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## Siroon Hovannisian Will Be Honored at Luncheon by Prelacy Ladies' Guild



Mrs. Siroon Hovannisian

The annual Mother's Day Luncheon and Fashion Show sponsored by the Prelacy Ladies Guild has become an established and eagerly anticipated function in the New York metropolitan area. Each year an outstanding mother is selected and honored.

This year the Luncheon will once again take place at The Plaza, Fifth Avenue at 59th Street, and the Guild has selected Mrs. Siroon Hovannisian from California as its Mother-of-the-Year. The reception begins at 11:30 a.m. with luncheon scheduled for 12:30 p.m. A fashion show by Giobet Fashion Boutique will follow the luncheon and awards ceremony.

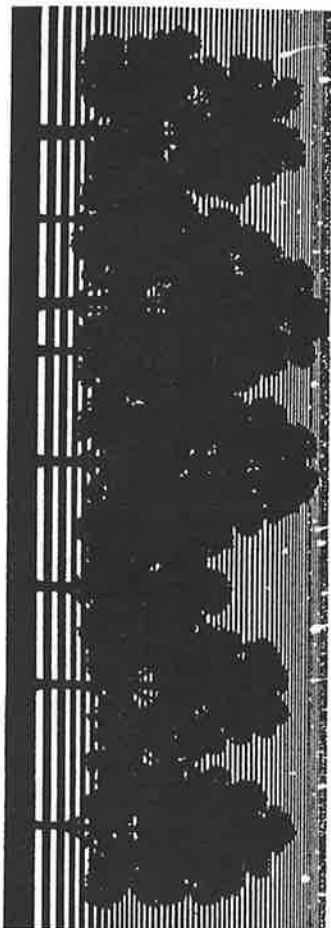
The Mother-of-the-Year, Mrs. Hovannisian, is the proud mother of four sons, 14 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. One son, Richard, is the well-known historian, writer, lecturer, at the University of California, Los Angeles; a grandson, Raffi, served as the first Foreign Minister of the new Armenian Republic.

The luncheon is under the auspices of the Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, who praised the selection of Mrs. Hovannisian as the 1993 honoree, saying, "Mrs. Hovannisian exemplifies the very best of a traditional Armenian mother combined with her modern activism in American and Armenian circles and her dedication to charitable endeavors. The Prelacy is truly pleased to be able to bestow this honor upon such a distinguished and worthy individual."

Siroon Hovannisian was born in December, 1909, in Mezre, Kharpert, as the first child of Sarkis and Sara Nalbandian of Keserig. The family immigrated to the United States in 1912, escaping the genocide three years later. All their other relatives remaining behind were massacred or sent on the death-marches.

In the United States, Mrs. Hovannisian lived with her family in Chicago. Four other children were born to the Nalbandians: Mardiros, Margaret, Michael, and Charolette. From Chicago, the family moved to Tulare, California, and engaged in farming. In 1927, Siroon was married to Kaspar Hovannisian, of Bazmashen,

(Continued on page 3)



Let the trees in the woods sing for joy before the Lord.  
1 CHRONICLES 16:33  
Որպէս եղիցն ւախճաւ ծառք անառնի  
Ա. Մարտ. 16:33

## Tree Planting Begins in Armenia

The Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America has received word of the start of a massive reforestation program in Armenia.

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Yervant Melconian, who is the coordinator for Prelacy projects in Armenia, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, the Prelate, received an update about the program, which is under the direction of Armenia's Ministries of Education and Forestry.

The tree planting program was inaugurated on Saturday, April 3, which Mr. Melconian described as "a beautiful spring day in Yerevan." The winter-weary population turned out for the festive occasion which became a first rite of spring filled with hope.

The Prelacy's tree planting project which was announced several weeks ago under the theme, "This April Let Us Plant Trees," is part of the overall project undertaken by the government of Armenia.

Mr. Melconian reported that on Saturday morning thousands of children in the Nor Nork area of Yerevan assisted in the planting of 8,000 trees. The Prelacy hopes to finance the planting of up to 200,000 trees in the Khorhuratyan boro of Yerevan which includes Nor Nork, Avani, Arinj, Zeitoun, and Kanaker. The Prelacy's commitment includes all in-

cidental costs such as fuel, transportation, and the piping of water from the Kanaker Valley to Nork Heights for irrigation purposes. The plan is to recreate city parks according to original plans and designs made in the last several years. The trees being planted are indigenous to Armenia such as weeping willow, birch, poplar, and pine. The reforestation program in the Khorhuratyan area is being directed by Mr. Dikran Kaloustian.

In addition to the Nor Nork area, Archbishop Ashjian said that five million rubles will be allocated for trees in Gumnri and another five million rubles for trees in Vanatzor. In all of the areas, the replanting has been complicated because of the necessity to uproot all the dead trees.

The overall program is expected to involve more than 25,000 children who will assist in the planting process. "We have purchased 2½ tons of candies to distribute to the children," Archbishop Ashjian said.

The Prelacy's appeal for funds to finance this massive replenishing of Armenia's soil began several weeks ago. Donations may be sent, "for trees," to the Armenian Prelacy, 138 E. 39th Street, New York, NY 10016. Checks should be payable to Armenian Apostolic Church of America. For further information contact the Prelacy at 212-689-7810.

## Students Attend Easter Eve Reception at Prelacy



## The Face of The Future

Each April we remember our Martyrs by celebrating life.

Each April we renew our faith in love to better understand sacrifice and sorrow.

Each April we memorialize the countless number of children who perished by looking into the eyes of the thousands of children of today. They, after all, represent the ultimate victory over the evil which perpetrated such horror.



College-age men and women enjoyed an Easter Eve reception at the Prelacy, where they had the opportunity to meet and speak with Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian.

Dr. Hratch Zadoian, Assistant Provost of Queens College, New York, spoke to the students briefly about new challenges. [See page 2 for Professor Zadoian's remarks].

Archbishop Ashjian hoped that the Easter Eve reception would once again become a tradition providing an opportunity for young adults to meet each other and stay in-touch with the church and community.

The reception was hosted by the Prelacy Ladies Guild who provided a buffet table laden with 6-foot submarine sandwiches, an assortment of salads and desserts and baskets of colored Easter eggs which provided an enjoyable tournament in the art of "Easter Egg Cracking."

## Donated Ambulance Enroute to Armenia



*The ambulance donated by Mr. Ohan Ohanian made a stop at the Prelacy office in New York before starting on its voyage to Armenia. Seen above, left to right, are Mr. Sarkis Guleserian, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Mr. Ohanian and Mr. Vazken Ghougassian, executive director of the Prelacy.*

A fully equipped ambulance, with the tri-colors painted on its side, and with appropriate Armenian markings, attracted attention in mid-town Manhattan on Tuesday, April 6. The ambulance, enroute to Armenia by way of Operation Winter Rescue, made a stop at the Prelacy office on 39th Street, before proceeding to Elizabeth, New Jersey, for its journey to Yerevan and then to a hospital in Stepanagert.

The ambulance is a gift from Mr. Ohanian, of Albany, New York, who purchased it and paid for all the necessary modifications. Accompanying Mr. Ohanian on the trip from Albany were his young son, Levon, and Mr. Sarkis Guleserian, who worked on the refurbishing of the ambulance and drove it to New York with Mr. Ohanian following in his car.

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian thanked Mr. Ohanian for his latest donation and noted that following the earthquake Mr.

Ohanian was responsible for securing large donations from pharmaceutical firms, which were transported to Armenia as part of the Prelacy's earthquake relief program.

Mr. Ohanian said he intended to continue to do his utmost for Armenia and encouraged everyone to help as much as possible according to individual means. "Our brothers and sisters are giving their blood and their lives to defend the Homeland. We must be prepared to help as much as possible."

Mr. Ohanian said he is donating the ambulance to Stepanagert in memory of his father, Levon.

Archbishop Ashjian wished the guests good luck and again expressed his appreciation. Following the brief stopover, the journey continued on to the Port of Elizabeth, New Jersey, where the ambulance will be boarded on an "Operation Winter Rescue" ship and eventually be delivered to Armenia and Stepanagert.



*Suren Bagratuni with Musical Armenia committee members Anita Nerses, Asbed Marashian, Diana Mkhitarian, and Julie Kedersha.*

Cellist Suren Bagratuni thrilled the audience in Carnegie Hall's Weil Recital Hall with his ambitious program of works by Stravinsky, Brahms, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky. Also on the program was the New York Premiere of A. Khudoyan's Sonata for Cello Solo.

The annual Musical Armenia, presented by the Prelacy Ladies Guild, took place on Friday evening, April 2. Originally scheduled for March 13, the performance was postponed due to the blizzard on the east coast.

Accompanying Mr. Bagratuni was Ms. Rona Dokshitsky, an accomplished pianist who has performed as a soloist with the Israel Philharmonic, the Tallahassee Symphony, the Lake Charles Symphony in Louisiana, and the Plymouth Symphony in Michigan.

Mr. Bagratuni was born in Yerevan, Armenia, where he began his musical education at the age of seven at the Tchaikovsky Central Music School. He later attended the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan and in 1982 began his studies at the Moscow Conservatory where he was tutored by Nathalia Shakhovskaya. He began performing at the age of ten, presented his first concerto at age fourteen, and went on to perform with the Moscow Philharmonic, Weimar

Stadtskapelle, Rostok Stadtskapelle, Hallische Philharmonie, State Philharmonic Orchestras of Georgia, Armenia, and Siberia, and the New England Conservatory Orchestra in Boston. Mr. Bagratuni made his American debut at the 1988 Soviet-American "Making Music Together" Festival in Boston, Massachusetts, where he has since performed to great acclaim with the Boston Pops and the Sinfonia Nova Orchestra.

The enthusiastic audience called Mr. Bagratuni back on stage repeatedly and he responded with two encores. Following the concert a reception took place at the Prelacy where friends and family (including Mr. Bagratuni's mother who came from Yerevan specifically for this event) congratulated the two young artists.

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian thanked Mr. Bagratuni and Ms. Dokshitsky for sharing their artistic talents and wished them continued success.

For twelve years the Prelacy Ladies' Guild's Musical Armenia series has given young Armenian artists an opportunity to perform in New York. The concert committee, headed by Asbed Marashian, includes members Julie Kedersha, Diana Mkhitarian and Annita Nerses with special assistance by Hera Marashian.

## Following are the remarks by Professor Hratch Zadoian during the Easter Eve reception.

It seems particularly appropriate on this evening when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, to speak with our young people about Armenia resurgent and the challenges it presents to the new generation.

Yours is the first generation for whom the words "independent Armenia" no longer refer to the past, nor merely represent a dream, but in fact, describe a living reality. For the generations before you, the challenge was that of keeping the dream alive, maintaining against all odds, the faith in the restoration of Armenia's independence, and backing that faith by building and supporting the institutions of the diaspora. Indeed, the very essence of the diaspora was the sense of obligation toward the nation imperilled. The obligation to maintain language and culture until that day when the nation made whole and free could return home; the obligation to maintain those symbols, traditions and parts of our culture which were suppressed in the homeland and finally, the obligation to speak out for our people, to be the voice of those whose voices had been stifled or repressed.

For decades, if not centuries, that was the burden and challenge of the diasporan communities—a challenge made harder in this country, because the freedom, tolerance and affluence which we enjoy as Americans made assimilation so much easier. And so, for generations, diasporan communities fought off assimilation, maintained traditions as best they could and built our institutions conscious that the diaspora had to be the repository of a heritage destroyed or endangered in the homeland, conscious that the peril was not merely one of losing some quaint traditions, but rather that of becoming lost as a nation. If I may borrow a metaphor from the Jewish tradition, each generation saw itself as a link in the golden chain that connected the distant past to a future only dimly perceived, a future of restored right, of independence, a future held alive and burning in our hearts with the hopes and prayers of generations.

Today, at least that burden of blind faith is removed. There is an independent Armenia, though as we are all too keenly aware, it is not yet free of peril and suffering and not yet fully united. And so, the task of the diaspora might seem lighter, for culture and tradition, at long last unshackled can grow freely in the free homeland. But, I submit to you that although the work and the challenges have changed, they have not become easier. For all of us, but especially for the young generations, the challenges of the future are marked by unprecedented complexity, by the need for redoubled efforts.

Allow me to outline some of these challenges, although, clearly, these are issues deserving broader discussion.

The first challenge is the challenge of endurance. Yes, there is an independent Armenia, but it continues to be imperilled by foes, by famine, by the legacy of decades of oppression and exploitation, a legacy of economic and ecological disaster. Armenia will need your help and your support, your voices, your talent, and your resources. I know you understand that. But what we must also understand is that Armenia will need you—day in and day out for years to come.

In the past, the diaspora could mobilize itself for an emergency, or once or twice a year for special projects. But Armenia will need you not just for this year, or this decade. Remember, Armenia's geography is destiny and our bitter past is prologue. You, through endurance and persistence of commitment will have to make sure that only the prologue is bitter.

The second challenge is that of balancing realism and idealism. When independent Armenia belonged only to history and dreams, we idealized everything about the nation. All Armenians in the homeland were honest and brave, all leaders wise and strong. Of course, today we know that the years of oppression and official corruption left their mark and we are confronted by daily reminders that our brethren in the homeland are only human, and their leaders are endowed with all the characteristics of humankind—including human frailties, including a capacity for error and folly. Your challenge is to maintain faith and commitment *despite* setbacks, *despite* inefficiencies and slow progress, *despite* corruption and wrong-doing. I have no patience with those who, having visited Armenia, come back wringing their hands in despair because, somehow, our long-suffering compatriots have not lived up to some preconceived standard of wisdom and heroism. It is time to look at ourselves and our people with realism. Our efforts are made imperative *because* these problems exist and, above all, because the love of our people and our land—if it is genuine—must be unconditional. Unconditional love does not mean blind acceptance. But it is important to be realistic in looking at the present social and political problems. At the same time, because we care, because it is the home of our people, we must aspire for the highest standards for Armenia. Not only aspire, but work, persistently, to make those aspirations reality.

The third challenge is that of discernment of seeing clearly through the fog of political battles. It is very easy to get caught up in the political passions of the day and lose sight of what is lasting and what is ephemeral, what is important and what is not. There are, of course, political conflicts in Armenia. This is the nature of a democratic society. Armenian democracy is still young and both government and opposition parties are still learning—painfully—their roles. This is especially difficult to endure when the country is engulfed in an economic crisis and beset by war and blockade. But, whatever your sympathies, opinions, or allegiances, your challenge—now and in the future—will be to make the crucial distinction between politics and history, to stay the course, without distraction or temptation.

Last summer, for instance, in the midst of a political conflict, the President of Armenia made some critical remarks about the struggle for Karabagh and its impact on Armenia. Right away there was a rush to judgement in some diasporan papers and in some letters to editors making Karabagh into a partisan political issue and urging its abandonment in the guise of "compromise." Thank God, our people *and* the government knew better and proud Karabagh is still fighting, still Arme-

(Continued on page 4)

## OUTREACH

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## Siroon Hovanisian

(Continued from page 1)

Kharpert, the only survivor of his large family. He was both a barber and a farmer in Tulare for more than thirty years.

The Hovanisians had four sons, John, Ralph, Richard, and Vernon, and their home was the frequent meeting place of Armenians from far and near. Visiting national field workers and prominent guests, such as Arsen Mikayelian and Simon Vratzian, stayed in their home, where meetings of the A.R.F., A.R.S., and A.Y.F. were common. The Hovanisian household became noted for its cordiality and hospitality.

### Charitable Endeavors

While in Tulare, Siroon was first a member of the local A.Y.F., and then the A.R.S., holding the positions of president, secretary, and treasurer. She was also active in the Parent-Teacher Association, being elected president of the Tulare P.T.A. She served as a den mother for the Boy Scouts of America and was active in the March of Dimes and American Heart Association.

In 1961, Siroon and Kaspar moved to Fresno, where she became an active member of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church and held offices in the Church's "Trinity Guild" and "Ladies Aid" societies. For more than 15 years, she served as a volunteer in the California Armenian Home for the Aged, teaching arts and crafts and participating in physical therapy sessions. At the same time she was active in the Emblem Club, a national civic organization, rising to the position of president of the Fresno chapter. She combined both Armenian and non-Armenian activities and was able to spread Armenian culture to broad circles of non-Armenians in this way.

### Many Awards

In recognition of her achievements, Siroon Hovanisian was selected as Fresno County's "Foreign Born Citizen of the Year" in 1973. The next year, in 1974, she was named Fresno County's "Mother of the Year," an honor which received extensive publicity for the Armenian people. In 1990 Holy Trinity Church recognized her as its Mother of the Year.

Throughout the years, she has continued the philanthropic work of her husband, who participated in the numerous fund-raising activities of the Armenian American community. In 1980, Mrs. Hovanisian made the first down-payment for the Armenian Community School of Fresno with a donation of \$50,000 in the memory of Kaspar Hovanisian. In 1987, she donated \$100,000 toward the establishment of an endowed chair in Armenian history at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is a continuing contributor to the Armenian Community School, the Armenian National Committee, the Armenian Relief Society and other organizations. Now 83 years old, Siroon Hovanisian continues to hold together four generations of her family and remains a vibrant participant in the work of the Armenian community.

Reservations for the May 4 Luncheon at which time Mrs. Hovanisian will be appropriately honored, surrounded by members of her family, can be secured by contacting the Prelacy at 212-689-7810 or one of the following members of the Prelacy Ladies Guild:

Linda Chirinian, 203-966-7255;  
Ica Kouyoumdjian, 908-739-3247;  
Rita Tatevossian, 718-268-3919;  
Gemma Vartanian, 718-441-2134;  
Silva Zadourian, 201-767-8414.

### A Mini Lesson

Biblical Palestine had an area of only about ten thousand square miles, somewhat larger than New Jersey or Massachusetts. The land forms the western frontier of the large Syrian Desert, which extends as a plateau eastward to the Euphrates River and the Persian Gulf.



On Sunday, March 21, several thousand Armenian Americans participated in a united demonstration to protest the Azerbaijani blockade of Armenia. The march, which began at St. Vartan's Cathedral, was led by the Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, and the Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashtjian with the participation of all major organizations. Before proceeding to Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza the demonstrators stopped in front of the Azerbaijani Mission to the United Nations for several minutes chanting, "Lift the Blockade." The Coalition to Lift the Blockade Against Armenia, under the auspices of the two Archbishops, was co-chaired by Sam Azadian and Ara Caprelian. Master of Ceremonies was Garabed Chuk Haytian, Speaker of the New Jersey State Assembly. Archbishop Ashtjian and Archbishop Barsamian opened and closed the program, respectively, and speakers included former Congressman Wayne Owens, Curtis Sliwa, the popular leader of the Guardian Angels, Dr. Sarkis Avramian, head of ambulance services in Yerevan. Messages also came from New Jersey Governor Jim Florio, Senators Bob Dole, John Kerry, Richard Lehman, and Alphonse D'Amato and Representatives Joe Kennedy and Carolyn Maloney.

## National Association of Ladies' Guilds Presents Seminar on Armenian Traditions

by Alice Khachadourian



NALG seminar participants with Archbishop Mesrob Ashtjian.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Seminar of the National Association of Ladies' Guilds took place on Saturday, March 20, at the Prelacy offices in New York.

The Seminar was hosted by the Prelacy Ladies' Guild with over 50 participants from Detroit, Troy, Philadelphia, Providence, New Jersey and New York.

His Eminence Archbishop Mesrob Ashtjian, opened the seminar with the *Hayr Mer* after which Yeretgin Arpine Shrikian, charlady of the National Association of Ladies' Guilds, welcomed everyone. Yeretgin Shrikian spoke about the purpose of the organization and thanked the Prelacy Ladies' Guild for hosting the seminar and providing a delicious Lenten luncheon.

Representing the Prelacy Ladies' Guild, Mrs. Gemma Vartanian welcomed the participants. In appreciation for hosting the seminar, Yeretgin Shrikian presented a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Suzanne Hagopian a founding member of the Prelacy Ladies Guild.

The program was then turned over to Archbishop Ashtjian who provided an informative and interesting lecture on the role of the Armenian woman in keeping Armenian traditions alive. Serpazan Hayr explained in detail the Armenian Feasts and Festivals as well as the Armenian Name Days. He stressed the importance of these holidays and why they must be perpetuated.

Following the lecture Yeretgin Shrikian gave an outline of the accomplishments and activities of the National Guild during the past year as well as describing future plans, such as the publication of a cookbook.

The National Guild's raffle for a \$1,500 travel certificate, was drawn at this time, with the lucky winners being Roxie and Esther Vosgerichian of Dearborn, Michigan.



THE ENTRANCE TO ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH in Watertown, Massachusetts, was recently renovated and an elevator was installed for the elderly and disabled. The total cost of the renovation was \$250,000. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Papoyans donated \$25,000 and the remainder has been raised by the community. Photo by Armen Meguerdichian

Between saying and doing  
many a pair of shoes  
is worn out.  
*Italian Proverb*

## The Rage of A Survivor's Grandson

by Stephen Sooren Choolfaian

The time of the genocide came; the slaughter of Armenia began.

The demagogues stirred revolt; the Turk plotted his course.

Death to all, remove that race!

It was easily seen that the race was foul; it was a race of shepherds, of farmers, of Christians, of sons of Noah, and of other scoundrels.

And the Turk wonders why he is a villain; why he is a damned murderer.

You took the men away, then shot them down in cold blood.

You sent their families into the desert; women wailed and the children bled.

My grandfather's family was killed for nothing; he fled into the hills an orphan.

My grandmother modeled pretty dresses, a living doll for haughty Turks.

The bones of a million of my people lie in the sand; so lie their hopes, their fears, their loves, and their indignation.

You sought to destroy us, Turk; yet, we survive.

You raped us; and taught us compassion.

You maimed us; and made us strong.

You sought to end your petty rebellion; and instead, created a nightmare.

Shall we quell our ghosts, let their bodies lie in the ruins of your carnage, let their screams fall on deaf ears, let their thirst for vengeance go unquenched?

Nay, defilers, our swords shall be made red with your blood, our fires shall lick your cities, and the stones of our lands shall serve as the tombstones for your race.

Perhaps. . .

Perhaps in the red storm of our rageful thoughts, we will commit the ultimate atrocity, we will let go of our hate and love you.

Perhaps we will show you the meaning of humanity, and how pale your reflection resides in it.

Perhaps. . .

### Professor Zadoian

(Continued from page 2)

nian. There will be, no doubt, many more instances like this one, many conflicts, many crises. We must always keep them in perspective and not rush to whatever makes our lives easier, whatever serves our political biases. This is why we must learn to discern between *making politics* and *making history*.

The fourth and final challenge is that of diasporan building. It may seem strange that, with all the problems in Armenia, I want to draw your attention to the task of building and strengthening the institutions of the diaspora. Yet this should be plain enough. Anything that we have done so far to help, support, and enhance Armenia we have been able to do because of our institutional framework, which your parents and grandparents built.

As individuals we are powerless, but within our churches, our social service organizations, our cultural organizations and, yes, our parties and political action structures, we can mobilize, we can act, we can be effective. Because the needs of the homeland are great, the need for strong diasporan institutions is great.

How will a strong diaspora relate to Armenia? Some have recently argued that our lot is to follow, unquestioningly, the lead of the homeland. That is, of course, self-serving nonsense. The task of the diaspora is one of constructive involvement. The diaspora is not the source of all wisdom, but neither is it a passive participant—a cow waiting to be milked. The diaspora is not only a bank account, an automatic cash machine, but a source of talent, expertise and good will. Although it cannot be an equal partnership, the diaspora-homeland link must be a partnership nonetheless. Your work and your contribution will shape that partnership.

As we speak now, it is Easter Sunday in Armenia. Crowds are flocking to Etchmiadzin and to churches across the length and breadth of the land, to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and the survival of the nation, after another bitter winter of blockade and privation and war. On their way to church they see far fewer trees in bloom, for so many trees have been chopped down and burned to keep people from freezing. Still, Spring has arrived; fields and valleys are turning green, the color of renewal and hope. And with our help, survivors of this bitter winter will plant new trees this year.

In the mountains of Karabagh and on the bloody frontiers, carved out to dismember Armenia, young men and women are celebrating Easter Sunday—gun in hand. As the roar of guns blends with the sound of church bells, they offer themselves as *madagh*, in our national ceremony of resurrection.

Your daunting challenge now and for years to come is to match their willingness to give and indeed *sacrifice*. The gaze of twenty-five centuries of Armenian history is fixed upon you and your brothers and sisters in the homeland. The hope of generations is about to shift onto your shoulders. That is an awesome burden. But I, for one, feel confident that you will meet the challenge with honor, and out of the future you will carve us a land as bright as all our dreams. And may God be with you and with our people, always.

### A Story for Our Time

## The Hummingbird That Lived Through Winter

by William Saroyan

This excerpt from the short story "The Hummingbird That Lived Through Winter," was first published in an anthology entitled *Dear Baby* and later included in the volume *William Saroyan Reader*, published by George Braziller, Inc.  
© 1944 by William Saroyan.

THESE WAS A HUMMINGBIRD ONCE which in the wintertime did not leave our neighborhood in Fresno, California. I'll tell you about it.

Across the street lived old Dikran, who was almost blind. He was past eighty and his wife was only a few years younger. They had a little house that was as neat inside as it was ordinary outside—except for old Dikran's garden, which was the best thing of its kind in the world. Plants, bushes, trees—all strong, in sweet black moist earth whose guardian was old Dikran. All things from the sky loved this spot in our poor neighborhood, and old Dikran loved *them*.

One freezing Sunday, in the dead of winter, as I came home from Sunday School I saw old Dikran standing in the middle of the street trying to distinguish what was in his hand. Instead of going in to our house to the fire, as I had wanted to do, I stood on the steps of the front porch and watched the old man. He would turn around and look upward at his trees and then back to the palm of his hand. He stood in the street at least two minutes and then at last he came to me. He held his hand out, and in Armenian he said, "What is this in my hand?" I looked.

be sure it is not too hot."

This was done.

After a moment the hummingbird began to show signs of fresh life. The warmth of the room, the vapor of the warm honey—and, well, the will and love of the old man. Soon the old man could feel the change in his hand, and after a moment or two the hummingbird began to take little dabs of the honey.

"It will live," the old man announced. "Stay and watch."

The transformation was incredible. The old man kept his hand generously open, and I expected the helpless bird to shoot upward out of his hand, suspend itself in space, and scare the life out of me—which is exactly what happened. The new life of the little bird was magnificent. It spun about in the little kitchen, going to the window, coming back to the heat, suspending, circling as if it were summertime and it had never felt better in its whole life.

The old man sat on the plain chair, blind but attentive. He listened carefully and tried to see, but of course he couldn't. He kept asking about the bird, how it seemed to be, whether it showed signs of weakening again, what its spirit was, and whether or not it appeared to be restless;

**The old man lifted his hand to his mouth and blew warm breath on the little thing in his hand which he could not even see. "Stay now," he said in Armenian. "It is not long till summer. Stay, swift and lovely."**

"It is a hummingbird," I said half in English and half in Armenian. Hummingbird I said in English because I didn't know its name in Armenian.

"What is that?" old Dikran asked.

"The little bird," I said. "You know. The one that comes in the summer and stands in the air and then shoots away. The one with the wings that beat so fast you can't see them. It's in your hand. It's dying."

"Come with me," the old man said. "I can't see, and the old lady's at church. I can feel its heart beating. Is it in a bad way? Look again, once."

I looked again. It was a sad thing to behold. This wonderful little creature of summertime in the big rough hand of the old peasant. Here it was in the cold of winter, absolutely helpless and pathetic, not suspended in a shaft of summer light, not the most alive thing in the world, but the most helpless and heartbreaking.

"It's dying," I said.

The old man lifted his hand to his mouth and blew warm breath on the little thing in his hand which he could not even see. "Stay now," he said in Armenian. "It is not long till summer. Stay, swift and lovely."

We went into the kitchen of his little house, and while he blew warm breath on the bird he told me what to do.

"Put a tablespoonful of honey over the gas fire and pour it into my hand, but

**God gives every bird its food but does not always drop it into the nest.**

— Danish Proverb —