apprenticed and assisted multidisciplinary artists exploring varied facets of craft such as working with cabinetmaker Micheal Carrola, art educator Dierdra Potash and commercial ceramic studios Mosaica designs and Pascale Girardin. She has collaborated with Special FX Makeup artist Chloe Simioni and has tailored costumes for Ziyang Yip. She has also done a multitude of Pop ups where she has sold handcrafted jewellery. Malkhassian has completed a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Studio Arts at Concordia University, and is currently attending Rosemont School of Technology in cabinetmaking.

# ARAXIE CASS

## Good Friday

On Good Friday, Mama and Auntie Karineh made choereg. They braided the little loaves as the sunlight streamed through the kitchen window, bouncing off the blue and yellow tiles to light their faces. Lily sat on one of the leather-covered bar stools, watching them with her dark eyebrows furrowed. The smells of meat and spices and nearly-baked pastries

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*The smells of meat and spices and nearly-baked pastries threatened to take her back to the mythical homeland she had never seen, but she fought it.*

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threatened to take her back to the mythical homeland she had never seen, but she fought it. With all her ten-year-old strength, she fought to stay grounded in America, in her world of pizza and fourth grade and North Face fleeces. She got up reluctantly when her mother asked her to get the black caraway seeds from the pantry.

Lily spoke barely above a whisper as she padded towards the pantry in her pink bunny socks. “None of my friends make choereg.”

Aunt Karineh looked at her sister and raised her eyebrows. Anahit sighed.

“You’re right,” she said. “She’s old enough to know now.” She and turned to Lily.

“Your Grandpa Ara,” she said, “Was a genocide survivor.”

Lily remembered Grandpa Ara. He had died when she was four, but she held on to bits and pieces of his memory. The smell of spices and cigars and Armenian brandy. His white beard and silver cross pendant. And one word. “Hay aghjik.”

As Mama began to tell Grandpa Ara’s story, Lily couldn’t help being pulled back in time, to a two-story house with intricate Armenian rugs on every floor. A family of five eating lavash, the traditional Armenian flatbread, before their Good Friday dinner. Artur, Ara’s father, sat at the head of the table, leading the prayer before their meal. His wife, Tamar, looked once more at the array of mezzes, making sure she hadn’t forgotten anything. Ara looked to his left side at his older sister Suzanna, standing perfectly still with her hands folded in the composure of a young woman. He was having trouble focusing on the prayer, but not nearly as bad as his little sister Nune, who was kicking her feet impatiently under the table. He closed his eyes.

Suddenly, an ominous clamor outside that brought Tamar to the four-paned front window. She looked outside, then back at her husband. The fear jumped from Artur to his son Ara, to Suzanna and little Nune like an electric charge.

“What is it?” Artur asked.

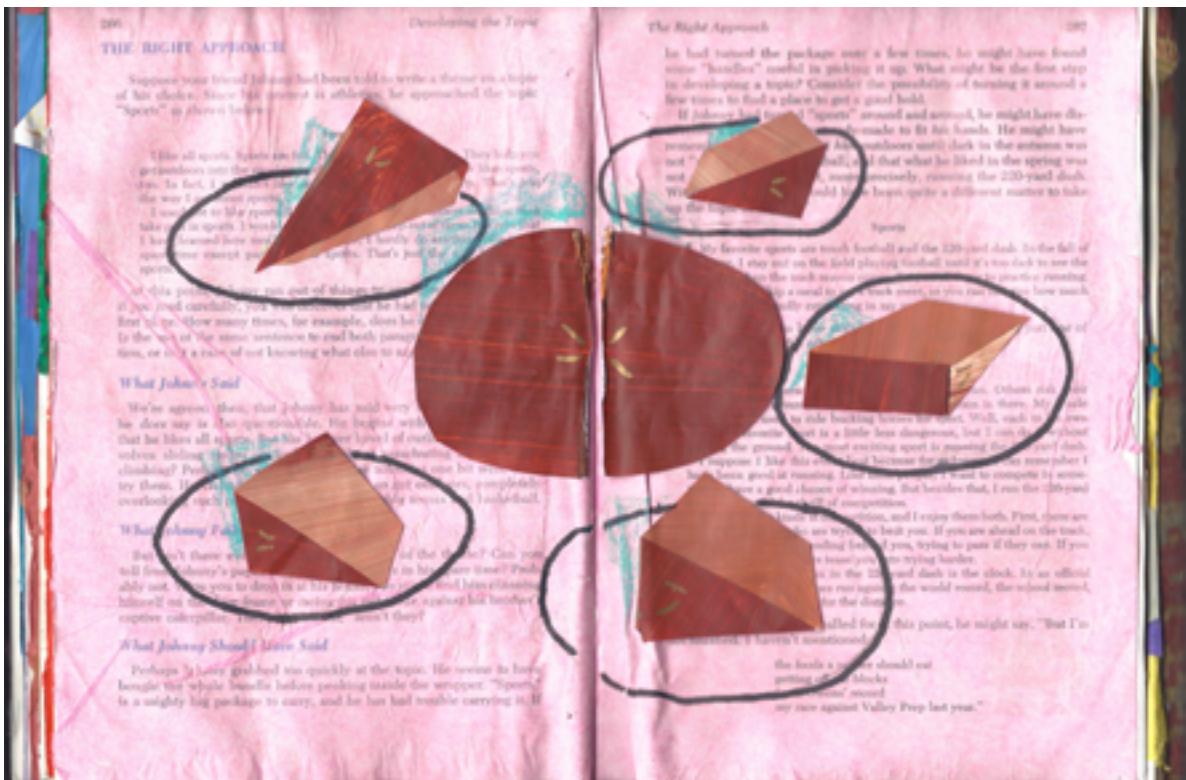
Tamar couldn't get past the knot in her throat to answer, but her husband already knew. They had thought about making plans for months now, but with the slow-footed reluctance of people who couldn't imagine needing them, they hadn't made any.

Artur got up. “Out the back door,” he said. “Now.”

Tamar's maternal reflexes kicked in as she grabbed a roll of lavash and her nine-year-old daughter, and ran.

Ara followed his older sister Suzanna under the apricot tree and into the field behind their house. He looked back at his bedroom window, calling out to him from the second story. He wished he could have taken his book. He imagined the table of mezzes still sitting there, empty. He felt Suzanna's hand pulling at his and turned back around. Neither of his parents had looked back, but it was already too late. They heard a shout from behind them.

“Ermeni!” A gruff voice shouted at them in Turkish. The soldier's mustachioed face scowled at them. He was looking at Tamar, and Nune, who held tightly to her mother's hand. Ara's eyes were glued to his little sister, but Suzanna knew what was happening, so



Anna Muradyan  
Gata Dance (Around the Cake) (2019)  
Mixed media collage  
9" x 12"

with a choking sob she gathered her resolve and ran. Ara felt himself pulled behind her, and turned away.

They ran as fast as they could towards the orchard, their last hope. The soldier's shouts followed them as they ran into the trees, but years of hide and seek led them to a little cave hidden by bushes and fallen tree branches. Nune's favorite hiding spot.

Lily looked up at her mother. Anahit had fallen silent. It was Aunt Karineh who broke the silence.

“We make choereg on Good Friday to remember Tamar and Artur and little Nune, and all the hateful, angry people, who made sure that they would never make choereg again. We make choereg to meet that hatred and anger with pride, and love. We make choereg because we are Armenians – we're survivors. Understand, hay aghjik?”

There was that word again. Hayaghjik. My Armenian girl. Lily sat silently, her eyes glued to the granite countertop, her brows furrowed. She wondered why people had wanted to kill her grandpa, but she didn't want to ask. There were some things, some stories that made her mom and her aunties cry, that she knew not to ask about.

She tried to imagine Grandpa Ara, just a few years older than she was now, hiding in the cave. She remembered his stories of coming to America on a big steam ship, of working in a factory and starting the family's rug business. He had never told her about his homeland. Her mother had said she was old enough to know now. She watched her mother put the tray of choereg in the oven and smelled the yeast and black caraway in the air. She wondered what it all meant.

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Araxie Cass (she, they) is a freelance writer and a student of Creative Writing and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Her work explores themes of identity, community and most recently the ambiguities of her experience as a queer, mixed ethnicity diaspora Armenian. She writes everything from blog posts to short stories, and her work has appeared in the Armenian Weekly, H-Pem, and other platforms. In her spare time she enjoys watching sci-fi, baking, and learning to play her new doumbek.



# *LUIZA GRIGORYAN GHIMOYAN*

## Bleed, root

Bleed, root is a project coming from my guts. I'm curious, and my curiosity has led me to question myself about what's the origin of the consequences that I'm living, from where were born the customs I have, what are the meanings of the traditions I keep on saving and why do I still maintain them. The answers are found when the root bleeds, and bleeding doesn't mean that it hurts. If you bleed, it means you are still alive. And that you can heal.



3. Tattoo

During the Armenian Genocide, some Armenian women had the opportunity to save their family's life by sacrificing theirs. The Turkish said to them: "If you agree to be mine, I will not kill your children." Thus, many women agreed to be the sexual slaves of the enemy, and were marked with tattoos for life. The face and the hands – so that neither themselves nor the others will ever forget the shame.



1. Honey

At Armenian weddings, the newlyweds have a teaspoon of honey that symbolizes a sweet life. Traditionally, the bride swallowed the honey from the tail of the spoon, “to keep her tongue short.”



2. Blutrache

At Armenian weddings, the newlyweds break two plates when entering their future home, symbolizing breaking the evil spirits to have a happy life.

However, domestic violence also exists in Armenia, no matter how hard they try to hide it. Women's role is to assume it and keep silence.

My woman isn't silent. She breaks the plate that symbolizes her unhappy marriage, in order to finally have the life she deserves.



4. Granada

Formerly, during the wedding ceremony, the Armenian women had to stamp a pomegranate against the wall, symbolizing fertility – in order to have healthy and strong children, very soon.

However, there are women who, no matter how many pomegranates they break, still yet aren't fertile. In Armenia many of them are mistreated, and they carry the blame on their shoulders.

I took care of this pomegranate for 9 months. When I threw it against the wall, it was rotten. I'm not guilty.



5. Eva

The Apple is guilt and innocence.

Eve, with her bite, made us eternal accomplices of sin.

Nune carries Eve in her blood, and she will bite the apple – a red delight that symbolizes her virginity.



6. Virginity

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Luiza Grigoryan was born on September 30, 1995 in Yerevan, Armenia. She arrived in Spain at seven years old, and currently lives in Madrid. She studied Journalism at the Rey Juan Carlos University. Once graduated, she has integrated the radio team of Círculo de Bellas Artes. During summer 2016, she traveled to Armenia and was working at the Mirzoyan Library. There, she discovered a fascination for the visual world by spending hours in photobooks. Very soon the camera has begun to be a part of her, and her look and background have been fulfilled by attending to courses directed by photographers as Antoine d'Agata, Teresa Margolles, Chema Madoz, Sonia Berger, Pierre Gonnord, Alberto García-Alix and among others Joan Fontcuberta. In November 2018, she established at Radio Círculo her own radio program, dedicated to the visual arts, called Ojo de Pez.

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# LILY DALY

## Our Roots

Before I moved to Armenia, I dyed my hair blonde, a brash color that did not go with my pink-toned skin but emboldened me, a sign that I was ready to leave America and live elsewhere for 27 months. In actuality, my bright hair made me stick out in our Pre-Service Training village outside Yerevan. There, I studied Eastern Armenian for 11 weeks, as well as participated in teacher training and cultural sessions. In the village where it seemed every window framed a view of Mount Ararat, I became known as the girl with the yellow hair.

Now, exactly two years later, my dark roots have taken back over, becoming longer and longer, not considered roots at all. The blonde has melted and holds on just at the tips, an odd sight for the 30+ volunteers who know the true me as the one with blonde hair. I, on the other hand, cannot even picture myself as blonde.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, the line between “living abroad” and simply living blurred. For 24 months, after the 11 weeks of training, I lived and worked in a small village by a body of water, a lake named after its sister lake in the country to the west, but named as the dark, life-taking relative. Not much grows inside Lake Sevan. The lake is still pretty; you can’t tell that it’s the ungiving sister. On certain cold days, it looks so pristinely flat and gray, like the most beckoning bathwater. When there is fog and the lake’s horizon is covered, you can almost believe that this is the way the newly dead walk home.

In Lchap, I lived with a host mother, father, and sister. I taught English Language, 3rd-12th grade, at the village school alongside

an Armenian counterpart. After school, I often held English conversation clubs. My students at the clubs were mostly girls and young women. In the classroom and in my kitchen, we created a space that is rare in rural Armenia, where we read and interpreted texts by female authors, discussing intimacy, gender dynamics, and self-expression. During one session, a 16-year-old girl said that childhood is the happiest time because you do not understand sadness; you do not know why your mom is sad.

In my village and around Armenia, I took photographs of Armenian women in cafes, with their daughters, in front of mirrors, behind cigarettes, in bodies of water. I posted these photos on Instagram: for my students, I tried to convey the idea that women have a right to occupy different spaces without shame. These photos and their captions connected me to my love for woman and her relationship to various things inside and outside of herself, some minor and some unexpectedly major. A recurring figure in my pictures is Mariam, my host sister. Every picture I took of her was a love letter to her as a person, and a love letter to her *gangur* hair, the liveliest and most stunning head of hair I have ever seen, her roots naturally held high above her head by texture and volume. During winter she would brush her newly-washed hair by the *pech*, and I would look on in adoration.

I lived in a country obsessed with roots. This national fixation stems partly from the fact that their ancestors and their lands were taken in a way that, for them, was so blatant and brutal and ignored; yet, to their aggressors, the exodus of Western Armenians was more shadowed, less

grossly meditated, a result of the ugly but accepted interactions of war. The Armenian language is full of words and expressions that highlight the imbedded importance and strength of heredity, inheritance: *aryunuh jur chi darna* (blood does not become water); *inch koxka?* (you ask, when someone new is mentioned in conversation); the idea of *aryan hishoghutyunuh*, the blood memory: if you look a stranger in the eye long enough, you can tell if he or she has the shared sadness of the genocide in their blood. All of these phrases, my sister taught me, as we sat at night around the kitchen table in our little home along the lake, drinking tea. She had been studying English for four years at university.

One night, in January, after I had lived in Lchap for a year, my mother called me. The results of her DNA kit, something she had wanted to do for months for fun, had arrived. To her shock, the results said that nearly half of her genetic make-up was “Turkey and the Caucasus.” “It is a mistake, isn’t it?” she asked. “Turkey?” My mother had only once left the country; it was a day-trip to Canada, and all I’ve ever heard about it was that she had lunch. She has never had a passport.

I figured the test was a mix-up: we were both pale with tiny, unassuming features, and we knew the stories of our ancestors crossing the Irish Sea and fighting in the Scottish Highlands. We had heard wonderful stories of valor and royalty.

After knotted days of thinking and asking, my mother found out, from her mother, that her biological father was not the man who raised her; somehow, the man whose blood coursed through her was a now-dead stranger, his roots from the exact country where – absurdly – I was at that moment, sitting in my cold room, surrounded by the foreign tongue of my host family. It was a tongue that, in the matter of seconds, became not my mother tongue, but something both softer and more suspicious, like being told the person next to me in the grocery line has known me for years, yet I can’t place her face at all. My

mother cried on the phone; I cried too. After the call, I went into the living room where the family was seated around the *pech*. I told them the news: I am Armenian. It felt like I was telling a lie. They wanted to know if my Armenian grandfather was on my maternal or paternal side of the family; they believed blood ran stronger from the man’s bloodline. After a few minutes, however, they brought out wine from the cellar, and we toasted to my new identity as an actual *hay axchik*. I hugged my sister tightly.

Perhaps coincidence knows best. Armenia, the country I was somewhat arbitrarily in, runs through half of my mother’s blood, one-fourth of mine. I started looking for my mother in female faces around me: I saw roots everywhere. I saw the roots of so much beautiful hair walking by me in the city on weekends, I saw a new person’s face and for the first time I wondered where this person had been planted and grew, how they found themselves here, next to me; I wondered how much life their roots gave, how much the roots took away. I studied women and their daughters, looking for shared features, wondering how long these features had been on this Earth, passing from face to face, life to life. I saw my students’ teeth turning brown, and I thought of the tooth’s roots, too.

I wanted to become more accepting of cultural differences: I wanted my newfound blood to inspire me, on the deepest level, to embrace Armenia in a way I hadn’t before. Volunteers were shocked when I told them about the DNA test. They loved telling shopkeepers and waiters that I was 25% Armenian. I would laugh, all the while feeling like I had fooled everyone. The teachers and students at school seemed confused, thinking I had always known I was Armenian but just never spoke about it. But in my downtime, on the occasional weekend in Yerevan, I would go to a church and light a yellow, wax candle. My grandmother died in November, nine months after she told my mother the news about her father; when I lit a candle, I lit it to keep my grandma’s soul going, and to light the knowledge she had of my mother, the

silences that must have crept up within and around her. I lit the candle for the knowledge I had now, too.

I went to Istanbul for New Year's: three other volunteers invited me. My host sister told me she had heard it was a beautiful city, that Armenians lived there but they did not know their mother language; generations had hidden parts of themselves out of safety. On the flight from Tbilisi to Istanbul, I heard a couple speaking Armenian behind me; I was surprised, not realizing that Armenians today travel back and forth, visiting.

On my second day in Istanbul, I heard a British woman and her daughter asking a store clerk about Armenians. I did not know if I had the right to jump in and assert my newfound Armenianness as any sort of claim or feat or rebellion. But I did speak up, for whatever reason. And the store clerk looked at me and smiled. "Brothers," he said. He gave me a small evil eye.

On a walking tour on our last rainy day, we visited an Armenian neighborhood, full of tall, narrow buildings of many colors. Nearly 60,000 Armenians lived there, the tour guide said. I texted Mariam, saying Istanbul was so beautiful that maybe we should move there. She replied that she wanted to see the city, but she could never live there. There was too much pain. I wanted to visit an Armenian church, but we didn't have time. I vowed that one day I would go to Western Armenia, including Samsun, where my grandfather was born.

I want to say that I feel Armenian. After being evacuated from Armenia due to the

virus, without getting to say all the goodbyes I wanted to, I feel like I have left my blood behind, a source of something - life, depth, sadness, realness - I was working to internalize. Although my Armenian blood is still abstract to me, it is distinctly, decidedly, female. In the teacher's lounge at school during my first year, before I knew I was part-Armenian, the vice principal approached and asked me how I was doing. Perhaps replying to my facial expression rather than my verbal response, she said, laughing, "You're adjusting to a new home, just like an Armenian bride. It takes time." I was taken aback by the comparison. For the first time I clearly saw that she, the teachers, and I were cut from the same female cloth, and that I was given permission to feel this way. She would always live in the village with her children and husband, a man she barely knew before marriage; within two years, I would move away. Our gendered cloth was a map of our differing displacements and duties; but this cloth, with all its burdens and joys, was something we shared like blood.

I see no classical Armenian feature on my mom's face. Her hair, however, has always been thick and wavy and huge, a physical trait of hers that often caused me embarrassment when I was young; she had the biggest hair of any mom. Her hair, I now notice, was telling us all along.

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Lily Daly has taught English in a village in Armenia for two years. She hopes to continue to understand her roots while traveling and learning and living.



# *THÉNIE KHATCHATOUROV*



Genesis II (2020)  
Gouache on paper  
47" x 31"



Genesis III (2020)  
Aquarelle on paper  
28" x 20"



Genesis I (2020)  
Gouache on paper  
31" x 24"



Genesis (2020)  
Gouache and neocolor on textured paper  
22 x 30 cm



Heros (2020)  
Pencil on paper  
28" x 20"

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Thénie Khatchatourov is a young Swiss artist of Armenian origin, who took the artistic path after university studies in socioeconomics at UNIGE and a Master Innokick, at HES-So. After her studies, she moved to Armenia for a mission at the Embassy of Switzerland in Yerevan, where she stayed for two years. Coming from a family of Armenian musicians, grand-niece of violinist Jean Ter-Merguerian, she grew up between classical music and paintings. "It was in Armenia that I was able to practice drawing and creation. Yerevan offered me new colors. The whole country, its people, its nature, customs and its finely ornamented architecture inspired me a lot." Armenia, once Soviet, still retains traces of this Soviet architecture to the glory of the regime and the worker. Many monuments, sculptures and bas-reliefs of the socio-modernist movement still make up the landscape of the capital today. A very singular coexistence takes place between the ruins of the Soviet monumental, the divine thousand-year-old churches carved out of the rock, and the statues of the powerful mythological heroes. Abandoned and prohibited during the Soviet era, mythology and religious art are full of great aesthetic and spiritual wealth. Her approach invites us to wonder about the importance of reinvesting the sacred and of updating the mystical subject in a dialogue with the present. Thénie has presented her work for the very first time at Artbridge café in the center of Yerevan, in 2018. She currently has two exhibitions in Switzerland, both in Geneva and Lausanne.

# NATALIE TAMAR HOVSEPIAN

## Today, Within

Never has it been so obvious that time passes as a melody. The grass is not wet, like last time, but it is as cold as Earth, which I like, so I sit.

Something about today feels like crying. The action of crying. The movement of it. Brace, hold, heave, release.

In one ear enters a bird's song. It travels the canal, bounces along the walls, traipses through the brain, and exits the other ear as the lilting piano of a ballet class. Melodious time, and a day that's crying. The action of crying. A patient pause for emotion.

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*I remember that child-like feeling. Lately, my own child-self has been climbing her way up from within. Today, she sits in my throat and howls.*

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There are voices all around. One belongs to a little girl. She speaks in a foreign language, tripping prettily off her tongue. Some people are just breathing. Or sighing. Or clearing their throats. Fire truck in the background with a beating heart.

The sun encroaches on my sitting spot. Time is passing.

I'd prefer not to tie weights to my thoughts, not

on this day. But there is one that lingers close to the ground where I sit. It asks - Have I made myself lonely? That is, have I chosen solitude, even as I wander after connection?

Maybe that's enough of that for now. In any case, I know patience will win in the end. I know time will play its tune to cycle my old questions out for new ones. And another thing, for that matter – when my ego talks, I'd be spoilt to listen. Though I often do.

Today feels like crying, in the way only a child can. Reckless, irreverent, unbound, innocent, thoughtless, fleeting, holy, wanting.

I remember that child-like feeling. Lately, my own child-self has been climbing her way up from within. Today, she sits in my throat and howls.

She has been angry with me. I try to hold her, warm and soften her, but she resists. She moans and fusses, screeches unintelligible things, but does not say much. But a child need not speak for their meaning to be felt. They're like animals, in that way.

I drink warm tea and eat ice cream and candies. She won't stomach it and whimpers in hunger. I read stories about magic and dance to old tunes. She plugs her ears and closes her eyes. I dress up in costume and put on a show in strange tongues. She used to love that. Not now.

I wish I could soothe her. She is wading through muck and scratching my inner walls. Grief, loneliness, neglect, secrets so heavy - you meet these demons the first time when you're small. She's still waist deep in the mud.

But there was a time I remember when we

danced and ate and laughed together, when her arrival meant freedom and joy. When I could summon her in conversation with the children I love, and feel their wonder.

Today is different because she is angry with me. She feels my grief, loneliness, neglect, and my secrets. I feel them too. I feel so small.

I start to ask her questions.

“If you could have anything in the world, what would it be?”

“What is your favorite animal?”

“When you wake up in the morning, what’s the first thing you think about?”

Nothing.

“Do you remember me?”

She knocks the breath out of me, throwing her body against my trachea.

“Augh!” I gasp for air, which comes as tears.

And she is crying, too.

It’s different than before. How do children sometimes carry all the wisdom? She cries now, and it’s like she’s lived a hundred lives over. I weep with her. The more I do, the more tears arrive to be abandoned.

Does she remember me?

Her feeling of loss aches all over my body.

She must, she must remember.

Then it’s the other thing.

Do I remember her?

Do I remember how it felt to be harmed? Do I remember who taught her to lie?

These questions...

Do I remember when I knew shame? Do I - does she?

I don’t remember if I ever knew what lives inside me.

There are Gods inside us all and they hide from us our basic truths. There are Gods born of pain, pleasure, and parenting - born of shadow voices in the womb. Gods born generations ago, blood-travelers that inhabited a world of genocide and survival. Gods born in Kindergarten English, confusing the difference between ‘G’ and ‘J,’ because before this we spoke our mother tongue. There are those that loom in darker places, banished, growing more powerful for it. They go on and on, miles of echoes reverberating into now, today, this moment. Suns that died, now we see them as stars.

Today feels like crying. She and I have fallen into a rhythm. I can’t distinguish my heaves from hers.

My Gods of desire tell me to seek out a friend to hold. They also say I should run looking for green healing places to hide. They want safety. They contradict themselves and still leave me wanting.



Illustration by Lena Dakessian Halteh

But as they contest my needs, the girl in my throat grows still. I notice her, and the pulse of her stillness spreads through my crevices – the cracks between my toes, the space around my hip bone, the back of my ear. I think she felt she'd lost me. I started to feel found. I'm steady-breathing. I'm sleepy. I'm clean.

It all feels a bit funny. We were mourning ourselves just a moment ago. Now my desires have turned their attention from gaping forlornness to home-made pizza. So strange. I tickle her, and we laugh. She'd held my Gods close, and turned them to fairy dust. At least momentarily.

It does ache, to be human. We carry with us more than our selves. It's quite heavy on the shoulders. We're all round holes and square pegs. But we're also children. And children fill gaps with pure feeling.

The sun is still high, the trees wave to me from the periphery on my left, and not a single other living thing on the grass turns to acknowledge me. The stillness makes me feel that I've filled the space around me like a balloon of helium to float amiably, until eventually falling to brush the Earth with the breeze. Deflated in kind, and invisible except to other patient and slow things.

The girl inside me retreats from my throat to somewhere likely more interesting.

Today, time passes as a melody. Tomorrow, the tune will change. I'd like to hear it.

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Natalie grew up in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, but has a soft spot for Northern California after graduating from UC Davis. She's inspired by Armenian creatives and hopes to elevate the work of our community with the HyeBred Mag team. Some of her favorite things include camping, her cat, long aimless drives, spontaneous roller coastering, and she's attempting to become a world-class home cook (see: multiple burns on right hand).



# JOHN DANHO

“V’rej”  
alternatively, “The Wilted Flower”

I, sun of misfortune –  
high and radiant –  
exude warmth enough,  
setting flame to the path ahead.

Dread as drought,  
the soles of my feet in a longing ache,  
flesh scorched away  
tread upon the smolders.

Sensation first felt in each step,  
then along the nerves  
reaching trembling fists.

Steady the hand with one strike.  
Open the palm for another.  
The third will engulf us both  
like a long slog of heat on the back of a  
crying lamb.

Such is vengeance

until the smoke clears,  
thoughts like a constellation;  
the next utterance  
lingers upon the lips,  
an earnest and forthright plea:

“I have done what is right.”

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John Danho is an English Master’s graduate from Cal Poly Pomona, using the knowledge he’s gained there to teach the next generation of students and citizens. When he isn’t working for money, he’s working for pleasure composing prose and poetry. He has several publications with past HyeBred issues and also acts as Managing Editor of Pomona Valley Review. He is a lover of all things Dungeons and Dragons and has an unhealthy obsession with sushi! “Very excited to be on the HyeBred team!”

# *NOUR-ANI SISSERIAN*

## Menti



*WATCH "MENTI" HERE*

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Originally from France, Nour-Ani Sisserian is an actor, writer and director based in Yerevan.