

were all first-generation survivors. Poetry was her powerful medium of expression, and Tadem (a village in the Kharberd region in Western Armenia), the natal village of her father and her mother's parents, was a faraway but never forgotten center of the universe, origin of life, and source of artistic inspiration. It was a place where a fairytale-like way of life suddenly came to a halt with a tragic calamity that wiped out its hard-working, happy population. Describing a dreaming shepherd boy and his village, Diana writes,

... a strange thing happened.  
His goats, the school, the children,  
their teacher, the church,  
priest and parish disappeared  
in a terrible way. Too terrible to tell.

One morning there was an Armenian village  
that turned into a Turkish fire.<sup>43</sup>

The more Diana tried to escape the painful memories of the past, the deeper she was drawn into the whirlpool of her nation's suffering, the suffering eternalized by Siamanto and Varoujan whose poetry she adored: "I would run, run/to escape your blood/filled poems...." But she could not escape, so she made it her mission to let the world know about that blood and suffering, and to let the world know in the language that it speaks: "And now I take your poems/and pound, pound them/into a raw new language/using all the force/of unshed tears."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Diana Der Hovanesian, "Once in a Village," in *Forgotten Bread*, ed. Kherdian, p. 273.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, "Translating II," pp. 295-6.