his location in time and space but also an existential act, and even a matter of poetic affiliation. He may be writing in English, and may have T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Wilfred Owens, William Carlos Williams, the Merseyside poets and Allan Ginsburg in his poetic veins; he will also claim Rabindranath Tagore and Jibanananda Das, the two greatest Bengali poets of the last century, as his ancestors.

To Tagore, therefore, he pays ambivalent homage in "Lord of a Dark Sun." Haq is certainly snide in this poem about aspects of Tagore's work and his "perennial philosophy," but his penchant for play and parody, his preference for "celestial chiaroscuro," his "tormented" brush strokes, and incisive words make Haq pay his respects to one who has been "an exemplar/for our entropic millennium, /Lord of the Sun,/Lord of the Dark Sun." Das merits from Haq a full-length affectionate parody: the Bengali poet's most famous creation, Banalata Sen, is now reincarnated as "ms bunny sen," for when Haq is "absobloodylutely/knackered," he hints, he can't help seeking out the company of Das and opt for a "tête-à-tête/with ms bunny sen of Banglamotor." In "Published in the Streets of Dhaka," moreover, Haq places himself intertextually in Das's Bengal, as he watches "Jackfruit leaves drift earthward/In the early morning breeze" as did this famous predecessor in the lovely sonnet on reincarnating in one's homeland , "Abar Ashibo Phire" ("I'll come back again"). Also, in "A to Z, Azad," a poem written after Humayan Azad, a major Bangladeshi poet and novelist who died not long ago, soon after he was attacked brutally by fundamentalists in Dhaka, Haq registers his solidarity with writers who are audacious enough to speak out (the Bengali poet's surname means "to be free"), and affirms his kinship with writers everywhere who use poetry to protest against tyranny and the forces of evil.

Haq's *New Poems: 2002-2006* is thus a very confident collection of poems: this is a writer at home in his -- and the wider -- world; it is also the work of a poet at the height of his powers, and consummate in his craftsmanship. Some poems show the tight formal control of his early verse, while others meander from verse to prose (and back again!) in the calm but composed manner of his later work. At times droll and playful, on other occasions snide and frivolous, occasionally even garrulous, Haq is also capable of sounding tender, wistful, pensive, and even anguished. A poem like "Truth on the Prowl," indeed, exhibits his ability to drift tonally from moments of high seriousness to the almost pathetic within a few lines. In a number of poems he enacts a minimalist credo, while in others he seems to adopt a William Carlos Williams-like formally achieved freedom. Once in a while, a poem by Haq appears to be nothing more than a *jeu d'spirit* ("Snapshot"), but the collection also contains intricately structured and extended meditative poems such as "Battambang" (based on a word he has picked up from a Marguerite novel, associated with exile, rerooting and affirming life). Haq's love of the English language, fondness for word and sound play, and self-reflexive versifying is everywhere apparent in the collection ("a slippery susu in the distance/punctuates the rippling syllables -- a kinetic comma;" "the hybrid/ / interrobang;" "Ballot-box democracy is meaningless/without nomocracy," "a mathematico-metaphysical shuffle"), as is his wit and gaiety and gift for the striking image and astounding juxtapositions.

Because Haq has chosen to begin his *Published in the Streets of Dhaka 1966-2006* with *New Poems: 2006-2006,* it is easy for the reader to see that he intends to make us view this latest collection of verse as the climax of a long and fruitful career. It also allows us to note that he has never been prolific -- and how could he be so? He has too fastidious a sensibility -- he has always been aiming for excellence and cultivating a rooted kind of cosmopolitanism from the beginning of his career, so that he could affiliate himself with international literature while representing his own corner of the world. After *New Poems*, Haq reverts to the chronological format standard in most volumes of collected poems. As a result, one can view his progress from the Kiplingesque "Les Miserables" (published when he was still in school) to the zany poems written either under the influence of the pop poetry of the sixties, or because of his preference at one stage of his career for the ironic but urbane English poets of the nineteen fifties and the sixties. One can also glimpse other phases of his poetic development, for instance the time when he had a fondness for hilarious Nissim Ezekiel-like poems in "subcontinental English," or when he began to savour the freedom of *vers libre*. Here it may be noted that while he appears to have enjoyed writing in free verse even in his early poems, he appeared to have taken to it

