

The Agreement

Michael Hicks

After the staredown, saliva gathering in their mouths,
cotton swelling in his, Daniel invited the lions
out for drinks and a late supper.

But he'd vowed not to drink. And they'd lost their appetite.
So they just talked.

The lions asked him, "How did it feel to be perched
like a bird in our sight?"

"I mounted the air, beyond snatching.
The torches glazed your fur with hope.
The whole den gaped in awe.
Demons sat on their hands."

"We see," said the lions.

Daniel asked, "How did it feel when I hovered
beyond your lips?"

"As if hunger had turned to tar in our chests.
As if longing had gorged us in the flanks.
As if Yahweh had cheated us for a trick."

"I see," said Daniel. And he put their paws,
one by one, in his hands.