

Modeh Ani

ani is me, *mi* is who, *hu* is he.
Hebrew school mnemonic.

dikduk, grammar, like a ticking clock
of synapse potential winding down.
I never learned the inner structure, only the words.

aish is fire and *ish* is a man.

rebetzn is Yiddish for Rabbi's wife,
and *Morah* is the female declension
of teacher. Morah Esther was the rebetzn (& a very dear lady)
and it was she who taught me
the morning brachot, including the one that goes
thank you God for not making me
a goy, or a slave, or a woman.

when I inquired, she explained
there were certain mitzvot that only *ish* could fulfil.
and for that I should be thankful. *modeh ani.*

bayit is house and also egg,
and the *aish* cooks the egg, or is it the *ish*?

yad means hand and also power
and every *ish* has two *yadim*.
kol is voice and *col* is everyone. they sound the same but are not.
shalom bayit. peace in the house.
goodbye house, goodbye egg, egg broken
ever since I learned your other name.

me is who? who is he?
I am not
who they said
I would be.

Etymological note: While fact-checking this poem, I found that bayit בית and baytzah ביצה do not share a root as I had supposed. I believe the emotional truths of the poem remain unaffected.