

Two Poems



Daniel

in the Lion's Den by Briton Riviere, 1872

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (February 2022)

[1] *I Visited a Lion's Mouth*

“As a lion swallowed its prey, a bone got stuck inside of its throat. So he said, ‘I shall give a reward to anyone who comes and removes it.’ An Egyptian heron, which has a long beak, came along, stuck his beak into the lion’s mouth, pulled out the bone, and demanded, ‘Give me my reward!’ The lion roared, ‘Off with you! Go boast, “I entered a lion’s mouth in peace and came out in peace.” There can be no greater reward for you than that.’”—*The Book of Legends: Legends from the Talmud and Midrash*, ed. H.N. Bialik and Y.H. Ravnitzky. [\[1\]](#)

Once, I went insane—unhinged, my friend.

Once, I lost it, and my soul retains the crease;

I remember heavens at an end.

Gravity's the truest democrat.

I visited a lion's mouth, and left in peace.

I'm informed I can (if I intend)

See what only everyone can see.

There can be no greater re-

ward for you than that.

—

Once, I was in love—oh yes, my friend.

Once, I was in love with Love's insane caprice.

I remember Love, whose words defend

Chaos; Eros is her diplomat.

I visited a lion's mouth, and left in peace.

Love's a loan that no one's hand can lend.

Mortgaged ink discovers poetry.

There can be no greater re-

ward for you than that.

I've beheld my body falter, friend.

I've beheld my body reel, and grow obese.

I remember when mere Time could mend
Anything. Before I got so fat,

I visited a lion's mouth, and left in peace.

Given something ghastly to transcend,
Men may know the flush of being free.

*There can be no greater re-
ward for you than that.*

[\[1\]](#) New York: Schocken Books, 1992.

[2] On Shlomo Carlebach (1925 – 1994)
Rabbi, Liturgical Singer & Songwriter

I've seen very pious Jews admit
Every indication of surprise
That so many of the songs they most esteemed
Issued not from fissures formed to gather Lore,
But, indeed, from this benignly wise
Rabbi-wanderer...a thousand anthems dreamed,
Transmitted, in the age of hard
Pavement & the telephone—

Carols from a place so perfect, it
Is invisible. Reb Shlomo's full
Universe of song achieves a fire-tree
Circumstance that, not unlike the silent roar,
Is quite nearly unachievable:
Sacred & distinctive anonymity—
A supple, nectarous, unmarred,
Elemental fact—alone.

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Jeffrey Burghauser is a teacher in Columbus, OH. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have appeared (or are forthcoming) in *Appalachian Journal*, *Fearsome Critters*, *Iceview*, *Lehrhaus*, and *New English Review*. Jeffrey's book-length collections are available on [Amazon](#), and his website is www.jeffreyburghauser.com.

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