A SONG'S SEARCH FOR HIS FATHER

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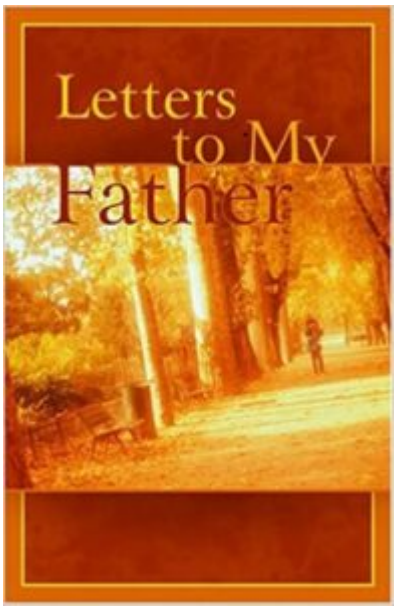
"Letters to My Father" by David Kherdian is the prolific Armenian-American poet's anthology of 60 poems which re-create the poet's multifaceted relationship with his father. The time is Depression America and the War years; the place is the Armenian neighborhood of Racine, Wisconsin. The memoir-poems are also about the poet as a child and adolescent.

Several major themes run through the poems: the unsaid "clash" between a Genocide-surviving Armenian father and his American-born son; the son's regrets that the father-and-son bond wasn't as embracing as the son had wished; the inchoate pains of the father who missed the Old Country; and the poignant attempt by the son to bridge the gap, to bond, and to forgive and be forgiven through words--long after the father has passed away.



The poems are pregnant with feelings and thoughts which are individual and universal at the same time. The father-and-son clash is perennial to the human condition, but here that scenario is burdened with genocide, with exile, with two individuals who are trying to survive in alien waters: the Armenian father in America; the Armenian-American son trying to fit in mainstream society without losing his Armenian identity.

Despite their anguish, the silence between them, the son's resentment towards an often-distant father, the son's love for his taciturn father shines throughout the poems.

Another attribute of the poems is the searing honesty as the Kherdian recalls the bitter-sweet Depression days in a small northern town with a tiny Armenian island. As always, Kherdian's words seem elusively simple, but are always lucid, probing, and powerful. The images he evokes are as graphic and penetrating as that of a Karsh photograph.

To order your copy of "Letters to My Father" write to David Kherdian at 5 Prospect St, Marblehead, MA 01945 USA. Send $10.00 in the U.S., $15.00 from Canada, $25.00 from outside North America. Books signed or inscribed by request. All mail out of the U.S. goes by air, hence the exorbitant rates. This book

is also available on Amazon.

A poem (No. Forty-six) from "Letters to My Father"

The streets where we scattered our
dreams, were also the streets
where you buried yours

in the factories and bars
and also the coffee houses where you
were most alive, all of it

away from the empty lots
where we played
the streams we fished

the ballparks and playgrounds
that held us to our
new country games.

Who were we, you and I,
we of the riddled mystery,
lost countries, oceans apart

contained by our separate memories
beyond the reach
of ear and tongue.