

her financial burden. I could see that her health wasn't that good, that she was worn out by the long hours she worked at Singer and by the long walk back and forth to work, a half-hour each way, every day in the scorching heat or the freezing cold. Logic and practicality made me abandon my dreams of the future. I began psychologically preparing myself to become an ordinary secretary. One of my father's old friends, a rich contractor, promised my mom to hire me in his office when I was ready.

With my dad's return, our plans for my future changed. "I won't let my Oobik settle for a high school diploma," he said. "She must continue her education in whatever field she chooses." I was thrilled. He truly brought me the beginning of a new life. He was serious about my potential and possibilities.

My father approved of my participation in the Alumni Society but he was uncomfortable with my relationship with my boyfriend who was two years older than me. We had woven dreams of a future together but I had to obey my father and break up with him, even though I felt miserable for a while. I cried many nights, listening to him whistle the same familiar Komitas tune as he passed our street on his way home. In my childish heartbreak, I have to confess, I even wished my father hadn't returned, so that I could go on with my plans without him pushing me around after years of absence.

What did my father see in my erstwhile boyfriend that he didn't like, and what was it that he saw in Neshan, my future husband, whom he met a few years later and developed a liking for, even before a serious relationship