The Thief

Hunger grew on my body
my eyes were bare
and everywhere in my back garden
poverty, hunger and deprivation
were in bloom.

My thorny fingers
tried to pluck those flowers
and from the neighbours' houses
in which
stood walls
of gold, silver and coins
plucked some happiness for myself.

A thief! A thief! A thief! A thief!
some voices
then chains
then a house somewhat like my own
a smelly dark room
outside which
some faceless people
like myself
stood guard around me.

NEELMA SARWAR
Prison

As I sat in a garden full of flowers
I saw a huge cage
cramped with human beings,
pallid of hue
wild-eyed
wild-haired human beings
in that small cramped cage.

Some sat, some lay on the floor
but they were all thinking something.

Perhaps of their punishments
or of their crimes
or, maybe, about those people
who sat outside the cage
and smugly presumed they were free.

NEELMA SARWAR
To the First Man to Be Awarded Lashes

You are the Messiah of my times
who, bearing all the sins of the nation,
all the evils, all the punishment,
on your shoulders received the lashes.

We are all thieves
We are all fornicators
We are all corrupt robbers
Then, the punishment which everyone deserved
Why did you receive it?

And we stood on all four sides
watching this spectacle
as if you had committed the crime
and we were all virtuous.

NEELMA SARWAR
I Wish That Day of Judgment Would Come

... When you would be beside me.

Armed with bricks, when the whole world
stones me to death —
then you, hiding me in your arms,
would carry on loving me still.

NEELMA SARWAR