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?