

Talk

By Yevgeny Yevtushenko

You're a brave man, they tell me.

I'm not.

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Courage has never been my quality.

Only I thought it disproportionate
so to degrade myself as others did.

No foundations trembled. My voice

no more than laughed at pompous falsity;

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I did no more than write, never denounced,

I left out nothing I had thought about,
defended who deserved it, put a brand

on the untalented, the ersatz writers

(doing what anyhow had to be done).

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And now they press to tell me that I'm brave.

How sharply our children will be ashamed

taking at last their vengeance for these horrors

remembering how in so strange a time

common integrity could look like courage.