

birthplace in the Middle East in search of a better life in the U.S., with tragic results. Even the physical comfort and the moral and sexual liberties of the New World cannot heal their inherited wound. "If you want to know the truth," says Gevork, the protagonist, "we are exiles, expelled from earth and heaven, expelled even from life. There is something alien in our existence, something temporary. We wander from one country to another, but we cannot put down roots that are strong, deep, and permanent..."²¹

The pain and frustration resulting from the struggle to adjust to one's dual identity and the search for an ideal image of the Diasporan Armenian echo in almost the entire literary output of Hacob Karapents. His characters are ordinary Armenians in the New World struggling to sustain moral integrity and psychological stability. In one of his stories, "From Any Place to Here," Karapents describes his protagonist: "An Armenian like any other Armenian. He was young and old like any other Armenian, because he had suffered.... He lived his life passively, without will or effort, like the survivor of a catastrophe."²²

Peter Najarian's *Voyages* (1971) is the site of the painful conflict and the attempted reconciliation between the past and the present. There is hardly any reference to the Genocide, but "the Armenian Genocide as a collective symbol permeates the

²¹ Akishian, "Bazhanvats tune," p. 46 in *Marde hoghin vra* (1987), a collection of eight short stories and a novel.

²² Karapents, "Voreve teghits minchev aystegh," pp. 152-3 in his collection of stories titled *Antsanot hoginer* (1970).