

interviews with the children of Holocaust survivors all over the world.

Diana Der Hovanessian experiences the strange feeling of being transported back into the past while driving at night, looking for “street signs in the dark,” when a bizarre psychological mechanism sparks fleeting hallucinations: she reads “Channing” as *Chankeri*, and at the next turn, “Ayer” as *Ayash*. And she is with Siamanto, Rouben Sevak, Grigor Zohrab, and other Armenian poets, writers, and civic and religious leaders who were arrested in Constantinople on the eve of April 24 (11), 1915, and murdered in *Ayash* Prison on the road from *Chankeri*. She keeps asking herself, why this association? “What is that to me?/To us?” Coming to her senses, she manages to re-inhabit her safe New England environment where, she writes,

... No one comes at night for me.
I drive out at any hour. Or stay home
to write poems. And if the poems have
secret messages, no one cares. Poets
are ignored, not feared, not rounded up
at night and shipped to Ayash Prison
on the road from Chankeri.⁵⁷

Lorne Shirinian considers Diana Der Hovanessian an Armenian poet who “use[s] English like a native,” but “absence and longing are [her] heritage.” In a poem dedicated to “DDH” and titled “Armenian Poets,” he writes about her close association with the dead land, with Armenia. “In the time warp called America/you mythologize the dead land/find yourself stranded between fable and reality.” This

⁵⁷ Diana Der Hovanessian, “Ayash Prison,” in *About Time*, p. 72.