

was Armenia, the color of the fence
 your homage to Adana, and your other
 complaints over my own complaints
 were addressed to your homesickness
 brought on by my English.

In “My Father,” he describes him as having “always carried a different/look and smell into the house when he/returned from the coffee houses in Racine”:

Years later, reading the solemn and bittersweet
 stories of our Armenian writer in California,
 who visited as a paperboy coffee houses in
 Fresno, I came to understand that in these
 cafes were contained the suffering and
 shattered hopes of my orphaned people.⁴²

In another poem in the same collection, he speaks of “Armenian Coffee Houses in America” resembling coffee houses in the old country, but there is one big difference: “they also share a/loneliness for Armenia and a/need for old country traditions.” Those coffee houses are gone now, as are the first-generation survivors with their yearning for the homeland they were uprooted from.

Kherdian’s newly kindled interest in his father’s past, which became his own, and his research into Armenian history brought him closer to his roots, but he regrets the seeming insignificance of what he remembers of his father: “It isn’t much to remember—/you’ve been gone more than 12

⁴² Kherdian, “My Father,” in *On the Death of My Father*, n.p. “Our Armenian writer in California” is a reference to William Saroyan.