

Rajarshi Mitra

## My Father Has a Communist Son

My father was a government servant  
During that whirlwind year,  
When fishes ate their children  
And fire begot fire.  
It was red, 1975,  
Emergency.

He taught me to read and write  
Taught me Gandhi, national anthem,  
And Indian history with lots of pride.  
He gave me hope that I'd be  
A shining star, a national bird.

My father was a government broadcaster  
During that whirlwind year  
When dragons seduced young men  
And fear begot fear.

In his hand a microphone, a pen locked in his shirt  
He interviewed young men and women  
Spoke what came to his heart.  
Radio, frequencies, studio, poems, plays and songs  
For those who went blind in red  
Eaten by some dragon.  
A head in bullet, a leg in grenade, brains in batons,  
Those half-men my father rescued found in him their home.  
He was loved in his ark.

Now, after more than thirty years  
He will retire next year.  
He will not know what his son had done  
In late 2007, Winter.

Police had called us bloody communists  
Had hit us with shells of tears  
We threw stones and marched without fear.  
He will not know,

How I ran away  
Leaving my comrades facing baton charge  
How could I explain that

I had come back to  
My father  
Who served his country  
When it was blood and Emergency  
For the last thirty years?