

Asking a poet to write something in light of Hanukkah

*Light's essential nature is still unknown,
Or at least is only describable
In the language of mathematics.
It must remain—light—
In the difficulty of what it is to be.*

Parks & Wallace Stevens, *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction*

Sometimes we see the moon in the daytime sky.
Why is that?
There's lots of things poets don't know
Even though we try to act like we do.
Like trying to shed light on light.

In the heads of poets one often finds
Dank apocryphal unbelieving minds,
Minds that are visited by a pale prince
Who, by quick hand, thrusts his scythe of light
Plunging them deeper into lightless thoughts.

Now scientists and physicists should be able to explain
Hertz's light wave transmission experiment;
Kepler's optical investigation;
Atomism and void existence.
Poets, however, can be counted on to write light verse.

Light enables vision.
Light speeds in a vacuum at about 186.281 miles per second.
We do know there is a light range visible to the naked eye.
We also know about tricks and illusion
And how visible things can hide other visible things.

We will own up that it is futile (if not perversely comical)
To paste on fig leaves and try to hide
Our shady characters in the light.
Everywhere God walks incognito
Edging us toward that which is invisible but eternal.

Light was called into existence
By a word. And so it came, arriving on the dot.
Ever since that command, light happens.
Light silently crackles, a scintillating force,
Waves of mystery, the everyday messenger.

*Tell me. Why do we celebrate the Festival of Lights?
Did one dinky clay crock of oil
Really make the menorah blaze for eight days?
Poets like to rig up Rube Goldberg word contraptions,
Tinker and make light with symbols all the while thinking
Religious stories are all fictitious, crockery.
It's all too easy *not* to believe a word anybody says.*

Usually the Master of the Universe
Has to coax us out of hot noisy kitchens
So we can hear ourselves think—
Not always a welcomed proposition.
His Spirit wrenches us free
From the difficulty—if the impossibility—
of what it is we are called to be,
Essentially, in this overpowering, lightless life.

He draws the sightless, skeptical, homely clay ones forward
to be filled, suffused with a treasure poets can barely explain.
No one can claim the last word but the Word made flesh.
The light we crave is the light that redeems.
Who can throw light on the personhood of Yeshua (Jesus)?
Yeshua is completely at home being what he is:
the light of the world.