

# THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON BIRTH

**Ravi Chittampalli**

*Then I saw the streets festooned  
End to end in blobs of blood.  
A visceral ushering of the great beast  
Could not be otherwise than what mocked  
The tide of mandarins flooding the streets.  
Plucked innocence, incubated for weeks  
In all its verdurant youth, as the twitch  
Grew in impatience, snorting, waiting  
For the skin to turn true and the meat  
Mature to a full sweetness, fails.  
The hour is at hand when the need  
To inject what infects the living  
And festers from within grows strong.  
Beyond the whistling thrush's complaint  
Waits the birth, the mocking dragon  
Or is it a mangy lion?*

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