



Grandma ...

Eyes dart, back and forth.
Your body rocks,
A savage rhythm.

Silver-gray swirls pirouette from exhaled breath.
A shaking hand brings burning relief.
Inhale deep, eyes closed desperate to ignore
the cacophony of voices
echoing deep in your bleak hollows
screaming ballads through your eyes.

Your mouth moves,
singing its wordless song.
A silent chant to ward off demons
that only you and angels hear.
Gruff words and cryptic messages
senselessly sung for decades,
left us struggling to understand.

We sing supplications to whatever Gods will answer,
and utter careful words in your ear.
A wrong note whispered, and your skull echoes
A discordant symphony.

We can't know you--
or understand you.

Your rebellious orchestra
of clanging echoes
and tuneless notes
push us away.

And now, your angry composition comes to its end.
Your babies gone.
Your husbands gone.
Your faith gone.
Your breath gone.

Finally.
It's quiet.

Grandma—Short Version

Voices, insistent and persuasive, ruled her.
Dead babies and love plagued her.
Her family cried for her.
Priests forgave her.
God took her.