

Margaret's *Knock at the Door*. Fighting the ravages caused by her horrible memories, Ester courageously broached the story of Yousouf Bey, the retired military officer who adopted her and then raped her (103). The horrible irony is that Yousouf's wife Hanum, who had promised to take care of Ester as the daughter she had never had and always wanted, "took me as a whore for her husband" (111-17). Ester did not conceal her three years of conjugal life with the Turk who had saved her from being killed. He took her as a wife but after he found out she was not a virgin, he beat her regularly (138). She endured the beatings and the cursing and the insults to her religion and her ancestors with the hope and the determination to flee to freedom one day. And when she finally did escape and returned to her hometown, she was chastised and insulted by those who had avoided deportation by converting to Islam and who wanted to forget the dark years. "*Mortseer* [*Morts'ir!* Forget!] became the word they all used" (173). Ester was scorned because she "fell in 'black dye' and will never be pure again" (167). "Fallen in black dye" was an Armenian euphemism for someone who had slept with the enemy.

It was easy to be judgmental; they had not seen what survivors like Ester had seen. Postwar Armenian society in Turkey was fearful of continuing government persecution, and in order to safeguard the secret of their survival, they never spoke of the past and avoided people like Ester who reminded them of the dark years. Openness and healing were the way of a few courageous men and women like Ester.

It was a different silence that Krikor (Grigor) Beledian chased. He argued that the first-generation survivor-writers