

do this to them. Margaret Ajemian Ahnert relates the story of her mother Ester. Ester's father was imprisoned days before the entire Armenian population of Amasya was deported. But he would not doubt his Turkish friend's assurance. He comforted his family when they visited him in the prison, "Don't worry. They told me that I would be released in the morning. They only want to frighten us by keeping us in the jail overnight." Ester's father was not alone. As the orders to move reached the town, some of the town elders advocated to stay and fight back, while the majority thought, "We must trust our Turkish friends to their word. If they say we will be safe, I believe them." Ester and her family and all the Armenians of Amasya were deported, and Ester never saw her father again.⁴²

The consequence of the destruction of the Armenian communities indeed robbed the survivors of their identity and sense of belonging. The outcome for the Armenian remnants in Turkey was decades of silence and searching for a new meaning of life and new ties with their origin that were safer, less reprehensible, and less offensive to the Turkish psyche. In the case of the survivors in the Diaspora, it was either clinging to a rigid, overdetermined sense of Armenianness, or resorting

⁴² Ahnert, *The Knock at the Door* (2007), pp. 73, 75. Incredulity is also the initial reaction of Vartan Balian, the protagonist of *A Summer Without Dawn*, by Hacıkyan and Soucy (2000), p. 54. (The original work, *Un été sans aube*, was published in Montreal in 1991.) See also *infra*, chapter 6, note 4. This author devoted an entire chapter to the sense of incredulity and the inability to face reality because of this sense of incredulity, in Peroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993).