



Akh Tamar

By Hovanness Toumanian

From the Hamlet on the shores
Of sprightly Lake Van,
A youth enters the water
Secretly every night.

Without a boat he enters,
And with his virile arms
Cleaves the water as he swims
Towards the island opposite.

From the dark island a light,
Bright and clear, beckons him,
Like a gleaming lighthouse,
That he may not lose his way

The fair Tamar every night
Lights a fire on that isle,
And impatiently she waits
in a hiding place near by.

The lake is astir with waves,
And the youth's heart is astir;
The waters roar terrifyingly,
But the youth strives untamed.

Now Tamar, with palpitating heart,
Can hear the splashing of the water
Close by, and she is set ablaze
All over with the intensity of her love.

In the silence, a black, shadowy figure
stands on the dark shore of the lake...
It is he...they are reunited anew...
Oh, the mystery of the peaceful night...

The waves of Lake Van alone
Now gently caress its shores,
Subsiding as they retreat
With unintelligible murmurs.

They seem to be whispering softly...
And the stars from the sky vault
Glance down with slanderous eyes
At the immodest, shameless Tamar...
Their gaze disturbs the maiden's heart...
it is already time to part...and again
One of them enters the turbulent lake,
Whilst the other prays on its shore. . .

But once, some mischievous men
Learnt of the lovers' secret.
And they extinguished the fire
On a black, diabolic night.

The swimming youth in love was lost
In the darkness of the waters:
And the wind kept drifting across
His sighs of: 'Ah Tamar...!'

His voice is near: in the gloom
Beneath the pointed rocks below,
Where the terrifying lake roars,
Now it is muffled and lost.
And now feebly heard calling:
'Ah Tamar!'

The agitated waters of morn
Threw the body on to the shore;
At his cold and stiffened lips,
As if at the moment of death,
Two words had remained frozen:
'Ah Tamar. . .'

And henceforth, for that reason,
The island has been called Akhtamar.