



12 roses for Balqis



1. I knew that she would be killed
and she knew that I would be killed
both prophecies came true
she fell, like a butterfly, beneath the rubble of (the Age of
Ignorance)
and I fell ... between the fangs of an age
that devoured poems



the eyes of women and the rose of freedom

2. I knew that she would be killed

she was beautiful in an age that was ugly

pure in an age that was contaminated

noble in the age of hoodlums

She was a rare pearl

amidst the piles of artificial pearls

a unique woman amidst the stacks of artificial women

3. I knew that she would be killed

because her eyes were clear as two emerald rivers

and her hair was long as a mawwal of Baghdad

the nerves of this homeland

cannot bear the density of green

cannot bear the sight of a million palm trees

gathering in Balqis's eyes.

4. I knew that she would be killed

for the compass of her pride was greater than the compass of the
Peninsula

Her heritage did not permit her

to live in the age of decadence



her luminary nature

did not permit her to live in the dark

5. In the intensity of her pride

she believed that the earth was too small for her

so she packed her suitcases

and withdrew on tiptoes without telling a soul...

6. She was not afraid that the homeland would kill her

but she was afraid that the homeland

would kill itself

7. Like a cloud laden with poetry

she rained over my notebooks

wine...honey...and sparrows

red rubies

and sprinkled across my feelings

sails...and birds

and jasmine moons

After her departure

the age of thirst began

the age of water came to an end



8. I always felt that she was leaving

In her eyes, there were always sails

being made for departure

airplanes crouching on her lashes

preparing to take off..

In her hand bag-ever since I married her -

there was a passport... and an airplane ticket

visas to enter countries she had never visited

When I used to ask her

And why do you have all these documents in your handbag?

She would answer:

because I have a date with a rainbow

9. After they handed me her handbag

which they found under the rubble

and I saw her passport

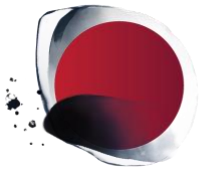
the airplane ticket

the entry visas

I knew that I had not married Balquis Al-Rawi

but had married a rainbow...

10. When a beautiful women dies



the earth loses its balance

the moon declares mourning for a hundred years

and poetry becomes unemployed

11. Balqis Al-Rawi

Balqis Al-Rawi

Balqis Al-Rawi

I used to love the cadence of her name

hold on to its ring

I used to fear attaching my name to it

in case I muddied the waters of the lake

and disfigured the beauty of the symphony

12. It was not for this woman to live any longer

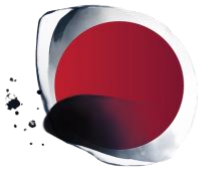
not did she wish to live any longer

she is akin to the candles and lanterns and like the poetic moment she

needs to explode before the last line.....

— Nizar Qabbani

Image courtesy of: [Jamie Street](#) [@jamie452](#)



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