LOVE LETTER TO ARMENIA

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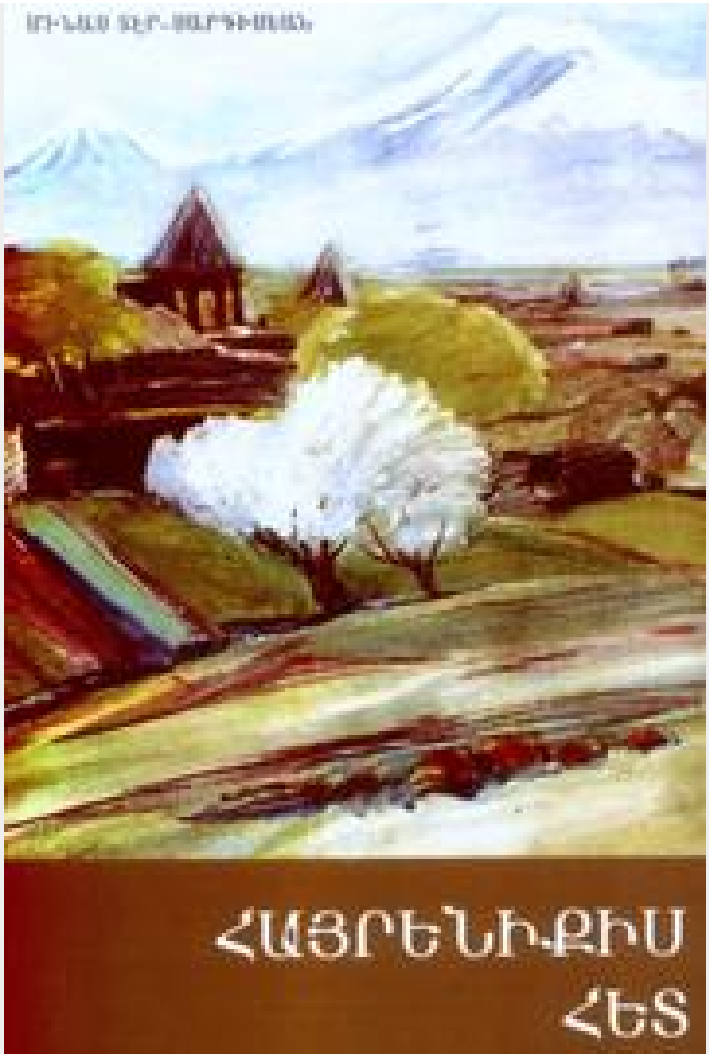

Category: Opinions

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In the *Letter to My Beloved* essay the author quotes his wife's plaintiff words: "It's always Armenia which has been your muse. Couldn't you have also dedicated two lines to me?" Der-Sarkissian admits that his spouse is right, and then he goes to explain his intense and unabashed dedication to his fatherland.

Born in 1931 in Beirut, the author is a graduate of Melkonian Educational Institute in Cyprus (1945-'50). After his graduation, he attended Lebanon's Middle East College. Soon after, he joined Trans-Arabian Pipeline. Over the years, Der-Sarkissian has contributed to *Zartonk*, *Ayk*, *Nor Or* and later to *Harach* and *Nor Harach* in Paris. In 1996 he settled in Paris.

In the second part of the 144-page book the author writes a short humorous memoir about his student days at Melkonian. There is also an interesting long essay about the circumstances of General Antranig's death, his burial in Fresno, then at Pere Lachaisse in Paris, and eventually in Yerevan. It will come as interesting news to readers that the reason the great Armenian hero was buried, in the late '20s, in Paris was because an Azeri at the Soviet consulate in Los Angeles successfully plotted against General Antranig's burial in Soviet Armenia.

The essays have a great many such interesting nuggets of information. For example, few Armenians would know that two of the eight athletes representing the Ottoman Empire at the Fifth Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912 were Armenian—V. Papazian and M. Mgrian. The latter was leading a track-and-field event when he slowed down near the finishing line because he didn't want to see Turks celebrate "their" victory with their crescent flag.

The essay titled Idol is a summary of the author's feelings for Armenia. He says he goes to Armenia like

--an orphan heading to his mother, like an exile returning to his family hearth, like a father who approaches his newborn's cradle, like the lover who hurries to the site of the tryst, like a new groom who dream's about the conjugal bed…

If a reader substituted Armenia, fatherland, motherland with the name of a person of either gender, the book could be become a fascinating compilation of passionate billets doux.

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