Martin Robertson

War-time Anecdote

"After they caught me behind their desert lines I was in gaol, a women's prison it had been under the Italians. The cell-walls were streaked with red-brown smears. Jesus, what people!"

Unhappy women caught from their open world into a cell, uncomprehending, lost, illiterate most likely, no resources but a dull hope.

Once each month peeling a sodden rag from her body she'd wipe it down the wall, marking the snail-course of her sentence. A calendar.

This poem is reprinted from Now and Then, the website devoted to the poetry of Martin Robertson, at http://rtnl.org.uk/now_and_then/