

years.”⁴³ In “A Poem for My Father,” he lovingly paints one of those rare memories, when father and son used to wake up early in the morning and go fishing in Lake Michigan.⁴⁴

In *On the Death of My Father* and *Homage to Adana*, the two collections he dedicated to the memory of Melkon Kherdian, David blames their bizarre relationship on his father’s behavior as a survivor of a great catastrophe who bore the burden of crushing memories of past atrocities that impeded his return to normal life, especially when the new world called for new ways and enforced its own peculiar parameters. But he also blames himself for the emotional distance he created in their relationship in order to safeguard his own aspiration to adopt the new ways unhindered, to embrace American culture, forget the past, and live in the present.

Kherdian’s *Letters to My Father*, composed more than forty years after his father’s death, manifest his continuing search for convincing answers, given the fact that his earlier vantage point brought him no solace or satisfaction. He takes the father-son relationship to another level in this excerpt “From *Letters to My Father*,” in *Forgotten Bread* (344–6), when he asks, “Is there a natural antagonism/between father and son/that cannot be avoided”? He pursues the question in general terms, probing Freudian theories, but in the end he returns to his original premise:

They stare at each other
unable to communicate,

⁴³ Kherdian, “A Poem for My Father,” in *Looking Over Hills* (Fresno, CA: Giligia Press, 1972), n.p.

⁴⁴ Ibid.