The Armenian Church

The Armenian church is the birthplace of my spirit, shadowed and illuminated like a cavern; but vast and vaulted, its entrance welcomes guests to the wide sanctuary where the altar floats in silence in the distance like a mighty ship.

Even with my eyes closed I can see it, its Christ's face bright as a child's. When I breathe in, I breathe its holy incense Smoking on its altar, its sturdy walls quaking with old and stormy prayers.

The Armenian church is the unyielding fortress of our fathers' faith. They raised it stone by stone out of the earth. They lowered it dewfall by dew from the heavens. And they were buried in hushed stillness there.

The Armenian church is the tapestry curtain behind which God Himself descends into the chalice. And before which my nation bows its head for communion with the wine and life-giving bread of our past.

Against storms, our church is haven and harbor. Against the cold night, it is fire and flame. It is the shaded forest in the heat of day where lilies flower watered by sharagans.

The Armenian church knows the secret road to heaven hidden under every stone. For the Armenian spirit and body it is the shining armor, its crosses swords; its bells reverberate with the victory we know is ours.

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