

# POEMS

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By Alan Whitehorn, Kingston, Ontario

### **Obsidian Obsession**

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The quest for a special rock  
to take back from my ancestral homeland  
begins with an existential question.

What sort of rock should it be?

Then I ask:

Where will I find it?

What shape will it have?

I repeat my questions to several different persons,  
and each time the answer is unanimous:

“Black obsidian rock

to be found on the road to Lake Sevan”.

A volcanic rock formed under enormous pressure so long ago  
seems apt for a land that has witnessed so much suffering in its history.

The colour black evokes memories of the genocide.

The rock’s hardness is a reminder of the toughness needed to survive in such a rugged land.

And thus at a rock cut on the road to Lake Sevan,

I cross the four lane highway and select my precious obsidian.

And I hold in my hand a piece of my ancestral homeland.

### **Armenia Between East and West**

Armenia

so rooted in Christian Eastern religion

and now increasingly on Western technology,

Khachkars and cell phones.

The land of a unique Indo-European script,

but also with street signs in Cyrillic and English.

So much history, such dramatic current events, so hopeful a future.

Turn the street corner

and shift back or forward a century or two.

Elderly stone carver or middle-aged e-mail businessman.

Old widow praying in a church

or high-heeled young lady strutting along the boulevard.

Armenia on the Silk Road  
between East and West,  
where caravans meander up and down,  
along winding paths through rugged ancient mountains.

Armenia: between East and West.

Always between.

## **Hayastan**

We journey in search of a path,  
back to Ararat,  
back to my ancestors' village,  
along centuries-old trails  
that meander across the dry, rocky landscape  
that I call my homeland.

To cradle a bit of soil  
amidst my weathered fingers  
that have been numbed  
from too much pain.

And so,  
I caress the soil to my face  
to feel one last time  
my Hayastan,  
my precious Hayastan.

