

Awe

Because he is alone, his own voice
answers him. When he looks out
of his window, the deep yellow light
throbs like his own caged blood.
He starts to grow a secret diary, perhaps
because he is only fifteen. Or perhaps
because something keeps
following him, like the long daylight
that ripens the sugar cane in the fields
beyond his sight. But is that the eye
of an impending revolution glowing
like the traffic light in the crossroads?
And over there, does an inhuman storm
flutter on a torn banner above the temple?
Only it seems so easy for him
to write his name over and over again
like an ancestral chant, as though it were
a wound that will not heal but festers
because he would not let it be.
But there goes Lakshmi down the road,
swinging her tight little hips in unison,
and he feels a part of himself forgive him,
the part that never gets out of him,
like those hands of his, throwing
their fettered shadows across
his open book, almost an awe.

— *Jayanta Mahapatra*