

**HOVHANNES TOUMANIAN MUSEUM**

HOVHANNES TOUMANIAN

**SELECTED WORKS**



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The present collection contains a wide miscellany of Hovhannes Toumanian’s poetry and prose writings selected carefully and wisely. It brings together poems, quatrains, narrative poems, short stories, tales, legends, ballads and articles. The volume includes well-known translations as well as captivating up-to-date interpretations providing a perfect introduction to one of the foremost figures of Armenian literature of all times.

# POEMS



## **WHEN SOME DAY**

SWEET comrade, when you come some day  
To gaze upon my tomb,  
And scattered all around it see  
Bright flowers in freshest bloom,  
Think not that those are common flowers  
Which at your feet are born,  
Or that the spring has brought them there  
My new home to adorn.  
They are my songs unsung, which used  
Within my heart to hide;  
They are the words of love I left  
Unuttered when I died.  
They are my ardent kisses, dear,  
Sent from that world unknown,  
The path to which before you lies  
Blocked by the tomb alone!

## **BEFORE A PAINTING BY AYVASOVSKY**

RISING from ocean, billows uncontrolled,  
With heavy flux and reflux, beating high,  
Towered up like mountains, roaring terribly;  
The wild storm blew with wind gusts manifold—  
A mad, tempestuous race  
Through endless, boundless space.  
“Halt!” cried the aged wizard, brush in hand,  
To the excited elements; and lo!  
Obedient to the voice of genius, now  
The dark waves, in the tempest’s fury grand,  
Upon the canvas, see!  
Stand still eternally!

## IN THE COTTAGE

THE little children wept and wailed;  
Heart-rending were the tears they shed.  
“Mamma, mamma, we want our food!  
Get up, mamma, and give us bread!”  
With bitter sorrow in her heart  
Groaned the sick mother from her bed:  
“We have no bread, my little ones;  
Papa has gone to get you bread.”  
“No, you are cheating, bad mamma!  
You are deceiving us! You said  
That when the sunlight struck the banks  
Papa would come and bring us bread.  
“The sun has come, the sun has gone;  
Still are we hungry, still unfed.  
Mamma, mamma, we want our food!  
Get up, mamma, and give us bread!”  
“No bread your father yet has found;  
Without it he dares not come back.  
Wait but a little while, my dears!  
Now I will follow in his track.  
“In heaven there is a great Papa;  
Abundant store of bread has he.  
He loves you much, so very much,  
He will not let you hungry be.  
“There will I go and say to him  
That you are faint with hunger sore.  
Plenty of bread I’ll ask for you,  
That you may eat, and weep no more.”

So spake the mother, and she clasped  
The starving children to her breast.  
On her pale lips the last kiss froze  
That to their faces thin she pressed.  
The mother's arms unclosed no more—  
She shut her eyes and went away  
Bread to her little ones to send—  
And lifeless in their sight she lay.  
The little children wept and wailed;  
Heart-rending were the tears they shed.  
“Mamma, mamma, we want our food;  
Get up, mamma, and give us bread!”

## THE CRANE

THE Crane has lost his way across the heaven,  
From yonder stormy cloud I hear him cry,  
A traveller o'er an unknown pathway driven,  
In a cold world unheeded he doth fly.  
Ah, whither leads this pathway long and dark,  
My God, where ends it, thus with fears obsessed?  
When shall night end this day's last glimmering spark?  
Where shall my weary feet to-night find rest?  
Farewell, beloved bird, wherer thou roam  
Spring shall return and bring thee back once more,  
With thy sweet mate and young ones, to thy home--  
Thy last year's nest upon the sycamore.  
But I am exiled from my ruined nest,  
And roam with faltering steps from hill to hill,  
Like to the fowls of heaven in my unrest  
Envyng the boulders motionless and still.  
Each boulder unassailed stands in its place,  
But I from mine must wander tempest tossed--  
And every bird its homeward way can trace,  
But I must roam in darkness, lone and lost.  
Ah, whither leads this pathway long and dark,  
My God, where ends it, thus with fears obsessed?  
When shall night end this day's last glimmering spark?  
Where shall my weary feet to-night find rest?

## OUR CREED

**THIS** our creed: we follow the light,  
We go on our way undismayed,  
Through storms and clouds and pitch black night,  
Not once from our path have we strayed.

Though drenched by seas of blood,  
We've pressed on undeterred,  
Faced fire, sword, and flood,  
By stormy winds unstirred.

And though our flag is tattered,  
Its every thread is blessed.  
And even though we're scattered,  
And have no place to rest,

We still press on most nobly,  
Unfazed by fate's misdeeds,  
Our eyes fixed upward humbly,  
Toward the light: this is our creed.