

## Book-burning

Queen's Park —

hundreds rallied against  
a book I had never read,  
and I too marched behind my parents  
calling to the sky for vengeance.

Smoke rose high above the trees  
and I, pious under my *hijab*,  
flung *Satanic Verses* into the bonfire,  
forgetting years of kissing books,  
holding them to my head with reverence . . .

And now monstrous  
from a hate that was not my own.

Words aflame and lost, lost, lost,  
and I became a barbarian.

NOOR SAGARWALA