

Uzun about Vardan, the famous cobbler of Diyarbakir, who would sing sad songs and weep whenever the family got together for a picnic under the pomegranate trees on the banks of the Tigris River. In these moments of high spirits, with alcohol-generated mental and emotional exhilaration tilting them into the world of the unconscious, they lose control and subdued memories of the past rise to the surface to perturb their souls. These survivors of the Catastrophe are neither here in the present, nor are they back in the past in the setting of a similar gathering of a much larger family with grandparents, parents, siblings, aunts, and uncles. They live in a painful and bewildering confusion of time and place. It is significant that many Holocaust survivors who kept silent about their past all their lives finally broke down and then talked about it endlessly in family gatherings. Savyon Liebrecht presents the character of Mendel in "Hayuta's Engagement Party" (1998). Mendel was eighty-two when this "secret door to the memories of the war—what had been shrouded in blissful oblivion for decades—suddenly burst open forcefully. It all started on the eve of Rosh Hashanah" (pp. 84-5). That was six years earlier, and ever since then his family is always apprehensive on these happy occasions lest he start up again. Just like Anelka, Hayuta, too, fearfully awaits these moments and prays that they are over soon. And just like Anelka, who would wish to forget the trauma of the past and assume the innocent identity of a Turkish citizen with a Christian Armenian background (an identity that is sometimes not so innocent), Hayuta, too, strives to leave the past of her forebears behind and become a typical Israeli citizen.