33. A PRISON NIGHTFALL

Step by step by its twisted stairway
Of constellations, night descends;
Close, as close as a voice that whispers
Tendernesses, a breeze drifts by;
Trees of the prison courtyard, exiles
With drooping head, are lost in brooding
Arabesques on the skirt of heaven.

Graciously on that roof's high crest
The moonlight's exquisite fingers gleam;

A PRISON EVENING

1. By evening's devious stars
Rung by rung night is coming down;
A breeze passes close by,
As if someone has spoken a word of love;

5. In the prison yard trees, with no native land,
Head drooping, are absorbed in making
On the skirt of heaven images and pictures;
On the crest of the roof is glittering
The beautiful hand of the gracious moonlight;

ZINDĀN KI EK SHĀM

1. Shām ke pech-o-kham sitārōn se
Zina zina utar-rahī hai rāt;
Yūn šabā pās se guzartī hai
Jaise kah-chā kisi-ne pyār kī bāt;

5. Šāh-e-zindān ke be-waṭan ashjār
Šar-nigūn maẖv haṁ banāne meṁ
Dāman-e-āsmān pē naqsh-o-nigār;
Šāna-e-bām par damāktā hai
Mehrbaṁ chāndī nā dast-o-jamil;
Star-lustre swallowed into the dust,
Sky-azure blanched into one white glow,
Green nooks filling with deep-blue shadows,
Waveringly, like separation's
Bitterness eddying into the mind.

One thought keeps running in my heart—
Such nectar life is at this instant,
Those who mix the tyrants' poisons
Can never, now or tomorrow, win.
What if they put the candles out
That light love's throneroom? let them put out
The moon, then we shall know their power.

10 The sheen of the stars has dissolved into the dust,
The blue of the sky has dissolved into light,
In green corners dark-blue shadows
Waver, as if into the heart
A ripple of pain for separation from the loved one were coming.

15 A thought continually says to my heart:
Life is so sweet this moment,
The mixers of tyranny's poison
Will not be able to be successful today nor tomorrow.
The lamps of the bridal-chamber of union,
Even if they have put them out, what then?
Were they to extinguish the moon, then we should acknowledge them.

10 Khāk mēn ghul-ga'i hai āb-e-najūm,
Nūr mēn ghul-gayā hai 'arsh kā nil,
Sābz goshoṅ mēn nilgūn sā'e
Lahlahāte haiṅ, jis īṣarā dil mēn
Mauj-e-dard-e-firāq-e-yār ā'e.

15 Dil se paiham khayāl kahtā hai
Inī shirūn hai zindagī is pal
Zulm kā zahr ghohne-wāle
Kāmraṅ ho-sakenge āj na kal.
Jalwagāh-e-visāl kī sham'eṅ
20 Vo bujhā bhi chuke agar, to kyā?
Chāṅd ko gūl kareṅ to ham ānēṅ.