

## **A Prose Poem in Memory of Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)**

There once was a flower planted in the twilight of the Georgian Era by an affluent English couple. Her namesake was her birthplace—Florence. Upon moving to England, she grew up in mansions across the distant counties of Derbyshire & Hampshire. When the Victorian Era dawned on her, Florence flouted tradition by teaching herself the scientific art of nursing. She soon became a nurse with a spirited flair for person-centred care, hospital management, and an entirely new field—quality improvement. In 1854, nursing work took her and her volunteer nurses to the Ottoman Empire, to a place where Florence would become a flower in full bloom—a rose with a name. She stood tall amidst the chaos of the first Crimean War. Charged with the tough task of managing a military hospital, Florence shone a lamp on the unsanitary conditions that had been claiming the lives of wounded British soldiers in shocking numbers. She brought this problem to the divided attention of British government officials through her innovative use of colourful, circular graphs comprising wedges whose areas measured deaths. That graph would later earn the name ‘Rose Diagram’. That graph became an agent of overdue changes in the sanitary conditions within military hospitals. Florence became a household name. Florence produced the seeds of modern nursing and data-driven quality improvement. She was a caring nurse as well as the very first female member of the Royal Statistical Society. Florence was a flower that rose resplendently in fertile soils. She was a passionate nurse-statistician.