

THERE ARE INVISIBLE GUESTS

Posted on March 5, 2011 by Keghart

YEGHISHE
CHARENTZ

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P O E M S

Translated by
David Kherdian
&
Garig Basmadjian

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Yeghishe Charentz

There are invisible guests. They enter without speaking, and fall into the lap of silence. They appear, they live, and then they pass by. We neither open a door for them, nor do we close one.

They are without name or shadow.
Nor do they make a sound.
They come, they live, and then silently disappear.
And why did they come, and why did they go?
What are we to make of that amorphous world?

Only this: that when an endless and deep sadness spreads its wings everywhere, we feel suddenly with an immense yearning that someone has passed never to return.

1915

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1915

Vsion of Death

Like the strained chord of an abandoned violin
My heart with a horrid passion beats to a stop.

This is the summit of my longing,
A strong rope and two lofty poles.
The gallows beams stand in the city,
Proud as the dark contempt of my fate.
Two silent beams supporting each other,
And between them a grey rope sways
Like the flameless anguish of my orphaned life.

A dark evening comes down and covers the beams,
Then a doorless, immobile, shadowless silence -
And the crouching shops crumble into dust.
And all the people are gathered about the beams,
So close to the brittle lyre of death.
Sad and reluctant people.
What do they want, why are they here?
And who has turned this flameless evening
Into a grey rope and two lofty poles?

Perhaps I am guilty for not giving you
A tongue of flame with my lunatic heart —
Maybe I am guilty for not allowing any other lyre
To bless the glorious future of Armenia.

Let me go now. And with a dejected passion,
With the smudgy songs of my charmless days,
With the last reverence of my Armenian dream,
Let me melt into the perishable evening
Like a persecuted phantom, like a trance,
Let me give my throat to the longing of the beams
And swing tragically . . . innocently . . .
Let there be no sacrifice other than my own,
Let no other shadow approach the gallows,
And let them see in my bulging eyes
The resplendent future of my burning country.

1920

* Translations by David Kherdian & Garig Basmadjian

