

# Krikor Der Hohannesian

## WALKING

### I.

I thought of you, *nene*,  
when I read of the discovery -  
a remote cave,  
an obscure province,  
Vayots Dzor, Armenia.

The world's oldest shoe,  
predating Otzi the Iceman's,  
unearthed - preserved  
in sheep dung and dried grass  
for five millennia.

Who would have thought  
to dig there?

### II.

Family legend has it  
that you walked from Aintab  
to Constantinople, in defiance  
of tradition and gender,  
your ambition to be a teacher.

500 miles? I confessed my skepticism –

But then that steely look  
lips pursed, a taut line,  
when you spoke of the Turks,  
the forced shoe-less death marches  
over Deir-al-Zor's scorched sands  
where so many fell along the way, feet  
blistered, energy sapped by unquenched thirst.

So, yes, we Armenians  
are long-accustomed  
to walking - for survival

**Krikor Der Hohannesian's** poems have appeared in over 175 literary journals including *The South Carolina Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Connecticut Review*, *Comstock Review* and *Natural Bridge*. He is a three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, author

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