

POETRY

Light¹

By **Morris Berman**

Light comes in
when a tectonic shift occurs,
so to speak.
Maybe it's in my family.
In the course of her divorce
my mother saw a burning bush.
No, I mean it, just like in the bible.
She ran home and lay down,
frightened out of her wits.
Her life had cracked open;
the burning bush entered that empty space.
Her therapist told her not to think about it –
end of story.

I recall a number of incidents like that in my own life,
some more 'cosmic' than others.
One occurred on the way to school
when I was seven years old;
it was one of those rare February days in upstate New York
when the temperature soars and the snow begins to melt
and I was walking with two friends –
the light was all around me
as though I were in heaven.

There was another one at age fourteen
and then a major blowout at twenty-nine.
It took me three books to work that one out.
And around age sixty, perhaps a little before,
I saw a pillar of fire – again, as in the bible
and I began to weep.
This time it stuck:
I see it more or less every day now.
Exodus says it guided the Jews through the desert,
but I'm not looking for the Promised Land.
Oh no –
wandering in the desert is the Promised Land.

1 From *Counting Blessings*, by Morris Berman; orig. publ. 2011 by the Červená Barva Press, Somerville, Mass.