

Loving Water Water to an Armenian is a holy thing, like fire. A farmer watering his plants, trees, or vines is taking part in a rite which has profound meaning and satisfaction for him. The farmers of Fresno went to the headgates of the irrigation ditches, or to the banks of the San Joaquin River or the Kings River for their Sunday picnics. They had to see the water where it was most abundant. They had to be near it.

Plans for going to *The River* were made by every family all week, and then early Sunday morning, or immediately after church, the family got into the horse-drawn carriage or into the automobile and drove there to spend the day looking at the water, smelling it, hearing it.

Going to *The River* was like going back to Armenia, or going back to the days of youth. The mingling of excitement and peace at the river's side was continuous, the kids dancing at the sight of the swift-flowing water, running to dive into it and swim, the old people just sitting and being alive in a place that was like their own country to them.

(p 21-22, The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills.)