

i s o l a t i o n

// UTOPIA



Hasmik Arakelyan
Goris

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MASTHEAD

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

Amidst the heartbreaking reality of our Artsakh and Armenia, HyeBred Magazine presents Issue 8: Isolation and Utopia. We dedicate this issue to the heroes on the frontlines in Artsakh, those who have fallen and those who are still fighting. Our sincerest and deepest gratitude for your sacrifice in a war the Armenian people never thought we would see in our lifetime.

The literary arts is a powerful tool to amplify the voice of the underdog. Collectively, our voices are louder than ever. We create for such a time as this. We write for such a time as this. We paint for such a time as this. We compose and sing and play music for such a time as this. May our voices never dim. May our creative talents propel the Armenian Cause to a global mission for Justice and for Peace.

Reader, as you scroll through these virtual pages, we encourage you to join the chorus of our outcry. First, *post* about the war in Artsakh on your social media accounts. Second, *urge* your political leaders through phone calls, text messages, and letters to recognize Artsakh and condemn the attacks in that region. Third, *donate* to reputable non-profit organizations to help the soldiers and civilians. A list of organizations and websites for further information is linked and listed below.

Last, but not least, *create*.

Haxteluenq! Հաղթելու ենք!

The HyeBred Team

<https://www.armeniasfund.org>

<https://kooyrigs.org>

<https://linktr.ee/amplifyarmenia>

<https://anca.org>

<https://armenian-assembly.org>

<https://armenianwoundedheroes.com>

<https://www.himnadram.org/en>

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Alan Semerdjian

The Stillness We Must Endure

Friend, I am on the other side
of this line we both cannot see

but we must follow like prayer
in order to understand what comes

after. If we're lucky, we can quiet
hearts in the stillness we must endure,

and if we're lucky, this is the least
of the things we will have endured.

We're lucky then, friend, if the quiet
itself will come in the landslide

of time spent alone again or finally
or (for some of us) for this only,

for there is every kind of us here
and more than one drawn line.

And if we're lucky, we will grow then—
towards and across—and speak

to and hold each other in new ways
we used to only imagine were true.



Alan Semerdjian is an award-winning writer, musician, and educator. Pulitzer-prize winner Peter Balakian called his first book of poetry *In the Architecture of Bone* (Genpop Books, 2009) “well worth your reading.” He just released a collaboration of sound and poetry with guitarist/composer Aram Bajakian this past April to critical acclaim.

Ojene Basmadjian



Ojene Basmadjian is a Los Angeles-based Armenian photographer. Her eye for a good photograph comes from her immigrant father and grandfather, who both dabbled in photography years ago. She has been exploring the medium since 2014, and uses her skills primarily to build the portfolios, brands and confidence of aspiring models and creatives. Passionate about minority representation in media, Ojene is currently developing projects that will amplify the voices of Armenians.

This photograph, taken in 2016 as she was still finding her place in photography, is titled “When You’ve Got the Beach.” A completely candid shot, the image evokes a sense of wonder of the unknown, the things that may be invisible to one in isolation or utopia. The boy, alone by the shore, looks up at the helicopter, his body language clearly displaying curiosity. But as Frank Ocean sings in his song “Sweet Life”: “Why see the world, when you’ve got the beach?”

Maria Arusiag

I sit on the beach in the arms of my mother
I tell her that from here
it appears the water has no end
and as far as we can see
the water is ours
I will be safe there
she lets me out of her embrace and
we walk down to where the waves meet the shore
coming in to kiss the sand
and leaving just as quickly
because although they miss the land
the rocks the shells
who take them in so tenderly
they know that at the end of the day
they must return to the sea
and so their brief visits would have to suffice

I told her I would miss her and be back soon
after all, it was no one other than my motherland
who took us in with open arms
and gave us hope when we had nearly nothing else
how could I not miss her
how could I not feel connected to her
to me she is and will always be
the stability of the earth, and the softness of the sand
I will visit her like the waves

I step into the water
knee-deep
neck-deep
eyes shut
the cold that surrounds me takes me by surprise
but I remember my father telling me it would be this way
he told me the journey wasn't easy
and how now
on the other side of the never-ending water
people speak differently
they dress differently
they will look at me differently
things have changed
and we no longer belong

and yet I still crave
to walk through the cities my ancestors once did
not as a purposeful act of resistance
not as a final farewell for closure
but simply because
like the waves who leave the kind sand
to make their way into the sea
I feel my fatherland calling me back

I float in the sea
whose beaches hold my sweetest childhood memories
I float in the sea
in between two homes
but I know on either side
to everyone else
I am out of place
because I was born oceans away
and my speech is clumsy
while theirs flows smoothly
local customs are foreign to me
and no matter how often I visit
no matter how warmly the land the rocks the shells
welcome me between my travels
I fear I'll never truly belong there
I will have to return to the sea

– I want the waves to guide me home, but I still feel lost on either shore



Maria Arusiag constantly finds herself on journeys between cultural identities, YYZ and OTP, and most recently, in the time between high school and university. These travels can be times of great self-actualization and growth, but they often do not come without the experience of isolation. When capturing these feelings in writing, she often resorts to metaphors about large bodies of water. Her poem explores the feeling of isolation brought by not feeling fully accepted by or connected to two cultural identities, in this case: the author's Romanian and Armenian heritage.

Susan Kricorian



In her painting based on the Tarot card, The Hermit, Susan reflects on having contracted CV19 at her public school, passing the infection on to both her daughters, and the isolation they felt during quarantine. The Hermit suggests that you are in a phase of introspection when you are looking for answers within, away from the current demands of your position in the world. Those months of illness, recovery and sheltering-in were challenging for Susan's family, especially for her youngest daughter whose freshman year at college was cut short. The hermit observes a world of darkness and takes time to look inward. Typically depicted as an old man, Susan's hermit is replaced with a young woman who looks very much like her daughters. The flowers in the painting represent virus spores.

Susan Kricorian was born and raised in Watertown, MA. Upon completing her BFA at Tufts & School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, she moved to NYC. A seasoned NYC Department of Education educator, Susan has been sharing her love of art with children and adults for decades. Her artwork deals with themes of family, nature, social justice and Armenian mythology.

Araxie Cass

Nor Akhuri

“Hey Aram.” Aram recognized Dan’s voice and lifted his com watch to reply. It had been a slow day analyzing charts and potential designs for a new mining site, and he welcomed the interruption.

“What’s up?”

“Sensor’s showing a problem with Drill 3. Something’s jamming it, but we’ve tried everything up here and we can’t figure it out. Can you go inside and check it out?”

“Yeah sure, I’m on it.”

As Aram drove down into the mine, he loved the way the dim light made the tunnels feel like somewhere he might find a dragon’s cave. He was always good at noticing the glitches in machinery that no one else could figure out, and even though it wasn’t his official job anymore, he loved doing it. There was something satisfying about solving a problem and seeing that green light go on again.

When he examined this drill, though, it baffled him completely. The monitor screen had gone off, meaning that the drill should be off, but it was vibrating intensely and irregularly, as if it were trying to saw through something. Aram touched the screen, willing it to come back on, but instead he was surprised to feel that the drill was sinking. In an instant, the mountain made a sound that was somewhere in between a scream and an explosion, and the world went white.

~~~

Aram woke up feeling strangely cold and wet. He opened his eyes, and with a start realized that he was floating face up like a dead man in a river. He wondered briefly if he had died and gone to heaven. With the eerie calm of someone who might be dead, he turned over, treaded water, and took in his surroundings. He didn’t know what else to do.

The river was wide and slow moving and had a shining, unpolluted blue color that only a few rivers on Earth still did. In front of him, he could see a bridge made of dark grey stones in the distance, and what looked like the beginnings of a city. On either side were mountains covered in pine trees and fields of wildflowers. The sky was blue and there was a bluish haze in the air that made him wonder again if he had gone to heaven. If only he believed in it.

The only thing Aram could think to do was look for someone to tell him where he was, so he swam to one shore of the river, shook off his wet clothes, dumped the water out of his hard hat, took off his waterlogged noise-cancelling headphones, and started walking toward the bridge.

The first thing that he noticed was a set of caves dug into the cliff to his left. There were steps cut into the rock too, suggesting that it was a settlement. He considered climbing up to one of the houses, but he didn’t know how just showing up in someone’s cave would turn out. He kept walking.

As he approached the bridge, he saw that there was a guard stationed at the entrance, dressed in a cloth shirt and patterned vest with something that looked like a strangely shaped rifle strapped to his back. He paced back and forth aimlessly, then snapped to attention when he saw Aram coming.

“Ur gnum es?” the man called out.

Aram started. He hadn’t expected to hear Armenian. He began to wonder if this

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The sky was blue and there was a bluish haze in the air that made him wonder again if he had gone to heaven. If only he believed in it.

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was some sort of strange dream his brain had conjured up for him.

“Ur em? Where am I?” Aram asked the guard.

The guard eyed him with concern. “My brother, are you alright? Don’t you know you’re at the north entrance to Nor Akhuri?” He looked Aram up and down. “Have you been robbed?”

“I, uh, lost my possessions along the journey,” he said. *I was in a mining accident and just woke up in the river* seemed too ridiculous to say. “Do you know anywhere I could get some help?”

“You haven’t been able to contact your village?” the guard asked, raising his eyebrow.

“Wait, how? They’re far away...”

The guard looked at him like he was stupid and tapped his finger to the side of his head. “You know, *mtsanov*...? Have you been injured?”

*Armenians with telepathy?* Aram wondered. “Uh, no...I can’t...” he stammered.

The guard gave him a pitying look. “There’s a community house near the Kurdish quarter. They’ll help you out. Cross the bridge, follow the main road to the market, then once you get to the main square, turn right, and walk until you get to the house with the green door.”

“Okay,” Aram nodded, trying to go over the steps in his brain and hoping the guard couldn’t read his thoughts. “Thank you, sir.”

~~~~~

Tsoline felt the disturbance like an electric shock. It was so intense that she had to take off her headphones and steady herself on the wooden table for a moment. It was not quite pain, but such an intense physical discomfort that it made her stand up. She knew instinctively that it was the river, but she put on her blue analysis glasses and checked the stats to be sure. She slung her fieldwork bag over her shoulder and made for the door.

“Hey, jans,” she called to her co-workers. “Something’s up with the river, going to check it out. Be back soon!”

She closed the door before she could hear the response and scrambled down the small slope to the river, leaving the wood and glass dome of the research station behind her. She squatted down, stuck her hand in the water, and closed her eyes, focusing all her concentration to listen.

“Alright, okay, downriver a little,” she said. Her coworkers made fun of her for always responding to the river out loud, but she’d always had to say things with her voice to make them really register in her brain.

The mark of the disturbance wouldn’t have been recognizable to anyone except a professional listener. It was a barely perceptible change in the current, like a small whirlpool drawing the water in. She stripped off her summer dress, pulled her sensing rod and her analysis goggles out of the bag, and waded into the water, feeling the ground fall away beneath her feet. When she reached the spot and looked down into the clear water, she could see a crack in the ground like a scar. It looked painful, like something had opened up the land. She folded out her sensing rod and poked the crack. Before she realized what was happening, she felt the rod sinking, and she let go just in time to stay where she was as it was sucked into the ground entirely.

She stayed there stunned for a second, treading water. There was an explanation for everything in nature, but this was unlike anything she’d ever seen. She took a deep breath and ducked her head under water.

What happened? She asked the river.

The vision was clear in her mind’s eye. The river was calm one moment, and then a

flash of white light and a sound somewhere between a bang and a scream wrenched through the scene. When the white light cleared, a man floated to the top of the water. He was middle aged with black and grey hair, closed eyes, and a calm expression. He was dressed in some strangely shiny clothing with headphones and a shell-like helmet. He might have been dead except that his chest was rising and falling softly.

Where is he now?

The vision shifted. The sun was slightly higher in the sky, so a little time had passed. The man's eyes opened and he continued to float there for a second before he turned over, calmly looked around, and then swam to the shore. She watched him from the river's perspective as he disappeared into the distance, walking toward the city.

Tsoline came up for air and stayed above water, trying to make sense of what she had just seen. The only explanation she could think of was that it was a portal, like the one that had opened up in 1840 when Mount Ararat erupted and the people of Akhuri village came through to this world. But after that, the portal had closed, and another one had never opened. So what was different now? She snorted, thinking of her mother, who would say that a portal would open again at the second coming of Jesus. The river lapped at her arms, as if it was laughing with her.

She thought of the man who had climbed out of the river. He had the calm concentration of someone who knew where they were, and was on a mission. She wondered what he had come there to do. She considered going back to the research station and reporting the incident, but she didn't want to give the government any information before she knew more. You never knew what they were going to do with it.

~~~

Aram knew immediately when he had reached the market. The noise of a small city's streets, populated by pedestrians and the occasional group of men playing

backgammon outside a storefront, swelled like a wave. The stone walls rose up higher, with wooden balconies on the second stories, and cloth canopies hung between the buildings. The air smelled of spices and hot food, and vendors called out to him, selling hookah pipes, chess sets, and a couple items that he didn't recognize, like strangely shaped cookware and glasses with shimmering blue lenses.

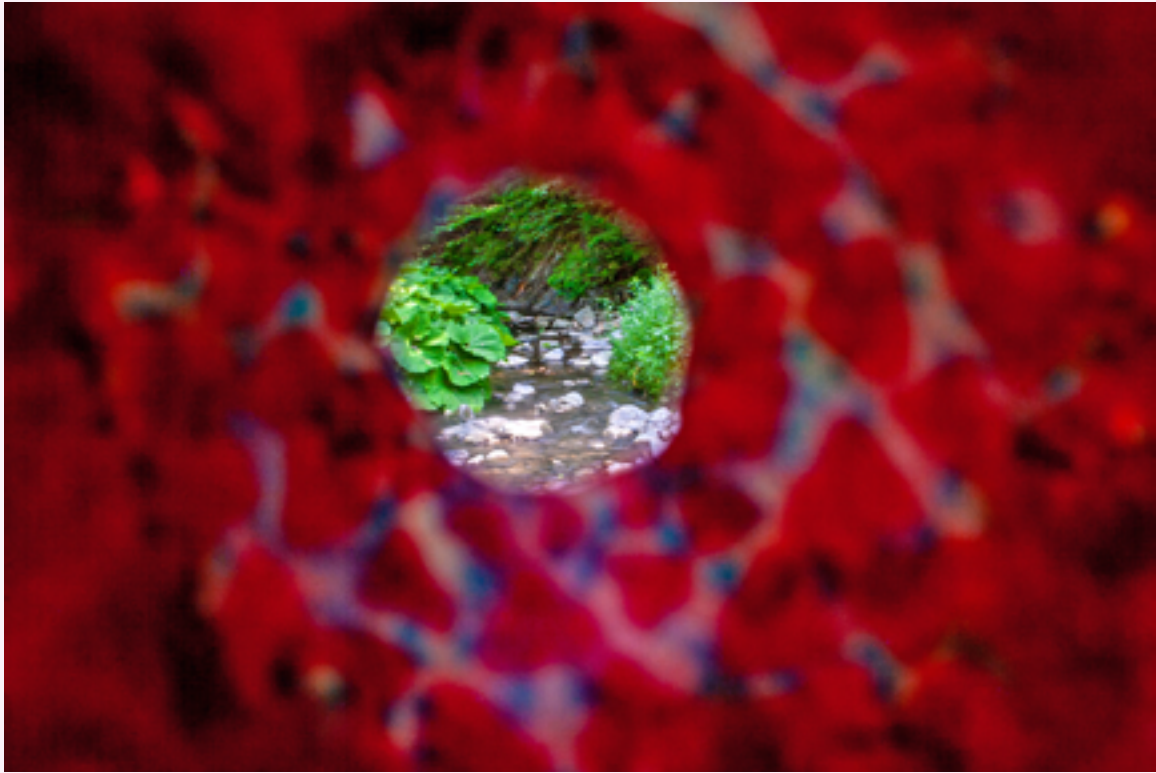
Although the noise overwhelmed him a little, he was glad to be in a crowd. It felt more anonymous that way, even though other pedestrians still stopped and stared at his orange safety vest and the white hard hat he now carried in his hand. It gave him some time to think and wonder at the way the city felt so familiar and utterly baffling at the same time. He was pretty sure that he wasn't dead at this point, but he couldn't help but think that this parallel world of Armenians seemed like it would be his grandmother's version of heaven.

As he walked, he started to have the strange feeling that he could hear people's thoughts. He couldn't make out any clear words, but he had a vague sense of conversation going on inside his brain as well as out. It gave him the feeling that he was being watched.

When he turned to look over his shoulder for a second, he realized that it wasn't just a feeling. There was a woman with an expression of intense concentration staring at him and following his steps. She looked away quickly, startled when he made eye contact. Looking again, he noticed that her long, dark hair was wet. Had she come from the river too?

~~~

Tsoline had never tried to follow anyone before, and it made her realize that she would make a terrible secret agent. She had assumed that being part of the indigenous religion movement the government was always trying to quash would have made her at least decent at getting around without being noticed, but apparently not. She didn't realize she'd been staring at



Nairy Shahinian

the man (completely giving herself away) until he looked over his shoulder and their eyes met. She tried to look away and play it cool, but she knew it was too late. She was trying to decide what she would say when he confronted her, when she realized that he had just kept walking. Maybe he didn't want to be found.

She stood still for a few moments, waiting for him to get a bit farther ahead of her, and put on her blue-lensed analysis glasses. She put them in tracking mode and selected his shape, allowing her to follow him from further away. She watched the little blue dot beyond her range of vision and followed the line of the course the glasses drew out for her. She followed him for a ways, and almost didn't notice when the blue dot stayed in place. But she was more careful this time, and when she saw that it wasn't moving forward anymore, she was careful to stay in the shadows as she got closer.

When she got in visual range, she was baffled to see that he had stopped for one of the religious debates.

~~~

Aram looked around him. He was pretty sure he had lost the woman who was

following him, so he stopped to see what was going on in the market square. A wooden platform had been raised in the middle, and a group of people had crowded around to watch the two people standing on top. One, a young man with a beard dressed in an Armenian priest's black robe with a huge silver cross hanging around his neck, was speaking.

"...and we can see proof of God's greatness in the great opening of Ararat in 1840. He gave us a way out of Ottoman oppression, and into our own land of Christ's light." He smirked at his opponent, an older woman in a colorful traditional dress with a carpet hat and crown of coins.

Aram's brain raced, trying to connect the dots. He remembered reading about the eruption of Mount Ararat in 1840, and the 1,900 villagers of Akhuri, who apparently had not died in the eruption after all. It occurred to him that if these people had come here in 1840, they were living in an Armenia without the Genocide. He was beginning to wonder what that meant when the woman's voice cut through his reverie.

"Jesus had nothing to do with 1840. That was the land of Nor Akhuri giving us a new home. And where is the respect for the land in this religion? Where are the mother

earth, and the rivers, the goddesses who take care of us so well? This land has given us the ability to communicate with her, to know her secrets and her memories. Do you think she will allow us to treat her without respect forever? Do you ever wonder what might happen if we push her too far?”

Aram shivered, thinking of the way the rock had made an almost scream-like sound before the portal opened. He'd never really believed in any religion, but he wondered if this woman was right.

~~~

Tsoline had to force herself not to join the applause after Mayrig Nane spoke. She heard her sermons almost every week, but she wanted to cheer just as enthusiastically every time. She was proud of herself this time for not giving herself away, but her self-admiration was interrupted by a muffled voice through a loudspeaker. She turned around to see one of the transport carts hovering on the edge of the square.

“Prince’s inspection – have your IDs out!”

She realized with a start that they would find the man from the portal in the

inspection. She had begun to suspect that he wasn’t a secret operative after all, which meant he wouldn’t have an ID, and they would take him to the prince immediately. She didn’t want to know what the princes would do with a newcomer from another world, so she had to think fast. She concentrated all her communication energies and tried to make contact.

~~~

The information came upon Aram like a wave that made him feel instantly dizzy and nauseous. It didn’t feel like *words*, per se, but he suddenly had the knowledge that the woman who was following him was a researcher, that something very bad would happen once the man in the strange wooden hovering cart thing found out he had no ID, and that he had to hide behind the rugs in the rug shop. He made the snap decision to trust it without question, then made the dash for the rug shop. He managed to crouch behind a curtain of rugs before the woman tried to communicate something else to him and he passed out.



Araxie Cass 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 culture, and she is inspired by 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. You can find her work at [araxiecass.com](http://araxiecass.com).

# Hasmik Arakelyan



*This work was inspired by a trip to Goris where I came upon a little 16th c. church. Buried deep in a gorge, it stood alone, only visible behind the treetops from the nearest hill. I remember looking at it, halfway down the hill, and thinking “this is what heaven looks like.”*

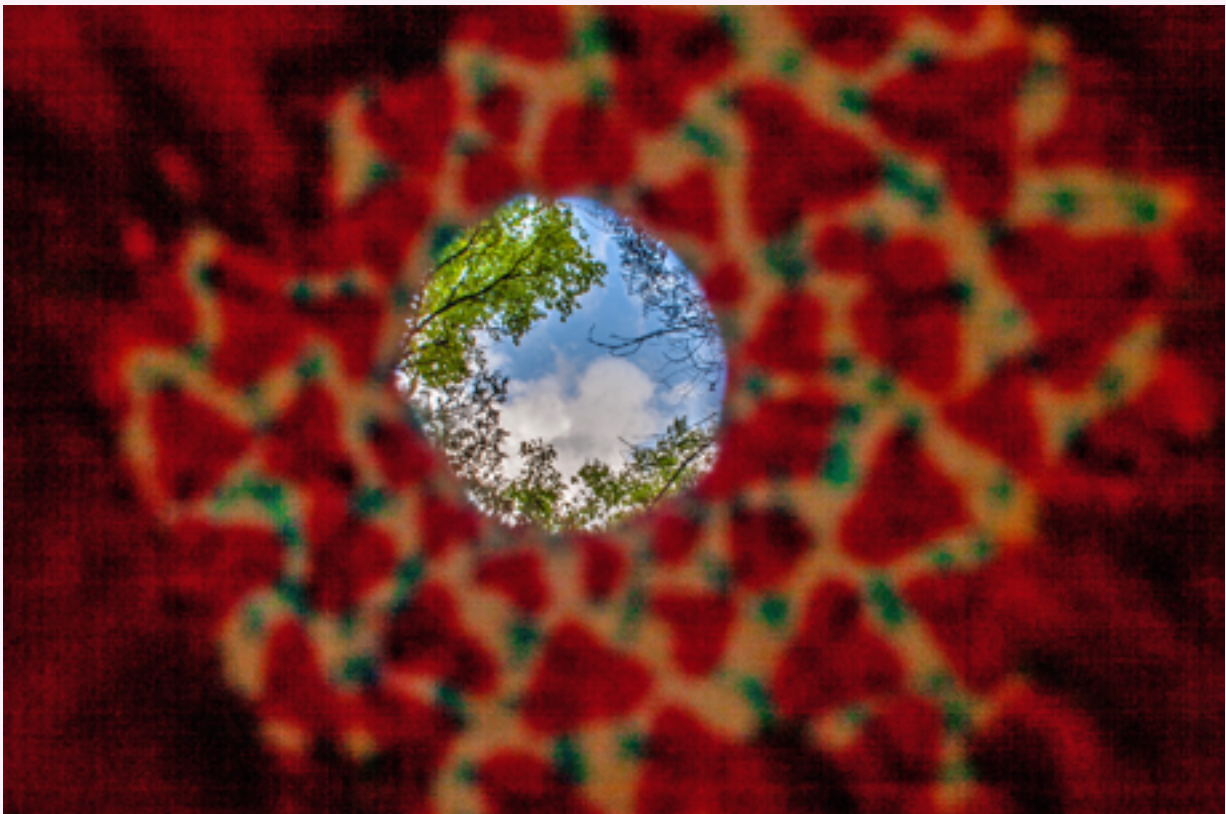
Hasmik Arakelyan (@flatimensions) is a digital illustrator from Yerevan. She is currently working on a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her works are often inspired by themes of isolation and identity.

# Rebecca Yeghiazaryan

## Absence of Companionship

In the midst of madness  
During nights like these,  
Where my anchor is my playlist  
And the cricket outside  
Chirps through the breeze,  
I wonder timidly  
If I'll ever get to experience a time  
Where I don't lay solo in this hollow room  
With its taunting walls,  
Jeering at my lack of luxury.

In another life, maybe,  
A life where mornings are welcoming,  
Rather than utterly lonely,  
And a life where I don't console myself all on my own,  
Like I must tonight.  
Tonight,  
When the absence of companionship  
Takes form of its own  
And hovers over me,  
Jeering at my lack of luxury



Nairy Shahinian



## Glass

I wish I didn't so often feel  
Locked up and tightly sealed,  
Like I'm in a glass container  
Growing stranger and stranger...

I dream of escape and breaking free  
From this merciless isolation,  
To show everyone  
What burns in me.

Alas, it feels as though  
This seal is drawing tighter,  
And I'm afraid that by now  
There's no getting out.  
I can only surrender.

Even though I'd rather fly  
And fly some more,  
Show my truest colors and  
Just how fiercely I can soar,

Would anyone outside of this glass container  
Even hear my roar?  
All I do is holler,  
I think my throat has gone sore...

Falling faster and further,  
Past return,  
Past all that I once knew,

Where there's no longer air,  
Only me,  
Where there's no sign of life,  
Only me.

Sitting alone  
In this awfully cold  
Glass container.



Rebecca Yeghiazaryan is a 16 year old Armenian-American girl living in California. She finds writing therapeutic, as it helps her work through her thoughts and feelings. She is always excited for opportunities to express herself, especially through the fine art of writing. Rebecca feels as though Armenian literature is extremely rich and she has been deeply inspired by writers such as Paruyr Sevak and William Saroyan and their ability to make reading feel utterly delicious. She's studied their work, and other Armenian art forms, and always includes some of that culture into whatever she creates. However, her personal ideals don't exactly line up with Armenian traditions, causing her to feel separated, or isolated, from the community. This sense of disconnection has ignited many of her pieces. Ultimately, she looks forward to working with Armenians in the future who have adopted modern morals as she has, and improving her connection to the astounding history that flows through her veins.

# Michael Aloyan

[This Land \(2019\)](#)



Written & Directed by Michael Aloyan  
Produced by Monika Ivonne  
Starring Karren Karagulian  
Cinematography by Andrew Rieger  
Original Score by Arman Aloyan

*Azat, an Armenian immigrant selling counterfeit designer bags on the streets of Los Angeles, strikes a bond with a woman from his night school only to face the pitfalls of the American Dream.*

**Watch “This Land” here**

Password: thislandismyland

## Nine Questions with Michael Aloyan

*Director and writer Michael Aloyan talks to HyeBred about the making of This Land his writing process, the collaboration with the actors and his passion for cinema.*

### **Hello Michael. Can you tell our readers a little bit about yourself?**

I was born and raised in Los Angeles to Armenian immigrants who moved to the U.S. in the early 90s. My dad was a big movie buff, so he was introducing me to classic cinema from a very early age. We were watching *Some Like It Hot* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* by the time I was in third grade and we had moved onto *Goodfellas* and *The French Connection* not long after. I got the movie bug quite early and started making my first little shorts by the age of eight. My dad was also an artist so he and I would build puppets out of clay. He would design the characters, I would write the scripts – my younger brother always filling in every other crew position – and we animated these clay puppets frame by frame, making these stop-motion animated films with my dad’s Hi-8 camera. That was the start.

At the age of twelve, I wrote a script for a 90-minute feature, gathered my friends and made the film over our summer break in my hometown of Glendale, CA. I rented out a local theater and charged \$5 for admission, screening to a sold-out audience. I took the money I made from the screening and invested it into another film I made the following summer. I did this throughout high school. In my senior year, I directed a short film called *Untermensch (Subhuman)* that went on to screen in dozens of international film festivals, win several jury awards, and secure distribution in over 40 countries. That served as my calling card. It got me representation and opened doors to a few producers and execs who would take a look at my work.

I decided to take a shot at television and wrote my first pilot for a series called *String*. By an extreme stroke of luck, I ended up selling that pilot to 20th Century Fox Television before my 20th birthday. I studied film at UCLA, continuing to write in the meantime. I would go to a morning class on documentary in Westwood, then leave fifteen minutes early to race across town to pitch a series at Warner Bros in Burbank. I spent a cumulative

total of about six hundred years in my car, driving back and forth. Thank God for podcasts.

It’s been a long and interesting journey... Nothing like I expected.

### **What was different about making *This Land*?**

*This Land* was a different experience from all of my other films in that it was the most ambitious in scope for its budget and limitations. We shot the film in four days over a span of ten locations spread throughout the greater Los Angeles area. It’s to the credit of my producer, Monika Ivonne, for pulling off such a smooth shoot. We didn’t miss a single shot or setup. Everything was on time and on budget and that was due to her planning and preparation. That environment allowed me to focus my time on set toward working with the actors and honing the performances. If you don’t have a good producer, you end up directing poorly because your attention is always elsewhere. Luckily, we didn’t have that problem on this picture.

### **Can you tell us about your writing process?**

My writing process tends to be the same on each project. I begin by letting an idea formulate for a while without putting it down on paper. I’ll then begin jotting down scenes, character ideas, images that come to mind without forcing any structure onto it. I don’t like to outline or do a thorough treatment, but I do know exactly how the story is going to end before I write a single page. My first draft is always freeform and a bit undisciplined. I will follow each scene as it progresses and let the characters take me where they demand. This approach presents an honesty and truth to the story without simply moving from one scene to the next in order to advance the plot. However, I will add that this method results in endless rewrites. I approach it like any other job and I think that is the most important part. I “clock in” and spend however many hours a day in front of the computer. No excuses.

### **How did you come up with your production team?**

The first person to come on board was Karren Karagulian, who plays the lead role of Azat. I wrote the part for him and I knew early on that I would only make the film if he agreed to do it. I couldn’t picture anyone else in the role. I’d been a fan of Karren’s work for years, having seen him in Sean Baker’s films, such as *The Florida Project* and *Tangerine*, so I sent him an email with the script,

asking him to take a chance on our little short. And he said yes. Everything came together quite quickly after that. Monika [Ivonne] led the hiring process for our other heads of departments, assembling a great team. Our cinematographer was Andrew Rieger, who also shot my previous film, *Noise*. My brother, Arman Aloyan, scored the film. He's written the music for all of my films. The wonderful Leona Paraminski was an actress I had known for many years and always wanted to work with. She was a perfect fit for Lana. And she introduced us to Frano Maskovic, the great Croatian actor. It's a funny story how that worked out. We couldn't find anyone that was quite what I wanted for the role of Darijo, the loan shark. I was meeting Leona for drinks one evening to discuss the script when she asked if she could bring along a friend of hers who was visiting from Croatia. The friend was Frano and we immediately hit it off, drinking into the night. Through the course of the evening, I was thinking how this guy would be the perfect Darijo. Well, as it turns out – not only was Frano an actor, but he was in town promoting his latest film, which was Croatia's entry to the Academy Awards. It was the movie gods lending a hand. We really had a wonderful team on this one. It felt like a family.

### **What were the challenges you faced before or during the shooting?**

We were definitely racing against the clock because Andrew [Rieger] and I had comprised a very ambitious shot list. On one of the days, we had 36 shots scheduled. We also had over 50 extras for the sweat shop location and about half as many for the classroom, so it was a lot of transporting large groups of people and equipment from one place to another. I also made the decision early on to shoot the film entirely handheld, so it placed a great physical strain on our camera team. It was a tough shoot, but everyone pulled through.

### **Do you rehearse with the actors beforehand?**

I don't like rehearsing in the traditional sense, in that I don't like reading over lines too much. Instead, I like spending a lot more time discussing the characters and story with the actors. I think this homework period, fleshing out who that particular character is and what makes them tick, is much

more crucial to understanding the heart of the film you are making. On this one, we also didn't have the luxury of face time as Karren was based in New York and we were only able to fly him out the day before the shoot because of his schedule. I had one day with Karren and Leona to rehearse. That was it. But we had spoken so much on the phone beforehand that they fell right into rhythm. I was nervous up until I saw them read a scene together and go off improving for the next twenty minutes. After that, I was at ease. They just became Azat and Lana.

### **What is your relationship with the actors on set? How much do you 'direct' them?**

The most important part of directing is casting correctly. I am very meticulous in my casting process. Our casting director on this film was Jennifer Peralta-Ajemian, based in New York. I asked her to send me everyone; we watched hundreds of audition tapes, met with actors several times and did endless chemistry reads until we found the right fit. On set, it's really about exploring new paths and honing the details that make a performance authentic and moving versus theatrical. Working with actors is my favorite part of filmmaking. It's a collaboration and, as a director, my job is to create a safe environment where we can take an idea and run with it.

### **What advice would you give to aspiring filmmakers?**

My advice to aspiring filmmakers is to broaden the range of media they consume. I meet a lot of young filmmakers who have never seen a film by Fellini or Kurosawa or Bergman or Parajanov. International cinema harbors some of the greatest gems ever put to celluloid and I think future generations will be missing a key component of film education if they ignore movies with subtitles.

### **Can you tell us about your next project(s)?**

I am currently in pre-production for a feature film I am set to shoot in England later this year, which examines a marriage through the lens of war.

### **Thank you!**

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



Michael Aloyan is an Armenian filmmaker who was raised in Los Angeles. Enthralled with films and storytelling from a very young age, and supported by his cinephile father, he started making stop-motion animated films with his dad's Hi-8 camera at the age of eight. With his dad serving as character artist and Aloyan writing the scripts, the two built the clay puppets and miniature sets together, after which they animated the characters frame-by-frame.

Over the years Aloyan shifted towards live-action filmmaking and, at thirteen, he gathered his friends and made a feature film. He rented out a local theater and charged \$5 for admission, screening to a sold-out audience. Aloyan took the profits he made from the premiere and invested them into making another feature over the following school year. He continued to shoot shorts while in high school, casting his younger brother and classmates in a variety of adventure films. In his senior year, he directed a short film called "Subhuman (Untermensch)", which screened in over a dozen film festivals, winning several international awards and acquiring distribution in over 40 countries across the world. In his sophomore year of college, Aloyan penned "String", an original TV pilot that he sold to 20th Century Fox Television before his 20th birthday.

Hailing from UCLA's MFA Directing program, he has been a finalist for the Sundance Screenwriters Lab, Academy Nicholl Fellowship, Warner Bros. Television Writers Workshop, Disney/ABC Writing Program, and his most recent pilot, "The Dive," was one of the three highest rated scripts on The Black List (2020). He is currently prepping his period feature film "Hidden" set to shoot in England later this year



# Gayane Parsegova

## My Forehead Says

My forehead says, “My parents are from a country you can’t pronounce.” Yes, it’s real. I’ll show you on a map.

Next, you’ll look at my eyebrows.  
You’ll wonder why they’re so thick, and what I could be hiding behind them.

You’ll ask about my eyelashes.  
You’ll look at them as if I’m a painting in a museum; ask if they’re real, and if you can brush your fingers against them.

You aren’t allowed to touch the paintings in a museum.  
You aren’t allowed to touch my eyes.

You’ll think my nose is a funny shape, very peculiar and out of the ordinary from what you’re used to seeing.  
I’ll say, “It’s because Noah’s Ark landed on it, and we believe our noses look like Mt. Ararat.”

You’ll get to my mouth. You’ll critique the way I pronounce words, like “Opinion,” and claim I have a small accent when I speak.

You’ll question my entire demeanor, my existence; as if I’m supposed to be passing your test with flying colors.

You’ll squint your eyes.  
You’ll ask for my name.  
You’ll sigh.  
You’ll say, “Do you have a nickname, something easier to pronounce, or even remember?”

I look away.  
You pull me back.  
You look deep into my broken eyes,  
because finally,  
finally you see my history, my people, my story, all forming into tears, trickling down my Fragile cheeks.

My name is Gayane, and I’m a proud Armenian. The first one to be born in America after my parents escaped a massacre in Azerbaijan in 1988, fled to Moscow, then left and traveled to the U.S. after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Only to be, refugees for the second time in their lives.

My forehead says, “My parents are from a country you can’t pronounce.” And I hope you never forget what my forehead’s story means.



## Baku Blues

Baku Blues, Baku Blues,  
Let me tell you a story,  
I'll sing it for you.

Baku Blues, Baku Blues,  
My mother sat me down,  
to explain to me,  
the origins of her sad town.  
“It wasn't always like this, chaos and blood.  
But time continued to move forward,  
as bodies were buried, in the mud.”

Baku Blues, Baku Blues,  
I'll tell you the truth.  
I'll speak of its dark hues.  
Persecution and lies,  
only filled the news.

And when we think of Baku,  
our minds turn to our youth.  
A car crash in slow-motion:  
Here today,  
Gone tomorrow,  
With nothing to lose.  
We were beaten in the streets,  
under Azeri's dark hues.

1988.  
A year,  
filled with hate,  
rape,  
and scars.  
Blood galore.  
No justification,  
for the people,  
who should have been put behind bars.

Baku Blues, Baku Blues,  
Thirty years later,  
we still think of you.  
Victims of massacre,  
now our Martyred Saints.  
Looking down on us,  
filled with grace.



Gayane Parsegova is a first-generation American-Armenian, with parents from the former USSR. She is a recent San Diego State University MA graduate in Comparative Literature with an emphasis in Russian language/literature, Communism, and Genocide & Massacre studies, and the Bildungsroman genre. More recently, her work has been published in the 2019 edition of Pacific Review's 'Hallucinations' issue. She graduated with her Bachelor's in Literature & Writing in May 2017 from California State University of San Marcos, where she was also the Opinion Editor for the student-run-newspaper and was awarded "Journalist of the Year" in 2017. She currently lives in San Diego, CA.

# Reza Melikyan

## Summer Green Bean

A crack of a green gentle neck  
the snap of the delicate twig of life  
fresh picked from the vine  
barely even there yet  
the sun shines through an old cracked window  
worn from the generational hurt and stone  
that built up so much of the common place of people  
the people who still believe despite being the masses  
who want the warmth to cover them once more  
in the gentle gleaming rays of equity  
that crumbled with the more and *more* society  
hands with little else to hold on to  
but the breath of the people  
that push out every last little speck  
discarding the carcass of the once free animal  
“but you are the masses!”  
that’s right, and still our voices ring  
for the truth, the holding power of our own weary eyes  
for something more than this  
more than taking with greedy grimy gangled and knotted hands  
please for the love of god, take me back to the gentle sun  
the cracked glazed window of the ancient stone home  
open just enough for the taut wire clothesline to be felt by my soft unknowing hands  
open enough for a smile from a woman with a warm heart  
and a warm hearth  
always baking with too much love  
so much love that her soft round cheeks and gentle worn face shows  
another crack of the soft-shelled delicate cocoon  
a small seed falls from between  
oh to experience the warm love of a summer green bean.



## Self-Righteous Genderhood

Where the neighborhood boys played  
I would join them  
With my mangled hair and muddy jeans  
Ripped and torn on the bottom most seams

Run around like I was one of them  
Tossed around from hand to hand  
Knocked back with my busy breathing  
Laughing under the sun speckled sky

We would run around on our naked feet  
Dirt caked and muddy  
Grass tickled toes  
Pioneering our own path

To victory we screamed  
We were leaders of the starship supreme  
Our own voyager among the towering tufts of trees  
Fighting our mind mangled enemies

“Climb the towers and take their heads!”  
And we would inch up rough bark  
Bruising and blistering our hands  
To bite into the sun softened sour flesh

A day's work to victory  
It was a while before I could see  
That we'd created our own soft lulled world  
That would be missed

Because outside of it  
I wasn't one of them  
I was the fleshy fruit that was taken  
And broken from its bent-up branch

I tried  
I poured and soared  
and all I could find was me  
Just a child, not your enemy



Reza Melikyan is an Armenian-American undergraduate student studying Neuroscience at the University of Michigan. Outside of working in the lab and analyzing neurons, they enjoy visual arts, storytelling, and theater. Reza's written work includes short fiction, plays, and poetry and is primarily inspired by science, gender, and cultural identity.

# Artur Manasyan



Artur Manasyan is originally from Yerevan but now lives in Minsk, Belarus. He is now 45 years old. For over 20 years he has been engaged in jewelry art. Since 1999, he has been engaged in working at the Yerevan Jewelry Factory, the “Crystal” diamond factory in Russia. Artur has also opened a jewelry school in Minsk (@jewelryschoolminsk). This is one of his favorite works, a silver match with Komitas’s face.

# Jack Chavoor

## Avak, Alone in the World

I walked into his office and we saw simultaneously that we were both Armenian.

“I’m Avak,” he said, extending his hand.

“I’m Jack.”

“Hagop?”

Hagop, Armenian for Jack.

“No,” I said.

“Yes!” he insisted.

“Yes, if I was in Armenia, but on my birth certificate it’s Jack, from Burbank.”

“Good!”

Not that good though, his disappointment leaked out – he was twisting his pinky ring.

“So, married?”

I was tired. My feet hurt in new shoes, my back ached from standing all day. I had worked a very busy nine hours, gone home, fixed a grilled cheese sandwich, kissed my wife, kissed our baby, ate the sandwich in the car and now was an hour into my night school job. And this guy wanted to play Nosy Armenian.

“Married? Yep, sure am.”

“That’s so nice. Kids?”

“One.”

“Precious. Boy?”

“A girl, Kathleen.”

“God bless your whole family! *Eferem*, good!”

He clapped his hands as if someone was going to bring us *paklava* and coffee. He hadn’t invited me to sit yet and I felt like a giant in his office, which barely had room for a desk, file cabinet and a couple of chairs. Avak was maybe five foot seven and fit the space perfectly. His desk was squared away – not a single stray paper or any chaotic stacks of folders, reminders, or books. Everything was stacked by size, even the paper clips.

“I’m on break and I’m wondering when the books are going to...”

“Two hours of grammar. They must want that diploma pretty bad, huh?”

“They’re motivated. Well, most of them. Night school’s different from high school. I’m just wondering about the books.”

He closed his eyes and tipped his chin at my inquiry.

“As for me, I’m single. Just me. No real family to speak of. That’s good though. I like it. It’s all right.”

I had been rude to not ask about his life. Such is the custom of our people. We have to establish that family is more important than business, and then we can conduct business.

“Uh-huh,” I said.

I sat myself down across from him and rested my binder on his desk, feeling more exhausted than before I entered his office. My ears were ringing and my throat was sore. The man wanted to talk, though. I glanced at the unframed “Hang in There!” desperate kitten poster right behind Avak, and waited to hear about his life.

“I’m vice-principal here and a damned good one. I’ve been at other schools. I was at Bullard High, you see? But at the end, they put you at Adult School. At night. Don’t stay here too long. It’s the elephant graveyard. It’s good that you’re here, though. One *Hye* anywhere is good; two *Hyes* is family, huh?”

His face was square and his smile was genuine. He wore black. A black turtleneck, black pants, black shoes. His attire clean, neat, fresh; never tired or rumpled. His gold watch looked proud.

“What do you mean, graveyard?” I said.

I extended my legs. Old high school football injuries suddenly demanded attention. I was 31, thinking it was a big number. Avak put both hands up like a preacher.

“It means don’t tangle with the big boys downtown. They will pay you back, eventually.”

“Yeah?”

“At any point. No matter who you know, or think you know. Even at the end of your career.”

“Well, that’s not good.”

“You don’t believe me.”

All I wanted to know was when the books were coming in.

“I guess...”

“You’ll see it. Chances are you’ll experience it. First you’ll be mad. Then you’ll be sad. Then you’ll say well, that’s just how the world is. *Guh hahsgunahs?*”

“Ayo. I’m at Roosevelt. I’m doing okay.”

He smiled, closed his eyes, slowly nodded his head.

“That’s good because here, they think they’re adults. It says so on the sign outside. Adult School. Hah! Most of them are puppies, though. You have to scold them when they make a mess.”

“Ha-ha. Maybe.”

“Yes, it’s the truth.”

The lights above us buzzed angrily.

“It’s like, I don’t want to be the mean guy, but sometimes you have to. I tell the Roosevelt kids that I teach night school so you can see me now or see me later,” I said.

“Good! Puppies, remember it. You might step on their tail, but they’ll get over it. You take your wife out to dinner?”

“What?”

“To dinner.”

“Sure.”

“You like Mexican?”

“Yeah, sure.”

“It’s the best,” he said.

“Yeah. I really like...”

But I never got the chance to talk about Rusty’s in LA.

“The *real* stuff though.”

“Real?”

“Yes, the food is real, not made for those who don’t understand.”

I was lost.

“Where is it?”

“Downtown. Near downtown. It’s dark there but it’s a bit of a dive so you don’t want to see everything.”

I tried to picture the place. It would be somewhere near the mall. Dark, like Avak said, but maybe a string of lights around the window. The smell of soap and salsa. York mints in a jar on the counter and a donation jar for missing children.

“Huh.”

“Maybe you don’t believe me. It is the best food you will ever have. I go there often. As often as I can.”

“Yeah?”

“I go by myself. It’s fine. I’m alone in this world, but I’m alright.”

“Of course.”

His aloneness became a presence in the tiny office.

“The food is spicy. Like you’ve never known.”

“Hot?”

“You can’t believe it.”

“Maybe I could.”

He began moving side-to-side, seated at his desk.

“Your mouth and entire face and your insides are on fire.”

“Wow,” I said.

It was good to be distracted; for the moment I forgot I was tired and didn’t have any books for my class.

“And your intestines are melting!”

“What!”

“Yes, and even your ears are burning, from the inside out, so hot it makes you cry, and your nose runs and you start to perspire.”

“You...”

“The perspiration rolling down your neck.”

His side-to-side motion was increasing, like a preacher touched by the spirit.

“Uh.”

“I eat the jalapeno peppers, too. Most people avoid them. I ask for more. At first they brought just a little dish and stood around to see. They didn’t know. But the last time I went, they brought me the whole jar.”

“Wait a minute now,” I said.

That broke the spell; he stopped moving. I felt nervous. He looked directly at me.

“God’s truth,” he said, raising his right hand.

“I mean...”

“Look, Jack, Hagop, are you a religious man?”

“You could say that. I try to...”

“The food there is a religious experience.”

This is Avak's story. Armenians love food, God and storytelling.

"Eating? A religious experience?"

"Listen to me now. The beans and rice? The tortilla? Those are the ordinary things to get through this life. This, this world."

He dismissed the world with a one-handed wave.

"Uh-huh."

"But salsa, jalapenos, the burning, the crying, the suffering. That's the true life."

He stopped to see if I was still with him. I wanted to say that we were done suffering, but I wasn't sure how he'd take it, or whether I believed it.

"True life is suffering?" I said.

"Passion!" He slapped the desk.

"I'm not sure I..."

"You don't, but you will. Yes, you have your wife and child, and you'll have more children, too. They'll grow and laugh and cry and, and you'll all go to Yosemite and stand in the cool shadow of the redwood trees, or maybe you'll go to the coast and stand barefoot on the shore with them and the water will touch the top of your feet. It will all be wonderful, wherever you go. Your children will laugh and shout with wonder and joy. You and your wife will grow old together."

He stopped and stood. I thought he was done and wanted me to leave. I stood.

"Yes, thanks. That's what I..."

"But there's the other part. The sweat, the crying, the suffering. True life."

"Hah," I said, because it had two meanings. If Armenian-speaking people say it, it means *Yes, I agree*; among native speakers of English it means *I don't believe you, or Well, how about that*. In the silence, I wondered which he believed I had said.

"That place downtown," he said, "it's fantastic. You should go. I go there often, as often as I can. Twice a week, anyway."

We're all a little crazy. That's where we get the idea that we're all geniuses, and geniuses, as we imagine them, are never wrong. If he weren't Armenian I would have left. I stayed, waiting to hear the rest. He was making me nervous though.

"Avak? Don't you like Armenian food?"

He sat down. I was relieved to have changed the subject.

"Of course! *Dolma, sarma, choreg, boreg*. It's in our DNA. Amenable to our digestive tract!"

I chuckled.

"It's family food," he said. "It's home food, the food of our people."

"Yeah."

"Takes us all the way back to our grandmas. To the Old Country, even."

I was getting hungry, despite the dumb, greasy grilled cheese sandwich sitting like a mossy stone in my stomach.

"That's true," I said. "Thanksgivings when I was a kid were amazing."

"That's not fire, though. That's preserving, not burning."

"Well..."

"The Mexicans know something. They know the truth."

"Even tortilla chips?"

He stared at me and sighed.

"You are trying to be funny when you should not be. I have not been funny with you. I am serious."

"I just..."

"The chip delivers the salsa!" he shouted, hitting the palm of his left hand with the top of his right hand.

"But I don't want my stomach to burn. I don't want..."

He stopped me with closed eyes and a tipped chin. He raised his right hand, to testify. He leaned back and to the right as if the hottest food ever was hitting him as we spoke.



A recent graduate of the MFA program at Fresno State, Jack Chavoor is a retired high school English teacher, originally from Burbank, California, now living in Fresno, California for the last 41 years. Jack is married to Grace and they have three children and four grandchildren. His thesis, "Ghosts of the Genocide," explores the complexities of knowing what it means to be Armenian and Assyrian, and American.



# Lena Halteh





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.

# Aram Ronald Krikorian

Listen to “Dzirani Dzari Dziran”/“ծիրանի ծառի ծիրան” here

“Dzirani Dzari Dziran”/“ծիրանի ծառի ծիրան”

դուրսը  
tours’uh  
outside

լույսը  
looys’uh  
the light

շուտով  
shoodov  
quickly

կերթա  
gerta  
goes

-  
երկինքը  
yergink’uh  
the sky

լեռները  
lerner’uh  
the mountains

վարդագույն  
vartakooyñ  
pink

հսկայ  
hsgah  
huge

-  
անուշիկ  
anousheeg  
sweet

գեղեցիկ  
keghetseeg  
pretty

ծիրանի ծառի ծիրան  
dzirani dzari dziran  
apricot tree apricot

-  
տունը  
doon’uh  
the house

խոհանոցը  
khohanots’uh  
the kitchen

փուռը  
poor’uh  
the oven

վառած  
varadz  
lit

-  
խաղալու  
khaghaloo  
playing

խաղալիք  
khaghaleek  
toy

առանց փուշի  
arants poushee  
without thorns



վարդ չըլլար  
vart ch'llar  
there would be no rose

-  
համով  
hamov  
tasty

հոտով  
hodov  
smelly

ծիրանի ծառի ծիրան  
dzirani dzari dziran  
apricot tree apricot

-  
մի քիչ դեղին ու  
mi keech tegheen ou  
a little bit yellow and

նարնջագույն  
nar'n'nchakooyan  
orange

ծիրանի ծառի ծիրան  
dzirani dzari dziran  
apricot tree apricot

-  
պիտի գամ  
bidi cam  
i will come

պիտի գան  
bidi can  
they will come

պիտի գաս  
bidi cass  
you will come

հետո կերթաս  
hedo gertass  
and then you go

-  
սիրտը վեր  
seerd's verr  
my heart up

սիրտը վար  
seerd's varr  
my heart down

սրտիս մեջ  
seerdees mech  
inside my heart

ծիրանի ծառի  
dziran dzar  
apricot tree

-  
անուշիկ  
anousheeg  
sweet

գեղեցիկ  
keghetseeg  
pretty

ծիրանի ծառի ծիրան  
dzirani dzari dziran  
apricot tree apricot



Aram Ronald Krikorian was born at San Francisco Children's Hospital. He has lived in Paris, Los Angeles and New York City pursuing a music career with financial support through work doing data entry and bookkeeping. He currently works with Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco. And he's engaged with his Krouzian Zekarian Vasbouragan School alumni and adjacent communities in addressing Decolonization, Palestinian issues and Black Indigenous Solidarity in the U.S.

# Kayiane Maranian

## In the dark

~~~~~  
We toast quietly. This is our fun, wild end to a trip we will always remember fondly.
~~~~~

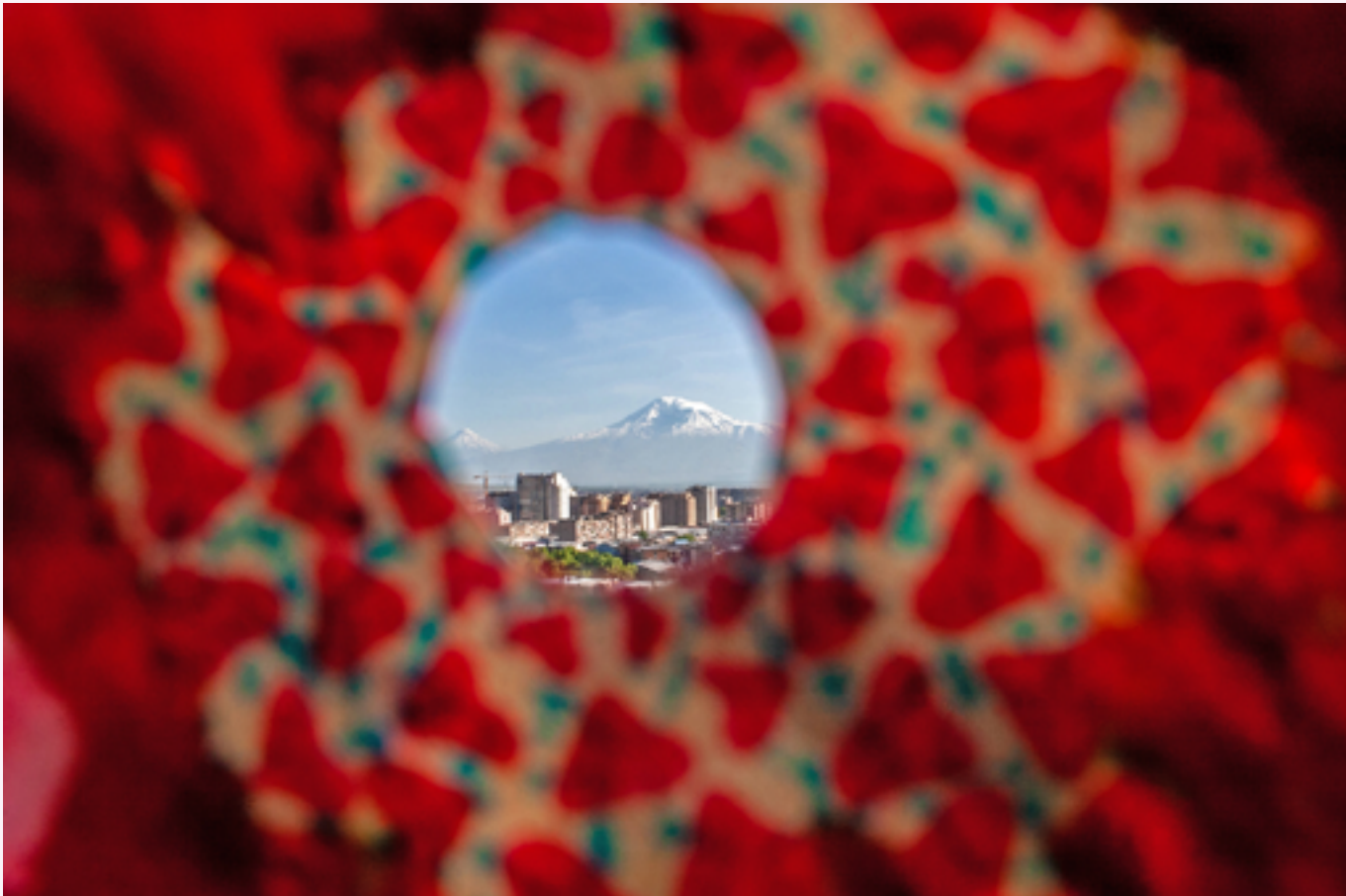
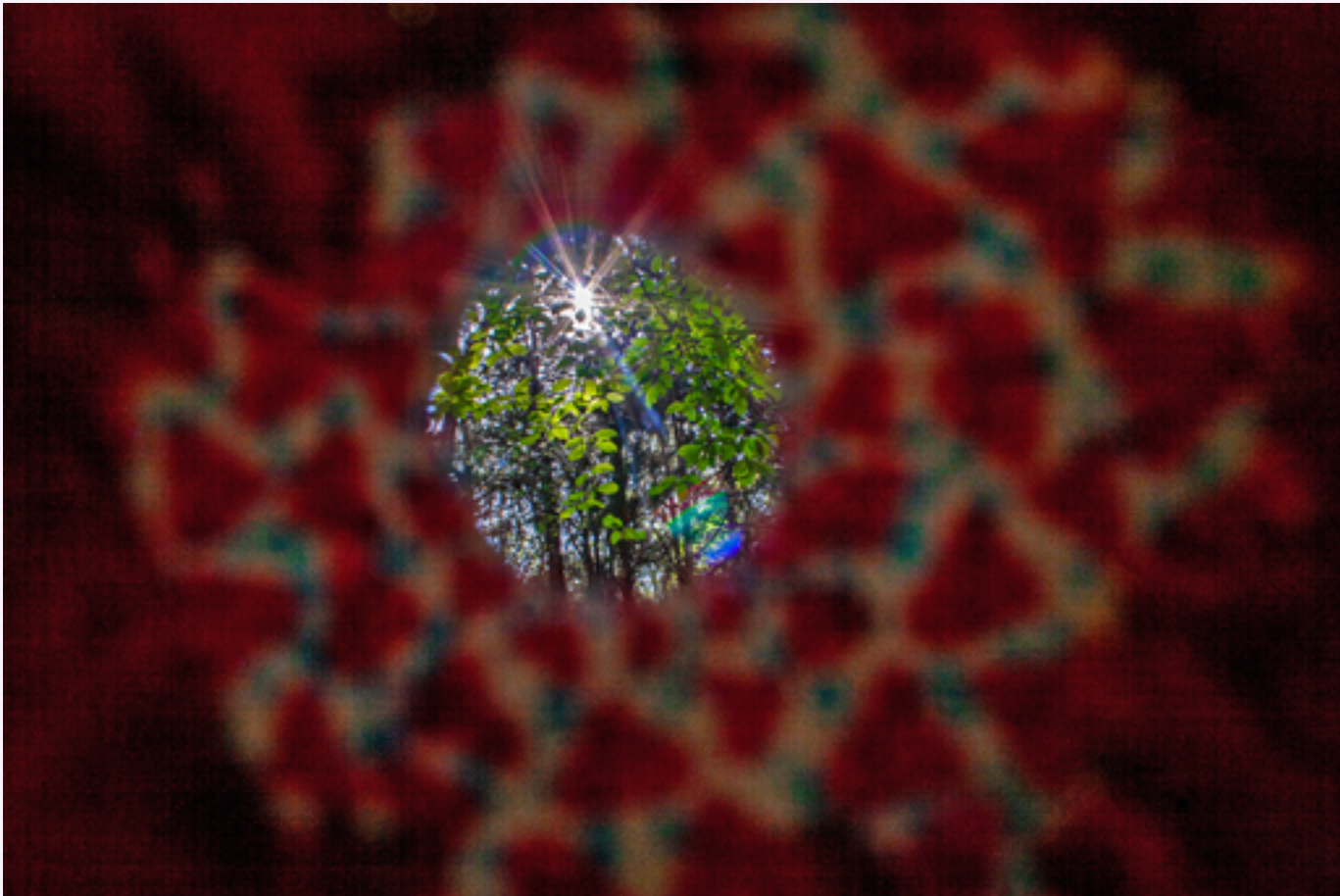
I'm in Paris, calling you late-at-night Paris time to your nine hours earlier California time – another day. You let me complain, calm me down, tether me when I tell you that this vacation is a disaster. It isn't. I'm dramatic. At 28, I feel the weight of having to make decisions for two in a way I never have before. Dad has no opinions on what he wants to do, where he wants to go, what he wants to eat. You sympathize, tell me he has been this way since the day you two got married. He is content and I don't speak French and neither does he and I'm frustrated that he can't see the maps in the Metro and that he keeps asking me when our stop is coming and that he wants to help but can't. It's sticky hot in Paris, which magnifies my irritability. I packed too light and have one gray t-shirt dress I keep re-wearing. I complain to you: about dad's indecision, about having to pay for every public restroom in this city that smells like urine, but is so beautiful at every street, alley and tucked-away corner garden that it forces you to forgive the rudeness. It's beautiful and I complain and you let me and commiserate like the perceptive mother you are at your best and I hear beeping in the background, but I assume you are at the grocery. I even think I ask and you tell me you are. Dad and I trek to Gatwick with our three pieces of luggage on and off from bus to bus. At our layover in Iceland, we buy mini bottles of gin at the only airport shop. Duty-free? I can't be sure, but the airplane has no television screens and no meals – absurd for 10 hours and \$1,000 a pop. No leg room or reclining seats either, so we sneak our mini bottles onto the flight and drink them together secretly, hidden from the air stewards whose disheveled chignons and messy lipstick reflect how I feel and whose bright pink vest-and-skirt uniforms match the exterior of the plane. We toast quietly. This is our fun, wild end to a trip

we will always remember fondly. I give him a book to read to occupy the time: *Grief is a Thing With Wings*. I'm ignorant of the foretelling. It's late when we land and finally climb into an Uber at LAX, heading south thirty minutes to Long Beach in the dark. When Dad and I exit the car with our three pieces of luggage, you open the front door and there's a look on your face. I can't remember anything about it, but you let out a surrendering sob and turn, rushing back into the house. I think you may be joking, playing a welcome-back prank – oddly placed but not completely out of character. My father says, “No, something is wrong” and follows you into the house, moving with an urgency I never saw at a single point during our time overseas. I'm left streetside with the bags wondering how he knows your face so well. Inside, you cry and tell us about my brother, about his broken jaw and thinking his teeth were all missing, about violence and blood and tattered clothing, about the police threatening you and you threatening back: “My taxes pay your salary!” About days and nights in the hospital and surgery and implanted metal plates and blending foods to liquid for consumption through a straw. “We didn't want to ruin your trip” is an unsettling cocktail of mercy and betrayal and guilt for not knowing what you were keeping from us.

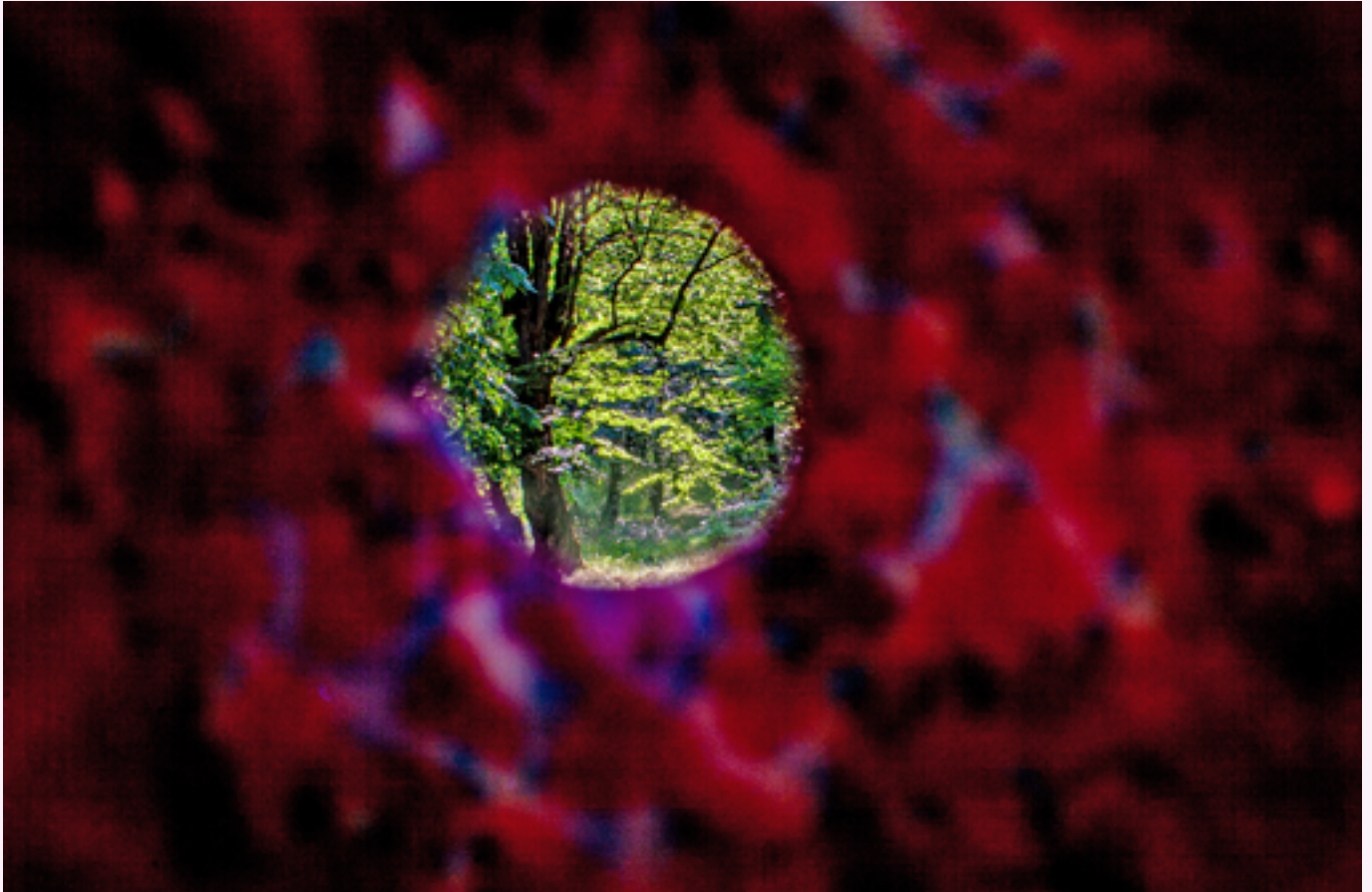


Kayiane is a first-generation Armenian-American writer and actor living in Los Angeles, California. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in art history with a minor in English literature from Chapman University. As the daughter of two visual artists, her Mother from Beirut, Lebanon, and her Father from Aleppo, Syria, free creative expression holds central importance in her life. She is on a journey to deepen her connections with Armenian history and mythology and is interested in exploring the relationship between identity and diaspora.

# Nairy Shahinian







Born in Damascus, Syria 1984, currently based in Yerevan, Armenia. Nairy Shahinian's artistic practice approaches photography as a never-ending process of discovery. Nairy often employs experimental techniques as investigative tools allowing her to intimately document her immediate surroundings and experiences. Her knowledge of the medium developed at a young age in the Damascus studio of her late father.

She earned a Professional Photography Diploma from New York Institute of Photography in 2008. In recent years Nairy has created several photographic series that have been presented at international art spaces and events.

# Meghri Sarkissian

## Isolation

and time has lost its iridescent luster  
among the pride wars of our freedom  
picking profusely at the seams of comfort  
that have erupted in agony beyond our grasp  
slipping through frantic blistered fingers  
and losing all sense of corporeal reality

*is there a soul left as isolated as I?*

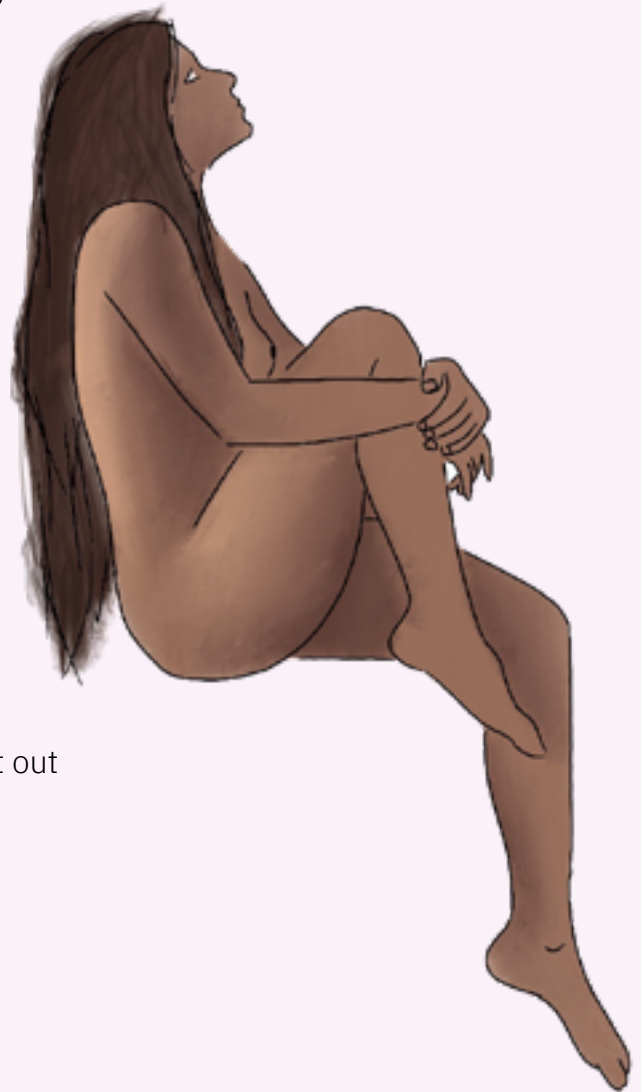
in an artificial world torn by avarice  
and unintelligible words twisted by malice  
bliss is pushed into a darkened corner  
till she bares her bloody fangs at all around  
and the cruel beast named solitude is he  
that takes my hand in its leathery grip

*is there a soul left as isolated as I?*

while destruction has painted over the earth  
a sombre color of astonishing hollowness  
all that remains is a pathless journey  
along an amber road meandering through  
mountains that ebb and flow with seasons  
where I hear a million ancestral voices shout out

*is there a soul left as isolated as I?*

Sarkissian Words





Meghri Sarkissian was born on the island of Cyprus to an Armenian family. She moved to the United States at a young age and grew up in Los Angeles, where she learned to speak English through books and storytelling. Sarkissian developed a passion for the deep sensitivity found in Armenian art and worked to incorporate that into her own writing. In 2018, she self-published a novel, *Lake of Sighs*—a fictional story inspired by the Akhtamar legend of Armenia. In 2020, she wrote a flash fiction story about her mother’s experience in northern Iran—which won first place in a contest hosted by The Composite Review. Sarkissian continues to write about the strength and richness of the Armenian culture, as well as the struggles of the Armenian feminist community and the transgenerational trauma of the Armenian diaspora.

In this particular poem, Meghri Sarkissian was inspired by the isolation felt during the pandemic quarantine, where she found herself alone while working in Colorado. With her family in California and Cyprus, and her close community of Armenian friends in Los Angeles, Sarkissian felt extremely isolated and culturally lost. Her comfort—which is portrayed at the end of the poem—has been to recognize the similar isolation that many Armenians feel around the world when they are not among their community. Armenians thrive when they are united, and this unity is often achieved spiritually—as the young generations of Armenians begin to reconnect with their roots.



# Tatevik Ayvazyan

## Fired flying missile\*

...կար մի աղջիկ և  
Եթե ես ասեմ, որ մոռացել եմ անունը նրա,  
Ինձ հավատացե՞ք այնքան, որքան որ  
Յուրաքանչյուրը է հաստատ հավատում  
Աշխարհի տարբեր լրագրորին:  
Եվ ամեն անգամ, երբ ես ուզում եմ  
Աշխարհին հայտնել անունը նրա,  
Ինքըս ինձ դարձյալ ասում եմ. «Չասե՛ս»,  
Իսկ այդ աղջիկը, գիտե՞ք ասում էր.  
«Երբ Բեթհովեն եմ լսում՝ թվում է,  
Թե ես քայլում եմ ծովի վրայով»:  
Ես ունեմ նաև ճիշտ կաղապարը և այդ աղջկա:  
Տա՛ք կաղապարը:  
Ու խաղալիքներ ես պիտի ձուլեմ ա՛յդ կաղապարով,  
Տա՛ք կաղապարով:

Եվ ով ինձ հարցնի. «Ի՞նչ արժի», ես ինձ  
Լուռ կասեմ. «Ասա՛»:  
«Դատա՛րկ բան,- կասեմ,-  
Ընդամենն արժի մի... անցած մի կյանք»...

(*Պարույր Սևակ, Խաղալիք սարքողը | Paruyr Sevak, The Toymaker*)

### Day 1 (I was five and he was six)

*His voice is thick and sweet and almost edible.  
She wants to bury her teeth in it and taste it.*

She will never forget hearing his voice for the first time. It sounds like a flying missile – dangerous, sweet, enticing, sharp, loud – and landed inside her throat and made a mess of her. She’s not sure whether there is a word for that feeling, but she feels like she’s pressed back to the wall and can’t breathe, and she wants to stay there forever. She’s a

So there was a girl and  
If I tell you I’ve forgotten her name  
Believe me as much  
as you sure believe  
to the different papers of the world.  
And each time when I think I want  
To announce her name to the world,  
I’m telling myself again “Don’t say,”  
And this girl – you know? – was saying  
”When I’m listening to Beethoven’s music,  
I feel like I’m walking over the sea”  
I have the shape of her,  
The exact warm shape...  
And I’m going to make toys  
using that shape,  
That warm shape.

And if I’m asked “how much is it?”  
I’ll tell myself in silence – “do say.”  
“Nothing” – I will say.  
“Only one spent life”

synaesthiac; she’s used to voices having colours and tastes, but this is different.

It’s like how [“Since I’ve Been Loving You” from BBC Sessions](#) makes her feel, pain and pleasure whipped together.

They spend some time in the same room (at a book signing, in a tiny hipster bookshop, with cheap prosecco), and she’s constantly aware of the pain and overcome by lust. He talks to her because they are standing next to each other, and all she wants to do is to close her eyes and bathe in the proximity and voice of this stranger.

\*Based on true events. Any suggestion or suspicion that people and events depicted in the story are fictitious is coincidental.

\*The title is a reference to Hey Rosetta’s “Plug Your Ears.”



She watches his face, examining what is so special about him. He's not conventionally good-looking – big nose, small eyes – but something hypnotises her, whether it's his watching, enquiring, sparkly eyes, his moody lower lip or his glowing skin. Too glowy for a man, she thinks.

He talks about the book, which is being launched, and is so observant, and his opinions so funny. She tells him she loved the illustrations, and he laughs an awkward laugh: "I'm the illustrator."

She hovers around the door when they are leaving, but he disappears quickly like a firework, blinding her with a smile.

The physical pain he causes will never go away. It'll grow like cancer, get inside her veins and bones and finally make a home in her heart and stay there, like a squatter trying to win a right to stay.

She hasn't felt anything like this for anyone (except for songs), losing her head within seconds – but she's hoping it's a temporary lapse of reason, it'll go away, she's not capable of lust (or God forbid, love). She has trained herself to make desires and hungers go away. It's so easy without them, so nice, so tranquil. Just replace everything with songs.

Later, in the evening, in the bath, she closes her eyes and the pain returns with the same intensity, with his laughter in her head.

His voice is thick and sweet and almost edible. She wants to bury her teeth in it and taste it.

## Day 2 (We rode on horses made of sticks)

He looks like a faraway prince, with luminous skin and majestic posture – and her heart hasn't stopped pounding since he brought his face very close to hers and kept his phone between them, demanding that she guess the song he was listening to when they accidentally bumped into each other in the British Library cafe. The song is [Suede's](#)

~~~~~

He asks what she thinks about the Death rumours, and she tells him it's rubbish. "I have stared in the face of Death for real," she informs him, "which left toothmarks on my body and filled my veins with cold ice, and I'm not going to believe some tale that he sits next to you on the tube, and boom, you're dead."

~~~~~

["Heroine"](#); she tells him the first line is from Lord Byron, and he's suitably impressed.

The rumours about Death were circling the city, but she's so glad that she decided it's social media-induced paranoia (or an advertising campaign for a horror film) and refused to stay at home.

She is incredulous that he remembers her. But he does and invites her to sit with him and they drink bad coffee together. She has no idea anymore why she came to the library. The pain inside her is amplified by his physical closeness and her bones softly crumble each time he elbows her to make sure she's listening to him. He talks a lot. He has so much to say, all of it fascinating. She feels so insignificant, so not pretty, so clumsy, and her

heart feels like the unruly drums in [“Love Will Tear Us Apart.”](#)

He's talking and joking and bombarding her with bits of information and opinions and while she's blinded by him, she also manages to register how perfect his body is – not too muscley, not too fat, not too bony, just perfect. She surprises herself lusting after his body, because she usually needs months and a deep connection to want someone that much, that immediately, that painfully. She can't remember the last time she actually, actively, urgently wanted to feel someone's skin this much.

He asks what she thinks about the Death rumours, and she tells him it's rubbish. “I have stared in the face of Death for real,” she informs him, “which left toothmarks on my body and filled my veins with cold ice, and I'm not going to believe some tale that he sits next to you on the tube, and boom, you're dead.”

She looks at his majestic hands next to hers and feels her fingertips bruising she wants to stroke them so much. (She will find out later that he doesn't like hand-touching or handholding, will always struggle with it.)

“Tell me more about death,” he says.  
“Once you face it, it's ordinary. Happens to everyone. Not scary.” She's trying to downplay after her dramatic announcements.  
“What are you scared of then?” he asks.

Of you, she thinks. Of you getting up now and leaving, she thinks. Of you getting up now and leaving and us never meeting again. Of not knowing what kissing you feels like. Of not feeling the smoothness of the skin inside your arms. Of not knowing your favourite song.

“Well,” she mumbles, “I'm scared of dying before I can tell people I love that I love them.”  
“Right,” he says, taken aback by the poignancy of the answer. “Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Don't die yet, and show me that collection of miniatures you were talking about earlier instead.”

They look at old manuscripts together, and after much awkwardness, agree to go and see that new indie band in Shoreditch that everyone is talking about.

### **Day 3 (He wore black and I wore white)**

She's breathless. She doesn't remember anything from before him. Everything is replaced by the sweetness of his tongue and a constant ache in her ribcage.

Her mother calls. “Scary things are happening, L.,” she says. “26 dead for no reason. Do you need to go to another concert?” “I do,” she says, without explaining that she's going to meet the most beautiful middle-aged man in the world who makes her giddy with the sound of his laughter.

He calls next, telling her that he'll be an hour early, so they can have a beer together. Her ears are ringing out of excitement and nervousness. [“Nympho”](#) is pulsating in her head.

He's already at the bar when she arrives and he immediately, gallantly buys her a glass of wine and is so ready to talk and talk. She wonders why he is single – because he must be, going out with her – he's just too perfect to be single.

The band come on, and they stand at the back of the room, elbows touching, and she discovers that he talks during the gig as well – about the gig, admittedly, but he's full of comments and funny observations which need to be shared immediately. The band is great but him loudly whispering in her ear, guessing the samples in the songs and being extremely pleased with himself like a child, is even sweeter. At the same time, he sings along, dances a bit, asks a lot of questions, comments on the musicians' outfits, airdrums, and runs back to the bar when she finishes her wine.

She wonders if this is a date. She wonders what the rules of the game are; she hasn't played for so long, after cancer broke her body. She wonders why someone so extraordinary

would spend time with her.

He's even shinier, full of songs and adrenaline after the gig, and wants to talk more. "I know the best Vietnamese restaurant around here," he announces. "Do you like Vietnamese food? Do you like those tiny dumplings they make? What sort of food do you like? Are you hungry? Do you want to have a bite?"

She's just nodding to all those questions, overwhelmed by tenderness for this excited child, his amber eyes sparkly with music and wine.

They walk to the Vietnamese restaurant. He doesn't remember the exact address but is sure it's "around here" because there was a publisher "next door" he used to work for. She suggests googling it, but he's sure he can find it and they continue their zigzags around Kingsland Road.

He admits defeat after 40 minutes, during which he gets the whole story of her life out of her and they google the restaurant. It's close and closed. They clumsily hug by Liverpool Street station and go home (on different lines) but agree to go and try the famous soup at that restaurant later that week.

### **Day 5 (He would always win the fight)**

Three more stations to Liverpool Street and she looks at her phone camera – unsettled,

tense, nervous – and doesn't like herself. The carriage is full, she can't put on makeup while standing and she panics. She thinks another layer of face powder, more mascara and brighter lipstick will make him like her more.

When the train pulls up at Barbican, she gets off to sit on one of the station benches, refresh her makeup and get on the next train.

The elderly man in an elegant velvet jacket is probably also avoiding the crowded train, sitting next to her, reading *The Master and Margarita*. After she's done with her makeup, he gently touches her hand. She turns the sound of the Karl Hyde in her headphones singing [his love to a skyscraper](#) off. "Miss," he says, "Come with me."

### **(Bang bang, my baby shot me down)**

He'll get annoyed waiting for her and not getting any replies to his calls and messages, and only when watching the news the next morning, he'll realise with blood-chilling horror that her face is the 27th death.

He'll cry a bit, mainly out of shock and partly because he liked her a bit, and tell everyone about it: "Poor girl, who could imagine that!" He'll decide to do his best to forget about her, although he'll keep avoiding the Metropolitan line for a year.

*(Nobody else will think they want to bite into the sweetness of his voice, ever again.)*



Tatevik Ayvazyan is of Armenian origin and lives in London. She has a number of useless degrees, jobs, skills and opinions, and is the only person in the world credited as a poetry producer in a film. Her main loves are writing, quality espresso, Marquez, Rushdie, Kasabian, Almodovar, smooth Malbec and growing artichokes.

# Ani Mosinyan

## morning serenade

dead roses

swim in my cup of tea

limp and lifeless

severed from their stems

yearning to find something intimate again --

roots!

I sip.

they sink.

to the bottom.

there they go.

it's 8 am and i feel worthless already.

*October 2017*

## Desert Haiku

A dry desert rose  
Awakened by the moonrise  
Celestial skies stir

Chaos, come closer  
In the desert we are friends  
Black hole at zenith

I light a stiff joint  
The fumes linger in the night  
Etched in dark matter

A tense tango now  
Between terrain and cosmos  
stars, they beg, come home

Because no one knows  
Save for the desert and I  
Here, dreams come to die.

*August 2020*



Lena Dakessian Halteh

### Untitled

Sometimes I'll wake up early in the morning,  
watch the sun slither into my room  
beneath the cracks of the curtains,  
catch a glimmer of dust dancing in the air,  
listen to the creak of the floorboards.

At night  
I'll leave the window open  
And let the cold climb into bed with me.

*December 2017*



Ani Mosinyan is a writer with a degree in English Literature and Film Studies from the University of Southern California. She was born in Yerevan, Armenia in 1996, and raised in Los Angeles, California. She has written for *The Hollywood Reporter*, and her poetry has been published with *The Poetry Nation*. From a young age, Mosinyan was inspired by the writings of numerous classic authors such as Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain, and Oscar Wilde.

Mosinyan's poetry wrestles with the human desire to belong and be a part of the human experience, while also dealing with feelings of isolation and detachment.





# Shushanik Karapetyan



For this series of paintings, my focus was to relate the existential dilemma of freedom and the need for structure. I start by taping edges of rectangular shapes on the canvas. I decide the shape, size and placement of the rectangles intuitively, going with whatever feels visually balanced. I usually work with three colors on one painting, a decision that is also intuitive and depends on my mood. If I am in a relatively calm space, I may choose lighter shades. If I am feeling more restless, I may include a neon color. I use acrylic paint which allows me to work quickly, an important part of the process.

Once I have the tape down on canvas, the rest is an expression of freedom, anxiety, excitement, chaos and catharsis. I apply the paint with a palette knife, creative textures, spontaneously mixing colors on the canvas,

enjoying the pressure of the palette knife on the surface and the pressure of making decisions quickly before the acrylic paint dries and no longer bends to my will.

Once an area has been filled up with paint, I pull the tape that has maintained a boundary, and reveal a straight line that gently anchors the paintings. The visual product portrays textures and colors that run wild on the canvas juxtaposed by the silent lines of the cubes that poise and contain the chaos with their serenity. As humans, we strive for freedom, and while creating our world and making our own choices is a positive experience, it can also bring up feelings of dread, that there is no ground beneath us, only a void. These series of paintings reflect the conflict between our need for structure and our wish for freedom.



Born in Yerevan, Armenia, Shushanik Karapetyan is a New York based artist. In her work as a psychotherapist, she practices being in the moment, in the “now,” and this translates well into her process as an artist. Her art is meditative and intuitive in nature, placing significance on the process and reflecting the present mood.

The paintings included in this submission speak to the theme of isolation and the theme of controlled chaos. During the quarantine of 2020, there is chaos and isolation, as portrayed in the textures and colors that run wild on the canvas juxtaposed by the silent lines of the cubes that poise and contain the chaos with their serenity.

# Elizabeth Mkhitarian

*the moon itself is a fiction – jorge luis borges, verbiage for poems*

the grass opens to a dust trail ahead, tucked behind wisdom's tree, you see the place for gathering, people walking to meet the cool sky, you walk and tear the soles of your shoes trying to reach an end, it circles back to the bottom, wherever you stand you see the cloud laced song bird soaring above the noise

if you could shout to the city below, it might be in the form of song, in the form of a poem, you write on your hands the words you'll transcribe later, something about the glory filled lungs passing by, the need for love around you, everyone searching and no one giving in return, you lift up the anguish, you reach the top of the hill, the city lights turn on like a switch, and the glare of beauty breaks the night, you feel small and it's comforting in a world that wants you to be larger, you let the city nurture you, an infant in the care of modernity, clothed in the light switch

what will you write to her, when the light dims and you watch the hill you climbed empty, abandon, waiting for the world to soothe

I'll listen to your cathedral of flight, strings of longing on the stained glass, carving hope on something so close to shattering; you keep your eyes on the path that led you, songbird flying just above your shoulders, you shudder in the knowing, as you look across your window and remember how ephemeral it must have all been



*you awake, shades drawn*

with the feeling that you might still be asleep  
you pull on strings, on beads to let the sun in

the day outside unchanging, time no longer in imaginings  
it feels more combusive; if it can be measured, it must be similar to the sky – I see it, I  
experience it differently than you

did you look outside today?

blinds shut

close your eyes

is it the sunrise or the fog of yesterday clouding all judgement, all awareness that you were  
a child born, forgotten, left to pull yourself up

hands stumble

you search for a mother turned

father strengthening you

you look to the distance, no markers of passings, of happenings within yourself; words you  
would write or speak if the anxiety were extracted

you let down your hair

when light touches skin and rain welcomes the morning

you open, you listen

worlds shut and you see yourself reflected on glass

what if you slept through this, what will you find in rising?

## Alone in Diaspora

FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM – NIGHT

YOUNG GIRL, age unknown, stands naked in front of a mirror; wax strip to upper lip, she rubs roughly with her index finger.

Eyes pulse in anticipation of pain, it's warm enough now. She pulls.

YOUNG GIRL

Fuck.

She places a larger strip on left boob, pink nipple encircled with dark hair, white-passing sometimes resembles hiding the hair of a father.

YOUNG GIRL

1, 2,

Pulls strip, touches roots overgrown, blonde tips graze low. She sits in front of the mirror behind closed doors, away from a LOVER, who knows all of this but pretends otherwise, for her.

Why are we prettier in America?

maybe the water is cleaner  
maybe the wealth makes us attractive  
the hair removal starts at 7  
the teasing ends at 16  
when you purchase a new nose  
jackhammer to the rim

whiter  
duller features now

EXT. BATHROOM – DAY

Young girl turned kukla, age kept quiet, lays behind the mirror naked, assimilated; am I better off?

FADE OUT



Elizabeth Mkhitarian is a first-generation Armenian-American published writer in both Armenian and English. Her work explores people and language in displacement, often finding a prayer-like-hope that emerges from inherited stories of trauma and survival.

# Nor Ashkhar

Ani Marganian & Anoush Khojikian



Affirmation: I deserve to rest  
*There is great value in solitude  
and taking time for ourselves-  
time for silence, for rest, and  
for gratitude.*

Affirmation: I am open and  
receptive  
*Time alone with cherished  
books opens us to new  
perspectives, while bringing  
us to far off lands and magical  
utopias.*







Affirmation: I deserve to rest  
*There is great value in solitude  
and taking time for ourselves-  
time for silence, for rest, and  
for gratitude.*



Nor Ashkharh is the collaborative passion project of two Armenian-American cousins based out of Orange County, California: Ani Marganian and Anoush Khojikian. Ani is a medical speech-language pathologist, supporting individuals with communication disorders in the hospital setting. She has Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies and Master of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders- but her childhood passion has always been art and drawing. Meanwhile, Anoush is a high school English teacher, with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Master of Arts in Teaching. Anoush finds inspiration through classic literature, and joy in empowering her students to find voice through their writing. Together, Ani illustrates and Anoush brings her knowledge and literacy of the Armenian language - resulting in culturally inspired illustrations which celebrate their Armenian roots. Their joint goal is to spread joy and connection through color and creativity, while honoring their rich heritage. They are currently working to develop a speech therapy service project to support non-verbal communicators in Armenia- which their Nor Ashkharh sticker and merchandise sales will support. During this global pandemic, Ani and Anoush have been going on long walks and discussing moments of gratitude despite these difficult times. They have discovered there are moments of “utopia” in the “isolation” of quarantine – spending more time in nature, dusting off old cherished books, and investing in self-care. This set of illustrations is inspired by these simple joys, and serve as a reminder that there is always something to be grateful for.

# Emma Elizabeth Shooshan

01/03/2019

I AM FROM  
the tree of knowledge  
a wealth of wisdom  
its fruit  
    torn open  
        raw and bleeding  
its seed  
    swallowed  
    spit out  
    scattered

If you cut me  
I still bleed  
    so sweet and  
    so bitter  
Burning even  
My own  
    throat

I AM FROM  
loud voices  
crooked smiles  
sharp teeth  
    cutting even  
    my own tongue  
thick skin  
    blistering  
    festering  
    calloused  
dark-eyed women  
    filled with  
fire

I AM FROM  
what grew  
    even from  
scorched soil  
    stolen land

a history  
    repeating itself



# Vicken Hovsepian

**Listen to “Forest of Pillars”,  
“Home” and “To the Wolves” here**

## Forest of Pillars

Forest alive  
The trees speak in signs  
Rivers of gold  
Where dreams are reborn

Speak no words, all is heard  
Search for the answers by moonlight  
Plagued by visions of the world beyond

Wake from this dream  
Or is this another life?  
Dream, no more  
No more  
Please, no more  
No more

Ruination, desolation  
No safe haven  
Eden lost

Fear his reign  
His reign  
His reign

I am destroyer of worlds

Can you feel his shadow?  
Can you feel him take control?

Brooding beast  
Visage of me

## Home

Journey unclear  
Abandon your fear  
There's no going back  
The light guides my hand  
Follow me, and know your truth

Far in the north  
Brave this cold  
Faces glaring at me  
So alone

Distant light, radiant  
Walk by faith, lead by sight

Distant light, luminous  
The celestial sky  
Can you see the aurora  
In the skyline; in the sky at night

And I see you standing  
Before my eyes  
And I see the Northern Lights  
In the skyline; in the sky at night

Don't look back again  
But in my eyes  
To know your truth

Who are you?  
And who am I?  
Who am I...

Seven years you have run  
Come home and fly  
We are waiting for you  
All those years, you danced with wolves  
Run to the wolves

## To The Wolves

Cast out to the wolves  
An exile left here to die  
I hear the wolves singing  
Falling through the trees  
Snow and leaves  
Gloriously

Shelter I seek  
In this twilight  
Feel their haunting presence  
As they near  
Taste of my blood

All I hear  
Their hollow cries so clear  
Howls echo through the air and trees

Feel their haunting presence X4

Eyes; lust for death  
Eyes; glow of red

When you look at your reflection; what do you see?  
A shell of the man you once were?  
You don't even recognize yourself anymore  
Why do you keep running?  
The wolves... they aren't real

Haunted dreams; Your face I see  
Haunting dreams of the wolves stalking me  
Running from you, I am running to you  
Running from you, I am running to you  
Please set me free



Vicken Hovsepien is a 26-year-old esteemed drummer and composer. Vicken was born in the United States, but his parents were born in Beirut, Lebanon. His family moved to the United States in the 70s to flee a civil war in Beirut. As a musician for 14 years now, Vicken has had the opportunity to study, write, and perform in a variety of styles and mediums. Between scoring for short films and video games, producing his own records, session drumming, and orchestrating for other musicians, he keeps his skill sets sharp and versatile. Vicken is a recent graduate of CalArts' Performer-Composer program, where he had the opportunity to grow immensely as a musician.

Vicken's original music is often rooted in mythology and mysticism. The 3 songs submitted come from Vicken's most recent release, an EP titled "To The Wolves." The songs on this EP deal heavily with the themes of isolation, abandonment, self-reflection, and the dreams of utopic ecstasy.

# Celeste Snowber & Marsha Odabashian

## Shield of color

even in isolation  
a virus looming  
fear penetrating

a shield of color  
exists; swarming us  
as angels, beckoning

the great flattening  
is the great rounding  
what brushes the interior

brimming with hues  
in the covers  
of our own longing.

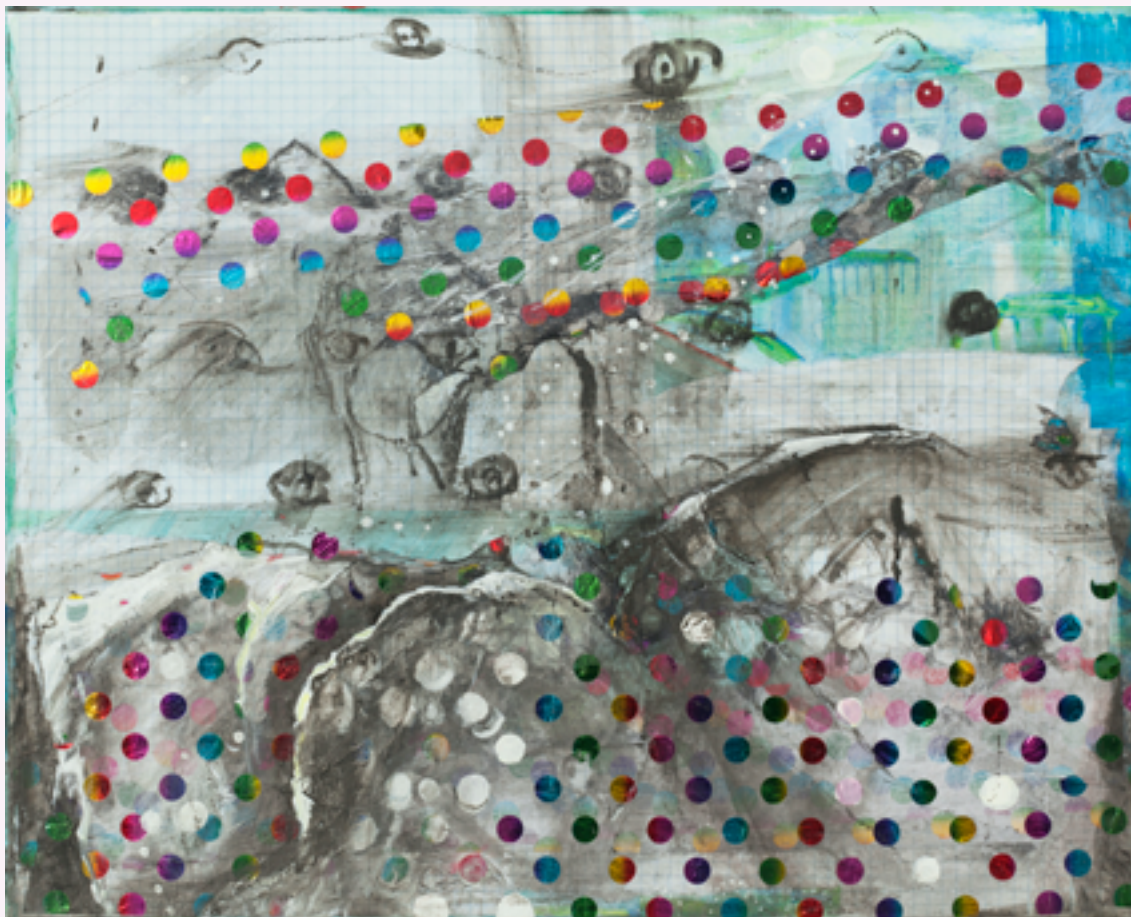
Celeste Nazeli Snowber



*Flattening the Curve 7*, 2020 ©  
Acrylic Paint, Water Soluble Graphite and Paper on Canvas

Marsha Nouritza Odabashian





*Flattening the Curve 5, 2020 ©*

Acrylic Paint, Water Soluble Graphite and Paper on Canvas

Marsha Nouritza Odabashian

### Pollinated with love

Draw near to  
the inner existence  
available within you  
liniments connecting the universe  
in this time of distancing

a world wider than the eye  
vibrates in your tissues  
bordering the invisible.

Drink the nectar  
where the heart blossoms  
sweet liquid of the infinite  
even in the midst of sorrow  
we are pollinated with love.

Celeste Nazeli Snowber

## Illuminata

We are all illuminated  
manuscripts and womanscripts  
etched with layers and letters  
storied lives inscripted  
on the skin  
cellular memory beneath  
epidermis and tissues.  
We are scriptoria  
writing our own narratives  
through a co-creation.



Windswept, 2020 © Marsha Nouritza Odabashian  
Acrylic Paint, Water Soluble Graphite and Paper on Canvas

Light cracks the wounds-

Here's a fact:  
31,000 Armenian illuminated manuscripts  
still survive after invasions and massacres

Perhaps our hope is us  
we are the real illumination  
brilliance of luminosity  
on living parchment.

Celeste Nazeli Snowber



Boston based artist and MFA, Marsha Nouritza Odabashian's drawings and paintings uniquely reflect the tension and expansiveness of being raised in dual cultures, Armenian and American. As young child she watched her mother cultivate the Armenian tradition of dyeing eggs red by boiling them in onionskins. In her work, vignettes of current events, history and social justice emerge from the onionskin dye on paper, stretched canvas or compressed cellulose sponge. Her numerous solo exhibitions in the United States include *Skins* at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, *In the Shade of the Peacock*, *EXPUNGE* and *Miasma* at Galatea Fine Art in Boston. Group exhibitions include the Danforth Museum and Gallery Z. She has exhibited in Armenia twice: *New Illuminations* (HAYP Pop Up) and *Road Maps* (Honey Pump Gallery). Reviews of her work appear in *ArtScope*, *Art New England*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Mirror Spectator*. Odabashian studies early and medieval Armenian art and architecture at Tufts University with Professor Christina Maranci, with whom she traveled to Aght'amar and Ani in Historic Armenia. Pairing her ancestral past with the present in her art is her means of fulfillment. This period of isolation has given her time to reflect upon overcoming difficulty through creativity. Marsha can be found at [www.marshaodabashian.com](http://www.marshaodabashian.com).

Celeste Nazeli Snowber, PhD is a dancer, author, poet and award-winning educator who is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University outside Vancouver, B.C., Canada. She has published widely in the area of arts-based research and her books include *Embodied Prayer* and *Embodied Inquiry: Writing, living and being through the body*, as well as two collections of poetry. Celeste continues to create site-specific performances in the natural world as well as full-length performances. Her next collection of poetry is entitled, *The Marrow of Longing* which explores her Armenian identity and will be integrated in her next one-woman show. Celeste's mother was born in Historic Armenia in 1912 and survived the Armenian genocide before immigrating to Boston. Integral to Celeste's own healing process is excavating fragments of ancestral memory, which find their way in poems and dances. They become a path to excavate trauma as well as the beauty imbued in the terroir of Armenian culture. During this time of COVID, poetry continues to become a place of alchemy and a portal into other worlds even in times of difficulty. Celeste can be found at [www.celestesnowber.com](http://www.celestesnowber.com).





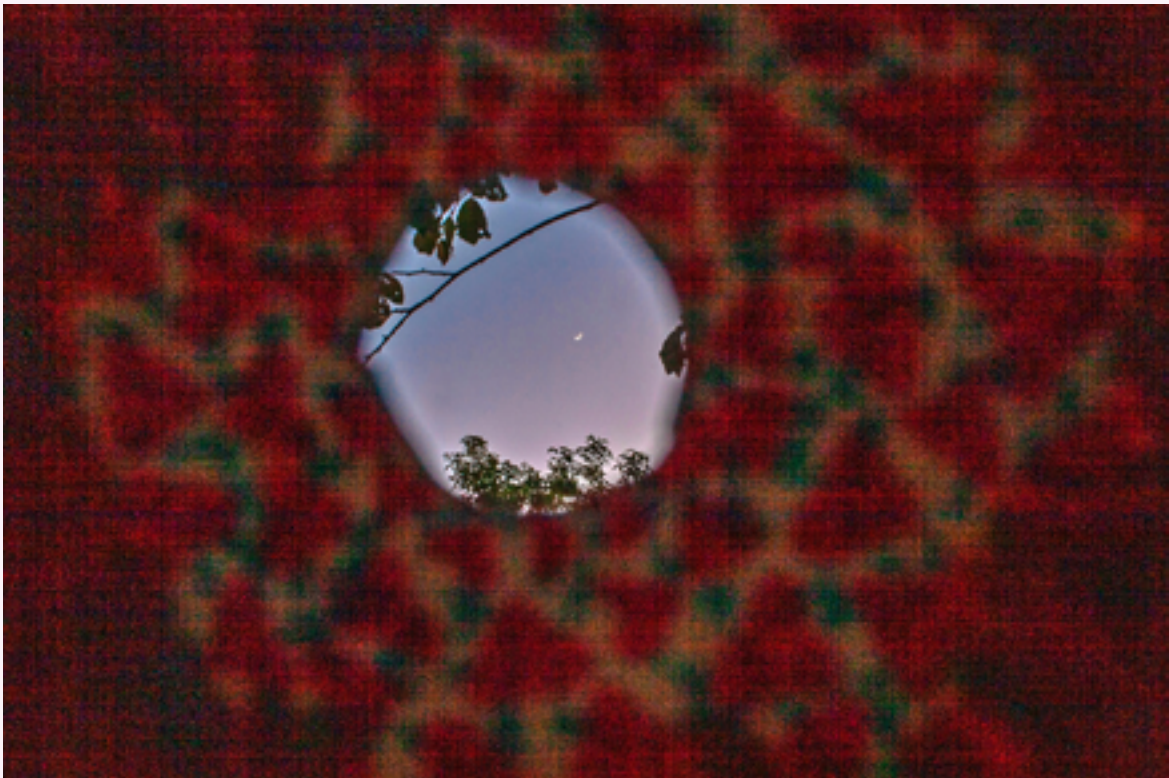
# Danielle Mikaelian

## Impermanence

It is not him, I tell you.  
Thoughts shift, gears shift.  
Cars crash without drivers, cars crash with drivers.  
Why rely on another's touch? Speedway.  
Buy that new car. Latch like a seatbelt. Lock the doors.

Hands at the wheel, hands on my heart,  
you do not hold my hand. Those keys  
jingle with promises, I hear them ring. Drop them.  
Leave the car, leave me, leave us.

In my thoughts tonight, I grab the wheel,  
steer it towards denial, crash into  
the realization that it is him, that parking ticket still needs to be paid,  
I am alone.



Nairy Shahinian

## February 14th

My cheeks are flushed pink, a rosy hue,  
but don't compare them to flowers.  
Flowers die; cosmetic blush does not fade until  
you stop applying it to tear-drenched cheeks,  
rebirthing the tilting of lips, the biting of a cheek,  
the giggle of a smile. Breath meeting air.

Honeysuckle apples always seem so sweet,  
don't bite them! Eve's folly is no fairness and  
flushed pinks turn to pale petunias when merged with drops of water,  
the river curving away from romantic sentiments, shapeshifting into  
flushed fall's leaves that turn to pieces in the wind  
if you blow your lover away.

Here and now, rosy cheeks are fairest reminders,  
we can rest thumb on thumb another day.



Danielle Mikaelian is an English Literature major at Columbia University in the city of New York. She has taken multiple creative writing courses at Columbia and recently completed a poetry writing workshop led by Dorothea Lasky, an acclaimed poet who has published multiple books. Danielle is the President of Columbia University's Armenian Society and, as the descendant of Armenian Genocide survivors, she is extremely passionate about her heritage. While living in New York, Danielle has further immersed herself in Armenian culture through taking an Armenian art course at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, joining AYF's Manhattan Moush Chapter, and meeting with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Armenia's Head Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs during fall 2019. Her poems focus on isolation between individuals and their loved ones.

# Aleen Jaghalian



## Skywalk

At the end  
you can actually  
enjoy the void.



Aleen Jaghalian was born, raised and currently lives in Los Angeles. Her preferred creative medium is anything that gets the point of her idea across. With a background in anthropology, she has a long standing fascination with language and communication - spoken, non-verbal, gestured, symbolic, textual, visual, or “between the lines” - and how it constructs perceptions which lead to an understanding of the world around and within us. Right now she is revisiting what it means to be Armenian and an artist while committing more fully to the practice of both.



# NAMES OF THE FALLEN

We thank and honor the servicemen and servicewomen for their bravery and sacrifice.

Petrosyan Khachatur Sergey, born 2001  
Artyom Spartak Harutyunyan, born 2001  
Reserve Martirosyan Arthur Lon, born 1985  
Sayadyan Garik Meruzhan, born 1984  
Tovmasyan Hamlet Janibek, born 1980  
Mernitaryan Lernik L., born 1972  
Suren Benik Sargsyan, born 1985  
Arsen Arthur Mailyan, born 1982  
David Manvel Manukyan, born 1987  
Topchyan Arman L., born 1993  
Reservist Hrayr Armen Yeganyan, born 1990  
Manukyan Narek Hrachya, born 2000  
Hovhannes Misha Chobanyan, born 1997  
Sargis Davit Tsaturyan, born 2001  
Zhora Alik Martirosyan, born 2001  
Georgian Edmon Telman, born 2001  
Mkrtchyan Misak Masis, born 1997  
Babayan Vahan Gagik, born 1987  
Khachatur Simon Hayrapetyan, born 1989  
Truzyan Hrach Avetis, born 1998  
Tigran L. Arsen L., born 1993  
Arshakyan Hayk Harutyun, born 1992  
Tovmasyan Nahapet Gharib, born 2000  
Reservist Marat Martunik Hakobjanyan, born 1982  
Reserve Azaryan Areg Borik, born 1988  
Hovakimyan Samson Misha, born 1992  
Hakobjanyan Tigran Drastamat, born 1978  
Vahagn Artush Grigoryan, born 1996  
Vlad Albert Grigoryan, born 1999  
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Bazunts Babken Arseni, born 1995  
Manukyan Andranik Armeni, born 1982  
Kochinyan David Mayis, born 1990  
Hasratyan Robert Garnik, born 1992  
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Vahe Arsen Karamyan, born 1988  
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Reserve Ghazaryan Davit Smbat, born 1999  
Reserve Torosyan Vachagan Varuzhan, born 1997  
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Reserve Kirakosyan George Manvel, born 1989  
Maranjyan Edward Artush, born 2000  
Hovhannisyan Gorg Zohrab, born 1984  
Hovhannisyan Gor Zohrab, born 1986  
Avagyan Ara Senik, born 1981  
Narek Senik Harutyunyan, born 1988  
Gabrielyan Igor Grigori, born 1977  
Hambardzumyan Hambardzum Albert, born 1989  
Avetyan Gegham Zhora, born 1971  
Danielyan Garik Azat, born 1990  
Mesropyan Hovsep Mheri, born 1991  
Hayrapetyan Arshak Vanush, born 1977  
Ayvazyan Vladimir Karapet, born 1982  
Nikalyan Armen Samvel, born 1981

Grigoryan Hayk Davit, born 1985  
Hrachya Sahak Avetisyan, born 1993  
Reservist Arayik Gacha Martirosyan, born 1989  
Reserve soldier Baghdasaryan Aram Gurgeni, born 1969  
Reserve Grigoryan Karen Gurgeni, born 1976  
Reserve Mirzoyan Sashik Ashot, born 1962  
Reservist Sahinyan Sargis Rafael, born 1984  
Vigilante Aperyay Yurik Loni, born 1961  
Necha Alexander Vasilich, born 2001  
Mkhitaryan Nikoghos Edward, born 2000  
Babajanyan Davit Garnik, born 2001  
Hakobyan Nver Azat, born 2001  
Hovsepyan Harutyun Arthur, born 2001  
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Khalatyan Grigor Sjada, born 2001  
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Danielyan Davit Hmayak, born 2000  
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Vrezh Arsen Kostandyan, born 2000  
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Aslamazyan Aghvan Smbat, born 2000  
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Tadjosyan Vardan Serozh, born 1980  
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Balasanyan Khachatur Sergey, born 1985  
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Garnik Robert Sahakyan, born 1985  
Mardanyan Hayk Romik, born 1979  
Babajanyan Alexey Alexey, born 1978  
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Khachatryan Tsolak Samvel, born 1990  
Karen Seyran Harutyunyan, born 2000  
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Elizbaryan Mher Ashot, born 2000  
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Sasun Tigran Hayrapetyan, born 2000  
Arman Manvel Poghosyan, born 2002  
Grigor Armeni Gorgyan, born 2002  
Mkrtchyan Vazgen Rudik, born 2000  
Arthur Hayk Kirakosyan, born 1999  
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Melkumyan Hovhannes Vagharshak, born 1977  
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Baghdagulyan Ashot Varazdat, born 1973  
Mikaelyan Hayrapet Gurgeni, born 1994  
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Kyarunts Gagik Razmik, born 1998  
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Harutyunyan Misha Sedrak, born 2001  
Mailyan Norayr Vahan, born 1999  
Rafael Yurik Konjoryan, born 2000  
Robert Arthur Sargsyan, born 2001  
Abgaryan Arsen Seyrani, born 2001  
Arthur Arsen Movsisyan, born 2001  
Eric Arthur Movsisyan, born 2001  
Manvel Karlen Avanesyan, born 2001  
Areg Arthur Barseghyan, born 2001  
Karen Gideon Grigoryan, born 2001  
Sargsyan Arman Arkadik, born 2001  
Reserve Antonyan Vruyr Siamanto, born 1977  
Reserve Vardanyan Harutyun Samvel, born 1982  
Avetisyan Hovhannes Nikolay, born 1967  
Khachatryan Arthur Ararat, born 1992  
Grigoryan Vanik Grigory, born 1971  
Kostanyan G. Arkady, born 1996  
Margaryan Hamazasp Vladik, born 1972  
Khachatryan Vardan Zorik, born 1990  
Kirakosyan Armen Aristakes, born 1985  
Margaryan Arman Mihrab, born 1983  
Asatryan Varuzhan Rubik, born 1977  
Hakobyan Armen Hayki, born 1980  
Yeghoyan Karen Zaven, born 1989  
Yeghoyan Karen Vladik, born 1988  
Muradyan Samvel Martin, born 1979

Aristakesyan Kolya Rafik, born 1990  
Simonyan Zakaria Heros, born 1979  
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Zakaryan Karapet Derenik, born 1986  
Gharibyan Artur Harutyun, born 1985  
Sargsyan Sjada Varazdat, born 1980  
Edgar Artemi Harutyunyan, born 1982  
Arthur Armen Aslanyan, born 1998  
Ayvazyan Armen Khachatur, born 1984  
Sargsyan Arman Rafik, born 1983  
Simonyan Gorg Vanush, born 1972  
Stepanyan Apaven Bayandur, born 1969  
Zakaryan Zakaria Hunani, born 1987  
Babayan Papag Kajik, born 1980  
Poghosyan Hrachya Vachik, born 1995  
Simonyan Isahak Samvel, born 1995  
Babayan Andranik Vardan, born 1991  
Mnatsakanyan Vardan Mushegh, born 1989  
Reserve Sargsyan Yanek Vrezh, born 1981  
Reserve Alexanyan Artyom Parzik, born 1983  
Hrant Albert Asatryan, born 1986  
Varagyan Sahak Demsik, born 1981  
Kakoyan Bagrat Saribek, born 1985  
Vachik Hayki Sargsyan, born 2002  
Vyacheslav Valerichich Voskovsky, born 1975  
Hovik Vardanyan Vardanyan, born 1996  
Grigoryan Hakob Albert, born 2000  
Stephanyan Mher Telik, born 1969  
Vardan Khachik Hayrapetyan, born 1987  
Martirosyan Karen Dzonik, born 1997  
Karapetyan Gor Haykaz, born 1994  
Galstyan Arman Armeni, born 2000  
Zakaryan Tigran Vahani, born 1988  
African Vahagn Vanik, born 1984  
Sergey Pavel Balbalyan, born 1982  
Isakhanyan Gor Artush, born 1985  
Ohanyan Sasun Seryozha, born 1974  
Ruben Raphael Kirakosyan, born 1982  
Petrosyan G. Ashik, born 1992  
Yeranosyan Karen Jonik, born 1991  
Igityan Hovhannes Varazdat, born 1987  
Mkrtchyan Ara Makari, born 1992  
Khechoyan David Edik, born 1993  
Aren Hovik Arzumanyan, born 2000  
Reserve Harutyunyan Gnel Rubik, born 1977  
Reserve soldier Babakhanyan Mikael Kamo, born 1997  
Abrahamyan Aram Hrachya, born 1981  
Saghumyan Varuzhan Armani, born 2002  
Sergey Vardan Iskandaryan, born 2001  
Baghdasaryan Edgar Shahan, born 2001  
Gabrielyan Gnel Karapet, born 2001  
Sardaryan Hovik Hrayr, born 2001  
Tigran Norayr Harutyunyan, born 2000  
Otaryan Gorg Vardan, born 1999  
Dadoyan Albert Hovhannes, born 2000  
Ghazaryan Harutyun Artashes, born 2002  
Citizen Grigoryan Eduard Alik, born 1996  
Nalbandyan Armen Mkhitar, born 1990  
Eric Arthur Khachatryan, born 2002  
David Samvel Hakobyan, born 2001  
Avagimyan Arshak Vazgen, born 1990  
Sargsyan Garegin Sargsyan, born 1986  
Rustamyan Sashik Armeni, born 1994  
Grigoryan Kamo Sanasar, born 2000  
Veranyan Volodya Vardan, born 2001  
Vahe Edik Vardanyan, born 2000  
Shamyan GHorg Hayki, born 2000

Baghdasaryan David Karen, born 2001  
 Samvel Suren Sahakyan, born 1986  
 Karapetyan Manvel Artsruni, born 1988  
 Grigoryan Hovhannes Hamlet, born 1991  
 Minasyan Vardges Vahagn, born 1994  
 Aghababyan Hayk Rafael, born 1985  
 Gorgyan Ashot Garnik, born 1996  
 Mamikonyan Melik Aramays, born 1997  
 Poghosyan Alex Vardan, born 2001  
 Lalayan Hayk Gagik, born 2001  
 Margaryan Davit Mheri, born 2002  
 Simonyan Artsrun Jirayr, born 1994  
 Soyanyan Lon Mekhak, born 1994  
 Avetisyan Avetis Khachik, born 1997  
 Soghomonyan Henrik Rafik, born 2001  
 Botsinyan Gor Serzhik, born 1991  
 Barkhudaryan John Hrachik, born 1985  
 Karakhanyan Karapet Alexander, born 1989  
 Davtyan Yenok Alexander, born 1988  
 Lazaryan Jond Sosik, born 1972  
 Antonyan Anton Bagrati, born 1984  
 Botsinyan Khachik Paruyr, born 1989  
 Babken Mkrtumyan Ararat, born 1990  
 Janibekyan Artashes Koryun, born 1985  
 Poghosyan Vardan Derenik, born 1987  
 Torosyan Aramo Karen, born 1999  
 Poghosyan Khachik Martiros, born 2000  
 Karen Ashot Simonyan, born 1985  
 Khachatryan Khachatur Hovhannes, born 1990  
 Drmeyer Arman Edward, born 1980  
 Andranik Karen Grigoryan, born 1993  
 Reservist Edik Armen Karapetyan, born 1964  
 Reserve Misakyan Arthur Torgom, born 1973  
 Edgar Arthur Galstyan, born 1999  
 Myasnikyan Myasnik Parg, born 1990  
 Volunteer Shahinyan Tigran Karlen, born 1968  
 Arakelyan Samvel Loni, born 2001  
 Teroyan Parg-Karen, born 1998  
 Adamyan Emil Hakoby, born 2001  
 Arthur Mikael Simikyan, born 2001  
 Tagvoryan Grigor Vahe, born 1999  
 Yeghshatyan George Arthur, born 2000  
 Reserve Shahbazyan Kamo Gorgi, born 1979  
 Vahagn Felix Asatryan, born 1977  
 Avetisyan Leon Armenak, born 1990  
 Nersisyan Andranik Manuel, born 1990  
 Galeyan Armen Hayaser, born 1985  
 Avanyan G. Sergey, born 1989  
 Reserve Nersisyan Martin Seryozha, born 1991  
 Kirakosyan Aram Hamlet, born 1979  
 Reserve Hovhannisyen Vazgen Martik, born 1974  
 Reserve Nersesyan Garik Seryozha, born 1978  
 Reserve Alaverdyan Gurgun Karo, born 1995  
 Reserve Movsesyan Vardan Seryozha, born 1983  
 Nikolay Armen Karapetyan, born 2000  
 Manukyan Marat Karen, born 2001  
 Sinanyan Narek Sergey, born 1992  
 Serob Sarmen Asryan, born 1998  
 Garegin Artush Yeranosyan, born 1982  
 Hambardzumyan Hakob Smbat, born 1996  
 Khachatryan Hrayr Surik, born 1981  
 Avetisyan Khachik Loni, born 1981  
 Janoyan Melik Zorik, born 1993  
 Dadoyan Marat Zohrak, born 2002  
 Ochinyan Arman Ararat, born 1999  
 Harutyunyan Gagik Gagik, born 2001  
 Karapetyan Karen Movses, born 2001  
 Mesropyan Argishty Sasha, born 2000  
 Ghoghhas Samvel Poghosyan, born 1990  
 Tsatryan Karen Seryozha, born 1977  
 Narek Vachagan Hovhannisyen, born 1992  
 Volunteer Grigoryan Khazhak Formik, born 1973  
 Volunteer Karapetyan Vardan Frunzi, born 1984  
 Volunteer Torosyan Radik Papini, born 1967  
 Gorgyan Shaliko Volodya, born 1995  
 Azizyan Artashes Yeghishi, born 1980  
 Abroyan Arsen Rubik, born 2000  
 Ayvazyan Rafik Hamlet, born 2001  
 Torosyan Arzumanyan Yegori, born 2001  
 Solkaryan Arsen Artak, born 2000  
 Kirakosyan Arayik Edik, born 1991  
 Babajanyan Gorg Arturi, born 1996  
 Galstyan Martin Vazgen, born 1991  
 Sargsyan Narek Jivani, born 1993  
 Safyan Gegham Serzhik, born 1984  
 Mailyan Rubik Hovhannes, born 1969  
 Safyan Arayik Hovhannes, born 1989  
 Poghosyan Vrezhik Seyran, born 1992  
 David Ara Hovhannisyen, born 1995  
 Amaryan Samson Rachik, born 1988  
 Arabachyan Gorg Aghasi, born 2001  
 Aram Arthur Poghosyan, born 1997  
 Martirosyan Narek Shiraz, born 1993  
 Reserve Khachatryan Marat Vladik, 1979  
 Gabrielyan Gor Armenak, born 2002  
 Eduard Armani Chichyan, born 2001  
 Navoyan Shant Gurgeni, born 2001  
 Shast Harutyun Galstyan, born 2001  
 Ishkhan Arthur Grigoryan, born 2002  
 Narek Hayki Hovhannisyen, born 2001  
 Qoryan Grigory Grigoryan, born 2001  
 Khachatryan Narek Arthur, born 2001  
 Razmik Grigoryan Grigoryan, born 1998  
 Reserve Gharibyan Karen Rudik, born 1982  
 Manucharyan Harutyun Vanik, born 1988  
 Badalyan David Vahani, born 1987  
 Danielyan Aram Vardan, born 2001  
 Razmik Karen Tandilyan, born 2001  
 Elfik Gagik Grigoryan, born 2001  
 Manukyan Pavel Harutyun, born 2001  
 Brsoyan Gagik Sedrak, born 2002  
 Rafael Armani Ovseyan, born 2001  
 Hovhannes Karlen Grigoryan, born 1995  
 Reserve soldier Hovsepyan Kamo Shahen, born 1976  
 Volunteer Petrosyan Habet Vrezh, born 1965  
 Volunteer Buduryan Vahagn Nahapet, born 1996  
 Volunteer Sargsyan Alexander Hamlet, born 1988  
 Volunteer Matdosyan Lernerik Martik, born 1967  
 Poghosyan Sargis Garegin, born 1982  
 Melkonyan Serob Melik, born 1969  
 Ghazaryan Arman Vardan, born 1981  
 Harutyunyan Mher Volodya, born 1973  
 Ginosyan Vachagan Anushavan, born 1985  
 Seryozha Smbat Virabyan, born 1995  
 Grigoryan Vazgen Hmayak, born 1976  
 Otaryan Tatul Meruzhan, born 1986  
 Bagrat Ruben Salayan, born 1982  
 Zohrab Samvel Arshakyan, born 1990  
 Khachatryan Artyom Karapet, born 1994  
 Gasparyan Samvel Sahak, born 1994  
 Badoyan Nver Artash, born 1972  
 Petrosyan Artyom Aram, born 1996  
 David Khoren Jalavyan, born 1999  
 Khechumyan Artak Norik, born 1982  
 Mikoyan Tigran Arsen, born 1997  
 Avetisyan Elfik Mkrtich, born 2000  
 Sargsyan Narek Anastas, born 1991  
 Dilanyan Gagik Edward, born 2000  
 Tadjosyan Vahan Surik, born 1987  
 Sosyan Suren Seyrani, born 2001  
 Harutyunyan Harutyun Gorgi, born 1998  
 Atayan Vladislav Georgi, born 1980  
 Avetisyan Vlad Arayik, born 1995  
 Babayan Hovik Viliati, born 1980  
 Davtyan Slava Rashid, born 1976  
 Tatul Vigeni Harutyunyan, born 1987  
 Eduard Eduard Adamyan, born 1995  
 Reserve Babayan Hayk Vilyat, born 1975  
 Reserve Osipov Aren Hmayak, born 1984  
 Reserve officer Alexanyan Karen Vagifi, born 1980  
 Terrorist Israeli Karen Suren, born 1980  
 Avagyan Khachatur Avanes, born 1980  
 Sargsyan Vilen Hamlet, born 1990  
 Abrahamyan Hayk Boris, born 1988  
 Garik Yurik Harutyunyan, born 1977  
 Mehrabyan David Samvel, born 2001  
 Tigran Hrachik Gorgyan, born 2000  
 Aghekyan Armen Geghayr, born 2000  
 Grigor Andranik Chghrikyan, born 2001  
 Sadoyan Abraham Gorgi, born 2002  
 Davit S. Grigoryan, born 1994  
 Nikoghosyan Taron Tadzoz, born 1992  
 Shahnazaryan Asatur Suren, born 1996  
 Mkrtchyan Hayk Aram, born 1997  
 Mahtesyan Hrach Varuzhan, born 2001  
 Pavel Miran Sahakyan, born 2000  
 Manvel Darwin Irkoyan, born 2000  
 Khachatryan Arthur Misak, born 2001  
 Ghuzanyan Gorg Yura, born 2001  
 Tigranyan Arthur Serob, born 2000  
 Ghazaryan Paylak Davit, born 2001  
 Kirakosyan Aren Karen, born 2000  
 Ohanyan Arman Harutyun, born 2001  
 Arakelyan Artsrun Meruzhan, born 2001  
 Edgar Vahe Hayrapetyan, born 2000  
 Azaryan Slavik Ararat, born 2000  
 Hakobyan Zaven Stepan, born 2001  
 Hovakimyan Arman Aram, born 2000  
 Khalatyan Artashes Hakoby, born 2001  
 Sargsyan Narek Vagharshak, born 2001  
 Reserve Captain Suren Slavik, born 1974  
 Abraham Hovsep Karapetyan, born 2001  
 Karapetyan Armen Davit, born 2001  
 Grisha Norayr Tumanyan, born 1999  
 Poghosyan Sargis Samvel, born 1990  
 Farmanyan Alexander Nairi, born 1996  
 Burnusuzyan Valentin Shavarsh, born 1985  
 Edgar Arthur Matosyan, born 1984  
 Vanesyan Garik Misha, born 1975  
 David Arthur Boris, born 1989  
 Hovhannes Yura Torosyan, born 2002  
 Karapetyan Armen Edik, born 2001  
 Petrosyan Eric Lon, born 2001  
 Rudik Arkady Malkhasyan, born 1976  
 Osipyanyan Alexander Vladislav, born 1985  
 Liparit Ashot Dashtoyan, born 1997  
 Sasun Samvel Hovhannisyen, born 1977  
 Hanyan Nubar Andranik, born 1998  
 Martirosyan Gorg Karo, born 1996  
 Harutyunyan Artavazd Vardan, born 1997

Manvel Suren Harutyunyan, born 1991  
Poghosyan G. Hovik, born 1997  
Sargsyan Pyotr Varazdat, born 1990  
Eric Willen Hovsepian, born 2001  
Yeghiazaryan Hayk Artik, born 2000  
Martirosyan Emil Suren, born 2001  
Sargis Armeni Sargsyan, born 2001  
Yeghoyan Arsen Meruzhan, born 2001  
Stepanyan Leon Hamlet, born 2001  
Arakelyan Edgar Arayik, born 2000  
Arakelyan Vahe Arayik, born 2000  
Saribek Hovhannes Mkrtchyan, born 2000  
Babayan Suren Harutyun, born 2000  
Mikikyan Gagik Smbat, born 2001  
Logyan Artyom Edward, born 2001  
Petrosyan Vache Ararat, born 1996  
Volunteer Hovhannisyan Karen Stepan, born 1997  
Grigoryan Arsen Vrezh, born 2001  
Mkrtchyan Aram Mher, born 2002  
Gondyan Gor Hovsep, born 2000  
Galstyan Yerem Vanush, born 1979  
Yeranosyan Arthur Derenik, born 1995  
David Vladimir Arzumanyan, born 1986  
Martirosyan Albert Baregham, born 1995  
Sargsyan Garnik Vardan, born 1990  
Malkhasyan Garnik Lernerik, born 1991  
Khachatryan Derenik Khachik, born 1996  
Vardazaryan Ashot Yuri, born 1985  
Eugene Agberi of Gorodnich, born 1993  
Taron Hakoby Hakobyan, born 1987  
Abrahamyan Arshak Ararat, born 2002  
Manukyan Maxim Hakoby, born 2002  
Davoyan Eduard Arseni, born 2001  
Khachatryan Albert Armeni, born 1994  
Hakobyan Mush Mheri, born 1999  
Aslanyan Van Armeni, born 2001  
Stepanyan Alen Artush, born 2001  
Margaryan Edgar Hrachya, born 2000  
Grigoryan Misha Melik, born 2001  
Ghulyan David Henzeli, born 2002  
Ghazaryan Harutyun Aharon, born 2001  
Arman Karen Mkrtchyan, born 2001  
Galstyan Rustam Gagik, born 2001  
Galeyany Mkhitar Garik, born 2000  
Beglaryan Serzh Armen, 2000  
Hakob Sergey Hakobekkhvyan, born 2000  
Mihran Gagik Harutyunyan, born 2001  
Muradkhanyan Grigor Varuzhan, born 2001  
Yeganyan Mikael Ararat, born 2001  
Chipley Artem Gagik, born 2002  
Azatyan Arman Vigeni, born 2000  
Bakhshiyany Kamo Sergey, born 1988  
Karapetyan Gor Karen, born 2001  
Harutyunyan Armen Arshak, born 2001  
Manukyan Gor Vigeni, born 1991  
Bagiyan George Albert, born 1976  
Volunteer Movsisyan Slava Vladimir, born 1978  
Volunteer Arakelyan Norayr Vladimir, born 1960  
Galstyan S. Arayik, born 1986  
Edward Manvel Petrosyan, born 1991  
Gharibyan Tigran Hambardzum, born 2000  
Sadoyan Mekhak Aresti, born 2000  
Abrahamyan Arshak Gagik, born 1978  
Karen Khachik Hayrapetyan, born 1997  
Edgar Arthur Galstyan, born 1999  
Baghdasaryan Khachik Karen, born 1987  
Hovhannisyan Vahram Gegham, born 1978  
Khachatryan Vahram Tigran, born 1988  
Avanesyan Semyon Hrachya, born 1984  
Stepanyan Grigor Vahram, born 1994  
Hovhannisyan Edgar Grisha, born 1988  
Minasyan Avetik Hamlet, born 1974  
Chilingaryan Artsrun Rafik, born 1985  
Arsen Samvel Harutyunyan, born 2001  
Voskanyan Lyova Gurgeni, born 1987  
Narek Henrik Chagharyan, born 1991  
Yura Vrezh Chobanyan, born 2001  
Manukyan Arsham Nelson, born 2001  
Khachatryan Emil Bagrat, born 2002  
Harutyunyan Honorary Vachagan, born 2001  
Bakunts Vahe Vahagni, born 2001  
Hovhannisyan Aghvan Tsovak, born 2000  
Harutyunyan Harutyun Sergey, born 1991  
Azaryan Hrant Semyon, born 1997  
Sergoyan Koryun Mnatsakan, born 1979  
Avetisyan Slavik Nikolay, born 1980  
Ghazaryan David Vanik, born 1989  
Gevorgyan Arshak Shahen, born 1990  
Vahe Armenak Mkrtchyan, born 2001  
Abrahamyan Seryozha Karen, born 2001  
Muradyan Arsen Andranik, born 2001  
David Vyacheslav Ivanyan, born 2001  
Hovsepian Karen Hamlet, born 2000  
Najaryan Aram Armeni, born 1996  
Movsisyan Vigen Khachatour, born 2000  
Serob Andranik Torosyan, born 2001  
Danielyan Grisha Armeni, born 2000  
Alaverdyan Harut Manvel, born 2001  
Hambardzumyan Davit Gegham, born 2001  
David Hovhannes Avetisyan, born 1987  
Beglaryan Artashes Vagifi, born 1982  
Robert Gurgeni Bejanyan, born 1975  
Sahakyan Roman Sashik, born 1986  
Melkumyan Vigen Artusha, born 1987  
Arthur Armen Asryan, born 1999  
Badalyan Vyacheslav Samvel, born 1998  
Hovhannisyan Gagik Hovhannes, born 2000  
Arkady Haykaz Palikyan, born 2001  
Bulghadaryan Arman Gagik, born 2001  
Sahakyan Hovik Artashes, born 2001  
Reserve Movsesyan Vigen Georgi, born 1977  
Danelin Valeri Misha, born 1987  
Chitchyan Hayk Arthur, born 1995  
Zurabyan S. Vova, born 1998  
Babayan Artak Kamo, born 2001  
Hovsepian Georgy Vachagan, born 1995  
Khujoyan Arshaluys Sargsy, born 2001  
Benjaminian Sergey Arsen, born 1997  
Soghomonian Sipan Armani, born 2001  
Ghukasyan Gorg Koryun, born 2001  
Galstyan Ishkhan Rustam, born 2002  
Eric Furman Jilavyan, born 2001  
Aslyan David Tigran, born 2001  
Mkrtchyan Hovhannes Masis, born 2001  
Sahakyan Erik Vardan, born 1998  
Panosyan Seryozha Hayrapet, born 2002  
Torosyan Manuk Sosi, born 2002  
Madoyan Armen Varuzhan, born 1983  
Edgar Arthur Galstyan, born 2000  
Simonyan Tigran Ashot, born 2000  
Ghazaryan Grigor Loni, born 2001  
Grigoryan Hrant Myasnik, born 1989  
Reserve Mkrtchyan Henrik Sosi, born 1985  
Volunteer Muradyan Shavarsh Martuni, born 1996  
Ghaltakhchyan Ashot Armeni, born 2001  
Yuri Karen Hovsepian, born 2000  
Avanesyan Ashot Meyva, born 2000  
Samvel Sargsyan Amiryany, born 1996  
Hovsepian Eric Tigran, born 2002  
Narek Samvel Sargsyan, born in 2001  
Zhora Karen Gorgyan, born 2001  
Sargsyan Arsen Sargsyan, born 2001  
Samvel Norayr Harutyunyan, born 2000  
Chobanyan Hovhannes Zohrab, born 2002  
Hakobyan Tigran Meruzhan, born 2000  
Manucharyan Grigor Rashid, born 2002  
Musayelyan Irina Lavrenti, born 1979  
Melikyan Avag Grisha, born 1978  
Andranik G. Movsisyan, born 1987  
Vahagn Ashot Sargsyan, born 1975  
Ispiryan Dmitry Sergey, born 1987  
Aghbalyan Tigran Suren, born 2001  
Gorgyan Karen Azat, born 2000  
Vahe Sasha Gasparian, born 2000  
Sargis Armeni Sargsyan, born 2002  
Simonyan Aram Artashes, born 2001  
Harutyunyan Narek Volodya, born 2001  
Aghasi Hakoby Gorgyan, born 2000  
Badalyan David Karen, born 2001  
Grigoryan Hayk Avetik, born 2001  
Martirosyan Alex Grima, born 2001  
Babayan Georgi Kamo, born 2001  
Khachatryan Arman Arthur, born 2001  
Gharibyan Artashes Rubik, born 1999  
Hovakimyan Mher Ashot, born 2000  
Haykyan Nikolay Mikael, born 1972  
Poghosyan Arman Lernerik, born 1992  
Mikaelyan Aghasi Vrezh, born 1992  
Mazmanyany Smbat Hmayak, born 1998  
Keshishyan Harutyun Karapet, born 1986  
Marukyan Samvel Gagik, born 1998  
Mirzoyan Vahe Haykaz, born 2000  
Eliseev Hovhannes Oleg, born 2001  
Aram Samvel Grigoryan, born 2000  
Vardanyan Lernerik Areg, born in 1978  
Minasyan Giorgi Lyova, born in 1979  
Khachatryan Hovik Lyova, born in 1990  
Mnatsakanyan Ashot Kolya, born 1979  
Harutyunyan Agsen Andranik, born 1997  
Hasmik Smbat Arzumanyan, born 1985  
Mardiyan Arsen Garik, born 1999  
Galstyan Ruben Mnatsakan, born 2000  
Torosyan Davit Mkhitar, born 2001  
Taron Hrayr Filiposyan, born 2000  
Grigoryan Mayis Makari, born 2001  
Garnik Edgar Khilghatyan, born 2001  
Sahakyan Erik Smbat, born 2001  
Karen Vahram Margaryan, born 2000  
David Arthur Ohanyan, born 2000  
Varezh Arsen Barseghyan, born 2001  
Baghdishyan Gorg Stepan, born 2000  
Harut Frick Muradyan, born 2000  
Khorenyan S. Suren, born 1987  
Hakobyan Hayk Ararat, born 1996  
Hovhannisyan Hovik Karapet, born 1984  
Avetisyan Shaliko Sedrak, born 1980  
Reserve Ghazaryan Gorg Edward, born 1989  
Reserve Kartashyan Hayk Nshani, born 1984  
Reserve Sargsyan Gegham Ashot, born 1992  
Reserve Sargsyan Vahagn Andranik, born 1986  
Grigoryan Grigor Hayki, born 2002  
Mushegh Mheri Vardanyan, born 2001  
Volunteer Khachatryan Arman Arsen, born 1993

Volunteer Petrosyan Hovhannes Andranik, born 1996  
Manyan Ararat Armeni, born 2002  
Avetyan Karen Gagik, born 2000  
Manasyan Andranik Kamo, born 2002  
David Armen Mnatsakanyan, born 2001  
Asatryan Marcel Khachik, born 2000  
Galstyan Eric Emily, born 2001  
Sinanyan Sasun Gegham, born 2002  
Makaryan Ararat Asatur, born 2002  
Manoyan Leon Andranik, born 2001  
Yesayan Karen Petros, born 2000  
Vardanyan Artyom Vardan, born 2002  
Khachatryan Valeri Davti, born 2001  
Petrosyan Hakob Suren, born 2000  
Arakelyan Arman Hovik, born 2002  
Gyulamiryan Aram Armani, born 2001  
Sargsyan Sargsyan Aram, born 2001  
Albert Arthur Vlasyan, born 2001  
Borik Suren Musinyan, born 2001  
Chakryan David Artyom, born 2001  
Archunts Arman Artush, born 2001  
Karen Norik Avagyan, born 2001  
Virabyan Gorg Mushegh, born 1994  
Aren Arthur Chatinyan, born 2000  
Harut Artak Hovhannisyan, born 2001  
Ashot Norik Aleksanyan, born 2002  
Mnatsakanyan Norayr Benik, born 2000  
Hovakimyan Ara Maxim, born 1988  
Serobyany Szak Loni, born 1987  
Manucharyan Mher Garik, born 1990  
Vahe Vahagn Melikyan, born 1996  
Dallakyan Arkadia Felix, born 1978  
Gasparyan Hayk Davit, born 1984  
Karen Vachik Melkonyan, born 1991  
Madoyan Ara Maxim, born 1977  
Reservist Arosyan Melikset Sargsyan, born 1992  
Reserve Ghukasyan Arthur Aray, born 1991  
Reserve Musikyan Karen Loni, born 1987  
Abgaryan Gorg Vazgen, born 1980  
Balayan Grisha Manas, born 1990  
Aren Samvel Petrosyan, born 2001  
Margaryan Vladimir Spartak, born 2002

Ghazaryan Melkon Avetis, born 1982  
Mushegh G. Petrosyan, born 1988  
Sargsyan Hamlet Ashot, born 1994  
Erik Garnik Yeganyan, born 1981  
Avetisyan Tigran Smbat, born 1996  
Mamikonyan Arsen Alexander, born 1996  
Nurbekyan Mushegh Harutyun, born 1981  
Garik Adam Davtyan, born 2001  
Grigoryan Sahak Varazdat, born 1984  
Hovakimyan Ara Jirayr, born 1989  
Reserve Voskanyan Tigran Rafik, born 1993  
Ghazaryan Armen Vaghinaki, born 2001  
Tumanyan Gor Seyrani, born 2000  
Gabrielyan Yura Ashot, born 2002  
Khomov Ashot Mihran, born 2001  
Chatalyan Ruben Kirakos, born 2002  
Aleyan Davit Vachagan, born 2001  
Kocharyan Arman Artush, born 2000  
Atabekyan Arman Sanasar, born 2001  
Areg Vahagni Gorgyan, born 2001  
Khurshudyan Leon Gorgi, born 2001  
Avetisyan Tigran G., born 2000  
Gorgyan Roman Karapetyan, born 2000  
Avetisyan Yervand Mkhitar, born 2000  
Hambardzumyan Ruben Karen, born 2001  
Manukyan Leon Ara, born 2000  
David Aram Hakobyan, born 2001  
Khachatryan Seryozha Aram, born 2001  
Ghasabyan Arman Kamo, born 2001  
Ivanov Pyotr Armeni, born 2000  
Vahe Nerses Aghababyan, born 2001  
Mahtesyan Gurgen Gorgi, born 2001  
Balbabyan Artak Azat, born 2001  
Sayadyan Torgom Arzuman, born 2001  
Vahe Arthur Yeghikyan, born 2001  
Yeprem Harutyunyan Harutyunyan, born 2001  
Murad Yurik Kaloyan, born 2000  
Kirakosyan Davit Artak, born 2000  
David Aram Mosoyan, born 2001  
Sargsyan Artak Arsen, born 2001  
Reserve Papyan Garik Armeni, born 1987  
Reserve Hakobyan Harutyun Hakobyan, born 1998  
Reserve Yazichyan Judeks Yervand, born 1991

Sargsyan Sargis Raffi, born 1987  
Petrosyan Vardan Hamlet, born 1980  
Babajanyan Ara Hovhannes, born 1988  
Martikyan Garik Vardanik, born 1993  
Alex Samson Avanesyan, born 2001  
Mkrtchyan Aram Mher, born 2002  
Muradyan Mikael Davti, born 2001  
Arustamyan Mikael Manvel, born 2001  
Makaryan Karen Spartak, born 1986  
Sahakyan Garik L., born 1983  
Stepanyan Hayk Lermonti, born 1979  
Beknazaryan Arman Sergey, born 1982  
Vardan Vahan Davtyan, born 1985  
Andrey Yurik Avagyan, born 1990  
Hakobyan Seyran Martik, born 1987  
Emil Gagik Khosrovyan, born 1989  
Patyan Karen Eduardi, born 1989  
Lalayan Eric Edward, born 1982  
Amirjanyan Hayk Vladimir, born 1990  
Sasun Boris Avagyan, born 1990  
Martirosyan Armen Boris, born 1977  
Dallakyan Karen Yurik, born 1984  
David Armen Kostanyan, born 1998  
Samvel Ruben Sahakyan, born 2001  
Asatryan Mkhitar Shahen, born 2000  
Arman Yurik Grigoryan, born 2001  
Edgar Artemi Mamikonyan, born 2001  
Sayadyan Hrant Karen, born 2000  
Galstyan Hovhannes Mikael, born 2000  
Burnazyan Karapet Mkrtch, born 2002  
Sergey Yuri Hovhannisyan, born 2001  
Arzumanyan Sasun Tatuli, born 2001  
Mikaelyan Jivan Anushavan, born 2002  
Ter-Poghosyan Arsen Armenak, born 2000  
Uzunyan Gegham Nshani, born 1994  
Potoyan Mher Vachagan, born 1998  
Beglaryan Karen Mheri, born 1997  
Crimean Hayk Manvel, born 1992  
Norik Alexander Mkrtchyan, born 1987  
Tavadyan Harutyun Sergey, born 1992  
Garik Artash Mnatsakanyan, born 1968  
Vanush Vahram Harutyunyan, born 2002

Source: Republic of Artsakh Ministry of Defense, <http://www.nkrmil.am/news>

*An updated list of names can be found on this website.*





