

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](#)»

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](#).

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)