

Güler Orgun



This picture of me was taken in Ankara in 1958. My first husband decided to go to the US to study and stay there. I helped him actively to apply to numerous universities, but when he got accepted, I did not wish to go with him and decided to separate. He left, and I stayed in Turkey. We had been married for three and a half years, without having children. I got married at 17 and divorced at 21. This was not a particularly courageous thing to do, for it was fairly common to divorce. But in my case, it was an uncharacteristically courageous act, because Ceki had been a manipulative person, guiding me in every aspect of life. In time, I rebelled against this, being perhaps somewhat harsh because he refused to let me go. At that stage, my character, which was on the timid, docile and introverted side, had to change, and it did. Then I returned to Istanbul, lived with my family and worked with my father, went horseback riding, traveled, had a wider and expanding social

entourage, or circle of acquaintances and friends. My parents were very supportive, although they probably were a bit sorry and would have wanted the marriage to have succeeded. But I could not bring myself to go to America with someone I did not love, leaving my family, and living under suppression. My close family consisted of three elderly people: my parents, who were already nearing their sixties, and the older Tantika. They would have had nobody had I left them, which I just could not do. In fact, after I started working for my father, the last company I had worked for in Ankara, had a meeting at the Istanbul Hilton Hotel, and asked me to do some secretarial work for it. Then and there, one of the persons for whom I acted as secretary, someone from Italy, offered me a job in Italy at a salary sufficient to live decently there: 250 dollars per month, which was attractive and consistent with prevailing salaries in the West. I thought about it a lot, but did not take the job. Maybe if I had, my whole life would have been altered, but I could not abandon my people here. Eventually, they all died practically in my arms, which makes my decision, in retrospect, appropriate.