

Her quest for self-identity is materialized in general terms, but she has more battles to wage and labyrinths to thread in the process of deconstructing the concept of identity and articulating her own in this globalized world.

Arpine Konyalian Grenier was born in Beirut of “orphaned parents.” In a prose piece in the form of an email exchange prefatory to her poem, “I Am Searching for Death,” she describes the material circumstances of her parents’ heritage, or disinheritance:

In Ak-Serai and Konya the land on Dad’s side was secured by the Turks for sure—in Kessab Syria the land on Mom’s side granted to the Turks—by the French so as to win them over against the WW2 Germans—later in Beirut Dad’s business seized during the Arab Israeli War—then he to America—but not long enough to collect for location.⁹⁸

In their consuming efforts, especially in the Western world, to get ahead in mainstream society and get away from the Armenian ghetto—the safe haven, separated from the alien environment—the second generation gradually drifted away from a rigid concept of Armenianness. That in itself was a negation of the first generation’s response to or interpretation of the Genocide that suggested ghettoization as a bulwark against assimilation. The degree and the depth of this distancing point directly to the dual-identity conflict the second generation experienced and the consequent need to find an alternative response or interpretation of the Genocide.

⁹⁸ Arpine Konyalian Grenier, “From *Silk, Paper, Gunpowder*/Comfort is strength in Latin,” and “I Am Searching for Death,” *Shampoo* 30 (July 2007), <http://www.shampoooetry.com/ShampooThirty/grenier.html>.