

Hi Dear Friend,

Many letters were left unfinished and many more weren't sent to you when I needed your help most, when you would understand me as there was war... war in my country and in yours.

You know, someday we may both drown in the unspoken words, restrained tears and misunderstood hatred. But no, I don't hate you because we share the same fate.

You know, I think it's only the weak who hate, those who don't find the strength to love others or at least feel nothing at all. I'm sure you don't hate me either, do you? Oh, sorry, I haven't introduced myself yet. I'm Lilit. I'll turn 20 next month but I don't like my birthday. You know, when I remember that my peers should have been celebrating their twenties but for some reason they fell victim, this doesn't let me celebrate my happiness.

I live in Lori, one of the Northern regions of Armenia. I've lived in Agarak village, Stepanavan for 18 years and have now moved to study in Vanadzor which was called Gharakilisa in the past. Of course, I miss my village but I also realize that education is a must. Have you heard about Lori? If not, please search in Google to see the wonderful nature we have.

You know, people in Lori are considered naive because of their extreme sincerity and kindness. In our dialect they're called "Shash." Would you tell me about your city or village? I'm so curious! I'd love to invite you and show you all of our attractions.

Oh, by the way, I again forgot to say that you can be sure you will be accompanied by a skillful guide as I study tourism and service. You're now probably thinking why I'm writing so long, why I go from Vanadzor to Yerevan everyday just for this one letter. I'm writing one letter, but believe me, I'm sending the many written and unsent letters of the past with this.

You know, I have both a brother and a sister. How about you? I don't know if you have a brother or not, but I'm sure you know young people who go to protect the borders and your homeland. You're afraid for them, aren't you? I'm afraid for my brothers, too. You know, it's so hard to look at the photo of your soldier and realize that the cold night of the trench is heavy on his eyelids. You understand me, don't you? Why shouldn't we live in peace, wake up in the morning without fear, without wanting to touch and sniff the air, without predicting war? I want a different feeling. I want to wake up and feel the spirit of friendship. I want us to unite and become one, and solve this seemingly unsolvable issue. You and I are strong. We can, I'm sure.

I know that our peers living abroad get acquainted and communicate, and even make friends. Is it because fighting on someone else's land isn't honorable? Why then do borders make us enemies if we're capable of living peacefully beyond those borders? Maybe we draw our own borders? Have you ever wondered who decided the size of the land given to you and us, and if they had the right to do so?

No one can make decisions on one's behalf. Do you agree with me?

Although painful to confess, we've both become puppets in the hands of history that constantly deceives us. Who has drawn those transparent borders? Because the problem truly lies only in the borders. I wonder if you'd like to start economic relations even if it's connected with tourism only yet. I'd like it very much. I hope it won't remain a dream and someday I'll get to know the touristic treasures in your country, and introduce you to mine. What if we try appealing to our Governments and they like the idea?

We can be the pioneers. Do you agree? Let's think and discuss, ok?

Fighting on a third land doesn't do credit to our states. What about conflicting on our own lands, is it honorable? It seems to be a theatre show, where the prize is Karabakh and the superpowers are the spectators. So, you and I compete to show better acting and bow more respectfully. I'm tired of bowing, and I'm sure so are you. I'm tired of wars, too, how about you?

You know, I'm horrified each time I remember April of 2016. My eyes are filled with a red river and the river of blood of my loved ones, and compatriots flow down my eyes making me stay brave. But I know that the river of my eyes has merged into one with yours. How many bloodstreams called tears have flowed down my eyes, merged together becoming one, crossed the border flowing, and flowing freely!

Enough is enough! We must finally close the riverbed, fill it with soil and plant forget-me-nots to remember the martyrs, pay tribute to them by taking care of the flowers, keep their dim stars alive without crying, without creating dew with tears. Let's stop blood and tears. Enough. I'm tired of crying.

I don't know how you will feel about my letter, I don't know if you'd like to answer my letter, but I want you to know that you helped me a lot by making me know myself and my origins. You made me overcome difficulties, you made me learn to appreciate, and I'm thankful to you. Let us both think out of the box and borders, and look for solutions. You know the saying: "He who seeks, shall find". Let's be Baba and Haj.

Let God always be with you.

With love,

Your Lilit