

Like an innocent child
 I gather pebbles and make them dance
 on the surface of the lake.

 But with every pebble I remember my father
 who spent his happy childhood
 along the shores of this Lake.
 I whisper tenderly,
 "Envelop me, O, Lake, for
 I have brought you my father's memory."

 and now
 I bring you my orphanhood." (95)

It is worth highlighting his overwhelming emotions on the banks of the Euphrates, that մարդակուլ river (the "mangulper" river, which he translates as the "haunting" river). Facing the "tombstone of a nation clinging to dignity," Markarian stands "silent and weak.... I bow my head in reverence... to the holy memory of brave Armenian women." He hears their screams swirling in his head. In his mind's eye, he sees the horrible atrocities that took place here. Sights and sounds deep in his memory come alive, creating a state of hallucination, but "the running river and the victorious and indifferent humming of the cars on the distant highway" bring him back to present reality which is the total erasure of the past and the bustling life of a country that has no memory of the past (65-7).

Markarian's pilgrimage, however, is incomplete. The village church in Shoushants, where his father was a choir boy, is in ruins. Tombstones have been overturned and graves dug up, apparently in the search for hidden gold. He cannot