

## Jonah and Daniel Debate Who Had it Worse

*But Jonah made ready to flee to Tarshish, away from the Lord... The Lord, however, hurled a violent wind upon the sea, and in the furious tempest that arose the ship was on the point of breaking up.... Jonah said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea" ... they took Jonah and threw him into the sea.... But the Lord sent a large fish, that swallowed Jonah; and he remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (Jonah 1:3-4, 12, 15, 17).*

*So the king ordered Daniel to be brought and cast into the lions' den. To Daniel he said, "May your God, whom you serve so constantly, save you." To forestall any tampering, the king sealed with his own ring and the rings of the lords the stone that had been brought to block the opening of the den (Daniel 6: 16-17).*

I know that it was me, Jonah insists.  
There is no darkness like a fish's gut.  
The smell was death's brine, Dan. The stench persists.  
Even my wife's perfume is ruined, somewhat;  
my nose still carries memories of it. No,  
Jonah declares, you cannot disagree.  
Daniel, you only had one night of woe  
inside the lion's den, but I had three  
within the fish itself. And something more.  
God stalked me, sacrificed me, ate me whole.  
Hiding from God was like an act of war.  
I should have known I could not run, control  
the outcome. I received what I deserved.  
Then, like a pickled herring, was preserved.

I hear your wail, says Dan, and I respond  
that it is tame, if you compare it to  
a feline pit. My terror was beyond  
your understanding. And while it is true  
that you were in the fish itself, you knew  
it couldn't eat you twice. I watched a pride  
pace menacingly, fearing what they'd do.  
All night I waited, shaking, as they eyed  
me, while I clawed at God within my prayer  
and begged to be set free. And what was worst  
is though I had been loyal I was there,  
waiting. It felt as though God left me cursed.  
Jonah, you ran from God, so became bait.  
I was God's pet, and yet he made me wait.

Annabelle Moseley