

Wind of the Genocide

i belong to an ancient tribe,
as ancient as the wind.
i belong to a small tribe,
culled by our neighbors and all passing hordes.
those who have culled us, have done so,
not knowing that pruning would make us stronger...
would make us resilient... would make us beautiful.

my tribe has chosen to settle under noah's arc:
cultivated vineyards, written poetry, and built magnificent places of worship.
others have dispersed to near and far lands:
hoping, but not succeeding, to find a better breeze, a better sunlight, or a better rainbow.

i come from the belly of the mountain,
just under noah's arc,
as my parents did before me and their parents before them.
i am of the mountain where the mist and the fog
create an isolation which breeds a certain stoicism and bravery
(some people say insanity) that learned scholars have determined
to be the root of leadership.

in the belly of my mountain,
the mist slowly washes my body,
and the fog gently purifies my soul...
and most importantly,
the truth becomes an inextricable part
of my very being.

when i was very young, my grandfather would put me on his lap
and let me twirl his moustache.
he would tell me stories of the past and
impart his wisdom for the benefit of my future.
he once told me the story of a flock of sheep
that early one spring morning
climbed into the belly of our mountain,
bathed in the mist, grazed on the slopes of stoicism,
and at dusk, came down
as a pride of lions.

and so the centuries pass, and i, in my turn, will tell you stories of our mountain,
so that you understand why (as i did from my parents and grandparents)
we are who we are, and, under the watchful eyes of the Almighty,
forever shall be.

John Vartan