

were there. A Kurdish family from a nearby village now occupied the house. The Armenian Quarter of the Infidels had been emptied of the infidels.

There was no longer any room for them in this Diyarbakir from now on famous for its military prisons, its dark jails, its gallows, its caravanserais and its Turkish baths, its taverns and its brothels, in this city, citadel of sorrow and nostalgia.³¹

Vardan and his family had migrated to a place unknown, leaving behind their house and the vestiges of their memories. Years later, Mehmed Uzun emigrated too. Turkey had no room for people with his mindset and ideas. He was in the minority in Turkey. He was in the minority abroad and he continued to belong to those ethnic and political groups that were always on the margins. His identity as a Turk with a Kurdish origin acquired new elements with a strange, previously unknown yearning for his Kurdish tradition and language—which he never had the opportunity to learn in school.

Now he knew well the pain of being rejected by the mainstream and living on the margins. He knew the emptiness of the phrase, “I am proud to be a Turk,” a phrase he had repeated in chorus every morning at school. He had come to learn about it as a young intellectual when he was still living in Turkey. He had come to realize how and why the Turkish government denied the existence of the Kurds as an ethnic minority in Turkey. Throughout the turbulent period of Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s rule and the Armenian persecutions and

³¹ Uzun, “The Pomegranate Flowers,” p. 53.