

Reza Haque

Not Much Like Dad

You've been very lucky I said;
How's that? asked my God-fearing Dad;
You grew up, O God, at a time
when things were damn cheap; take lime,
for instance; how much did it cost
you? Perhaps an *aana* at the most
for a dozen of it. You had
far less worries to make you sad.
Now look at us, forever churning
the thickening mire, for turning
the tables on whosoever
seems to have a higher fever
of ambition. Well, there's no harm
in being ambitious; but the germ,
added my Dad, shan't get free play;
don't ask for stone if you have clay;
happiness does not lie in things;
it's untarnished conscience that brings
peace of mind. As to the glamour
of the past, it's an old charmer
that deceives by way of distance.
I was at a loss to make sense
of what my Dad had said when he rose,
picked up his glasses, and then chose
to walk silently away;
I knew it was time for him to pray.