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HYEBRED MAGAZINE



Cover photo by
Julie Asriyan

103 years later . . .

Forget-Me-Not

Issue 03

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A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Dear Faithful Reader,

This issue is dedicated to our Armenian ancestors. May their stories never cease to be told or forgotten.

As April is Genocide Awareness Month, the theme for this issue is fittingly 'Forget-Me-Not.' It has been 103 years since the Armenian Genocide, a time in Armenian history that still hurts and haunts. HyeBred Magazine represents the vitality and success of the Armenian people; it showcases how far we have come.

Thank you to our wonderfully talented contributors. Your enthusiastic collaboration enhances each successive publication. Thank you, faithful reader, as your support is what keeps this magazine alive and well.

Շնորհակալութիւն.

The HyeBred Team

Self Love

don't let yourself
get in the way of yourself

the same way you can harm yourself, adding salt to those wounds
and grow only in sorrow and grief
only to become
tired of yourself

you have the power to heal and
love
admire
celebrate
your existence in this world

water those roots and
make something
beautiful out of you

By His Wounds

by His wounds
my fear is removed
my once-broken spirit restored
my shame revised
reconsidered

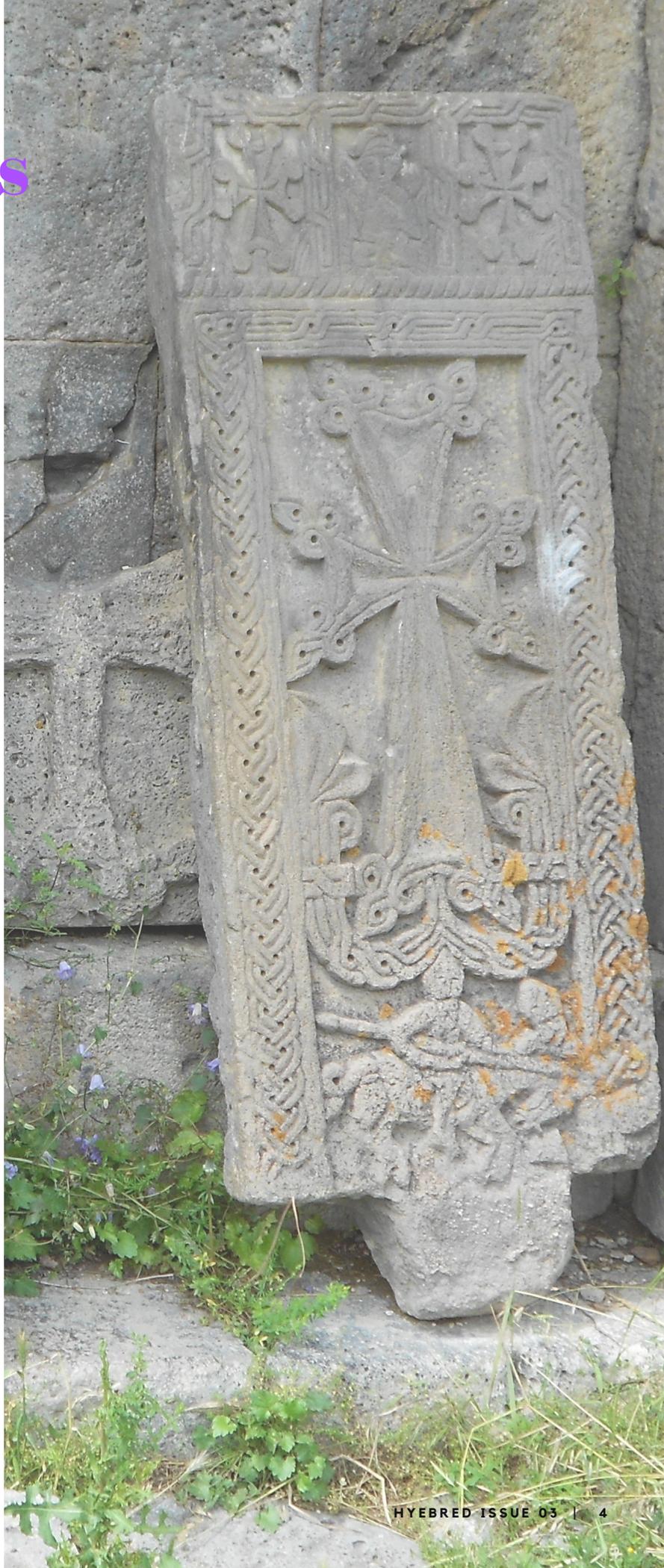
anxiety has been replaced
with laughter and grace

by His wounds
I am washed in love
purified in peace

my heart delights in this
in Him
and in
the adventure that awaits me

by His wounds
by His "I Am"
it is well
and I
am known

by His wounds
I'm alive



The Beloved

you loved
and you lost
now remember
that feeling
and
channel
that energy
the butterflies
the unexplainable carefulness
towards that person
the 'How can I love you better?'"
except this time
make yourself
the Beloved



Ani Chivchyan

Originally from Glendale, CA, Ani studied English at UC Berkeley and currently lives in San Francisco. She works full time for a start up in the city and runs a blog called yourstrulyani.com, where she'll share about her day to day experiences, product reviews, poetry, and more. Much of her poetry is about spirituality, family, Armenian culture, and personal growth / self-love. On a Saturday, you'll probably find her writing (and occasionally people-watching or playing with a dog) at one of San Francisco's many adorable cafes.

You Do Not Have Enemies

by Anais Chagankерian

In a harbor of the Ottoman Empire,

during the First World War, families hop on a boat. Eight-year-old Flora is on this journey with her mother and siblings. Her father was killed a few months earlier by Ottoman generals, who were accusing him and other soldiers of being responsible for the loss of a battle. Aligned side by side, the soldiers were shot dead. Following persecutions in their hometown, what is left of the family is fleeing to the Greek Island of Lesbos, where they will find refuge in the old Castle of Mytilene

At the same time, eight-year-old Hovanes is wandering the Ottoman streets with his 2 year-old sister. Though their parents were killed, the two kids managed to escape the massacres. Hovanes, who cannot keep on carrying his little sister in his exhausted arms, summons her to start walking too. He puts her on the ground and walks ahead. A few meters further, however, he turns around and looks back. She is gone. They took her. He does not know it yet, but from this specific moment, he has lost her, too, forever.

In Marseille, France, in the 1930s, Flora is grilling fish outside. An unknown man approaches her and starts begging for some food. Annoyed, she asks him to leave. Her husband Hovanes, observing the scene from afar, intervenes. He remembered the days of his childhood when he was himself forced to begging and was beaten up by the

passer-by. He was left with no other option than digging into horse excrement to find some remaining of wheat to wash and eat. He asks Flora to take a moment and put herself in the shoes of this unknown man. The unknown man leaves with a piece of fish and a piece of bread.

In the Paris suburbs, France, in the 2000s,

a grandmother is telling her granddaughter: 'This is the story of your great-grandparents, my parents. You are a descendant of survivors of the Armenian genocide'. 'I am telling you this story the way it was told to me, and though time might have altered its details, you must keep it in our family's memory, for the sake of those which courage has enabled our name and people to survive, even when the present had the same horizon as a dead-end road'.

This is the story of your great-grandparents

This is the story of Flora and Hovanes, my great-grandparents. I am the descendant of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and this story has now been in my family for more than a century. Would my great grandfather have thought, at the time he was wandering the Ottoman streets in search for food, that he could one day have a family to tell this story to? When he was finally rescued, brought to an orphanage in Lebanon and then to the Castle of Mytilene, where he met Flora among other Armenian refugees, he was however able to rebuild his lost family, and together with the other survivors, he contributed to the process of collective memory-making. This is how this story was passed on, generation by generation, until it finally reached me.

One century after, however, we still remember, but nothing has truly improved. Last March, the Armenian government annulled the Armenia-Turkey Protocols – supposed to normalize relations between the two countries, denouncing a lack of political will from Ankara. Ankara has sweetened its discourse but still shows no sign of recognizing the 1915 massacres as Genocide. Armenia-Turkey relations are tied to the development of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which itself does not seem to get any closer to resolution. The political situation seems stuck and each anniversary of the Genocide seems to be taken as an opportunity to only repeat the same messages, but louder.

Remembering the past is not the only way to build the future.

Reconciliation after violent conflict is surely one of the biggest challenges in the conflict resolution field: too many traumas have been endured and it seems like no shared future can be considered unless we deal with the past first. Acknowledging, condemning, and remembering those traumas appear as essential parts of psychological healing, itself an essential part of reconciliation. But remembering the past is not the only way to build the future. I have had the chance in my life to meet many people on “the other side”: professors, classmates, and colleagues who have become friends and great intellectual figures and inspirations I look up to. I have experienced at a personal level how good it feels just to put constructed animosities aside and start building new relationships.

And maybe this is what is needed today: let’s not wait for the political

situation to improve in order to build our future with those we have been taught to hate. By starting a bottom-up approach through which populations on both sides decide to take reconciliation into their own hands and consider it a personal commitment, we can create the political environment in which governmental deadlock will no longer be tolerated by both sides and where it will be possible to discuss questions related to the past through enlightened dialogue instead of hate speech. So when I tell the story of our family to my daughter, I will also tell her that, as important as it is not to forget, she must never let the seed of hatred grow into her heart, as this is the same seed that was responsible for the tragedy we condemn. You do not have enemies, only memories to protect and peace to achieve. May this anniversary be the opportunity not only for remembrance, but also for a new beginning.

Anais Chagankерian

is a graduate in International Conflict Analysis and Geopolitics, a book lover and an art enthusiast. Currently, she is a freelancer and blogger based in the Paris Suburbs. In 2017, she created an online project called 'Anahit of Erebuni,' whose overall goal is to provide a safe place where Armenian women can exchange their experiences, support each other and amplify their voices and visibility in order to promote a more inclusive, equal and peace-oriented Armenian society.

Julie Asriyan



PICTURED: KRISTINA ASRIYAN / KRIS ALBERTS

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JULIE ASRIYAN

is an award winning creative & performing artist whose work has been featured in IndieWire Women & Hollywood, Huffington Post, NY Magazine, Adweek, Time Out NY, and Ashton Kutcher's A+. As an actor, Julie has appeared on stage and screen in theatrical, commercial and independent film productions. Behind the camera she has served as Creator, Director, Producer, Creative Director and Editor of independent short films, music videos, and new media projects. Julie is also a photographer (Editorial, Commercial, Lifestyle, Branding, Fashion, Portrait, Kids).

Julie's film HOME has been named finalist in Creative Armenia & Terry George human rights 60 second film challenge.

Julie currently stars in a national ad campaign for the 9/11 Memorial & Museum which draws focus on her work as an artist, refugee and New Yorker. Watch 'Our City. Our Story.'

Music by Brenna Sahatjian

from her album
Knotted Orbits



Listen Here:

"Cold Planets"

"The Seeker"

"The Thistle"

Brenna Sahatjian

is a Portland, OR based songwriter and musician. At times traditional, at time experimental, she creates layered folk music on cello and guitar. Brenna sings about social justice, folklore and stories, dreams, anti-capitalism and re-enchantment with the natural world. Other projects include Riotfolk Collective, and Portland bands Strangeweather and Aradia.

Vessels for Ghosts

I watch our cat, named after my father-in-law, climb our tangerine tree & get lost in its branches. Sprinklers attempt to revive our long suffering grasses. A squirrel flicks its tail, barks its alarm near the cross arm & confluence of wires on a telephone pole. Fleas search for bodies. I think about the way I attach meaning to activities of animals, to the stillness of objects, the slow reach of plants. I wonder about vessels for ghosts: bottle, blue oak, soil, jacket in a closet never worn, fence post, brick fireplace, rose. I call to our cat & my wife's father does not arrive. I want him to emerge from a body of black fur, stand & hug me.

Family Portrait

My family & I watch t.v.—our cat is outside the sliding glass patio door. She is soil & coal dust. Our hammock barely rocks in hot wind. My wife is on her computer, registering our youngest daughter for 5th grade. Our eldest child scrolls her phone for texts, picks at a pimple on her thigh. We hear a siren outside & the mockingbirds gossip about the noises that dawn from inside every house. The light, coming in through the glass door, reflects itself onto our caramel wood floor. We are all writing this together.

Ronald Dzerigian

received his M.F.A. from California State University, Fresno. His poems have appeared in the Australian Book Review, Comstock Review, Prairie Schooner, RHINO, Salamander, and others. His first full-length collection, *Rough Fire*, is forthcoming late summer 2018. He resides in a small farming community with his wife and two daughters.

Armenian Genocide - WE NEVER FORGET

All lost are not lost in vain so long as we remember, so long as we stand,
so long as we are alive.

We don't need any validation...for the Truth to be True...there is One Truth...

I remember always because how can I forget myself, my blood, my ancestors, my
roots.

I cannot deny myself...Never...

Who I Am

I Am Armenia

Armenia lives through me

All days of my life

I cannot deny ever

I cannot forget ever

This simply is who I am

Nobody and Nothing can change that

I am strong...

I am courage...

I am brave...

I Am Alive...

Our birth never dies...no matter who and no matter what...

We Live On... Now and Eternally...Armenia...Armenians...

I am Sassoun...I am Kilis...I am Anteb...I am Zeitun...I am Bitlis...I am Diyarbekir...I am Erzurum...I am Harput...I am Sivas...I am Trabzon...I am Van...I am Adana...

I am...Krikor Zohrab, Daniel Varoujan, Rupen Zartarian, Ardashes Harutunian, Siamanto, Ruben Sevak, Dikran Chokurian, Diran Kelekian and Erukhan... intellectuals, writers, philosophers...and countless others...

I AM...I am the child of, the daughter of, the sister of, the aunt of, the mother of, the grandmother of...

I am Red Sunday...I am Armenian Genocide...April 24, 1915...103 Years of Denial by Turkey...

I KNOW. TRUTH IS. I AM. ALIVE.

Nora Boghossian

was born in Beirut, Lebanon, then moved to Montreal, Canada, and finally settled in Los Angeles, California. She has been living in Los Angeles for the past 35 years. She is a paralegal and has been proud to be in the industry for more than 20 years. She wanted to further contribute and give all of her unique gifts by sharing her writings, photography, and more recently by leading and teaching a local support group and by offering and facilitating her services in private sessions for divorced/separated women. She loves and replenishes her soul with all types of arts. She loves photography as a way of expressing her creativity and has exhibited some of her work. She also enjoys being in nature and cooking – one of the most sustainable loving gifts her beautiful mother gave her.





Ani Iskandaryan is from Yerevan, Armenia but during the past 4 years has been living, studying and working in Denmark. She has been working on a lot of interesting projects, most of which are within fashion and costume design, both of which she has worked on in Armenia and Denmark within the past 10 years. Even though her major is fashion, she has always loved creating anything art and design related. A couple of months ago she started focusing a big part of her spare time on drawing and painting. As an Armenian, wherever she may be, she carries the history of her nation with her and can never forget it. It was a great pleasure for her to create this modern artwork, which tells the history of her country.



A Conversation with Lora Avedian

by Lizzie Vartanian Collier

In a far away land filled with apricots and magic there are two girls playing with fabric and tradition. There is something mischievous about them, but it is hard to tell what it is. They could be friends, but there is a sense of tension between them that suggests that their relationship is complex and confusing. Dressed in blue and copper, their costumes embody history and innovation, looking to both the past and the future at the same time. These characters are the invention of British-Armenian textile artist Lora Avedian, whose MA collection while at the Royal College of Art in London, was heavily influenced by her Armenian heritage.

While the pictures that accompany this feature pay homage to the cinematography of Armenian film director and artist Sergei Parajanov, Lora's upbringing consisted of very few Armenian traditions. 'To be honest I had quite a distant relationship with my Armenian heritage', says Lora, 'My [Armenian] father was away a lot when I was a child and my mother is English.' In fact, like many Armenians brought up in diaspora, she was equally influenced by her father's homeland, Iran: 'We would often go to Iranian restaurants which I always feel so comforted by.' That said, during her masters degree, Lora took her postgraduate study as an opportunity to research and understand more about Armenian culture and the customs that her family have.



Models: Georgie Lucas-Going (standing)
Lizzie Vartanian Collier (kneeling)

Lora has been studying textiles since she was a teenager, and her interest in embroidery was cemented during her art foundation degree at Kingston University in southwest London. She then went on to study for a degree in embroidery at Manchester School of Art. And, while Lora's work has recently been injected with an Armenian spirit, her British relatives have also inspired her. 'My mum loves textiles and so I have always had her feeding me with inspiration', says Lora. The British sentiment also lingers in her master's

collection with it being important to Lora that both of her ethnicities are present in her work. 'In the end the work I produce is always going to be from a half British, half Armenian perspective', explains Lora, 'I know so much more about British heritage than I do about my Armenian background.'

Of her dive into Armenian history Lora explains: 'I began trying to find links in traditional British folk costume and traditional Armenian dress.' She researched traditional Armenian costume and the symbolism of the Armenian Orthodox church when first embarking on preparation for the collection, 'But I realised that the link didn't need to be so obvious', she adds. That said, Lora's research has manifested itself in even the smallest details: 'I looked a lot at everyday objects that I found in museums and archives as well as national foods and flowers', she explains.



In the photographs the models can be seen eating apricots, holding fabrics embroidered with the Armenian alphabet and with their hair in braids similar to those worn by Armenian dancers. But, while emblems of Armenia are seen throughout, the actual clothes are a subtle nod to her ancestral homeland. Where one might expect to see a taraz – a traditional Armenian dress that covers the whole body and is often elaborately embroidered – Lora presents two-piece ensembles and a jumpsuit. Similarly, while one model does have her hair in braids, there are four plaits, instead of the usual two.



The result of Lora's research brings a taste of Armenia to Britain. 'I couldn't afford to go to Armenia', she explains 'So I had to do as much research outside of Armenia as I could.' She spent a lot of time at the British Museum as well as at Blyth House, where the archives for the Victoria & Albert museum are kept. 'They had the most amazing collection of Armenian textiles and costumes', explains Lora, who also visited the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and London's Armenian Institute. In addition to museums, she researched oral history and memory with Armenian friends and through discussions with her father and aunt who narrated the stories of her own family's objects and keepsakes.



The book that Lora's collection is presented in is titled *Once We Give Shoulder to Shoulder We Can Move Mountains*. 'It is a bad translation of an Armenian proverb', explains Lora, 'But I liked it.' The English version of the Armenian lyric sounds like something that might have come straight from a Sergei Parajanov film, whose *The Colour of Pomegranates* was a key inspiration in the final images. 'I am totally in love with his films!' Lora proclaims, 'The colours, symbolism and framing of the shots I found very moving and wanted to incorporate that into my work.' Therefore images show one model tying a mask in which the eyes are covered with images of the sun in front of the visage of her fellow mannequin. In other shots one girl holds a half broken masque in front of her face and in others they stand mysteriously in grassy landscapes holding sheer pieces of embroidered fabrics that cover their faces.

Amongst the garments one can make out suns, moons, and various flora and fauna. 'I use a lot of symbolism in my designs and many of the symbols are based around my Armenian heritage.' Thus, the models are photographed playing with typically Armenian fruit that mirrors Lora's research into these emblems of Armenia. The images, taken by photographer Suzie Howell, were tinted with tones of apricot and peach, to bring all of the elements together. The peculiar atmosphere of the images though, is mostly thanks to Parajanov: 'I found the ritualistic elements in the *Colour of Pomegranates* really fascinating, which is something I tried to incorporate into the project', says Lora.



Technically, the clothes use a vast array of embroidery techniques that include couching and hand dying all of the fabrics – mostly cord and silk – that Lora did herself. She explains that the colour palette was especially important to her, as it represented much of her research into Armenia. She also used applique to create 3D embroideries and used a hand-guided embroidery machine called the Irish. Lora’s British identity came through in two collaborations with British designers. Thanks to John Smedley, a British knitwear company who funded the second year of her degree through the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, she created a digitally knitted shawl with one of her drawings on. She also worked with Christopher McEvoy, a weaver who she was studying with at the RCA to create a cloth with her design on. Of the final collection, Lora explains: ‘It’s a long-distance view of what Armenia is to me, combined with my English heritage.’





So, what lies in store for Lora in the future? She hopes to finally go to Armenia and she also plans to collaborate with Christopher McEvoy again, who now has a mill in Scotland. She also intends to continue researching Armenian history: 'I think there is a lot more for me to discover about Armenia and it's culture', she says, 'Ask me again [what my biggest inspiration is] in a few years time when I have done more research!' In the meantime, she will have an artist residency at Howe, 36 Bourne Street in London during this year's London Craft Week between 9th and 13th May where she will be showcasing some new work.

Lizzy Vartanian Collier is a London-based writer and curator. She runs the Gallery Girl blog and has written for After Nyne, Arteviste, Canvas Magazine, Harper's Bazaar Arabia, Ibraaz, Jdeed Magazine, ReOrient and Suitcase Magazine. Lizzy recently curated Perpetual Movement as part of Arab Women Artists Now (AWAN) Festival 2018 in London, which was featured in Vogue Arabia and The Art Newspaper.

Susan Kricorian



"Madonna" (Left)

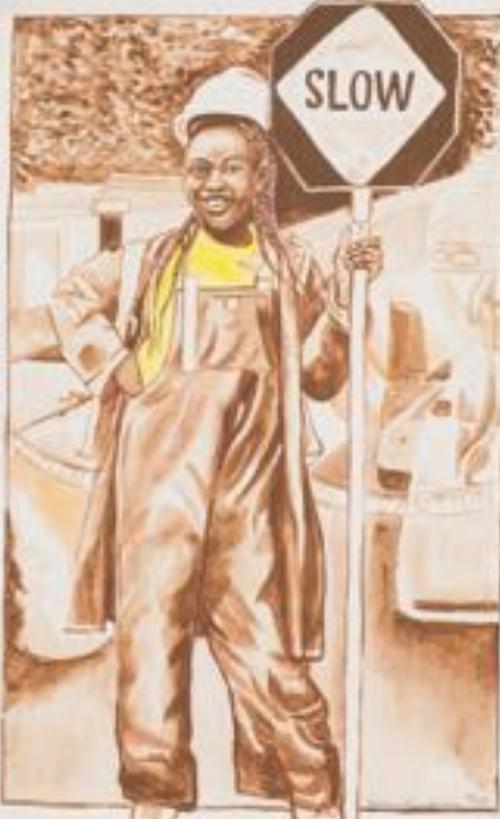
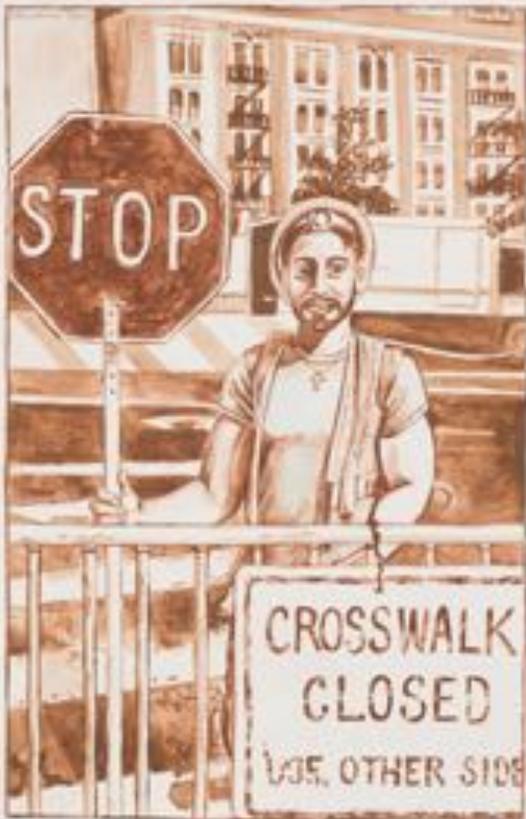
"Book of Knowledge"
(Below)



"Sassy, Adallize, Mariella"



"Dalton, Ayanna, Rachel"



Susan Kricorian

is a New York-based artist who has exhibited her work at the Armenian Museum of America, the Harlem School of the Arts, DOMA Gallery, La Mama Galleria, and the West Side Arts Association, just to name a few. A graduate of Education and Fine Arts, she has a wide range of teaching experience in the visual arts which include studio art, clay, and other hands-on materials. She has always been inspired by patterns in nature and color and music. Since she was a young girl, she loved observing life in her family's gardens, from fat caterpillars to vibrant zinnias, tomato plants and bees. Drawing and painting have always brought her great satisfaction. Working from old family photographs has proven to be very productive as well. People, plants, color and pattern are always important elements in her work. She currently teaches middle school visual arts in New York City.



"Mother and Child"

Armenia, I Know You

Like blood in my mouth,
I taste it.
Every year that same
displacement; Names click
against my molars,
still growing,
still sprouting roots
in the fertile soil
of bodies that hold bodies that hold
gospel.

Everywhere the sun
touches my skin
radiates a language too heavy for
my thin tongue.

Still sprouting tan lines
in some familiar desert
out east,
that trace together mountain peaks;
textured so sugar-spun, sweet as
the rose water stain
on my mother's floral dress
that first taught me
what home meant.

Rita Tanya Jalnekrian

is a first generation Armenian-American poet in Los Angeles. Her writing exists at the intersection of confessionalism and feminism. She wrote "Armenia, I Know You," last year on April 24th. It was inspired by the consistently beautiful spring weather in Southern California while she marches, and how this has led her to associate the floral spring with Armenia, despite the fact that she has never been there. She frequently shares her poetry on her Instagram @ritatanya.

The Ancient City of Ani

Ani Kolangian is a passionate photographer who enjoys taking photos and capturing the beauty of every moment. Photography first interested Ani as a young girl, as she would watch her mother photograph the world around her. She received her first camera in high school, and has been photographing since. Ani is deeply connected to her Armenian culture, and bears a strong devotion to the Armenian cause.







Music Performance by Ani Kalayjian featuring Original Composition by Mary Kouyoumdjian

Armenian-American concert cellist, music educator, and humanitarian, Ani Kalayjian's mission is to serve as an artistic ambassador through performing music in underserved communities all around the world. Hailed by the Los Angeles Times as "representing the young, up-and-coming generation," and a "superb cellist with a large, expressive, singing tone, passionate musicianship, and magnificent playing" by the Journal Tribune, Ani has a prolific career as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and educator that has taken her to Japan, Australia, Canada, the Middle East, and throughout Europe and the United States.

She is a virtuosic cellist who is as fluent in playing classical and romantic works as she is in playing folk music from Armenia, the Middle East and beyond. With the belief that music should be accessible to all people, no matter the race, gender, religion, or status, she has seen firsthand the way music unites and uplifts people, no matter their circumstances. During her time in Lebanon in 2015-2017, Ani has given outreach performances to disadvantaged communities at St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Insan School for Iraqi & Syrian refugee children, Byblos Birds' Nest Armenian orphanage, Karageusian Foundation, and in the Syrian refugee camps, among others.

Ani is an adventurous musical explorer uncovering rarely performed works from Armenia & the Middle East and expanding beyond to those territories in the Far East.

Ani's experiences abroad and around the states inspired her to found 'The Refugee Project' to commission new works by living composers and interdisciplinary artists who have either had first hand experiences as refugees or as immigrants, and to explore concepts of cultural identity and displacement in its programming. This project will include the first ever World Premiere of an Armenian cello concerto written by a female composer, Mary Kouyoumdjian, both of whom are from the Armenian Genocide surviving families.

Another work in 'The Refugee Project' is The Cranes Are Flying by composer Sam Lipman which is based on Franz Werfel's 1933 novel Forty Days of Musa Dagh, a book that brought the world's attention to the planned systematic murdering of over 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children. This work has a common deep significance to Ani. It was the first documentation of the Genocide that would have Ani's grandfather witness the butchering of his entire family in a single day and these music videos of Komitas, Abrahamian, and Kouyoumdjian reflect the "Forget-me-not" theme through expressing the work of these incredible Armenian composers.

Watch Ani's Performances Below:

"Krunk" by Komitas performed live in
Beirut at Haigazian University

"Impromptu" by Arutiunian with pianist
Ilya Kazantsev

Mary Kouyoumdjian

is a composer with projects ranging from concert works to multimedia collaborations and film scores. As a first generation Armenian-American and having come from a family directly affected by the Lebanese Civil War and Armenian Genocide, she uses a sonic palette that draws on her heritage, interest in music as documentary, and background in experimental composition to progressively blend the old with the new.

Kouyoumdjian has received commissions for such organizations as the Kronos Quartet, Carnegie Hall, Alarm Will Sound, International Contemporary Ensemble [ICE], Brooklyn Youth Chorus, the American Composers Forum/JFund, WQXR, REDSHIFT, Experiments in Opera, the Nouveau Classical Project, Music of Remembrance, Friction Quartet, Ensemble Oktoplus, and the Los Angeles New Music Ensemble. Her documentary work was recently presented by the 2016 New York Philharmonic Biennial and has also been performed internationally at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Barbican Centre, Cabrillo Festival, Big Ears Festival, 21C Music Festival, and Cal Performances.

Her residencies include those with Alarm Will Sound/The Mizzou International Composers Festival, Roulette/The Jerome Foundation, Montalvo Arts Center, and Exploring the Metropolis. Her music has been described as “eloquently scripted” and “emotionally wracking” by The New York Times and as “the most harrowing moments on stage at any New York performance” by New York Music Daily. In her work as a composer, orchestrator, and music editor for film, she has collaborated on a diverse array of motion pictures including orchestrating on the soundtracks to *The Place Beyond the Pines* (Focus Features) and *Demonic* (Dimension Films). Based in Brooklyn, New York, Kouyoumdjian also actively promotes the growth of new music in her native state of California.

Currently pursuing her Composition D.M.A. as a Teaching Fellow at Columbia University, Kouyoumdjian studies primarily with Zosha Di Castri, Georg Friedrich Haas, Fred Lerdahl, and George Lewis. She holds an M.A. in Scoring for Film & Multimedia from New York University and a B.A. in Music Composition from the University of California, San Diego, where she studied contemporary composition with Chaya Czernowin, Steven Kazuo Takasugi, and Chinary Ung; new music performance with Steven Schick; and modern jazz with Anthony Davis. Kouyoumdjian served as the founding Executive Director of contemporary music ensemble Hotel Elefant, taught composition at the New York Philharmonic's Very Young Composers Bridge Program, and is a cofounder of the annual new music conference New Music Gathering.

Source: <http://www.marykouyoumdjian.com/about.html>

Watch Ani Perform Ms.
Kouyoumdjian's composition below:

"Piano trio Moerae" performed live by Ani Kavafian, violin-Ani Kalayjian, cello-Orion Weiss, piano by contemporary living composer Mary Kouyoumdjian.

Forget-Them-Not: End of Life Sentences

by Armen Bacon

Pausing one morning, I revisited that sacred place where memories come back to life and a daughter is reminded she would do just about anything to have a few more minutes with her parents.

February 15, 1981

The 'for sale' sign went up a few months after he died and everything about the house felt different. The smell of fresh cut grass was gone. He had mowed the lawn faithfully, come rain or shine, every Sunday morning since I can remember and it was also his perfect excuse for not going to church. Flowerbeds once filled with pansies and sweet peas – mostly empty now except for the few wilted potted plants still in their foil wrapped containers, leftovers from the funeral service.

We couldn't rid the house of cancer's stench although hospice nurses promised that this, much like our lingering grief hangovers, would subside over time. My mother had grown impatient and it became the tipping point for her decision to list the house. Tidying up for the arrival of realtors, I walked through each room, scanning walls top to bottom, overlooking cobwebs assigned to me for dusting and mostly just noticing dad nowhere to be found. His larger than life shoe prints, once embedded in the carpet like Big Foot or the Loch Ness Monster, gone. A penholder bearing the Manny, Mo and Jack logo and holding three leaky ballpoints was missing. So was his key ring and

loose change, usually dumped onto the kitchen counter creating a grabbing frenzy for us kids. It was all now neatly stowed in an ancient cigar box inside his desk. Three ironed and starched Pep Boys shirts still hung in his bedroom closet, at the far end behind his suits.

His absence was everywhere. Even in the bathroom. As a child I had a habit of walking in on him. I'm not sure why he never locked the door. It was the only bathroom in the house until they did the add-on years later when we were teenagers. He called it his office, quite possibly the only sanctuary where three daughters and a wife weren't tormenting him to some degree. Simply put, he was outnumbered. I missed that gruff voice, the surprised look on both of our faces when I would accidentally barge through the door, giggling under breath, catching a glimpse of him reading his newspaper sprawled out on the toilet seat. How I wish I could intrude one last time.

Thank God the medical supply people took back the metal-framed hospital bed that barely fit through our tiny front door. It took three of us hoisting it up the porch, yanking open the screen door, maneuvering so it wouldn't get scratched or dented, pushing and pulling the bed at various angles, all the while trying to be discreet so as to not disturb my father. Failing miserably, we cursed and shouted orders back and forth, no one listening or hearing a word, all of us teetering – emotions ready to explode. Once finally into the house, we had to decide where to put it. We settled on the front room, not far from the door and with a nice view out to the street.

Over the years our modest front door had been a welcoming entrance for aunts and uncles, neighborhood kids and countless friends. William Saroyan, the Pulitzer Prize winning author had joined us once for dinner. Too young at the time to really appreciate his literary prowess, I do however remember exactly where he sat at our dining room table. My father took his normal place at the head of the table; guests

of honor were always seated across from him under the big round mirror that made the room and everything in it look twice its size. Not that Saroyan needed any help in that department – he talked loud and was very animated, using his hands as special effects – amplifiers of his voice. He reminded me of Uncle Tonoose, Danny Thomas’ fictitious uncle on the “Make Room for Daddy” show. We watched the sit-com every week in black and white, enjoying similarities between the Lebanese culture and ours.

That front door had seen better days, that’s for sure. Several summers back there had been a wild summer storm with lightning and thunder. The weather was so hot and humid none of us could tolerate sleeping in our stuffy, unventilated bedrooms. Even with windows cranked we were sweltering hot, whining and complaining, yelling to our parents we were smothering to death until dad finally suggested we congregate in the living room to sleep on the floor with the door wide-open. Despite the heat, we lined ourselves up sardine-style close as possible to the edge of the doorway, mesmerized by the light show, savoring the occasional breeze and waiting patiently for the smell of fresh summer rain. The downpour was always the grand finale luring us to sleep. My mother would find us in the morning laying with our pillows, legs crisscrossed, arms dangling every which way while dad snored away in his oversized boxer shorts. Wisely, she exempted herself, preferring her own mattress to the avocado shag carpeting used as a makeshift campground. None of us campers, it was as close as we ever got to outdoor living. In our minds, we were sleeping under the stars, entertained by Mother Nature, with a protective father watching over us.

One hospice nurse commented he looked a lot like Rock Hudson, a conclusion she must have drawn from the 8 x 10’s hanging in the hallway. It was the family gallery of milestones – starting with my parents’ wedding; the arrival of my twin

sister and me, the unexpected arrival of a third daughter nine years later, followed by a series of poorly tinted and stiffly posed Olan Mills family portraits. Interspersed were larger framed candid snapshots, each in their own collage styled frame, showcasing trips to Disneyland, Hollywood and Carmel-by-the-Sea. My personal favorite was the close-up of dad leaning against a gigantic boulder taken on some ridge near Lake Tahoe. My mother called him her rock, and there he was, in living color, no explanation required.

The cancer had chiseled his profile to the extreme, so much so that all of his handsome attributes now protruded. I never admitted this to anyone but it was hard making eye contact toward the end. His nose looked twice its actual size; his dark brown eyes (the ones I inherited) retreated and he constantly wore a look of regret and resignation, as if his days were numbered and he was ready to surrender. His olive skin had turned an unbearable shade of grey.

My mother called him her rock, and there he was, in living color, no explanation required.

He had been our center of gravity. Once, there had been a grease fire in our tiny kitchen, the epicenter of the house. My mother panicked, grabbed the flaming pan barehanded, dropped it into the sink and poured water over it. As flames shot up the ceiling, I ran outside screaming in hysterics, only to collide head-on with my father, arriving home from work. Pushing me out of his way, he walked calmly through the living room, turned and entered the kitchen, lowered himself under the sink grabbing the fire extinguisher, and quickly put out the fire, glaring at us as if we were all morons.

The day he returned from the doctor's appointment, his body language and demeanor were notably different. Looking defeated and frail, his body hunched over, his face remained expressionless as he walked through the front door. The house quivered as if the foundation might be cracking. I watched through the corner of my eye as my mother stumbled down the hallway in search of her bedroom door. Later she told me it was the longest walk of her life. She had so wanted to remain vertical, strong for his sake. Her world was crumbling. Despite my youthfulness, I could see that they had received a pair of life sentences: his was terminal cancer; hers, a rude awakening that in less than six months, she would be widowed.

There had always been music in our house. Like clockwork, John Phillip Souza marches blasted over the hi-fi Sunday mornings. The drums and percussions vibrated through heater vents, waking my sisters and me with a startling vengeance, like a mismatched combination of ice water and staccato notes. We begged him to lower the volume but he was a stubborn, obstinate man. Until his cancer got worse. The music stopped altogether. He said noise hurt his skin.

Life in our house changed rather quickly. He began serving time in a recliner. After about a week, it carried the rancid scent of his illness: a strange blend of soured milk, ammonia and vitamins you buy at a health food store (impossible to swallow, carrying the smell of horse manure). I tried not to gag and finally figured out it was easier holding my breath when walking past his chair. About this same time, his pant legs started to puddle on the carpet. No one said a word but we all took notice. Our father was shrinking right before our eyes.

The kitchen, once a breeding ground for my mother's award winning recipes, soon became the dispensary for father's restricted diet. He had his own shelf in the refrigerator: bottles with childproof lids, homemade yogurt and puddings and all things bland and soft on the palate. Our giant of a father, the "meat and potatoes monster man of the house" began eating meals with a teaspoon. My mother made milkshakes he sipped once or twice before pushing them aside and drifting off to sleep.

We yard-saled the sky-blue pajamas and pitiful corduroy slippers with backs permanently indented. He shuffled a lot in the end. We trashed the recliner. It had become a symbol of his demise.

I can still smell him when I drive by the house – something I do once, maybe twice a year. Instead of the cancer I catch a whiff of Old Spice aftershave – the trademark cologne he wore before he got sick. For the longest time he tried not to let on that anything was seriously wrong; but when you grow that thin, everyone can see right through you. And besides, he wasn't much of an actor.

But I was.

During the darkest hours and especially at the end I found solace in walking out the back door, retrieving happier days from the past. Still hanging on the clothesline a pastel display of sheets and pillowcases, wrinkled to perfection, the same ones that had served as majestic backdrops during my childhood days. Watching them dance in the breeze, I recalled talent shows and countless performances staged over the years. With few if any props, the yard, a clothesline pole, and a small grove of loquat trees easily transported

me to another world. Today was no exception. I stood there remembering lyrics to one of my favorite Beatles songs:

*I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together.
See how they run like pigs from a gun, see how they fly.
I'm crying.*

December 15, 2017

My mother fell in early November, breaking her femur and unexpectedly dying exactly one month later.

This was never supposed to happen. Unwritten in the stars, we had, after all practiced balancing – walking slow and steady, finding shoes with just the right grip to secure her steps on carpet and concrete. Sales clerks at Macy's knew us by name. We both thought she'd live forever, at least till 100, as she had promised on more than one occasion.

A daughter never outgrows her mother.

A lingering sense of betrayal haunts me this morning as I rummage through drawers and shelves, closets and cupboards – a lame effort to reconstruct her life, instant replay each nuance, and keep her in the present tense. Her home, the space still carrying her scent and possessions but mostly her life

story, remains sacred. Touching, even daring to move treasured photographs and keepsakes, especially her handmade collection of quilts, feels awkward, disrespectful – an invasion of privacy.

Gravitating to her kitchen table, the place we often sat analyzing the world, airing confessions, eating Chinese take-out, negotiating weekend outings, my eyes fixate on a collection of roosters. This tiny square of space in her house, forever the place where time and worries came to a screeching halt, was a safe haven for life's travails, easily remedied by the aroma of baked breads and delicious stews. "Leftover vegetables quietly wilting on their deathbed," she called them, but somehow miraculously resuscitated by simmering chicken broth, a handful of secret spices, a few squeezes of lemon and, of course, her magic touch.

A daughter never outgrows her mother.

She baited me in – well aware I could never refuse an invitation to sample a batch of her fresh-out-of-the-oven *gata* (Armenian sweetbread filled with *khoriz*, a harmonious blend of butter, sugar and flour). Like her mother and her mother's mother, there was no exacting recipe – they were baked by *achkachap* (translation: "eye measure"), although I did once stand over her shoulder, a voyeur to her delicious witchcraft, trying to discreetly measure and record the precise amount scooped into her palm – watching as she grabbed and caressed ground lamb and parsley, chopped onions and peppers, her artistry undeniable. The primitive notes, forever stained from my ill-fated attempts, will never match up to her culinary gifts.

Her kitchen was an island unto itself – a land of pure perfection.

Her pies brought joy to the heart-broken. Her chicken soup cured common colds, the heartier lentil rendition a sundry for stubborn viruses. The simplicity of her buttered noodles inspired calm to the beautiful chaos and calamity of great-grandchildren entering the front door. Scattering like ants, they awaited her summons to the tiny table where she dished out love-infused pasta and then surprised them with warm tapioca pudding. The sight of this ritual, handed down through generations, still makes my mouth and eyes water.

No matter mood or occasion, the tiny altar of her kitchen table, the sanctuary of a mother's gentle heart, offered comfort, respite and soothing second to none.

Mothers nurture our souls. They feed our hopes and hurts.

Catching a glimpse of the counter carrying her medications, my mind drifts to our endless treks to Walgreens, her impatience standing in line, cured only by a frozen yogurt stop on the way home. It's funny what you miss. Her cat, Candy, meows from underneath her rocker – a feline's sixth sense that someone important is missing. Sitting on her floor, I excavate memories while realizing my role as daughter, caregiver and confidante has expired.

It's funny what you miss.

Friends remind me that 91 years represents a long, rich life, "a good run" as they say. But still, not long enough, I whisper to myself. The sight of her handwriting, a half-accomplished "to do list," leaves me breathless. There are clean dishes in her dishwasher, bolts of fabric awaiting creative attention, holiday cards to be addressed. Unfinished business. A life not quite ready to end.

I pack her clothing to be sent to Armenia. She did leave this and a few other handwritten instructions. Her will, however, was never signed – that indomitable spirit always coming to her rescue, promising immortality. If only...

What I miss most, I often dreaded while she was alive:

Her insatiable appetite for fast-foods, our drive-through rituals at Boston Market, McDonald's, Wendy's and of course, In-N-Out Burger;

Her late night stall tactics insisting I walk into her sewing room for the unveiling of a new masterpiece. Only weeks before her passing she finished quilts for all the great-grandkids, patriotic table runners for local veterans, children's aprons and book bags for friends and patrons at her favorite local book store, Petunia's Place;

And finally, the signature early morning calls – her voice often anxious, impatient, irritable, especially if I was showering or gone, forcing her to leave a voice message.

"It's ONLY your mother," she would say, half-joking but always underestimating her place in my heart. Armenian Mother Guilt Syndrome, I would often think to myself, pondering if I might someday follow in her footsteps.

For many months my mother and I shared an existential crisis, both of us refusing to admit the end was nearing. I continued buying her red Estée Lauder lipstick, she purchased new clothes, changed her hairdo, and told the world she planned on someday dancing at her great-grandchildren's

weddings.

Driving past her house a few days ago I was nearly blinded by the sight of blood orange geraniums, fuchsia azaleas and Calla lilies raging in full bloom, all remnant signs of life, love and a garden well-tended.

Although she could be bossy, outspoken, feisty and demanding, this morning my pen finds only one word to describe her.

Missed.

Armen Bacon

made her authorial debut with the powerful memoir, *“Griefland - An Intimate Portrait of Love, Loss and Unlikely Friendship,”* a story of two women whose words and astonishing friendship helped them survive the ultimate loss. Her second book, *“My Name is Armen – A Life in Column Inches,”* contains a decade’s worth of Fresno Bee and other essays on family, friends, love and loss. *“My Name is Armen (Volume II) – Outside the Lines,”* takes readers beyond the margins of everyday life – always circling back, returning home – celebrating the resilience of the human spirit.

Wasp in a Beer Glass

John Danho

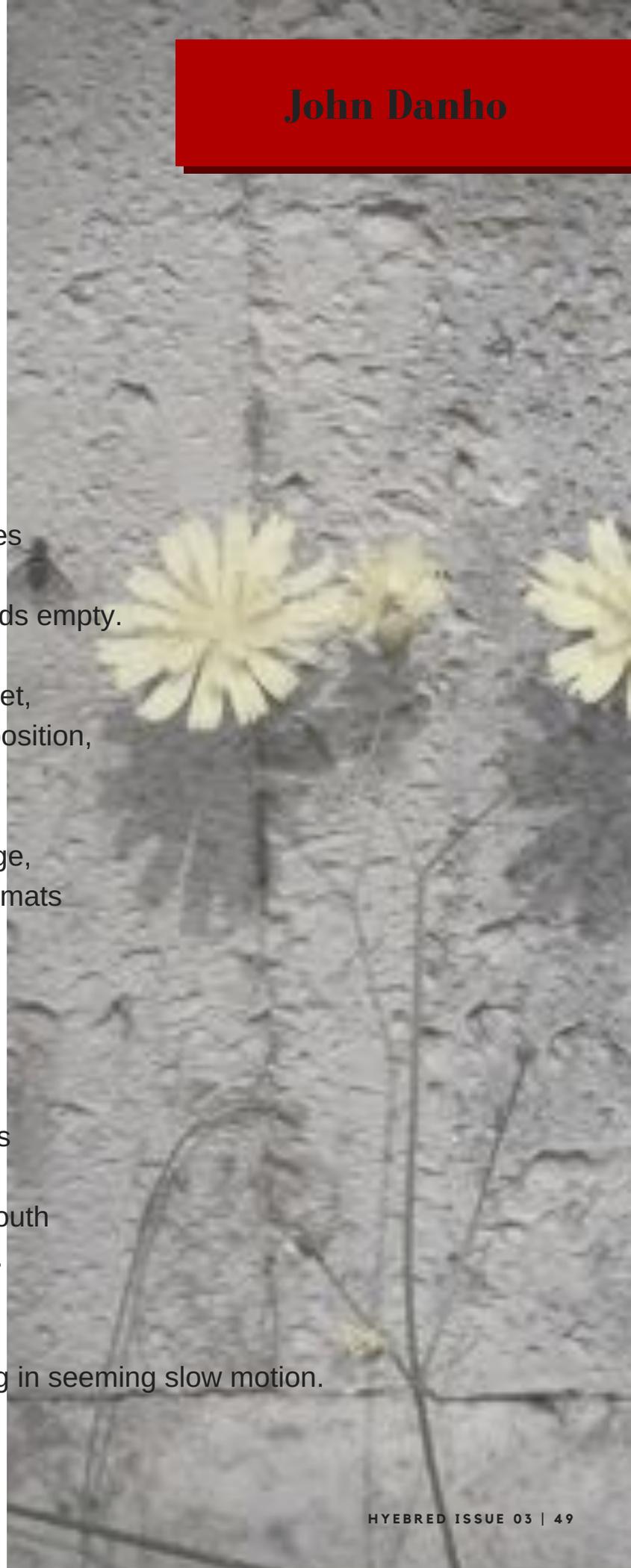
I'm suddenly split,
wrought with a double conscience -
distracted and flat.
Made mundane,
the lightning didn't so much crack
as (it did) rumble
from the belly of a languid beast.

She's suffered its snarl far too long,
an interminable crisscross of poor choices
disguised as retrograde reflection
coasting on the I-5 until the gas tank reads empty.

There, right where the 5 and the 170 meet,
she's reading street signs from a static position,
and the letters start to take flight;
the suspension of her disbelief
like an emotion fostered from a young age,
bounced between houses and welcome mats
that concealed sinister intent.

I feel for her;
I feel for her.
I want to kiss along her hands,
between each digit 'til the dirty fingernails
reach for the wildflowers blooming
from my eyes and ears and nose and mouth
and hands and feet and chest and heart.

Dark clouds roll across the sky
in 20/20 hindsight, bloated, floating along in seeming slow motion.
Even still, rain refuses to fall,
and all the solitude in the world
wont start it.



Red, Blue, and Orange Badge of Courage

Far more dreadful,
a glass of cognac
than a guillotine.

A knife on the neck,
Running the blade
and feeling keen -

Because in Armenian,
you know,
we call alcohol “kino,”
and when we drink
we say “kenatseet.”
“To your standing.”

But, well, when they walk me to the scaffold,
I admit I’m quick to my knees.

Kenatseet, brother,

I’ll see you at the bottom of the glass
we hold with our factory hands
with an upside-down look.

Sending

A kestrel carries the point of trauma
out of my mouth.
Why what where
my lips could barely kiss,
equidistant to a personal apocalypse.

Gaps in the clouds,
arranged like the strings of an untuned guitar,
discordant sounds of the sunbeams
playing upon the wings
of a somber, sober enterprise.

When it reaches you,
hold fast
before
the freefall.

John Danho

is a Middle-Eastern Armenian currently living in Los Angeles and attending Cal Poly Pomona. He is finishing up his Master's program in English Literature, though his disillusionment with academic pursuits has turned him more towards the path of creative writing. He intends to be a published author some time in the foreseeable future, be it in prose or poetry. In the meantime, he co-hosts a video game podcast, and he is the Lead Editor at the Pomona Valley Review, an annual arts journal that showcases work from all around the world.

"King Ardashes and his beloved Anahid"





"Yes Bidi Chimorranam"
(left)

"Hayastan vs. 'Turkiye"
(Below)





"Wendy, the Soviet Trip, and the Ancestors She Couldn't Leave" (Above)

"The Lucinians Left Behind" (Below)





"Talaat and his No-Soul Eyes"

Nicole Burmeister

is an 18-year-old artist. Her mother is Ecuadorian, and her father, while he has German ancestry, is also Armenian. Being part Armenian is something that to this day still confuses her, yet has always intrigued her, from the sound of her great-grandmother's name, "Nevart," to the sleek dark eyes of her grandmother in her wedding photo. With these pieces, she hopes to reveal the intense emotions of those impacted by genocide suppressed for years, and the resolve to continue to celebrate our history and culture.

April 24, 1915
Forget-Me-Not

