

## ANOUSH

Prelude  
(On Ascension Night)

PERCHED upon the slender rays of the moon  
Flying upon the wing of the breeze  
The fairies forgathered by night  
At the head of yonder mountain.

‘Come sisters of the lofty mountains,  
Oh you, most delightful of sprites  
Come, let us mourn the untimely death  
Of the young maiden’s impassioned love.

Her virginal pitcher she has filled  
With water from seven springs;  
Of seven flowers, she has picked flowers  
To bind silently into a posy of love.

The water and the flowers she has placed  
Beneath the stars, to plead from them,  
Her heart filled to bursting with eagerness,  
That they may smile kindly upon her lover...

Woe to you, Anoush, o mountain flower,  
Woe to your valorous lover, too!  
Woe to your soft and dainty form,  
Woe to your deep, thoughtful eyes!

Likewise, their hearts and eyes  
Overflowing with tearful dew,  
The mountain flowers sadly sighed  
With a mournful zephyr that night:

‘Woe Anoush, woe sister, woe,  
Woe to your love, woe to him!  
Woe Saro, woe brave one, woe,  
Woe to the mountains you love!’

‘Come sisters of the lofty mountains,  
Oh you, most delightful of sprites...’  
Thus did the fairies mournfully  
Sing away right through the night.

Thus wondrously they called  
In voice of enchantment;  
But the moment the sun’s rays shone,  
They vanished unseen, without trace.

They plunged deep into the spring;  
They slid into the massive oak,  
And into the sparkling waves  
Of the mountain stream.

## CANTO THE FIRST

### I

Again and again, the unsleeping yearning  
Of that fairest land ceaselessly calls,  
And with wings imperiously outspread  
My soul now flies towards home;  
There, sitting before the family hearth,  
They wait ever with yearning for me  
And through the long, wintry nights  
Tell about the ancient braves of Loree:  
Towards those huge, proud mountains,  
That in drunken files dance round,  
In a monumental dance against the sky:  
As if rejoicing in that great wedding-feast  
For elegant Mount Aragats's fair daughters,  
Whom Dev-Al, Dev-Bet and yet other giants,  
Those demented giants of the ancient world,  
Abducted and bore to the impregnable Loree.

### II

O friends of bygone days, o mountains green,  
Now that I see you again, I recollect  
And visualize before me those happy days,  
Those well-loved faces that are no more  
And have passed, like the many-coloured flowers  
That grew upon your flanks last spring;  
Though like last year's snow upon your peaks  
They have passed, yet I cry out to them now:  
Greetings, O first-born memories of my life;  
With winged yearning is my soul searching

For you in the valleys and in the mountains,  
And, with bewitched voice, urging you to appear.  
Come out anew from the darkness of your graves,  
That I may see you, feel you, and hear you.  
Breathe life again and live once more,  
Fill the poet with pleasure sublime...!

### III

And from the dark caverns of the mossy rocks,  
The silent depths of the thickly forested valley,  
I can hear the echo of my laughter now  
Resounding anew from childhood days.  
The merry sounds ring from the mountain-camp;  
The smoke rises from my familiar vented-tent:  
And everything here comes to life once more,  
Emerging briskly from the darkness of morn;  
And upon the fresh, dewy mountain slopes...  
Hush! Hearken! The shepherd is calling...

### IV

'O godless maiden, sit inside your tent,  
Why do you come out to drive me insane?  
You have made me a minstrel and I cannot rest:  
    Weaving my songs,  
    I roam about the wilds;  
    Unattended have I left  
    My sheep in the field.  
Oh, you have scorched my heart with your love,  
And have bound my feet with your loose hair;  
I can bear it no more; I will steal you away.

Oh, mountain maiden,  
You, beautiful maiden,  
Oh, your rosy cheeks,  
You, dark-haired Anoush!

If your parents will not give you to me,  
I will shed blood like a river;  
I will take to the mountains and vanish,  
For you, oh maiden,  
With eyes so black  
And so profound,  
And brows well arched!

V

Thus sang Saro, and the maiden could not  
Settle down peacefully inside the tent.  
'Oh, who was it, *nanni*, that was calling us?  
Can you not hear...? Listen, there it is!'  
'Enough of that, Anoush, come inside the tent;  
Every time you fly out and look around,  
People will say, 'What kind of a girl is that:  
She goes to all the men and talks to them?'  
'Look there at that mountain slope, *nanni*,  
See how thickly the green sorrel has grown!  
Let me go and pick some to weave into plaits,  
And sing 'The Destiny Song' over there!  
'Settle down, Anoush, you are a grown maid,  
You do not want to mix with young shepherds;  
Sit in the tent and see to your work;  
It's a disgrace, you must behave decently!'  
'Oh, I know not why my heart, *nanni*,  
Now weeps, having turned sullen and sad,

And now takes wing, anxious to fly away,  
But I know not where, I know not where...  
Oh, *nanni* dear, *nanni*, what shall I do...?  
What shall your sleepless, restless child do?  
Oh, *nanni* dear, *nanni*, let me take the pitcher  
And go to the spring with the other maidens!

## VI

The pitchers at their shoulders,  
They went fluttering down to the stream,  
Laughing and with shoulders linked,  
Their song ringing up the mountains:

‘From beneath the clouds, flows the water  
And, breasting its way down, it froths;  
Whose lover is it sitting up there,  
Sobbing away on that mountain?’

Oh, cool waters, limpid waters,  
That come from the mountains,  
Passing through fields and wilds,  
Did my lover, too, drink from you?

Did he drink thereof, perchance, oh God,  
And did it cool his flaming heart?  
Did the sleepless anguish in his breast,  
Perchance, leave him, oh God...?

‘Oh maiden, your lover came and passed  
Aflame and drunk with your love;  
And his burning heart came and passed,  
But the chill waters did not cool it.’

From beneath the clouds, flows the water,  
And, breasting its way down, it froths,  
It is my precious lover weeping there  
And sobbing on the mountain slope.'

## VII

And all of a sudden a dark, hidden doubt  
Within the old mother's heart gave voice:  
'It is some time since Anoush took the pitcher  
To go to the spring: she has not returned...  
The clouds have enveloped the mountains  
And filled the valleys, embracing them all;  
A thousand evil perils, a thousand robbers,  
A thousand youths must be swarming there now!  
And all of a sudden the old woman stood up:  
'Where have you gone, Anoush, shameless maid?'  
She called out to her fearless daughter  
From above the valley, her hand to her brow.  
'You black-hearted girl, may fear seize you!  
Does a maiden enter a valley all alone?  
The clouds have gathered, it has turned dark,  
How have you disappeared thus without trace?  
Anoush, my child....! Hey, Anoush, Anoush ...!  
Beating her own knees, she sighed with woe,  
And, standing at the head of the valley,  
She looked below, sullen heart, distressed.  
The clouds have enveloped the mountains  
And filled the valley, embracing them all;  
A thousand evil peril, a thousand robbers,  
A thousand youths are swarming there now.

## VIII

'Let me go, mother's calling! She'd find out !'  
'Stay a little longer, Anoush, just a little!'  
'No, I cannot, I must go...! Oh, I am so mad!  
You do not love me, in the way I love you;  
I am the only one that suffers and weeps,  
Whereas you sing songs on the mountain slopes!  
You have forgotten me for a long, long time!  
I have been here, waiting and waiting for you,  
And I have turned into stone, disloyal one!  
My eyes are wearied through searching for you!

You do not hear,  
No, nor pity me;  
You no longer care  
What happens to me!  
I am all burning  
And turning into water!  
Oh, I do not know  
Into what I will turn,  
If I continue thus  
To wait and wait...!  
They say, the willow  
Was a maiden like me,  
Waiting for her lover:  
But he never came.  
The poor maid atremble  
Bent over in despair,  
And shriveling with grief  
Into a willow turned...!  
Her head hanging down  
Over the waters

She still trembles on  
And softly weeps;  
Now all the year round  
She has but one thought:  
How any lover could  
His love ever forget..!'

'Oh, Anoush, Anoush, what is that you say...?  
Can you not hear then...  
That, when on the mountains I sing,  
To whom it is I speak...?  
That, when by night I play upon my flute,  
Whom it is I call...?  
That, when in despair I remain sitting,  
In whose company I am...?  
That, when I sigh and woefully cry out,  
Whom it is I recall...?  
Oh, Anoush, Anoush, Oh Godless Anoush...!  
Listless and drunk with love,  
Sighed the shepherd thus, deeply grieved,  
Then pined, and ended his song...

## IX

'Anoush, my child, Anoush, come home...!'  
Her mother keeps calling, as she sighs.  
'I am coming, *nanni*...! I am coming...!  
The maiden's voice rings out of the valley.  
With her dishevelled hair down her back  
And strewn across her flushed cheeks,  
From under the feathery clouds emerged  
Anoush, like a roe in flight.

She brought back the pitcher still empty,  
But without its pad at her shoulder,  
Which she had left beside the spring also...  
Oh, the carelessness of young maidens!  
'I was frightened, *nanni*,' she complained,  
'And wanted to cry but could not.  
I saw some men down below, *nanni*;  
I thought they were Turks, bathing there!'  
And her aged mother, grown angry'  
Cursed her forgetful and timid Anoush,  
And thereupon brought down from her shoulder  
The old pitcher she had brought back empty.

## CANTO THE SECOND

### X

(On Ascension Morn)

Ascension Day is here, the multi-coloured flowers  
Have adorned the pastures with beautiful rugs,  
In clusters have the maidens gone to the mountains  
With joyous songs for the drawing of lots.

'It's Ascension Day,  
Meadow, dear meadow  
Black mountains, meadow,  
Meadow, dear meadow!

Song and scent mingled,  
Arm in arm they go,  
Adorning the mountains,

As they pick flowers  
And played with them,  
Like the butterflies.

It's Ascension Day,  
Meadow, dear meadow;  
Joyous days, meadow,  
Meadow, dear meadow!

Ascension Day is here,  
Decorated with flowers,  
Let us know our luck:  
'Now, who is whose fate?'  
'Oh tell me dear shepherd boy, whose are you?  
'God above and the world know, you are mine!'

Come now, oh maiden,  
Your good fortune draw!  
Let us praise in song  
Your lover so brave!  
'His lip has sprouted, and he is so very tall;  
Cares have I none, when such a lover is mine!'

It's Ascension Day,  
Meadow, dear meadow;  
Flaming hearts, meadow,  
Meadow, dear meadow!'

The air is filled with song and hearts with joy;  
They have formed a circle and are drawing lots;  
The dream of love desired by one comes true,  
The yearning of another remains in the heart.

## XI

The drawing of lots circles round anew,  
As the veiled Mother of Flowers bids them;  
The Destiny Song pours out of tender hearts,  
And with it rumble the flowered mountains.

‘Oh maiden with the rich, dark hair,  
Maiden to the mountains schooled,  
A bullet will touch the heart  
Of him who loves you, maiden!’

‘What a black fate has befallen you,  
Oh hapless sister, beautiful Anoush!  
May the hand that drew this lot break!’  
And they all stood bewildered and stunned.

‘It is all untrue, sister, do not believe it;  
It is no more than passing words, Anoush;  
Do not break your heart for what is not true,  
Dance away and song the Destiny Song!’

‘No, good fortune is not for me, I know it;  
It has never, oh, never been mine!  
And I shall always remain thus luckless,  
For I have been cursed from my infancy!  
One day, when I in my cradle lay,  
They say, an old dervish came to our door;  
He sang his song and asked for a reward,  
But my mother would give him none:  
‘Begone!’ she cried. ‘Away from our door!’  
My infant will burst, begone from here!’

And the dervish put a curse upon me, saying:  
'May her days with sorrow and tears be filled!'  
Oh, that old, wandering man's merciless curse  
And now this ill fate are well known to God.  
My heart is always closed, it is always dark:  
And I know not what lies hidden before me!

'Do not be sad and obstinate, Anoush;  
It is a senseless lot drawn by our own hand,  
Some stupid dervish with his foolish curse,  
And thus you weep, sister, with broken heart!  
Calm yourself, for there is nothing to fear:  
Life is but an ardent spring for you yet;  
Your tender, newly-ripened virginity  
Has many, many happy days before it sill.  
It is all untrue, sister, do not believe it;  
It is no more than passing words, Anoush;  
Do nor break your heart for what is not true,  
Dance away and sing the Destiny Song!'

(The group sings)

Oh, fortunate maid,  
Blessed be your love,  
And your eyes so black  
To the mountains used.

It's Ascension Day,  
Meadow, dear meadow;  
Loving days, meadow,  
Meadow, dear meadow!

I'd die for your youth:  
You're the spring in flower;  
You have at your back  
A lover like a mountain!

It's Ascension Day  
Meadow, dear meadow;  
Mountain lovers, meadow,  
Meadow, dear meadow!

(Anoush alone)

Oh, my destiny is calling me,  
I know not, no, I know not where!  
And my heart, sorrowful and dark ,  
Now trembles at its chill voice.

Oh, pretty flowers of the mountains,  
You, too, bear a silent sorrow:  
Your little eyes are filled with tears  
And your hearts are black and cheerless.

Oh, all the flowers of this world  
Always suffer thus in vain;  
And likewise all saddened hearts  
Become crushed and wild in their grief.

(The group from afar)

It's Ascension Day,  
Meadow, dear meadow;

Ardent sorrows, meadow,  
Meadow, dear meadow!

## CANTO THE THIRD

### XII

There was a wedding-feast one wintry night,  
The village multitude rejoiced unrestrained;  
There, too, had descended the shepherds young,  
To look at the maidens, to dance and wrestle.  
And after the dance, they cleared a big space  
In the middle of the spacious main room;  
The piper now played a wrestling tune:  
Both the old and young into ferment were thrown.  
They clamoured, 'Drag them out, drag them out!'  
And forcibly dragged out two of the youths:

One was Saro and the other, Mossi,  
Anoush's eldest brother – a shepherd.  
And the whole village like a rampart stood;  
They parted into two separate camps,  
Each selecting one of the wrestlers,  
Each standing behind the youth of its choice.  
They roared and called out of both camps:  
'Be brave of heart, do not be frightened, boys!'  
Whereas from behind the bride's veil  
The maidens and the bride stood and watched.  
And the youths now grown extremely heated  
Thrust their hems into their belts;  
They beat the ground with their sturdy hands

And ferociously set upon each other!  
There was a custom in those dark valleys,  
And, ever obedient to old customs,  
No youth would set his fellow wrestler  
To the ground before an assembled crowd.  
And, locked together in friendly combat,  
Saro and Mossi tumbled down sideways;  
Then they rose together from the ground,  
As if victory were difficult for both.  
In vain were the roars of the drunken crowd,  
In vain, the maids' gazes with palpitating hearts;  
In vain also had Anoush breathless grown  
Standing there frozen like a very picture.  
Saro spotted her standing there thus...  
And his heart throbbed and beat faster:  
His eyes became shrouded in a mist,  
He forgot friends, customs, and the world.  
And whilst Mossi, ever in playful mood,  
Had momentarily released his hold,  
Saro mustered up his strength and kneeling,  
Viciously floored his friend and held him down!  
The crowd rushed forward excitedly,  
Whisked the two young wrestlers up from the ground,  
And, with thundering roars of joyous cries,  
Led the victory to the bridegroom's throne.  
At the sounds of merriment and applause,  
All the walls and ceiling shook and trembled;  
Whereas from behind of the bride's veil  
The maidens and the bride stood and watched.

### XIII

Mossi stood up eroded with anger,  
'Let him come,' he roared, 'and tackle me again!  
If not, I swear upon my life, that coward  
Will never, never escape at my hand!  
He did not floor me! He cheated me!  
Clear a space here, let him face me again!  
And from every side they laughed merrily  
And called aloud in biting mockery:

'No, he wasn't beaten!  
No, he wasn't floored!  
Mossi rolled over,  
He fell on his side!  
Ha, ha, ha, ha boys!  
Oh yes, he is right!  
Slap him on the back,  
He must try again!  
Ha, ha, ha, ha, boys!  
Slap him on the back!'

### XIV

And from the noisy wedding house that day  
Mossi came out wounded to the core;  
With blood dripping from his sullen heart  
He wandered away, hasty of step and unsteady.  
'Shame upon, you, Mossi... such insults, too!  
Shame upon such a known brave youth like you!  
Remember who you are, have a look at yourself:  
Your back had never before touched the ground.

You, who are like a mountain, how you fell  
Before the eyes of all the villagers there!  
You, how you curled up under Saro's knees  
And then appeared before the womenfolk...!  
Such a thing had never happened to you before!  
You are now but a mockery to the whole village!  
Go, fall off a roof... or twirl a spindle...!

XV

'Oh Mossi, dear Mossi, do not kill me,  
I'll stop loving him from now on, I will!  
Put your dagger away, it frightens me!  
My heart is trembling like a leaf...!  
Thus before her brother pleaded and wept  
The helpless and wan Anoush, kneeling down,  
As Mossi, the gleaming dagger in his hand,  
Wanted to murder her with eyes open.  
'Swear upon your name then, shameless wench,  
That you will not love Saro any more,  
Or else this bared dagger that you can see  
I will thrust into your heart, to the hilt  
'I am the dust under your feet, Mossi,  
I am your slave and need not even swear!  
I said I did not love Saro any more,  
Do you not see how I weep on my knees...?'  
'Are you deceiving me, you lying cheat:  
You say you do not love him, what then is it  
That makes you sob in the dark of night?  
And why is it that in your dreams you call,  
'Saro dear, Saro...! Oh, dearest Saro!'  
'Oh my fondest brother, dearest Mossi,

Please, do not kill me, let me go this time;  
I will not love him, since that is your wish,  
I will no longer call him in my dreams!  
Do not kill me, take your dagger away!  
Am I not your sister and you my Mossi...?

## XVI

And since that incident on the wedding day,  
The brotherly youths became enemies;  
And every effort made by their friends  
To bring about peace ended in vain.  
To the stubborn Mossi, how could Mossi  
While he was still alive in this world,  
Ever bear the sight of his own sister  
In the arms of his cowardly friend, Saro ?  
Perhaps at night, too, sleepless in anger,  
He desired to kill his sister, to tear out  
Of her heart, with the point of his dagger,  
Saro's name and her secret love for him.  
And who knows, perhaps, on this very night,  
That brave opponents, stubbornly hostile,  
Are driving away sheep from each other's flock,  
Seeking to avenge each other thereby.  
And likewise it could happen suddenly  
For the stack of the one — a whole year's crop —  
In the dark hours of the night to catch fire  
And singe the stars with flames reaching the sky.

## CANTO THE FOURTH

### XVII

The clouds leisurely even like camels,  
Newly watered ascend from the valley;  
The sun has newly shown its face  
At the stony spine of Chatindagh.  
The village is in a noisy turmoil:  
Old men, women are running to the edge of the rock,  
With guns held by the middle.

### XIII

There came an old man great of stature,  
And stood amidst the disquieted youths,  
His calm finger pointing towards the valley,  
Puffing away at his chibouk, he spoke thus:  
‘Last night — it must have been at midnight —  
I was in bed but had not yet closed my eyes;  
I had lost my sleep, like my health of old,  
I have been left poor in every way...  
Ah yes, it must have been just midnight,  
The dog stood up over on this side,  
I called out, ‘Hi there!’ There was no reply;  
The dog went mad and jumped about...  
‘Well, well!’ I said to myself,  
‘Boys are not the same as they used to be!’  
I was lying down alone in the sheep-fold,  
I heard a sound and flew up from my place —  
As I said, I had not yet gone to sleep,  
And it must have been after midnight —

Two human shadowy forms were running away  
Ahead of the dog and went down below...'  
No sooner had they heard this than the youths  
Went down into the valley in the great haste,  
And just as they entered it, away from the path,  
They found two human footprints, freshly made.

## XIX

For a whole month, the group of armed youths  
Tramped about in the mountains and valleys,  
Looking for the shepherd Saro, who had descended  
From the mountains and snatched Anoush away.  
A month later the youths returned home,  
Now full of praise for his skilful deed:  
'What bravery! The boy really deserves it!  
That is the way to snatch a girl away!'  
Only Anoush's brother, Mossi,  
Stayed behind in the pastures, having sworn  
To seek them out, wherever they might be,  
And slay them both, to soothe his heart.  
So he stayed in the pastures. And one day,  
As darkness fell, hidden among women gatherers,  
Her clothes rent, her head bowed, her face sad,  
Anoush returned home, from the valley.

## XX

'Vardishagh, girl, for the love of your soul,  
Throw down your barley and see what it says;  
May my sight go dark, may I turn into a ghost,  
I saw a vision in my dream last night!

It was in a dark and narrow valley,  
 And unlucky Saro's sheep were standing there,  
 They could all speak and were singing songs,  
 And they were all singing together...!  
 Throw down your barley, for the love of your son!  
 I do not see any good in this dream;  
 Merciful God, open up your doors to us,  
 You created us, who are dust under your feet!  
 The dumb lambs, in the dark valley  
 Were singing away and weeping aloud,  
 Whilst Saro's mother before them all,  
 With kerchief in hand, was dancing away...!  
 'It was a bad dream you saw, Manishak,  
 See, my barely says the same thing, too:  
 This one's bad, that one's good; that's Saro;  
 See how he has fallen into a black path...  
 Oh may God preserve this youth from danger;  
 May God preserve his luckless mother!'

## XXI

And in the mountains Saro roams about  
 Like a deer in flight, between evils caught:  
 Pending death ahead, a bullet behind;  
 The pastures, a hell; his companion, the foe!

And when evening falls, silent and serene,  
 He descends from the mountains, shrouded  
in darkness,

And it is a sad lament that he sings;  
 He talks to his friends the mountains, and grumbles:

'Oh mountains, lofty mountains,  
I cry out, 'Woe!', my mountains;  
You, too, voice my grief with me,  
You, who jointly share my sorrow.

Hunted am I, and rest my hope  
Upon you and upon your valleys;  
Wearied of this world, I want  
To disappear without trace.

Let me disappear, weary and idle,  
In your stony wilderness;  
Let me die and end these my days,  
That I may sleep peacefully.

Oh, I would die: but were she  
To hear of it suddenly  
Though I were freed from torment,  
She would be left with tearful eyes.'

## CANTO THE FIFTH

### XXII

Anoush is lying on her face, weeping;  
Around her stand the neighbourly women  
And can find no words for the luckless maid,  
Dishonoured, carried away and returned.  
God spared her uncouth brother, Mossi,  
Who from the pastures had not returned,  
And her white-haired father, with a frown,  
Began to froth with anger, spat and cursed.  
'Get out, you impudent, shameless wench!

May black mourning be your wedding crown!  
Away and perish for ever from my sight;  
May you get buried under the ground!  
You saw how your brother hated him,  
You saw how your own parents shunned him:  
How many heads have you on your shoulders,  
That you get up and run away with him?’  
All the villagers descended from the roofs  
The father’s harsh anger to appease;  
And likewise there came the village priest,  
A huge, venerable, white-haired old man.  
‘Go outside!’ he cried out, ‘Go outside!  
Let Anoush stay here and tell me the truth,  
Let her reveal her thoughts and love to me,  
And everything will be simple after that.  
Do not cry, my daughter, confess to me,  
Did you run away of your own free will?  
If you love him, then you need not worry,  
I will marry you together without fail...’  
‘Why are they groaning so? Who was it then  
That suddenly raised an uproar outside...?  
Whom have they killed? Was it Mossi? Where?’  
‘Oh! Anoush ! Fetch her some water, quick...!’

### XXIII

Like the sudden surging of a deluge,  
Descended from the dark clouds in the sky,  
Like a tempest, impetuous and swift,  
A group of youths from the village sped forth.  
Inflamed by grief, they no longer questioned,  
And flew away as if pursued by fear:

And before them opened out horribly  
The swishing valley filled with blood.  
The village emptied in but a moment  
And, impatiently waiting on the cliff edge,  
They listened silently, with throbbing hearts,  
They looked below... there was not a sound:  
The roused Debbed alone in the precipice  
Glided downwards with a muted lament.

#### XXIV

And the murderer emerged from the valley,  
His face distorted and his gait unsteady;  
Terror dripping out of his blood-shot eyes,  
And his appearance altogether changed.  
Without looking into the people's faces,  
Without voicing a word, sullen and grim,  
He went to the porch and hung on the pillar  
His black rifle-black like a snake.  
The stunned crowd was likewise rendered dumb:  
None of them dared utter a sound!  
Except for one, who curblessly enraged,  
Tore at her cheeks and wailed with woe.  
It was the dead shepherd's aged mother,  
Who, mad with anguish, bellowed and wept.  
Now the ill-fated parent began to run:  
Her mournful roar was heard from the valley.

#### XXV

Women in mourning, with their wails of lament,  
Went running to the valley after her,  
Recalling anew their own lost ones also,

They stood round the body in a circle.  
With worthy, tender laments for the brave youth,  
They wept and wailed, their voices united;  
Whilst the youths, gloomy, silent, and heads bowed,  
Remained there sitting on the rocks near by.  
They lamented for the lifeless body,  
For the flock now left without a shepherd;  
With merciless curses they remembered  
His poor and helpless love left behind;  
They remembered the friends who called out to Saro  
Every time they went up to the pastures;  
And his dogs, that, escaping from the mountains,  
Would yelp and howl mournfully from the roofs;  
And his heavy crook, with its studded knob,  
That would grow sooty among the ceiling beams;  
And his long dagger, that would hang on the wall,  
Left in its sheath, would turn rusty...  
How his mother, used to the cool mountains,  
Would no longer go without Saro there,  
But dressed in black, she would sit at home  
And recall in her mind those bygone days!  
And every word, every recollection,  
The aged mother's heart tore to shreds;  
And she pleaded for her dead son to speak  
But once, to open his eyes for her:  
'Why will you not speak? Why will you not look,  
You the light of my life, my dearest son?  
Why have you seized my grave from me,  
You, my treacherous son, my enemy!'  
But in vain, the closed eyes refused to close...  
His lips were frozen and stiffened,

And between them could be seen  
His teeth in their white rows.  
And in her fury, with daring curses,  
She reared up against the hostile heaven,  
And, swearing the while, she pounded her breast;  
And they all wailed together as they wept:  
'Fallen from the red sun, dearest Saro,  
Fallen from the green leaves, dearest Saro,  
My sun has gone down, oh dearest Saro,  
Night has fallen for me, dearest Saro...!  
Then the night fell, the darkness grew deeper,  
And the melancholy voices grew faint,  
Wearied and died away... The aged Debbed  
Alone now mourned in the dark abyss.

The aged Debbed,  
The mourning stream  
With its heart rent,  
Its waters afroth,  
Still lashes away  
Its stony banks,  
Its steep rocks  
As it laments...

## XXVI

And a few of his young friends,  
Broken of heart, dug a hole  
Beside the stream in the valley  
And lay the dead shepherd in the earth.  
The flowers and trees, as they rustled,  
Breathed forth sweet incense-like scent;

Whilst the aged Debbed sang  
Noble hymns in a stentorian voice.  
And the youths, silent and mournful,  
Leaving behind a black mound,  
A nameless grave in the valley,  
Went back to their homes.

## CANTO THE SIXTH

### XXVII

Spring has come and the fowls have returned,  
Mountains and valleys are robbed in flowers;  
A maiden has come, a lonely gatherer,  
Wandering about the banks of the stream:  
She circles around, she laughs and cries,  
She sings songs as she goes roaming about.

‘Why are you crying, pretty maiden,  
Wandering thus all alone?  
Why do you weep and roam about  
In these valleys every day?  
If it is roses you are crying for,  
Wait a while, May will be here;  
If it is your lover you are crying for,  
Oh, he has gone away, away...!  
By thus shedding tears, oh fair maid,  
Your slave you will not return;  
Why do you in vain extinguish  
The youthful light of your eyes?  
Upon his luckless tomb sprinkle  
Cold water from the spring;

Go, seek yourself another lover,  
That is the law of the world.  
'I thank you, oh passing friend,  
May God preserve your love;  
She stands at the end of your path,  
With a sweet smile in her eyes...  
May you both, with a gay heart,  
Enjoy your unfaded love;  
The Lord has given me tears,  
And I will cry and cry...!

And she roams about,  
Singing as she weeps.  
Her disjointed songs, her mournful songs,  
Flow away like so many tears, in vain;  
Yet she weeps, singing endless songs  
And ever uttering that senseless complaint:  
As to how the whole universe had changed,  
How life had grown devoid of everything;  
How the mountains had turned into orphans,  
How without a shepherd they were left now;  
How he had suddenly gone far away,  
Never to return, never to return...!

'Come back, my brave one!  
With endless waiting,  
Wearied are the eyes  
Of the one you yearn.  
The sheep on that mount  
Set loose and come home,  
Run away by night  
And come secretly...!

Oh, upon that green mountain side,  
Who lies asleep in that place,  
With his black cloak drawn over him,  
His arms uncovered, in that place?  
Oh, it is my beloved one,  
Drunk with the scent of flowers,  
Slumbering sweetly in the cool air,  
Lying on the mountain slope.

Arise, my brave one,  
Bring your sheep in  
For the milking,  
It is midday now!  
Come, dearest, come,  
I long to see you;  
Come, tawny shepherd,  
How I yearn for you...!

Look, oh look, with tabor and drum,  
What a wedding this will be!  
People in gay horse-contest,  
Beating time, in rain and snow!  
Oh what a vision is this I see!  
Look, maidens! Look, look!  
With neither bridegroom nor bride...?

They are bringing him here,  
In front of our very house...  
Put him down that I may  
Loosen my hair over him...  
Where are you taking him?  
I am coming with you...!

Bury me, too, with him,  
Together, in his grave...

They say, oh that is but a corpse,  
Silent and vile of odour,  
The blood drained away from the face,  
The eyes unblinking and blanched.  
He was handsome and of sweet fragrance,  
His eyes were filled with laughter;  
He would come with dew all over him,  
Full of pleasantries and songs...

Come back, my brave one!  
With endless waiting,  
Wearied are the eyes  
Of the one you yearn.  
Do not be tardy,  
I have waited long;  
Do not make me cry,  
I have cried too much...  
See how vexed I am,  
I will cry yet more  
I will not love or speak  
To you any more...'

## XXVIII

The turbid Debbed flows away,  
Its waters swishing endlessly on;  
Upon its bank the lonely grave  
Of the brave youth has turned green.  
Around him the weeping laments

Of his poor loved one ring out;  
And, ever calling to Saro,  
She roams about bewildered.  
And the hapless maiden sheds  
Bitter tears night and day,  
But never does the loved youth  
Appear before her eyes again.  
The swollen stream rushes past,  
Swishing with its fast currents;  
And it calls out, 'Come, Anoush, come,  
Let me take you to your lover!'  
'Anoush, my child, Anoush, come home...!'  
Thus her mother keeps calling from above.  
The valleys are silent, horribly silent;  
The hostile Debbed alone roars away there.

'Woe Anoush, woe sister, woe,  
Woe to your love, woe to him!  
Woe Saro, woe brave one, woe,  
Woe to the mountains you love!'

### XXXIX

It is Ascension night, that enchanting night,  
When at a happy, wondrous moment,  
The golden gates of Heaven are opened:  
Down below all grow speechless and silent  
And with divine, inscrutable conception  
It is filled with God's holy compassion.  
At that sublime moment of the beauteous night,  
Out of the distant depths of the infinite heaven  
There fly out and come together the two stars

Of the dead lovers, their desires unfulfilled,  
And, with yearning, tenderly they kiss each other,  
In the azure vault, far away from this earth.