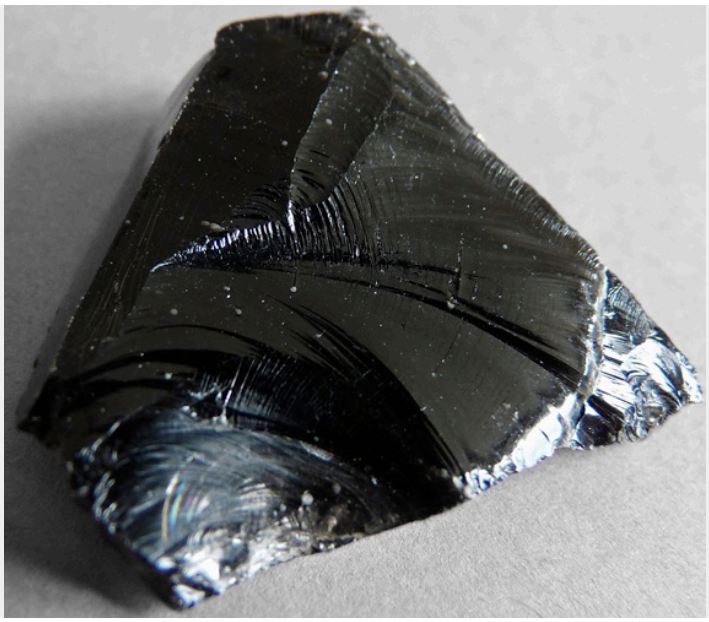
POEMS

Posted on December 11, 2008 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

By Alan Whitehorn, Kingston, Ontario, 11 December 2008

Obsidian Obsession

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-email 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.