

# White Roses

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Tehran 1982

Grandmother kisses my eyelids.  
I kick awake. Where is she?

Embroidered roses scratch my cheek,  
Maman's handiwork.

I'm in bed. It's hard to sleep.  
The homemade funeral was yesterday.

Grandmother died weeks ago, but  
the hospital, the morgue, rejected her.

Even our dead bodies have no freedom here.

So we took Sultan home,  
laid her in the bathtub, and covered her with ice.  
No one but family entered the house.

If a dead body was found in a Baha'i home,  
the Guards could accuse us of murder,  
haul us off to prison on false charges.

Baba finally found a spot.  
A nameless grave, marked with a number.

First, we washed her body,  
perfumed her with rose essence,  
wrapped her in white silk.

Then we laid her on the dining room table,  
surrounded by white flowers.

We drew the lace curtains, lit candles,  
and prayed the prayer for the dead.

*We all, verily, worship God.*

*We all, verily, bow down before God.*

*We all, verily, are devoted unto God.*

*We all, verily, give praise unto God.*

*We all, verily, yield thanks unto God.*

*We all, verily, are patient in God.*