

For Batya

Of course the last joke is on the reader!
Bible or Milton it matters not
having accepted it as a sacred text
we are now prisoners of the word, the logos
and despite awareness and "reader reception theory"
we are its victims.
we soak in its literariness
working out this or that meaning
that forever remains elusive
and bask in the tricks we find and gaps in the text
as if we have dis-covered a new layer of hidden meaning
hitherto unearthed
like amateur archeologists of the soul we dig and we dig.

Two trees
diplopia
double vision
two eyes
the text as mirror of our poverty
splitting
never got it right

always missed the point
for there were two points
isn't that the message
knowing and experiencing
guilt and forbidden pleasure
carrying the weight
forever
for a moment's indiscretion.

And we
Children of the readers
Prisoners of a different type
Housed in a maximum security cell block
Called Torah She Be al Peh
Where the outer limits of discourse
Frame and constrict us
Preventing escape into a dangerous field
Like the waters surrounding Alcatraz
Weighted down by generations of prior readers
With long beards and authority
What shall we say?
How do we read anew?
How can we interpret truth after the end of truth?

And we can no longer be silent
Like good English polite schoolboys
In their maroon uniforms
And skullcaps
And long socks
And short pants
To the master who fondles
Or the rabbi who decides the true interpretation

We survivors
Children of survivors
Our diplopia is hard-wired
A new generation of genetic mutants
We cannot see but double
We cannot make love in the singular
We have a new declension and a new grammar to fit
We make love in the plural to a double visual ghost.

So Adam may have been correct after all
From his perspective there were two trees
In the midst of the Garden
In that mid-point where there can only be one

For he described a new geometry
And put Aristotle to sleep
And we are forever condemned
To love and seek both.