

Two Poems

by [Thomas Banks](#) (June 2020)



Jonah, Albert Pinkham Ryder, 1885-1895

Haman and Mordecai

His gallows fifty cubits high
Made Haman swell with laughter,

To think that Hebrew Mordecai
Would hang from it thereafter.

The gods were good, for they had set
Him up on high; and higher
Rich Haman hoped to be raised yet
By Xerxes, his good sire.

Within a few days Mordecai
Watched Haman hanged in style,
And, looking up as he passed by,
Allowed himself a smile.

Jonah

The voice from which I first had fled
Stayed with me, as if he behind
Pursued me close; I in my dread
No refuge and no rest could find.

Later upon the threatening sea,
Refusing still with him to go,
The only shelter left to me
I sought in lightless depths below.

In deepest Hell I made my bed,
Till his hand found me even there,

And from the dark house of the dead
He dragged me to the upper air.

He filled my mouth with words to speak
To guilty men whom I abhorred;
His words I spoke; but none will break
My hate for that all-vicious hoard

Though by his kindness they are filled.
Let them enjoy it till the end.
Whatever mercy he has willed,
In anger I have found a friend.

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