

Allahu Akbar

My first Saudia flight -
Likely from Dhahran to Riyadh,
Tho I don't remember ...

As we taxi'd into take-off position
The plane's PA system lit up.
Not the pilot
Nor a stewardess

- And yes, there were stewardesses
On the Saudi Arabian National Airline
At least as far back as the 1980s.

Rather, an Imam
Leading us – those who knew how –
In prayer.

The entire flight, I thought about that ...
Only distracted by tme in-flight service
Of a deliciously fresh date
And a demi-tasse of gahawa –
A milky green cardamon 'coffee'.

Everything in Saudi Arabia started with a prayer.

How unchristian that seemed ...
Yet, more Christ-like
Than anything I had learned
To believe.

Allahu Akbar