

# Two Poems

by [Steven Sher](#) (April 2020)



*The Riot Baruffa*, Umberto Boccioni, 1911

Spit

**One of the** Arab staff spits into the pita dough  
in a kitchen in Jerusalem.

Another is arrested in the Old City gates

for spitting in the face of a cop.

The worker is fired, the cop spitter cuffed  
and tomorrow there will be riots in the streets—  
hatred the only leavening  
that makes this violence rise.

The Train to Kheil Ha'avir

*outside the New Gate*

**Up ahead cars** cross the tracks,  
but a cab has stopped just short of the gate  
to let its riders off. The driver steps outside  
and greets another in opposing traffic.  
The van stopped on the tracks behind him  
blocks the train. They stare in its direction  
and won't move despite the train's  
insistent clanging. Passengers murmur

about some people having all the time in the world  
until a small old man on unsteady legs  
storms toward the front of the train,  
pounds on the closed compartment  
and shouts that they should drive on,  
shove the van off the tracks, those around him  
nodding in agreement. *When you meet  
a donkey in the road, you must lead  
the stubborn beast out of the way.*

«[Previous Article](#) [Table of Contents](#) [Next Article](#)»

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Brooklyn-born **Steven Sher** has lived in Jerusalem since 2012. His latest (16th) book is *Contestable Truths, Incontestable Lies* (Dos Madres Press, 2019). His work has appeared widely since the 1970s. Recent appearances range from *Veils, Halos & Shackles: International Poetry on the Oppression and Empowerment of Women* to *Mizmor Anthology* to the forthcoming *New Voices: Contemporary Writers Confronting The Holocaust*. Last year he received the Glenna Luschei Distinguished Poet Award, headlining the 35th annual San Luis Obispo Poetry Festival. Visit him on his [website](#).

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