

HALVA

By **Bänoo Zan**

For Natasha Charles

the sweetness
that doesn't betray—

takes me
to Granny Eid

Here I am—
far from photos—

Were those my parents
who denied me food

or was I
a conspirator
who said nothing

Childhood
was bitter—

a famished dream—

Here I am—
away from me

timid, quiet, broken
never to catch up to

festivities

Bio

Bänoo Zan is a poet, librettist, translator, teacher, editor and poetry curator, with more than 160 published poems and poetry-related pieces as well as three books. *Song of Phoenix: Life and Works of Sylvia Plath*, was reprinted in Iran in 2010. *Songs of Exile*, her first poetry collection, was released in 2016 in Canada by Guernica Editions. It was shortlisted for Gerald Lampert

Memorial Award by the League of Canadian Poets in 2017. *Letters to My Father*, her second poetry book, was published in 2017 by Piquant Press in Canada. She is the founder of Shab-e She'r (Poetry Night), Toronto's most diverse poetry reading and open mic series (inception: 2012). It is a brave space that bridges the gap between communities of poets from different ethnicities, nationalities, religions (or lack thereof), ages, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, poetic styles, voices and visions.

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