

In his own “struggle for identity,” David had shunned everything Armenian and whatever his father represented. His “resistance to Armenian food,” his “preference for everything American,” his arguments with his father “over spading the/vegetable patch, painting the/garden fence ochre instead of blue,”⁴¹ these were all symptoms of an alienated soul caught between a past that he ignored and despised and the world of the present around him that he so enthusiastically embraced.

It was only after his father’s death that David experienced a feeling of sympathy creeping into his heart which, as I discussed earlier, is not unusual in this kind of parent-child relationship. The posthumous bonding resulted in a feeling of guilt and regret. He began reading about the history of the Armenian massacres and there he found the explanation of his father’s strange disposition. *Homage to Adana*, a collection of poems of love and compunction that he wrote in memory of his father, speaks of this newly discovered past and his newly acquired sympathy for his father. It also resonates with the tormenting, ineffaceable memory of the Genocide which he now knows has been indirectly transmitted to him. “For My Father,” in which he speaks of his aspirational identity clashing with his father’s ways, ends with an outpouring of regret and compunction:

Why have I waited until your death
to know the earth you were turning

⁴¹ Kherdian, “For My Father,” in *Homage to Adana* (Fresno, CA: Giligia Press, 1971), n.p.