

Eghegnatzor

Ararat/Walnuts

High cliffs along the valley;
The silk road guarded by a fort;
A city's ruins;
An open church on the cliff's shoulder
for dead sentries who patrolled the ridge.

Half-way up, a mule trail
To crumbled monastery walls,
Ruined cells.

Across the river, a graveyard.
rounded, long stones most buried in the ground.
Some with ancient Hebrew on them,
mute memories of a forgotten exile.
The monastery opposite and the river.

An old, bent man came,
"these stones are from another age" he said.

They are all still there:
The Jews of that village,
The caravans of the Asia merchants,
The monks,
The guards along the crenellated ridge.

Now a wedding feast in a village,
Long tables of food and people,
Talking, living.

We ate there,
on a platform
hanging over the water like the willow branches.
And drank coffee.

September 1999