

Simon Fletcher

Tagore

In praise of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

I'm still reading my way to you. One day,
perhaps, I'll make my way to Jorasanko.
How many rivers flowed into the delta
of your mind, what beasts, what birds and fish?
Your sunlit willow, mangrove metaphors
amaze in density and range of thought.

Poet, novelist, composer, artist
and educationalist, philosopher,
constructive critic and good friend of Gandhi,
you also knew the farmers of Bengal.
Your words washed even stony British hearts;
a man for all those holy, eastern, seasons.

Did loss of loved ones drive you on, the deaths
of children, friends, your darling Mrinalini?
When most of us are thinking to retire
you travelled, tirelessly, and made new friends.
I'm crossing rivers, wading through your words;
large minds and hearts like yours inspire the trip.

Note: 'Jorasanko' was the Tagore family home north of Kolkata,
Mrinalini was his wife.

Simon Fletcher lives in Shropshire. He's performed across Britain, with 'Mini Mushaira', and in Pakistan & Norway. He's read his work on BBC Radio Shropshire & the BBC Asian Network. He runs poetry writing workshops in green spaces/ places, organises festival programmes, and MCs various monthly events. He has been a 'Poet on Loan' in West Midlands libraries. He is the (co) author of 3 pamphlets, including *The Cherry Trees of Wyre*, and *A Little Bridge*, with Basir Sultan Kazmi and Debjani Chatterjee, 4 poetry collections, his most recent, *Close to Home*, Headland, 2015, and co-translations. For more go to: www.simonfletcherwriter.com

Simon is also manager of Offa's Press and has brought out 32 books/ pamphlets/ anthologies/ CDs to date. A pamphlet of his 'environmental' poetry *Wild Orchids* was published this spring by Offa's Press: www.offaspres.co.uk

In 2022 he was commended in the Michael Marks Environmental Poet of the Year Award.