

people who would be considered normal, everyday human beings. Israel W. Charny believes that “the mass killers of humankind are largely everyday human beings—what we have called normal people according to currently accepted definitions by the mental health profession.”⁴⁰

Margaret’s granddaughter Sara was cradling her hand between her own when a chilling thought occurred to Margaret: “Sometimes I feel terror so acute, so delineated, the world closes in. Terror, like genes, gets passed down” (107–8). Her reaction is significant: she pulled her hand away. “I did it, understand, out of love. I did it to keep her safe.” Subconsciously aware of the possibility of the genetic transmission of trauma, she avoids physical contact as if it could “get passed down” that way. But the memory has been transmitted through her and her mother’s joint memoir/narrative which together they offer the younger generation and the world.

Sara would feel the impact years later when, as a teenager, she visited Ellis Island with her mother and grandmother to look for her immigrant great-grandparents’ names engraved on the Wall of Names, to follow in their footsteps as they embarked on freedom, and to read a few pages of her grandmother’s manuscript that describe that unforgettable day (202). The memory was passed on to the third generation.

Margaret’s writing project began when her 98-year-old mother was dying in an Armenian old age home. She was ready to tell her stories “as they popped into her head” and

⁴⁰ Quoted in Eric Markusen, “Genocide and Warfare,” in *Genocide, War, and Human Survival*, ed. Charles B. Strozier and Michael Flynn (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), p. 75.