The firmament,
La Picota Prison,
23rd January 2013
This is the poetry of David Ravelo

David is a human rights defender and a political prisoner in Colombia. This poem was written in La Picota prison in Colombia where he is presently being detained. He received death threats before facing a trial described as irregular by lawyers and international human rights organisations. This poem first appeared in the book In Protest – 150 Poems for Human Rights and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author. The struggle for his release continues.

Translated from the Spanish by Gwen Burnyeat.

Nights, so many nights
That I do not see the firmament.
It will be full of stars, I think,
Or the moon with its radiating glow.

I imagine the clouds drifting
Visiting and embracing the stars and planets,
I think of the woman I love,
But what is immensity like?

Is the night dark or bright?
Night dies as dawn approaches
Day is born with a halo’s splendour
The firmament is strange to me.

Night without a firmament
I do not see it but I invent it
The rain dances with the wind
And thunder sounds, like a wail.
Show me what the firmament is like
Because I have not seen it for so long
The sky will be grey or blue
I hope soon to overcome this unjust imprisonment.