

feelings of infantile pride and the awareness of a mysterious attachment he wanted to escape:

evening lessons in our language,
as well as plays, recitations,
and skits in the downstairs hall.
.....
and the gathering with
children all of my blood
Kept me moored to the sorrow,
the pain of the past;
our present situation
that I wished to escape from
as our parents had not from theirs:
our victimized past that all of us shared.
I was troubled, uneasy, proud, ashamed....⁷⁰

The cultural polarization, as Kherdian attests, was confusing and destructive for the first generation of children born in America, or for that matter, in Europe or in any other discriminatory environment. They were “forced either into a posture of bragging, lying, or withdrawal,” in any case, “abnormal” behavior. “None of us were normal.”⁷¹ David’s choice was to withdraw, to escape from it all: “Rejection was my salvation for a time.”⁷² Where was the breaking point in these children’s lives, if there was a breaking point? When did they find a happy medium where they could feel comfortable and experience the opportunities of the New World without shedding their ethnic pride and their inherited culture? For their parents, these children were too Americanized. Outside

⁷⁰ David Kherdian, “From *My Racine*,” in *Forgotten Bread*, pp. 333–4.

⁷¹ Ibid., “Our Block,” p. 328–30.

⁷² Ibid., “From *My Racine*,” p. 334.