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Literary Dialogue with Poet Anoush NakashianBy A. Atamian

BOSTON, MA - A literary dialogue with poet Anoush Nakashian of Jerusalem was held here last week. The event was organized by Tekeyan Cultural Association to present the newly published *Rainy Love*, Nakashian's third volume of collected poems.

Throughout the "Dialogue," 36-year-old Nakashian's personal reflections and literary interpretations were enriched with her captivating poetry recitations.

Hratch Tchilingirian, a scholar and analyst of contemporary Armenian affairs, was the host of the evening. He was introduced by Alex Kalayjian.

In his introduction, Tchilingirian welcomed Anoush Nakashian as "one of the finest representatives of contemporary Armenian diasporic literature."

Referring to *Rainy Love*, Tchilingirian remarked that under current conditions in the Diaspora, as well as in Armenia, "the publication of an Armenian book is a courageous event." Tchilingirian cited renowned poet Silva Gaboudigian's characterization in the introduction of the book: "It is martyrdom not only to preserve the Armenian language [in the Diaspora], but, most important, to write in Armenian despite being far away from the main domain of the mother tongue [Armenia]."

"The publication of an Armenian poetry book is reassuring and dispels the fear of decline of Armenian literary creativity in the Diaspora," said Tchilingirian. As nationally recognized poet Maro Markarian wrote in the introduction of Nakashian's previous book: "The recognition and appreciation of the creativity of our multi-talented compatriots who live outside Armenia is one of the dearest and most valuable tasks [of our times]."

The "Literary Dialogue" started when Anoush Nakashian entered the stage reciting one of her poems:

*Abundant rain
Pour down
these dirty pavements...
There is dust
Even in the eyes
of these passersby
Their views are blurred...
Before the dust reaches their hearts,
Pour down abundantly
and cleanse this universe.*

As the title of the book suggests, the central motif of Nakashian's book is the rain. Its numerous contours, emotions and moods constantly intermingle with the concept of love.

Nakashian sings love, love, and "abundant" love, "the powerful feeling" in her life." For her, "suffering and love give birth to beauty." Nakashian reflects: "How sad and monotonous life would be without suffering...we would not appreciate the value of happiness. God created night and day, rain and sun...all these are providential blessings in humanity's life."

Nakashian brilliantly interweaves natural phenomena with human tensions, emotions, defeats and triumphs. "Her poems in *Rainy Love* express strength in disappointment, self-confidence in despair...Nakashian has a passion for both what is and what is not," said Tchilingirian.

Love is the dominant theme in Nakashian's poetry, reflected in her other collections as well: *From the Warm Breath of My Love* (1993) and *Night Liturgy* (1994).

In *Rainy Love*, Nakashian's words and thoughts "rain" on the reader, making the reader a co-traveler with her. Her "song" is universal, yet very personal and touching at the same time.

*Even the gods
Speak about love
In silence...
We are humans, I know,
But, in love,
Come let us become gods.
Whom shall I sing my unsung love
Where shall I find the hero of my legendary love...
And if you could, live happily, and
My blessings shall be with you
In silence I walk in the path of suffering
Voiceless I walk through the consuming fires around me*



Anoush Nakashian

*I prevail the mocking sky above me
I live proud, I live strong in my pain
Please, don't feel lonely
Even when these tears seem a smile to you*

Love for Armenia, the fatherland, is one of Nakashian's "loves" which springs from turbulent realities of Diaspora life, both on the individual and collective levels. As a Diaspora Armenian, Nakashian speaks about her "adoring fatherland:

*Unequaled love
To live without you
Is death
To die in your bosom
Is the beginning of life
And when I turn dust
I'm braided in the extending bridge
From Van to Yerevan...
I do not die
I am your dream come true.*

In a poem dedicated to a wounded soldier of Karabagh, Nakashian encourages the Armenian freedom fighter:

*Dance, with your holy dance,
Take the revenge of the Armenian...
The closed gates of justice
Are simply crushed with this dance
Dance brother, dance proudly
And with your unmoving legs
Move the hardened conscience of humanity.*

In 1997, Anoush Nakashian was made a member of Armenia's Writers Union in recognition of her exceptional literary talent.

In addition to artistic and literary career, Nakashian is also a philologist. She received her Ph.D. from Yerevan State University in 1995, after successfully defending a ground-breaking thesis on Frig, a medieval Armenian poet.