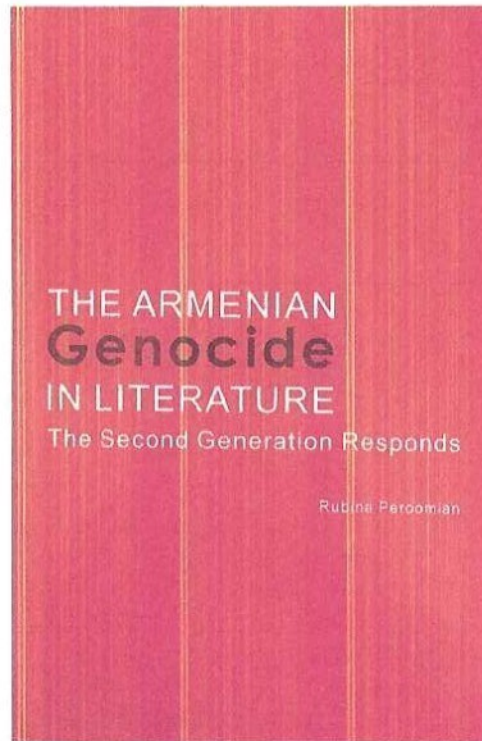


Book Review: Apples in Square Boxes Grin at Me

Arts & Culture Books 1 day ago

The Armenian Genocide in Literature: The Second Generation Responds, by Rubina Perroomian
Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, 2015

Here's Perroomian with her fourth volume on the subject, this one on the literature of second generation (post-genocide) Armenians. It reads like a compendium of sorts unfolding the even more silent yet drawn out drama that followed the tragedy of 1915; and this, promptly and diligently one hundred years after the events that eventually coined the term 'genocide'.



Dr. Rubina Perroomian's "The Armenian Genocide in Literature: The Second Generation Responds"

At times a mosaic, other times prism, these almost 400 pages have an earthly to reverent touch to them. Housed comfortably inside hardcover red, black, white and lovely grey designs, they feel solid. And I miss something I never had, yes, that Armenia; most Armenians probably miss that too. Perroomian unravels as she stitches fact, dreams, emotion, more dreams. She has wrestled with the arduous task of addressing the Armenian Genocide for some time now, and it looks like she'll continue doing so, unabashed, curious and dedicated to the documentation of it. Someday, like Mark Twain, I

assume she'll be thankfully saying to herself, "Oh, what a ride that was".

So one claims Ararat, having chosen The Odyssey Trail where "... apples in square boxes grin at you/like rice-powdered statues from Dresden", and where, Under the Skirts of Ararat "... the few ... stepped out with a whimper/arched their vertebrae to the gods/until they felt ground/they offered no sacrifice/rather/began to record the new/and transcribe the old...". (I could not resist quoting myself from St. Gregory's Daughter, University of La Verne Press, 1991). Everyone is Armenian then.

So Rubina records. Because life is more of the same in space-times; then again, what is space, what is time? Heritage silently presses on, genocide even more so. Perroomian continues; she is novelist, journalist, narrator, in our living room, bedroom, family room, everywhere; at the library and at the therapist's too. I hope she explores the nuances of separatist cultures next, as they cannot be characterized solely by the word she uses – ghettoization. The term conveys poor socio-economic conditions; yet, in most post-Armenian Genocide families (including mine) the safety net of separatism came through affluence, education, religion. Another challenging exploration could be studying the effects of atrocity (of any regime) on the use of the mother tongue in future generations. (See Celan.)

This book is available from [Amazon](#).

Arpine Konyalian Grenier comes from science, music, languages and the arts. She has authored four collections: "St. Gregory's Daughter"; "Whores from Samarkand"; "Part, Part, Euphrates"; "The Concession Stand: Exaptation at the Margins." Recent and forthcoming work can be found in Columbia Poetry Review, Fence, Journal of Poetics Research and The Iowa Review, to name a few. She lives and writes in Los Angeles.