

MY FATHER BEGAN AS A GOD

My father began as a god,
full of heroic tales
of days when he was young.
His laws were as immutable
as if brought down from Sinai,
which indeed he thought they were.

He fearlessly lifted me to heaven
by a mere swing to his shoulder,
and made of me a godling
by seating me astride
our milch-cow's back, and, too,
upon the great white gobbler
of which others went in constant fear.

Strange then how he shrank and shrank
until by my time of adolescence
he had become a foolish small old man
with silly and outmoded views
of life and of morality.

Stranger still
that as I became older
his faults and his intolerances
scaled away into the past,
revealing virtues
such as honesty, generosity, integrity.

Strangest of all
how the deeper he recedes into the grave
the more I see myself
as just one more of all the little men
who creep through life
not knee-high to this long-dead god.

IAN MUDIE