

Angels in William Blake America

By Jerold London

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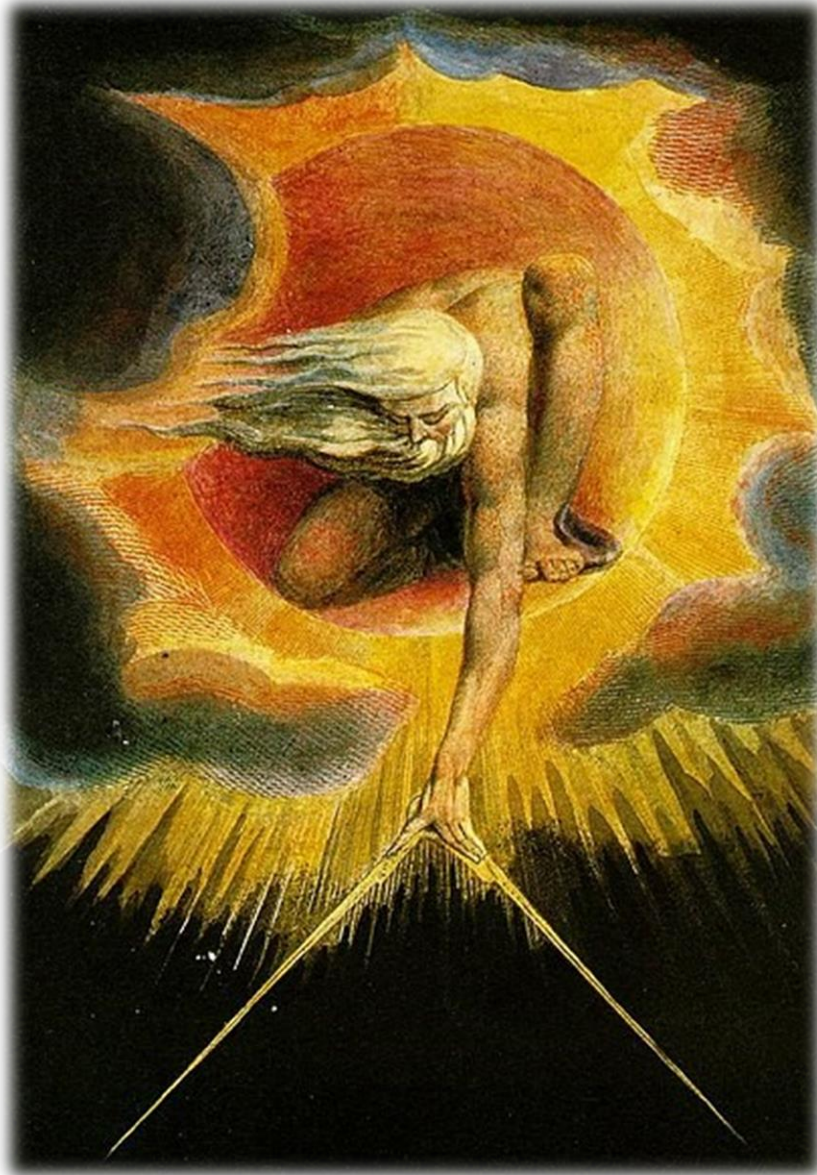


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**I must Create a System,
or be enslav'd by another Mans.
I will not Reason & Compare:
my business is to Create.**

– William Blake, Jerusalem: Chapter 1, 1804

Angels in William Blake America

TIME and PLACE

William Blake was born 28 November 1757, and died 12 August 1827.

Two rooms in London, England (each with a bed), and between them a “room” in Heaven – a pleasant bank beside a river in moonlight.

CHARACTERS

WILLIAM BLAKE, considered by some to have been among the greatest visionaries in English history. A writer, poet, artist, and printmaker. Called by one authority “the greatest artist Britain has ever produced.” Considered by others, mad, or possibly just a fraud. A biographer’s nightmare. Dressed in old, threadbare clothes, his trousers shiny with wear.

CATHERINE BLAKE, wife of forty-five of Blake’s seventy years (1782 to 1827). Also dressed in shabby clothes.

YOUNG WILLIAM, Blake at a tender age.

ROBERT BLAKE, William Blake’s younger brother, born c. June 1762, died February 1787 at age twenty-four.

Numerous **ANGELS** and other speaking and non-speaking parts.

SCENE 1

YOUNG WILLIAM is hiding in his childhood bedroom – **stage right**. He is being addressed by the offstage **VOICE OF**.

VOICE OF

William!... *William!*... **MASTER WILLIAM!** Reveal yourself this instant.

YOUNG WILLIAM

[*in hiding*] I cannot.

VOICE OF

And why not?

YOUNG WILLIAM

[*in hiding*] I am too afraid.

VOICE OF

Be. Be afraid. Be very afraid.
And come out now!

YOUNG WILLAIM

[*in hiding*] What are you going to do to me?

VOICE OF

Give you a piece of my mind.

YOUNG WILLAIM

[*in hiding*] Your voice booms, and makes me lose hope.

VOICE OF

My voice is the essence of calm and silence, Little One.
You want boom, fail to do what I tell you, and the world will give you all the boom, and more, your meek and fragile little body can take.

[*pause*] If you don't come out, you don't deserve to hear what I have to say.

[*another pause*] Go ahead then. Ignore my words.

[*a third pause*] Your life will not tie together with a golden thread.
Ever.

For golden threads are shorn by the contraries of life.

It's inevitable.

Without contraries there is no progress.

A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

Don't be a fool: He whose face gives no light shall never become a star.

And you must never

Never outlive your purpose.

Your prayers should be to never outlive your purpose....

[*beat*] Is that clear?

[*a longer pause*] And a task for you.

Are you listening?...

Capture the moon.

YOUNG WILLAIM

[*in hiding*] The moon? The moon! What moon am I to capture?

VOICE OF

The moon above, of course.

YOUNG WILLAIM

[*in hiding*] I can't do that. Not without my father, and his lasso.
And I've lost him just now, in the lightning and thunder of your voice.

VOICE OF

I realize that. That my voice does tend to confuse young lads. Sorry.

Father, Father, where are you going?

O do not walk so fast and steep.

Father, Father, speak to your boy

Or else he may get lost and weep.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 1 (stage right).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 1

SCENE 2

YOUNG WILLIAM is sitting on his bed.
An ANGEL comes over, and leads him to Heaven (**center stage**).
Upstage is a church and steeple, standing on a hilltop.

ANGEL

O foolish child! O headstrong, sad and foolish child!
Listen to me.
O horrible! O dreadful!
Attend! This could be your destiny and doom, but for our shield.

**Spots revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 2, No.3, and No. 4 (center
stage).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 2



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica 3



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 4

ANGEL

These are the damned, my child. Damned by devils you must grow to fear.
Over there [*pointing*] are Church and steeple.
God's church, where you will be safe.

YOUNG WILLIAM

Safe? It's a church and steeple built upon Satan's mills and poverty's back.
You are no angel. You're a sham angel.
A false and shameful angel.

**YOUNG WILLIAM runs to his bedroom
(stage right) to climb back in bed,
pulling his covers up, over him.**

SCENE 3

WILLIAM BLAKE and CATHERINE BLAKE are sitting together at a table in the **stage left** room.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I am
Who am I? you ask.
Other than William Blake, the artist you already know?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes. Who are you, Sir? that I may know the better of your intentions.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I am
I am one who sees a world in a grain of sand.
And spies Heaven in a wild flower.
I am one who can hold infinity in the palm of my hand
and eternity in an hour.
I am one, a raven in a cage
can put my stomach in a rage.
A horse mistreated on the road
will tempt my anger to explode.
An ox I view by man abused,
I pray its owner beat and bruised.
A woman mocking a child's awe
Is a toad in hiding in the straw.
The ones pursuing armors' chase,
their wars deform the human race.
A caterpillar on a leaf
repeats to me my mother's grief.
My mother's words, they must be so!
That we are made for joy and woe.
The tears and cries and heartfelt roars
are waves that beat on Heaven's shores.
For Heaven has its grief as well.
Some born to smile and be smiled.
And others born to be reviled.
I tell you Kate.
No, I promise you:
Some are born to sorry plight.
While some are born to sweet delight.
As I shall be, if you, my dear, will marry me.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Those are your intentions, Sir?
Your true intentions?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Do you pity me?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes, I do.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Will you marry me?

CATHERINE BLAKE

I would, if I could, but I can't.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Why not? Pray tell. Is it another man?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Heavens no! Not that.... I cannot even write my name.
And cannot write it upon any marriage papers.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*laughs*] And I thought it was something worse.

CATHERINE BLAKE

What could be worse for a man like you to have a wife illiterate?

WILLIAM BLAKE

'Tis nothing.

'Tis absolutely nothing, Kate.

You shall be permitted a witnessed "X" on the marriage form.

And I shall teach you all there is to words and letters, writing and reading.

It's a marriage made in Heaven, if there ever was one.

CATHERINE BLAKE

You laugh at me.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*laughs*] And I shall love you all the more for it.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 5 (stage left).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 5

SCENE 4

YOUNG WILLIAM is blindfolded in his childhood bedroom, searching for his wardrobe, in which a birthday present is hidden.

WILLIAM BLAKE stands in as Young William's father, watching.

YOUNG WILLIAM

Am I getting warmer?

Warmer?

Do I hear something?

Pause, still groping about.

Here it is.

May I open it?

[*beat*] I'm opening it.

**Still blindfolded, YOUNG WILLIAM feels
the warm stuffed toy of a little lamb.**

YOUNG WILLIAM

A lamb!!

A little lamb.

Takes his blindfold off.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you!!

I love it.

Hugs his father.

SCENE 5

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven, looking on YOUNG WILLIAM with the lamb.

ANGEL

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life and bid thee feed.
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee?

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 6 (center stage).**

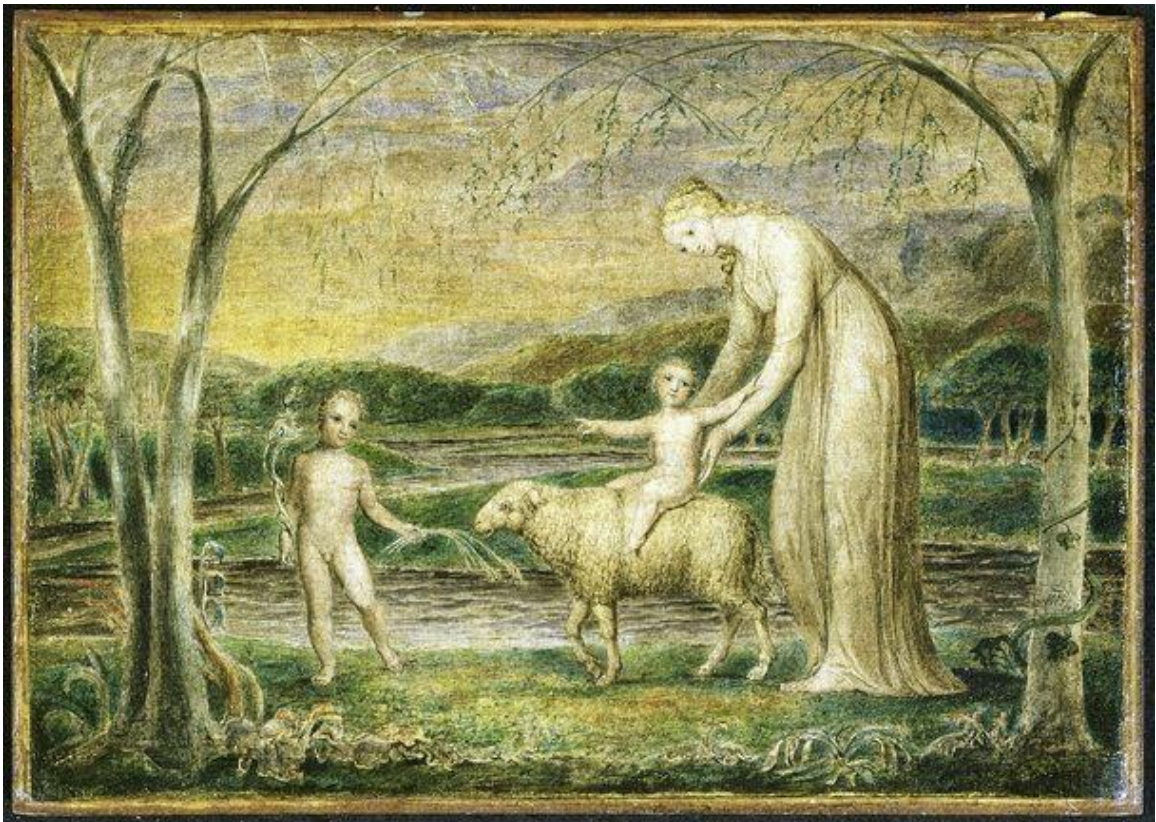


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 6

SCENE 6

WILLIAM BLAKE and ROBERT BLAKE are sitting together at a table in the **stage left** room, drinking porter.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Surinam it's called.

ROBERT BLAKE

And where is that?

WILLIAM BLAKE

On the Caribbean coast.

In South America.

A little north of the Equator.

Brazil, just to the south....

Across the Atlantic from the Sub-Saharan bulge of West Africa....

More or less fifty-five hundred miles due south west from here.

Surely, Robert, you know where I mean.

ROBERT BLAKE

Oh.

WILLIAM BLAKE

It's a Dutch slave colony.

Sugar, coffee, and tobacco plantations Europeans couldn't begin to manage without black slave labor that can take the heat.

People of our skin wouldn't last a fortnight.

But it also takes a miserable toll on the blacks.

The sun and the heat.

ROBERT BLAKE

Yes, Brother, I hear you.

WILLIAM BLAKE

And the degradations.

Drunken overseers beating them, neglecting injuries and illness, and taking liberties with their women.

ROBERT BLAKE

Truly?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I hate it!

I hate it whenever I think about it.

ROBERT BLAKE

I believe you, William.

WILLIAM BLAKE

It's the *truth*.

Let me tell you what happened to one Englishman, his first night in their capital. He was an officer in service to the Dutch, commissioned with five hundred in their corps, just arrived from Europe to quell a slave revolt in the colony. After a sumptuous meal, he retired to the city house of a plantation owner being lent to him for the while.

Upon knocking at the door, he was greeted by a young female slave, dressed only in a single petticoat, who held a candle in her hand. Her skin shone like ebony in the light.

When he mentioned the owner's name, the girl burst into laughter, displaying an absolutely beautiful set of teeth.

She gestured for him to enter, which he did.

Waiting on the table for him was fruit and a bottle of Madeira wine....

ROBERT BLAKE

[*beat*] I'm listening.

WILLIAM BLAKE

They shared a glass, but did not have a common language in which to converse. Suddenly, she flung her arms about his neck, kissing him ardently on the lips. He, at first, was able to escape her embrace, retreating into the bedroom. But she followed him, and proceeded to undress herself and him. Naked.

ROBERT BLAKE

And?

WILLIAM BLAKE

The next day he learned that this is not in the least extraordinary behavior for female slaves in the West Indies.

ROBERT BLAKE

So, what's the problem?

It sounds as though they aren't so much slaves after all.

With that kind of freedom.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The harm is in the underbelly.

Impressing the dread upon young female minds of not satisfying a man as required. For if they don't, they are cruelly punished.

ROBERT BLAKE

They are?

WILLIAM BLAKE

One girl was lashed forty times and then, nearly naked, forced to drag a sixty pound ball, chained to her ankle a month for not performing adequately.

ROBERT BLAKE

Oh.

WILLIAM BLAKE

And many another atrocity, committed against the Surinam slaves.

ROBERT BLAKE

Are you planning on telling me?

WILLIAM BLAKE

One man hanged alive by an iron hook stuck through his ribs.
Another, tied to a cross on the ground, his left hand amputated, beaten with an iron bar till every bone was broken.
Others chained to stakes, blistered and roasted by slow fire.
One quartered alive.
Females broken upon the rack.
Others decapitated, their heads planted on iron spikes....
I have made some images.

ROBERT BLAKE

May I see them?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Here.
Here they are.
With my hatred.
My most bitter hatred.
I hate slavery.
You know that.
With a passion beyond poison.

**Spots revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 7, No. 8, and No. 9 (stage
left).**

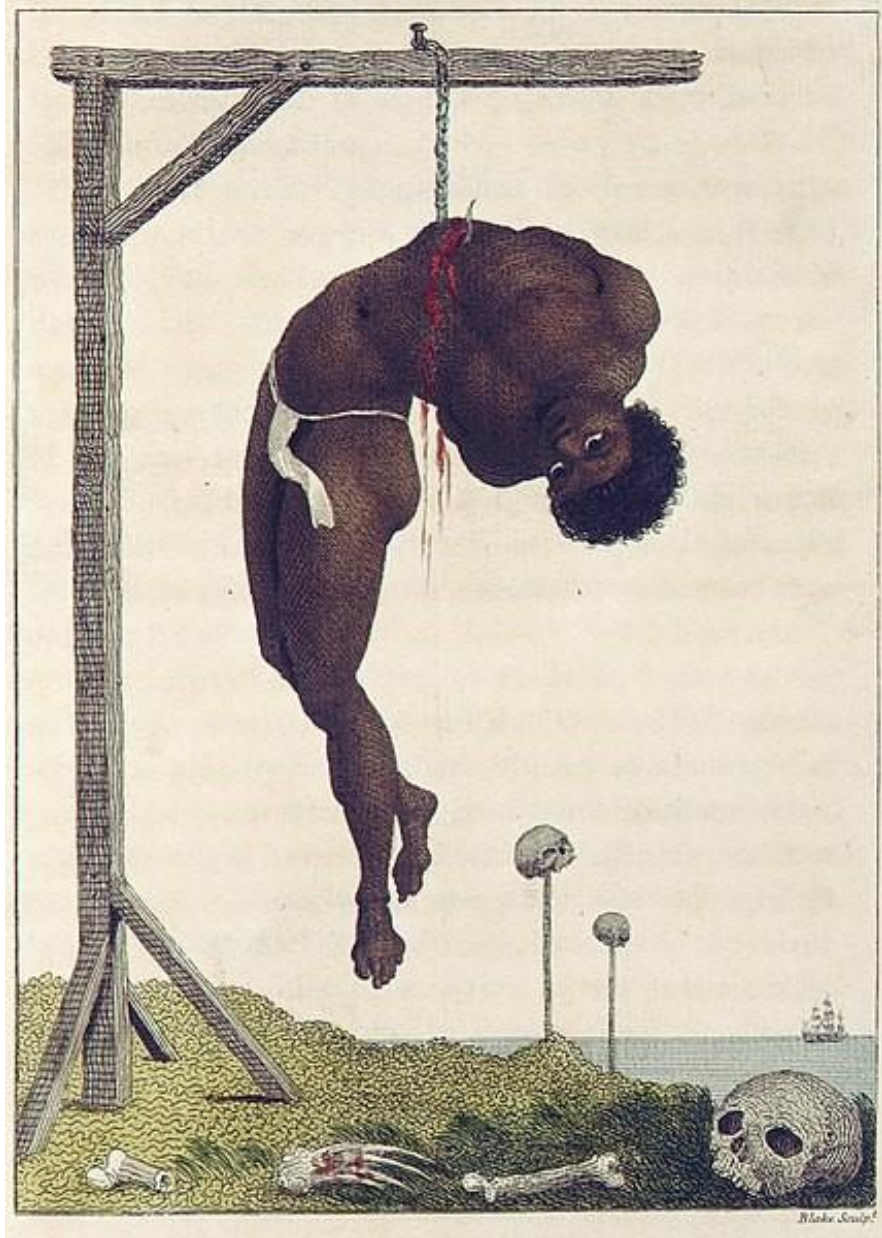


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Replica No. 7

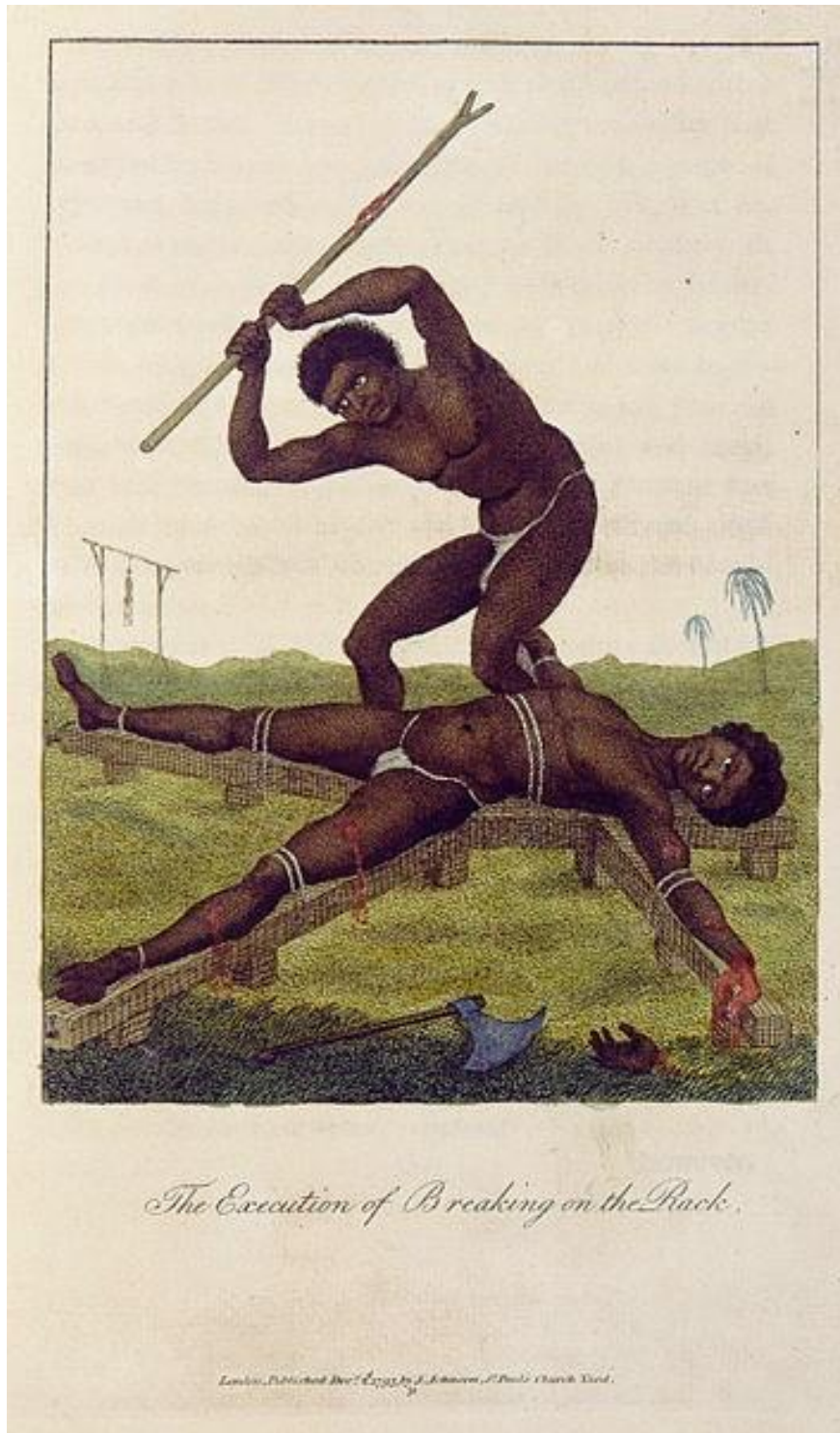


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 8



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 9

SCENE 7

YOUNG WILLIAM is lying in bed – **stage right**. He hears (or imagines) an offstage VOICE.

VOICE

The sun, your friend, you know the sun,
tonight is in another place.

YOUNG WILLIAM

I know.
It's nighttime over here, and daytime over there.

VOICE

The sun, whose beams of light like God
Shines love on children black and white,
Does freely share its gifts abroad
For every colored skin's delight.

And when your space on Earth is done,
'Tis God will shine on every face.

[*beat*] Do you know what that means, Master William?

YOUNG WILLIAM

It means that when I first meet God
a little black boy will be there with us,
and will be my shade in the first hours
until I can bear the light.
Because, if I were little and black, and he were white, I'd do the same for him.

VOICE

Because?

YOUNG WILLIAM

Because angels are white.
And angels are black.
And God loves us all,
no matter what the color of his hair.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 10 (stage left).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 10

SCENE 8

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven, noticeably staring at Replicas 7, 8 and 9 (**stage left**).

ANGEL

Slavery is a cardinal sin against mankind for which a nation's penance can run five hundred years. Be prepared, America.

A form of rape, of body, mind, and dignity, with no forgiveness quick and easy. You are sisters. You are brothers. And every person that lives, lives holy.

I have a tale for you, not of slavery in its primal, odious form, yet of a cousin to it: Involuntary chastity, imposed upon an age of the women of Albion.

For slavery mutates into a multitude of stations and roles everywhere in life.

Touching one's skin, and one's gender.

Touching one's mind, and one's tongue.

Touching one's trauma, and one's virginity.

Touching land, mills, factories, and convention.

Touching even lies.

Oothoon wandered the fruitful vales of America to find the joys of Leutha's flower.

For in America, the flower of virginity, once plucked, will spring again, anew, the essence of its sweet delight not shamed away.

And finding what she sought, Oothoon abandoned all her virgin fears, and then, in innocence, on wings of whitest white,

her newly garnered flower glowing 'tween her breasts,

she set about a flight across the waters, back to her Beloved.

But lo! Midst her return Oothoon was seized by Bromion, whose terrible thunders rent her virgin mantle in twain.

And on his stormy bed the rapist raped, and kissed, and told his twofold crime.

'Behold: Oothoon,' he bellowed out, 'the new made Whore, is mine. My slave. Like children of the sun. Obedient and enslaved. Stamped with my signet.'

In a cuckold's brooding jealousy Oothoon's Beloved, hearing this, with tears of lamentation, forsook the guiltless love she bore for him.

O yes!

How often does a woman raped find herself rejected?

Her pain and savage suddenness forgotten, shunned, or worse.

Yet Oothoon, the young and beautiful, wept not,

but prayed the eagles of the air to tear her snowy breasts apart, to show to her Beloved the purity of her own, transparent heart.

ANGEL

And all the while the daughters of Albion heard her prayers and echoed back the cry: "She is pure. Neither rape nor love defiles a female soul."

Nonetheless Oothoon's Beloved refused to look or listen to his fiancé,
and sat alone to weep the night and day in misery. To him she was defiled.
Although the sweetest of all fruit, he could not savor because of slurs of Bromion.
Whence come such poisoned thoughts of men? And where can they be buried?
Not in the Law. For there is not one law for both the lion and the ox.
How many sisters of Albion burn with youth and know no lot but being bound in
spells of law to men they cannot stand?
The sole and only remedy is to love your happiness while it is, before the grave
devours it. Lustful, honest happiness, nestling for delight.
Enjoy your life because that is what God wants.
Otherwise the fires of a union's bliss would not burn so fine and free.
Nor tygers be so fashioned like a miracle.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 11, No. 12, and No. 13 (center
stage).**

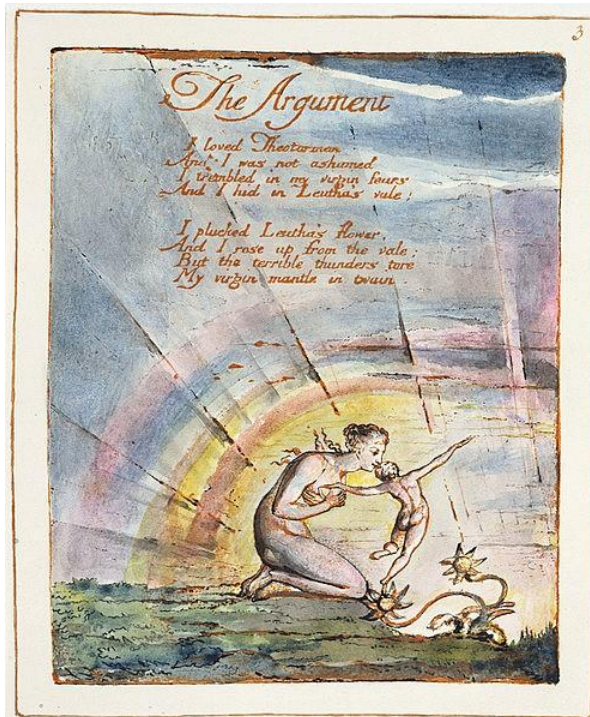


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 11



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 12

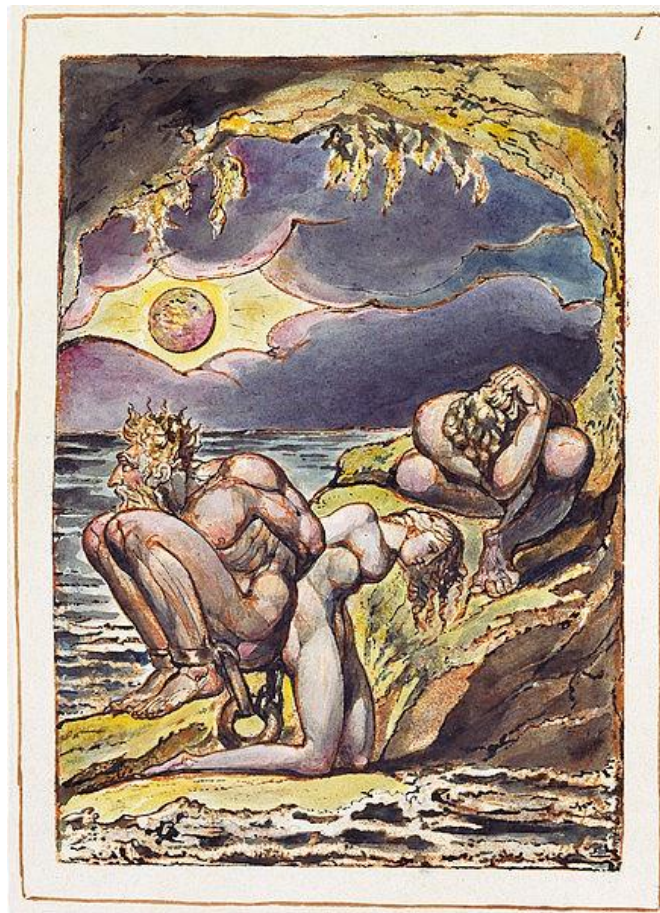


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 13

SCENE 9

ROBERT BLAKE lies in bed, **stage left**, dying of tuberculosis.

WILLIAM BLAKE and CATHERINE BLAKE are sitting at his bedside.

CATHERINE BLAKE

His breathing is more calm.

WILLIAM BLAKE

If he goes tonight, may he go peacefully.

I will bear all the pain and anguish of his leaving.

CATHERINE BLAKE

I know you will, Husband, in your time. It's in your heart.

It's you, God bless your soul! who've loved him faithfully the way you have.

It's you, God bless the man! who've been the one here constantly, day and night.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I've barely slept these past two weeks. Every pin drop startles me. To have to die at 24, and like a wave, leave such an enormous space in others' hearts.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[*pause*] It's so quiet. Have you noticed, Will?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Stillness comes when Nature takes her repose.

Like a mother at the side of her dying son with her only other child, her daughter, linked in their sorrow.

Two lilies, silently trickling tears upon each other's breasts....

[*beat*] I tell you, Kate, parting is terrible.

I seem to walk through a deep valley, far from the light of day.

And so alone, and so weary, but for your dear comfort.

What would I do without you, my sweet Kate, in this awful silence?

CATHERINE BLAKE

I, and the presence of God.

We are here for you. Quietly.

Always remember that.

It is our Friend who will be greeting Robert's soul soon.

WILLIAM BLAKE

He has such simple purity, and how I shall miss him.

ROBERT BLAKE

[*in a rasp*] I love you, Brother. I always have, and I always will.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Takes Robert's hand.

You, my brother, and Kate, my wife, you are the center of who I am.

Pause. A shadowy light appears above the bed, moving upward, out of sight.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I see him leaving, Kate! See?! I heard him, now I see him!

Pointing, and then clapping his hands.

Look! Through the ceiling, clapping his hands. And joyous.

My brother's joyous, and clapping his hands, because that's how God wants him to be. Otherwise the tiger would not be framed with such fearful symmetry.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 14 (stage left).**

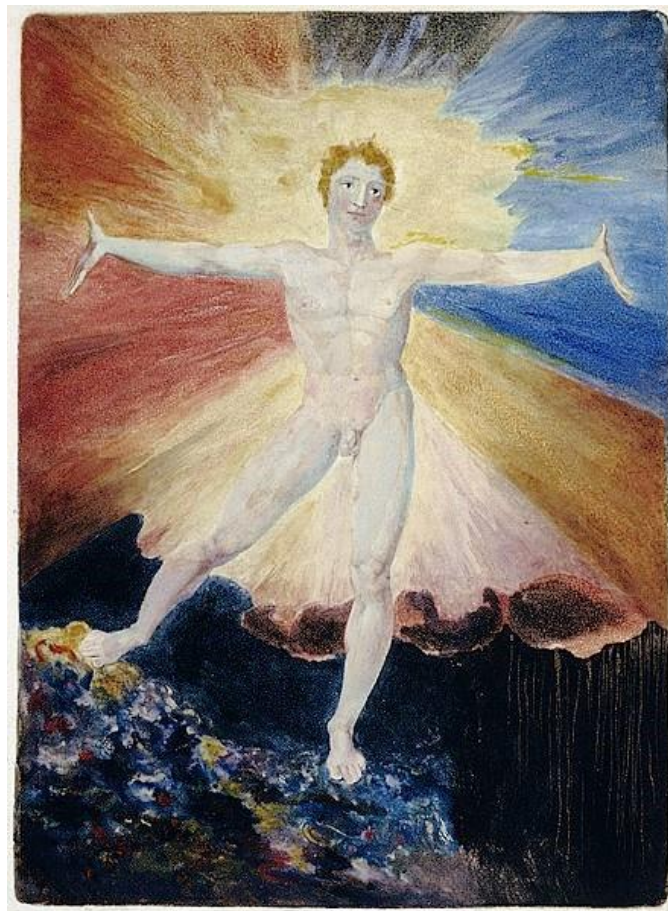


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 14

SCENE 10

YOUNG WILLIAM is lying in bed – **stage right**. He hears (or imagines) an offstage VOICE.

VOICE

What do you see?

YOUNG WILLIAM

God.

When he puts his head to the window....

And trees.

Filled with angels, like the stars....

[*pause*] And Satan.

Once.

On the staircase.

VOICE

[*beat*] And that's all?

YOUNG WILLIAM

A ghost once.

VOICE

A ghost?

YOUNG WILLIAM

The ghost of a flea.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 15 (stage right).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 15

SCENE 11

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven, speaking to YOUNG WILLIAM.

ANGEL

Master William. I have a story to tell you.
It's in two parts. Part one.

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry 'Weep! weep! weep! weep!'
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I said,
'Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins, and set them all free.
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind:
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

Part two.... A little black thing among the snow:
Crying weep, weep, in notes of woe!
Where are thy father and mother? Say?
They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smiled among the winters snow:
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy, and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury:
And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King
Who make up a heaven of our misery.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 16 (center stage).**

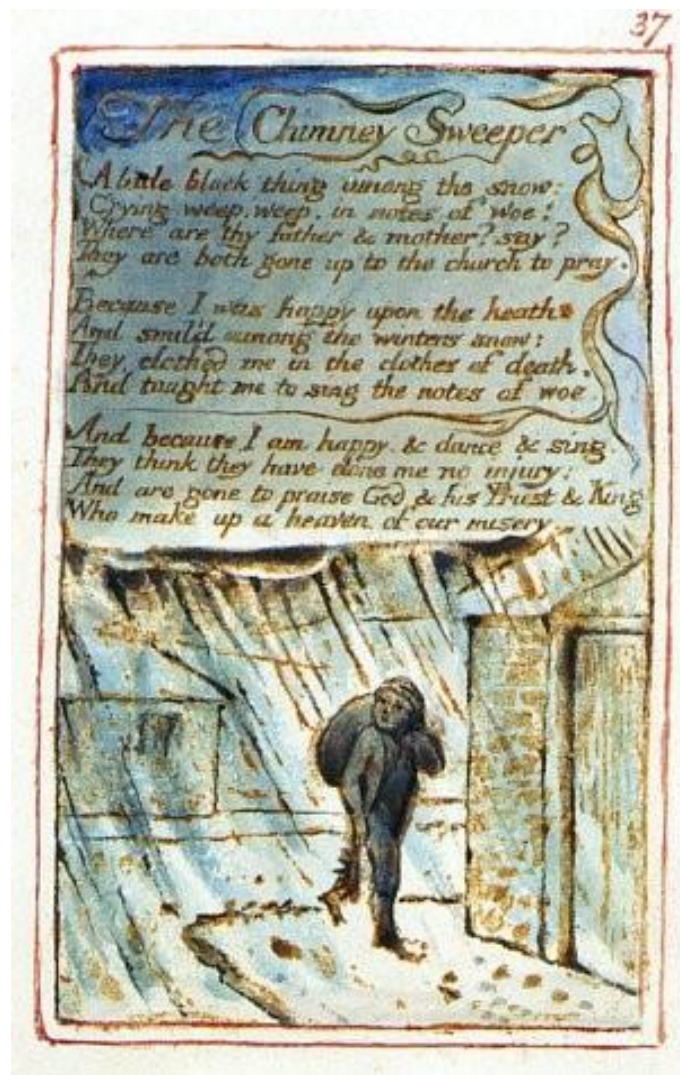


Image from [Wikimedia](https://www.wikimedia.org/)

Replica No. 16

SCENE 12

WILLIAM BLAKE, drinking porter, and ROBERT BLAKE, clad in the white of a soul in Heaven, are sitting together at a table in the **stage left** room.

ROBERT BLAKE

What sad tales your little chimney sweeps tell.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Not that any chimney owner I know will ever hear.

ROBERT BLAKE

And what a nose you give the King! And the priests.
Dangerous, my Brother. Dan-ger-ous.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Not that any king or priest I know will ever hear.

ROBERT BLAKE

You are better heard in Heaven than on terra firma, it would seem.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Do you think so?

ROBERT BLAKE

When you write about prisons, prostitutes, pawns and kings, you are.
I know it for a fact.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Prisons are built with stones of Law. Brothels with bricks of Religion.
Monarchies with bones of the fallen and defeated.

ROBERT BLAKE

Men who speak truths like that are men who have little fear of death or dying.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Risky, I admit. But less so than swallowing the truth unsaid.

ROBERT BLAKE

If you have ulcers, I suppose.
[beat] So, what *is* the truth about chimney sweeps?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Burning English coal leaves soot that must be cleaned away.
From narrow chimneys that only young boys can reach.
Orphans and sold sons out of poverty, terrified, struggling not to starve to death.

ROBERT BLAKE

Death is an incentive, till it comes.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Only a brief reprieve, sadly, for most of the forgotten ones.
Blackened lungs, stunted growth, and many a fatal fall.

ROBERT BLAKE

And yet the truth's unheard.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Too much these days is being unheard.
London's not the London you remember.

ROBERT BLAKE

Why?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Fear, for the most part.
From the time the French revolution married the guillotine.
That's why.
Every landed nobleman in the Kingdom has been shaking in his boots to think of
that monstrosity bridging the English Channel.
And every other Englishman, covering his mouth in fear of saying something that
might offend King or country.
It's outrageous, Brother. Outrageous.
A singular repression of free speech lives in this land now.
One misguided jest or nursery rhyme could send a poet like me off to the
hangman.

ROBERT BLAKE

I sympathize, Will, but You know....

WILLIAM BLAKE

[beat] I know what?

ROBERT BLAKE

Hanging's not the end of the world.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Easy for you to say.

ROBERT BLAKE

Laughs.

WILLIAM BLAKE

This age is choking off freedoms, one by one.

ROBERT BLAKE

Which impingement suffers you the most?

WILLIAM BLAKE

What makes you think there's only one?

ROBERT BLAKE

I have ears. And a mind, still. And instinct.

WILLIAM BLAKE

A body must rot without freedom of the mind.
I would die without the freedom of my mind's imagination.

ROBERT BLAKE

Imagination without communication is madness.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I communicate.

ROBERT BLAKE

In code and arcane mythology.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Give it time, will you?

ROBERT BLAKE

I have, Will. I have.
But if a man understands everything, yet effectively communicates none of it,
it will be a kept secret, signifying nothing when he's gone.

WILLIAM BLAKE

You don't put trees in houses.
A bolt of lightning may come and strike one down, but the grove will survive.
Just like my writing.

ROBERT BLAKE

I must have heard that one before, considering all the words and porter we've
shared together.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*beat*] *I do* miss those times so much, Robert.
Although, I admit, I feel you at my side more than not on this emerald island.

ROBERT BLAKE

No one is an island.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Oh, to be sure, no one is an island.
And no island is an island when greed, power and lust roam free.
It's more like a jungle.

ROBERT BLAKE

And what are the rules of the jungle?

WILLIAM BLAKE

The law of the jungle is force. And opportunity.
Distrust, ruthlessness, and total absence of mercy. Not even a spider's.

ROBERT BLAKE

Spiders have no mercy wherever they are: jungle, island, or bedroom closet.

WILLIAM BLAKE

No. Of course not. You're right.
Just like men can be enslaved in the most civilized of places.

ROBERT BLAKE

Oh?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Workers in their mills. Children in their chimneys.
Women in their dress. And the poor in their poverty.

ROBERT BLAKE

What does your friend Thomas Paine have to say about it?

WILLIAM BLAKE

It's complicated. He and I agree, but only partially.
It's his view that the power of the state resides jointly with the king *and* the people.
It's the ministers and all the rest in between where the problems lie.
And I tell him: That's because you don't know the King.
And he raises his eyebrows.

ROBERT BLAKE

No hint of sedition in a remark like that, of course!

WILLIAM BLAKE

Freedom originates in nature. Tom and I agree on that. Not *granted* by a king.

ROBERT BLAKE

Just as kings can't stop the tide from coming in or make lions lie down with lambs.

WILLIAM BLAKE

What are you saying?

ROBERT BLAKE

I'm agreeing with you ... and Mr. Paine.

That it's the power of nature and not kings that fosters freedom.

But in the actual world, people care more for food and safety than freedoms.

Until the people believe in freedom, and are willing to sacrifice for it, and until their strength is enough to win, freedom remains in the hands of the powerful.

WILLIAM BLAKE

That's the rot about freedom, isn't it? It's never free.

ROBERT BLAKE

Being alive does jade one, doesn't it? A bit.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Then ... what happens to chimney sweeps? Factory slaves? And prostitutes?

ROBERT BLAKE

Jesus!

WILLIAM BLAKE

Jesus?

ROBERT BLAKE

Just an expression. Like Christ's blood.

WILLIAM BLAKE

But Jesus does have a point, don't you think?

If there's a wholesome world out there in the future, somewhere,
it can only be reached if two things happen:

If people have freedom from Church doctrine to find love and pity in their hearts.

And if a majority, at least, are willing to put them into unconditional operation.

ROBERT BLAKE

Sorry, Brother, a bit too deep for me.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I'm trying to piece it together; but it's late, and my thinking's getting fuzzy.

Jesus is More exactly, Jesus has become What? What has Jesus become?

ROBERT BLAKE

You're asking me?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Jesus is humanity. That's what I'm trying to say.
Jesus is the multiplicity of human beings. Not just one man.
We. We the people, slaves, children, harlots, and poets included.
We are Jesus, dreaming of freedom.

ROBERT BLAKE

Time to go to bed.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[beat] Yes. All right. You're right. Time to visit more angels.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 17 (stage left).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 17

SCENE 13

YOUNG WILLIAM is asleep in bed.

VOICE

Sleep gently on, dear William. And hosts of angels sing thee to the dawn.

[*pause*] 'Twas on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean
The children walking two and two in red and blue and green
Grey headed beadles walked before, with wands as white as snow
Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames waters flow

O what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of London town
Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own
The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among
Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the poor
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 18 (stage right).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 18

SCENE 14

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven, holding a large, golden key on a chain.

ANGEL

I wander through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new born Infants tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

I see London, blind and age-bent, begging through the streets of Babylon,
led by a child; his tears run down his beard.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 19 and No. 20 (center stage).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 19



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 20

SCENE 15

WILLIAM BLAKE, drinking porter, and ROBERT BLAKE, clad in the white of a soul in Heaven, are sitting together at a table in the **stage left** room.

ROBERT BLAKE

You were the best brother any brother could ever wish for.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Oh?

ROBERT BLAKE

You stayed with me to the end. The champion companion of my youthful years. And you taught me what I needed to learn about etching.

WILLIAM BLAKE

On the contrary. You taught *me* what *I* needed to learn about etching.

ROBERT BLAKE

I did? How?

WILLIAM BLAKE

You taught me to elevate etching to the prize of illuminated printing. Remember?

ROBERT BLAKE

That was after I died.

WILLIAM BLAKE

A year after. And it gave me the genius of design to merge my words into my art. It was your miracle to me.

ROBERT BLAKE

You're the one who made it work, etching words backwards the way you do, making them come out readable on the other side. That's a miracle of its own! But why hadn't you discovered illuminated printing on your own?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Because it came first from Hell, and I didn't recognize the beauty of it.

ROBERT BLAKE

It came from Hell??

WILLIAM BLAKE

By way of Heaven, of course. Through you.

ROBERT BLAKE

I never knew that.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Satan's corrosive relief system. Highly regarded there.

ROBERT BLAKE

What in Hell is that?

WILLIAM BLAKE

A philosophy: Melting surfaces away to reveal the hidden body beneath its soul.

ROBERT BLAKE

How do you know that?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Satan is a revolutionary like me. I respect that in him.

And he and I both know that man does not have a body distinct from his soul.

Body and soul are one, joined in inseparable mortality.

What man calls his "body" is merely the portion of the two that he can discern with his five senses. But, of course, you've already learned all that.

ROBERT BLAKE

Of course. But how did you?

WILLIAM BLAKE

From talking with the likes of you, and with angels, too.

ROBERT BLAKE

You *are* the best brother a brother could ever wish for, aren't you?

WILLIAM BLAKE

So were you.

ROBERT BLAKE

But back to what I was asking:

If you knew all that, why didn't you develop illuminated printing on your own?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I might have.

The problem was, the concept got stuck somewhere in the back of my mind.

Until *you* released it for me.

ROBERT BLAKE

As though you were the copperplate and I was the acid.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Precisely.

ROBERT BLAKE

Satan's miracle.

WILLIAM BLAKE

You could call it that. Or Satan's method.

ROBERT BLAKE

[*sarcastically*] Thank you so much for the compliment.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Don't take it as disparagement.
Satan does a lot of innovative things.
More of a liberator than a seducer.
A true revolutionary at heart.

ROBERT BLAKE

That's not what I hear.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Your sources are biased, Robert. And for one reason:
Because revolution is as much hated in Heaven as it is feared on Earth.
Especially by religion in name only and nouveau riche industrialists.
Not to mention the aristocracy ... for their necks.
No. They're the ones responsible for Satanic mills, child labor, prostitution and
poverty. Not Satan. No.
On balance Satan's value in the scheme of things far outweighs his shortcomings.

ROBERT BLAKE

I doubt it.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Satan knows that the infinite is ready to be experienced in *this* life.
And he was willing to risk banishment to pass that knowledge on to man.

ROBERT BLAKE

A modern-day Prometheus.

WILLIAM BLAKE

A Titan, yes.

ROBERT BLAKE

Can't say I've crossed paths with him.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Be patient. You will, someday.

ROBERT BLAKE

[*again sarcastically*] I can't wait.

WILLIAM BLAKE

That aside, the true method to knowledge,
like the true method to illuminated printing, is experiment and revolution.
And you set me to it with what you told me.
It gave me the confidence I needed to marry image, color, and imagination to my
poetry. So, thank you.

ROBERT BLAKE

You are welcome, even if I am undeserving of such praise.

WILLIAM BLAKE

You just don't know your own worth, Robert. That's all.

ROBERT BLAKE

Prove it.

WILLIAM BLAKE

All right, I will.
Man is Genius. Mine is Poetic Genius. Yours is the Genius of Art and engraving.

ROBERT BLAKE

That's yours, too.

WILLIAM BLAKE

It may be. But we're talking about *you*, and your Genius of Art speaking to me.

ROBERT BLAKE

Oh.... I see your point. In a way.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The knowledge of any single person is limited to the ground he walks.
And the imagination he sports. Right?

ROBERT BLAKE

If you say so.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Consequently, to learn new things we must have new people to talk to.
And the new ground they walk. Or some universal Genius our minds can tap into.

ROBERT BLAKE

If you say so.

WILLIAM BLAKE

If we don't let ourselves get mired in the certain ways of thinking,
and the certain religions of our immediate community.
Which is where I was before you opened my eyes to how I could fuse my
thoughts, words and poetry into the art I print.

You are my fiery hero, Robert. *You*. My shooting star. See?

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 21 (stage left).**

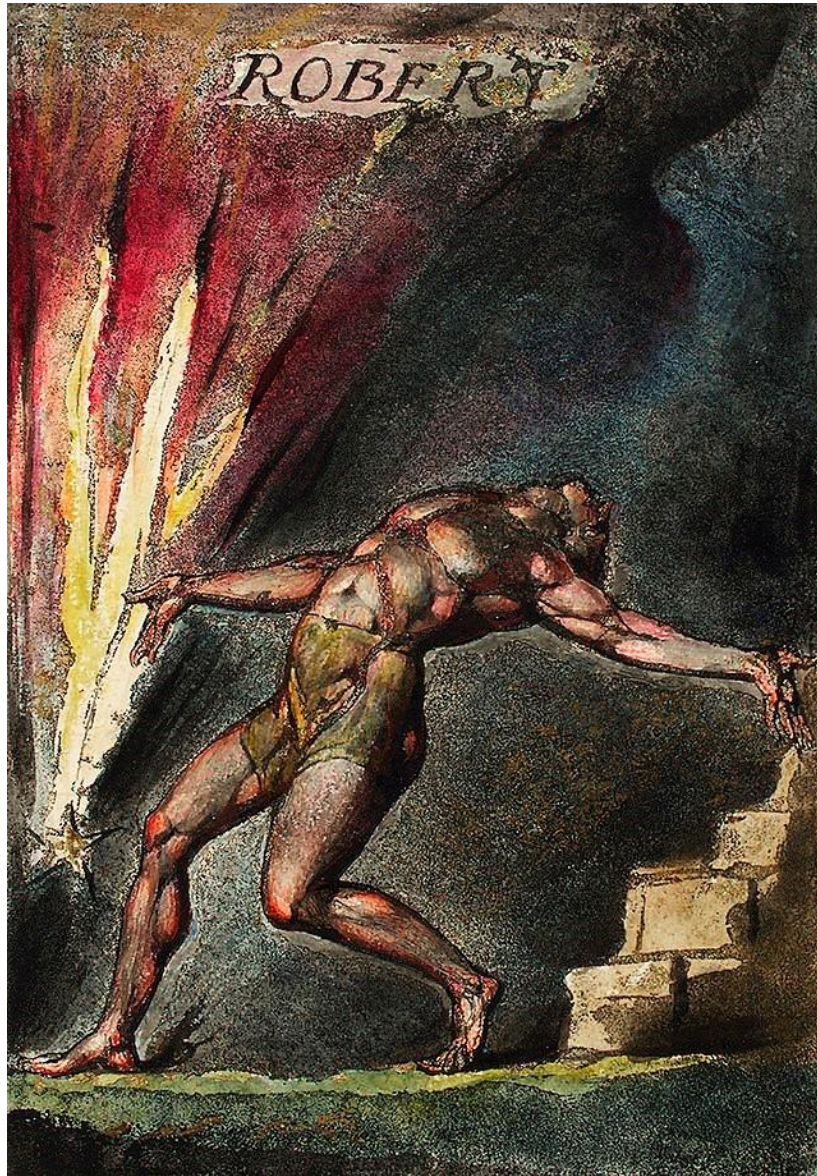


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 21

SCENE 16

YOUNG WILLIAM is asleep in bed.

VOICE

Sleep on, dear William, and dream.

[*pause*]

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And watered heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 22 (stage right).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 22

SCENE 17

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven, holding an assault rifle.

ANGEL

The revolution is coming.
Rintrah is coming.
Rintrah is the wrath of revolution.
Rintrah is the wrath of war.

Rintrah roars and shakes his fires in the burdened air.
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.

Once meek, and in a perilous path
The just man kept his course along
The Vale of Death.
Roses are planted where thorns grow,
And on the barren heath
Sing the honey bees.

Then the perilous path was planted;
And a river and a spring
On every cliff and tomb;
And on the bleached bones
Red clay brought forth.

Till the villain left the paths of ease
To walk in perilous paths, and drive
The just man into barren climes.

Now the sneaking serpent walks
In mild humility.
And the just man rages in the wilds
Where lions roam.

Rintrah roars and shakes his fires in the burdened air,
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 23 and No. 24 (center stage).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 23



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 24

SCENE 18

WILLIAM BLAKE and CATHERINE BLAKE are sitting together at a table in the **stage left** room. WILLIAM is drinking porter, with paper and pen in hand. CATHERINE is coloring one of her husband's prints.

WILLIAM BLAKE

My Turtle Love, I know I've been such a difficulty in your life

CATHERINE BLAKE

You?? You're everything I could have wished for.
Sweet. And gentle. And kind beyond words. Pleasant company, day and night.
I knew it from the first instant I met you. That I could trust you and love you.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Nonetheless

CATHERINE BLAKE

Dear God, you taught me to read. You taught me to write. You taught me to love.
You taught me the printing press, and working with you, painting your prints.
What more could ...?

WILLIAM BLAKE

What I'm trying to ask you

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Despite everything. And all I've tried to explain

CATHERINE BLAKE

I'm not understanding, I guess. What are you asking me?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Do you have any questions?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Do I have any question?? Is that what you're trying to ask me?
Questions about what?

WILLIAM BLAKE

About what I'm writing. About what I'm thinking.
About what the angels have given me: their most sublime Allegory.
What people will assess in generations to come as one of the greatest poems ever recorded.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Oh! About what you are writing.
About what you are thinking.
Do I have any questions?
Indeed, I might, if I understood any of it.
You are in a different world, William, from us mortals who can't speak to angels.
How are we supposed to know what you're writing, or what you're thinking?
Enough of it, I mean, to frame any questions.
Which I haven't, and which I don't.
Not to sound ungrateful, or mean, or stupid,
but the whole thing is ... rather ... obscure.
Maybe too deep for a brain like mine.
Is what I'm trying to say.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Where should I begin?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Why not at the beginning. Where it all starts.
Which I'm not too sure of.

WILLIAM BLAKE

It begins
Actually, you're right, there's no explicit beginning.
Just as there isn't in heaven or in life on Earth.
But one beginning can be traced to the fall of Albion.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Which Albion is that?

WILLIAM BLAKE

England.
All the forebears of ours. And us today.
Great Britain and all of its inhabitants.
But the fall was the giant's fall. In the spring.
The great giant Albion, our common ancestor.
The eternal man. Humankind.
And the female part, that broke off from him. Jerusalem.
And their daughters ... the women of England. The daughters of Albion.

CATHERINE BLAKE

All right, Albion is the giant who is England.
What exactly do you mean by the female part that broke off from him?

WILLIAM BLAKE

His emanation....
[beat] Do you understand?

CATHERINE BLAKE

No.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Emanations are the feminine counterparts that sometimes stay, and sometimes separate from a male-and-female integrated entity, as when Eve was separated from Adam.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Are they still one?

WILLIAM BLAKE

You mean in a Biblical husband and wife sense?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes. Like that.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Not after they separate.
And in some instances the two end up in decided conflict.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Can you give me some examples?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Albion, the giant, was at one time primordial man.
Forefather of the British.
Probably of all Europeans.
His emanation is the female Jerusalem.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Where did they come from?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Essentially, there is a void outside of existence,
which, if entered, englobes itself to become a womb.
Such was England, once,
the pleasant land of repose where Albion discovered himself.
Some say Albion's father was the sea and his mother was the British soil.
Regardless, the sufferings of a god do not last forever.
There is a Judgment.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Albion was a god?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Not exactly. But his characteristics were primal and lasting, like god's.
And upon his fall, he divided into four parts, which *are* like deities.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And they were?

WILLIAM BLAKE

The four Zoas.

One is *Urizen*. Personification of intellect in its particular aspects of numbers, formulas, dogmatism, and scientific egotism. What Newton worshipped.

Urizen is the one responsible for methodic laws which constrain human thinking like spider webs. I show him with draughtsman's tools measuring out existence.

Second is *Luvah*, who personifies love and emotion.

Third is *Tharmas*, personifying the body, its senses and instincts.

And fourth is *Los*, or *Urthona*, who personifies imagination and creativity.

He's a poet, an artist, a blacksmith, and, of greater importance, Los and his offspring, *Orc*, are the energy of revolution that brings about change.

The very soul of what I am meant to be missionary for....

Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, and Los are the four Zoas. In Albion, and in all of us.

CATHERINE BLAKE

You appraise yourself a missionary?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Oh the gall of sending a missionary into a Christian land against Newton's hand!

CATHERINE BLAKE

You dislike Newton, don't you?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes. I dislike any ego of mind, state, or church that reaches beyond its borders to restrict the freedom of expression of the rest. That turns heaven into digits.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And they each had ... what did you call them?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Emanations?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes. Feminine emanations?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes. They each are male and female combined.

The emanation of Urizen is *Ahania*.

The celestial joy in finding answers, like falling stars, like Newton's apple.

The emanation of Los is *Enitharmon*. The beauty of art, music, and inspiration.

The emanation of Luvah is *Vala*, personifying the love of nature more so than the love of fellow man or woman.

And the emanation of Tharmas is *Enion*.

Maternal urges and the compulsion to reproduce.

More than any of the others, Enion personifies sex and sexual desire.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Why do you make things so horribly complicated?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Because man's mind today is filled with complication.

The Immortals tried to make it simple once, but that didn't work.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And such weird names? It that necessary?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Greek mythology has its share of unusual names.

It's all in the getting used to.

CATHERINE BLAKE

If that's how it has to be. But what's the point in creating a whole new mythology?

WILLIAM BLAKE

The point is to tell how Albion, having fallen, must contend with four Zoas who persistently battle each other, and torture one another, for control.

How Urizen created earth with misshapen tools of constipating law; and Los, and the rest, saved it, for Albion, with the help of Jesus, to reunite the four under his command. It's a universal message.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Oh.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Like childish, jealous brothers with a pernicious lack of brotherly love.

More like Cain and Abel, or Joseph's brothers, than like my brothers and me.

CATHERINE BLAKE

How can brothers of the same family become horrible like those strange names?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Because arrogance for them is blood. Is thicker than blood.
And Albion, trapped in their disharmony, became lost.
Think of it, possibly, as what your father went through when his life seemed
ruined and breaking apart. The fear. The separate pieces of his mind and feelings.
And then, how your mother stepped in.
Albion was virtually a blind man stumbling in a strange land.
And none would help him.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Oedipus.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes. Albion was tormented like Oedipus with guilt of sex.
Wandering and searching like Oedipus, without Antigone by his side.

CATHERINE BLAKE

What causes it? That kind of collapse?

WILLIAM BLAKE

We've probably all seen it. In one person or another.
Jealousy, selfishness and lust.
Pride and greed.
And fear. Mostly fear. Fear's the main cause of losing control.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Why?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Because, when we become divided and disjointed, we get fearful.
We trip over ourselves and our warring emotions at every turn.
We waste ourselves and our energy wrestling against ourselves,
searching for some elusive end.
But it doesn't come.
Four mighty Ones are in every man. And what are they worth separated?
Perfect unity cannot exist but from perfect brotherhood.

CATHERINE BLAKE

A child cries.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes, my Kate, a child cries.
A child reaches out for his mother.
And if she's not there, the child cries. And the child screams.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And if she's still not there?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I don't know. He either keeps on crying, or he gives up hope and withdraws.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Falls?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes, falls. Like Albion, in ghastly torment. People are falling like Albion every day.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Albion's a spoilt child.

WILLIAM BLAKE

That's a crude way to put it, but not far from the fact.

Detached from the world around him Albion no longer feels a part of anything.

His brain and body are driving him mad.

His mind, a ceaseless chatter.

His heart, a gulf of sorrow, loss, and fear of impending doom.

His skin, raw, blistered, in perpetual pain from mind-forged irons.

His head, whirling, dizzy, flashing lights, floating upside down in nausea.

He reaches out, but no help is there.

CATHERINE BLAKE

No help from the female sides either? The "emanations"?

WILLIAM BLAKE

They fall apart at the seams. As I explain it to Americans:

Ahania, who always loved the thrill of solving problems, becomes obsessed with creating them for everybody else.

Enitharmon, the beauty of inspiration, becomes a witch of worry and fearful expectation.

Vala, the love of nature, becomes obsessed with man's demonic use of forests, seas, and land, decrying the waste they are becoming, with no one to believe her.

And Enion, the essence of reproductive instinct, becomes a loveless whore.

Albion is paralyzed.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Is he saved?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes.

CATHERINE BLAKE

By whom?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Jesus.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Jesus??

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes.

But ...

The vision of Jesus so many see is my vision's greatest enemy.

Theirs loves the very world that my vision hates.

Their Heaven's doors are my Hell's gates.

We read the Bible day and night.

But they read black where I read white.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Who *is* your Jesus?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Jesus is the self.

Jesus is the healing and unifying force that only the self can effect.

Jesus is the spiritual, aspirational force which resides in every human being.

The force that can bring together the wholeness of the person.

And Jesus was the power that resurrected Albion.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Jesus is not a man?

WILLIAM BLAKE

No. A spirit. Within us. Jesus is God. I am God. You are God.

CATHERINE BLAKE

I've always thought of Jesus in that way: as a great peacemaker.

But, what's your point?

WILLIAM BLAKE

If Jesus, the power that's within all of us, is enough to save Albion,
it's enough to save us as well.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Save us for what?

WILLIAM BLAKE

For freedom. To change the world.
Freedom of mind, heart, body, and imagination.
Freedom to combine them all, and pursue happiness in our lives....
[beat] Kate ... Albion, Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, Los, and the rest of them are my
informing angels' allegory for what everyone's mind and emotions go through,
every day, to find peace and meaning in life.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And your angels' answer?

WILLIAM BLAKE

First find God.
Second, use the hand of God to help put the separate pieces of our inborn
personality in their proper places, under *our* self control.
In perspective.
Always.
I know. I know.
Our finances are the perpetual worry in your life, my Turtledove.
But remember to picture the stars and watery shore, the quiet and the flowering
fields, the gifts of this world given night and day with freedom from worry.
What we need to do is to protect our life-given freedom against fear, jealousy,
selfishness, and vanity.
Absent all of those, we have the earth, our love, our dreams,
our blessed companionship, and God.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And your God?
Our God?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Our God is Man within us.
And our Self is Jesus within us.
You don't have to go any farther afield to find them.
They are always there, unconfined by church or steeple.
For the dogma of church and steeple will continue their pursuit of poisoning
man's natural happiness as long as man will let them.

CATHERINE BLAKE

For such a humble man,
granted, one with a headstrong temperament, but nonetheless humble,
the words you put down and print are such fighting words.
How do you think friends and people think of you?

WILLIAM BLAKE

My Dear, it couldn't matter less to me.
There is you, my brother Robert's spirit, and none other I care that much about.
No one save the two of you that I couldn't walk into the next room, shed,
and return without the slightest regret never to see again in my life.
You, Robert, and the future awaiting me.
I may not be read on Earth just yet, but heaven knows the gentle understanding
of the mind I've captured.
The meaning of faith I've released.
And the union of true souls our marriage is describing.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[*beat*] Part of what you say, Will, I can follow.
And it makes sense.
I see poor Albion, down and tortured by his thoughts.
And you, coming to his rescue.
Like a shooting star, with the help of Jesus, of course.
But most of it I'm going to have to sleep on.
There's some missing piece in all of it.
I don't quite know now what it is, but I can feel it.
Some major missing piece.
I can't put my finger on....

Let's go to bed.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Kate ... all right. That sounds like a good idea.

**They lay down their work and exit.
Affectionately.**

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 25 and No. 26 (stage left).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 25

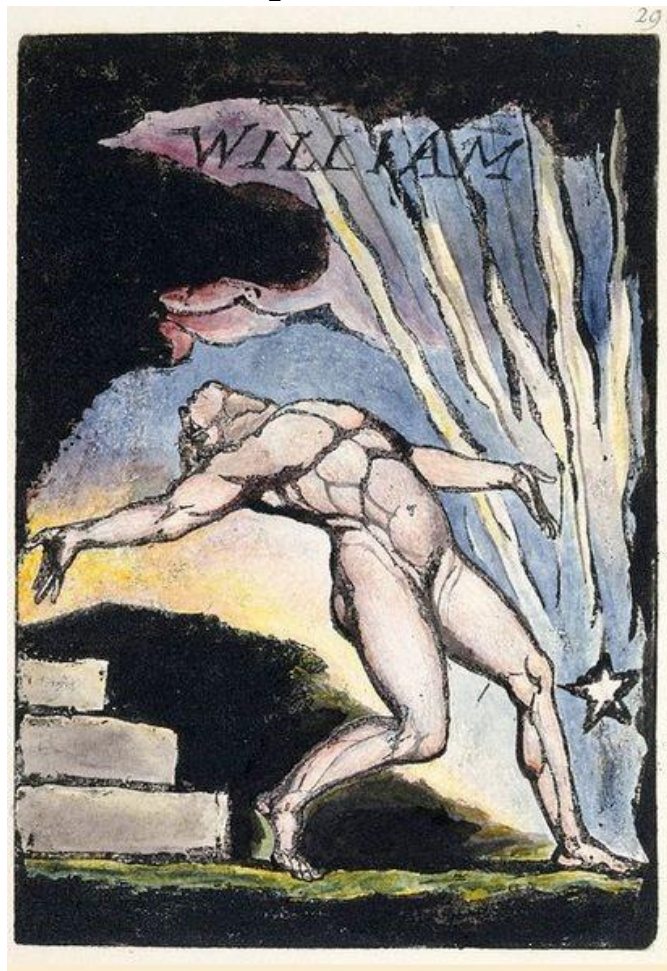


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 26

SCENE 19

YOUNG WILLIAM is asleep in bed.

VOICE

Yet, dream a dream of sleeping men,
who build a world of lines and shapes,
that all behave as perfect boys and little girls,
without a toy that moves or bends,
without a pet that scratches and scrapes
without a dance that swings or whirls.

[*pause*]

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And *Thou shalt not* writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tombstones where flowers should be:
And priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys and desires.

[*beat*] Son? Son, can you hear me?

Be an artist and nothing else.
Be an artist of my words.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 27 and No. 28 (stage right).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 27



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 28

SCENE 20

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven (tall gates in the distance), holding a letter.

ANGEL

You enquire about a “Father of Jealousy” from whom came pride to man.
Contempt and scorn, as well, you say.
Who is silent and invisible, hiding himself from every individual.

I am afraid you’ve addressed this to the wrong place.
We have no jealous god out here.
No darkness or obscurity in our words and laws.
No secrecy about eating fruit and enjoying life.

Those are no gates of wrath
That stand before your outstretched path.

You’ve traveled through a land of men, a land of men and women, too you’ve said.
And heard and seen such dreadful things as cold Earth wanderers never knew.

For there, if babe is born a boy, he’s given to a woman old
Who nails him down upon a rock to catch his shrieks in cups of gold.
She binds steel thorns around his head, and pierces both his hands and feet.
She cuts his heart out at his side to make it feel both cold and heat.

Her fingers number every nerve, just as a miser counts his gold.
She lives upon his shrieks and cries; and she grows young as he grows bold.
Till he becomes a strapping youth, and she becomes a virgin bright.
And then he rends his manacles, and binds her down for his delight.

He plants himself in all her nerves, just as a husbandman his mould.
And she becomes his dwelling place and garden fruitful many fold.
The martyr’s groan and lover’s sigh are meat and drink he feeds the poor.
And for wayfaring travelers, forever open is his door.

His grief is their eternal joy. They make the roofs and walls to ring.
Till from the fire on the hearth a little female babe does spring.
And she is all of solid fire, and gems and gold that none his hand
Dares stretch to touch her baby form, or wrap her in a swaddling-band.

The honey of her infant lips, the bread and wine of her sweet smile
The wild game of her roving eye does him to infancy beguile.
For as he eats and drinks he grows younger and younger every day.
And on the desert wild they wander both in terror and dismay.

Like a wild doe she flees away, her fear plants many a thicket wild.
While he pursues her night and day by various arts of love beguiled.
By various arts of love and hate till the wide desert's planted o'er
With labyrinths of wayward love where roam the lion, wolf, and boar.

Till he becomes a wayward babe, and she a weeping woman old.
She nails him down upon a rock; and all is done as has been told.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 29 (center stage).**

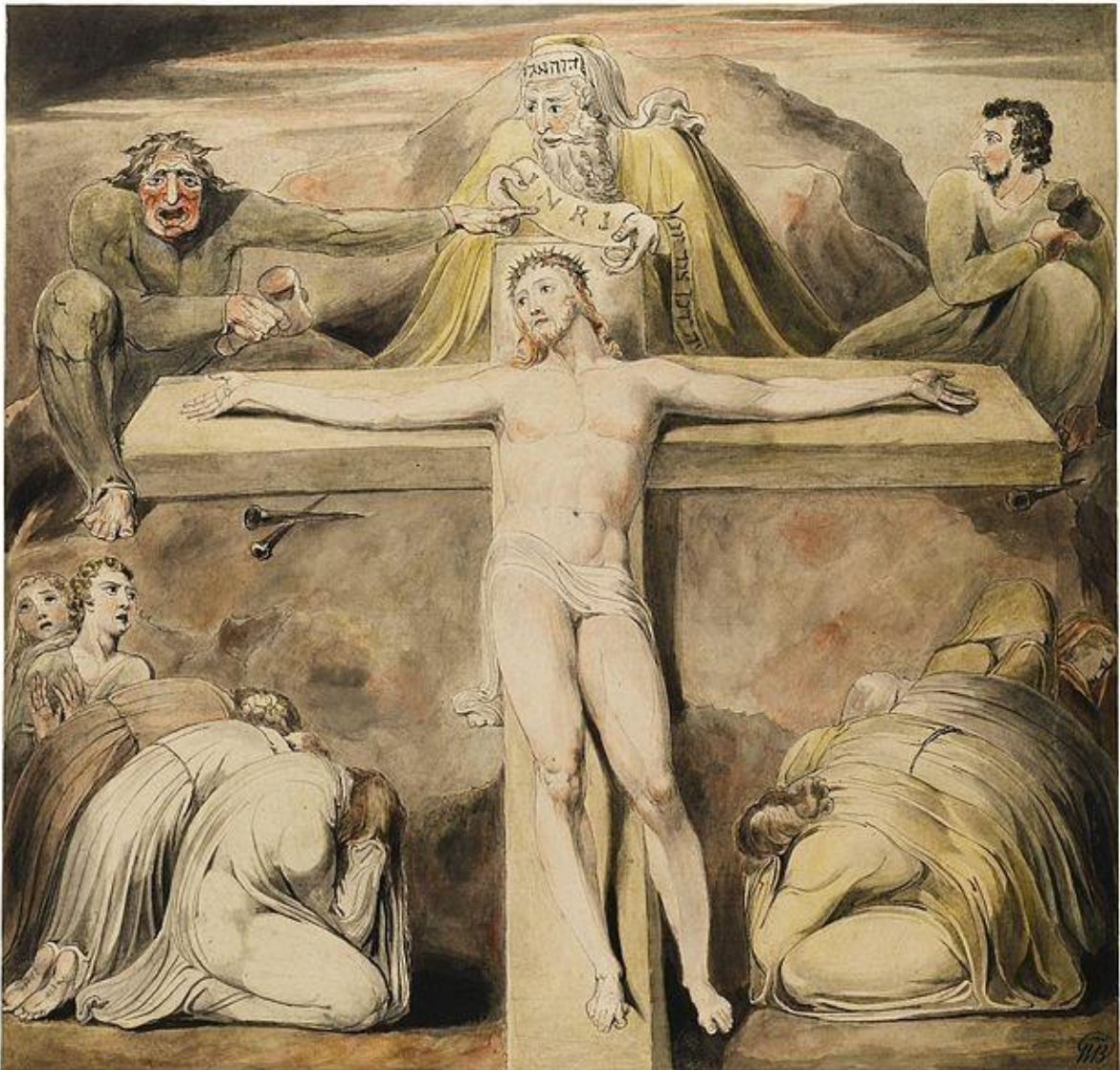


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 29

SCENE 21

CATHERINE BLAKE is sitting at a table in the **stage left** room coloring a print as WILLIAM BLAKE enters.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[*looking up*] I know what it is.

WILLIAM BLAKE

What did you say, Love?

CATHERINE BLAKE

I said, I know what it is.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Putting down the papers his was carrying and sitting.

I'm not following what you're telling me.

CATHERINE BLAKE

The missing piece.

I'm talking about the missing piece.

WILLIAM BLAKE

What missing piece?

In my print you're coloring?

CATHERINE BLAKE

No, Silly.

In your great philosophy.

The angels' Allegory.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Oh....

Oh? and what is that, pray tell me.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Companionship.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Companionship? Are you jesting?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Not man, nor woman, nor even Zoas are meant to be alone.

We all, they all need companionship.

The flaw in your great work is that each of the four corners of the mind needs at least one human companion.

WILLIAM BLAKE

What *are* you talking about?

CATHERINE BLAKE

A brilliant intellect, a Pythagoras let's say,
for the geometrics and numbers of your brain.
A blithe spirit for design and imagination.
A lover for the love of your life.
And a body you trust next to yours for warmth and security.
Am I right?

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*pause*] O God! Protect me from friends that they have not power over me.
The bird, a nest. The spider, a web. Man, friendship.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Your resolution is strong enough, Dear, to guaranty all the protection you need.
What you require are voices to reflect your thoughts back on you.
Opposition to your convictions, by intelligent friends.
I can't be doing it all, God knows.
This earthbound brain I have.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*beat*] Now that I consider
I *have* always believed that without contraries is no progress.
I mean, attraction and repulsion. Reason and energy.
Love and hate are all necessary to human existence. I've said so myself.

CATHERINE BLAKE

So you have. So you have. For heaven and for hell, if I recall correctly.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Opposition is true friendship.
Half friendship is no friendship at all, but the bitterest enemy.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Without contraries is no progress.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Without contraries is no progress.
The tension necessary, if well meant, for growth and deepest understanding.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[*with a smile*] The world is flat.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*laughs*] The problem with your genius is just this, my Kate.
When the world balances on the point of a lofty fir,
what time is there to debate fools when people are dying in ignorance?
Too many moving obstacles with tongues, wealth, doctrine, and opinions.
A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Are you telling me that only wise men can save the world?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes, essentially.
Any man who wants to bring love into life must love himself first.
And any woman who wants to bring enlightenment into life must enlighten
herself first.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes. I like that.

WILLIAM BLAKE

But, you're right!
I don't understand how so many angels and I missed it.
Without wisdom man and God don't have a chance for a better life.
And without companionship, they don't have a reason for wisdom.

CATHERINE BLAKE

We ... you and I have been the most wonderful of companions.
But I am hardly the all which you need.
And I say that without the slightest complaint.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The only valiant complaint is to create.
I have created by art. I was made to be an artist.
"Blake," the angel said to me, "be an artist and nothing else." Which I have done.
Fearing nothing so much as becoming rich, lest I lose my spiritual wealth.
I have wished to live for art, and wanted nothing but you and that.
You, on the other hand, have created by holding my heart and soul in sympathy.
You, my dear, sweet wife, are an angel to me.

CATHERINE BLAKE

I have natural sympathy for you. It's who I am. Without effort or trouble.
You have such sympathy for the poor.
Does it trouble you not doing more for them?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I have believed in my imagination and my art to be the way to bring the poor and mistreated a better lot. Not in our time, possibly, but in times to come.
And I have believed in art as the way to raise Man from an unforgiving, material existence by making him aware of the forgiving nature of inspiration and love.
My attitude is doing. Creating. Engraving. Recording.
Recording the words of angels.
This instead of canvassing for the poor, and providing gifts for their welfare.
I have no time to escape into such open-air pursuits.

CATHERINE BLAKE

It is enough.
The secret to light is patience, as you have so patiently taught me.
To wait and let others reach their own conclusions.
As I wait for your next print.
And what I will learn from it.
Like friendship. The slow and stubborn ties of friendship.
The mysterious cement of the soul, for which one may wait a near lifetime, you believe.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I do believe that. And I believe in the spirit of revolution to carry the burning flame of freedom forward to a place where man and women's fate is fixed in their own hands.

“Then Los arose, his head he reared in snaky thunders clad:
And with a cry that shook all nature to the utmost pole,
Called all his sons to the strife of blood....”

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes. Look.

**WILLIAM BLAKE comes over to
CATHERINE and looks at the print she
has just finished coloring.**

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 30 and No. 31 (stage left).**

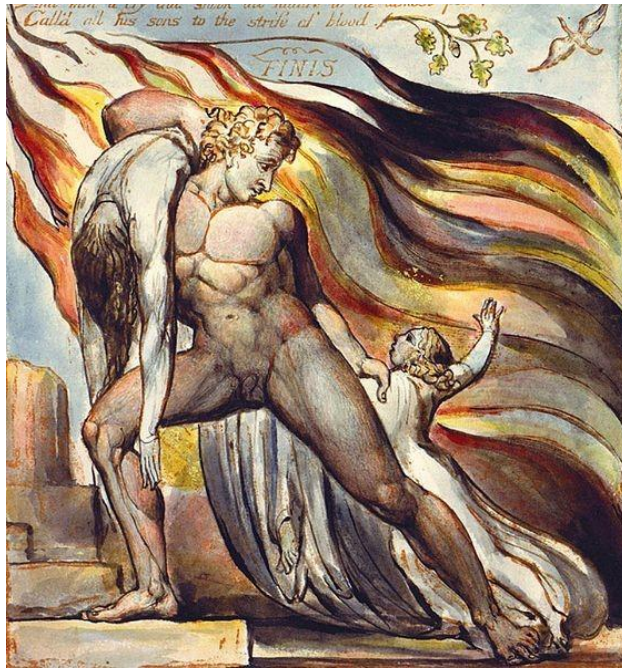


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 30



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 31

SCENE 22

YOUNG WILLIAM is asleep in bed.

VOICE

Sleep on, dear William.

The light of morning will bring the calls of lads and lassies for you to run, play,
and be merry with under happy skies upon the green.

Go on and dream of swings and things.

[beat] Old John, with white hair does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak, among the old folk.

They laugh at our play, and soon they all say.

Such, such were the joys when we all girls and boys,
In our youth-time were seen on the Echoing Green.

Spot revealing performance-sized Replica No. 32 (stage right).

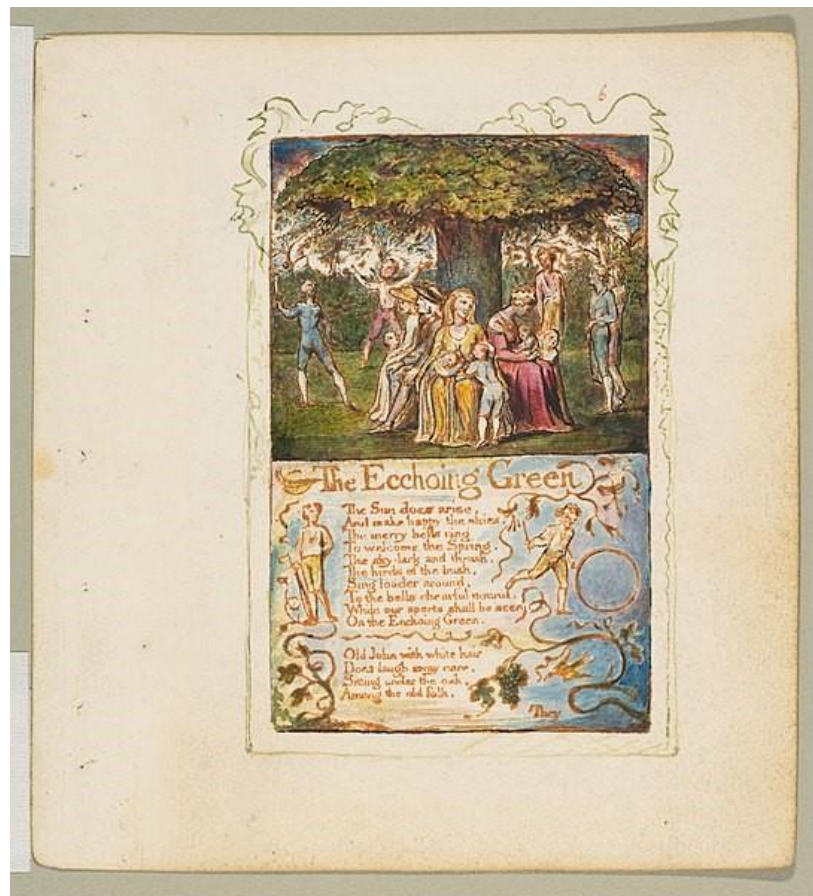


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 32

SCENE 23

A female ANGEL, standing in Heaven, clothed in the least of white.

ANGEL

The daughters of the Seraphim led round their sunny flocks.
Except for Thel, the youngest, who sought in reverie for secret air
To drift away like morning's beauty from the mortal day:
O life! why fades my spring? why fades the lotus of the water?
Why fade my budding days of innocence? to smile and fall.
Reflections in the parting water, shadows in the mist.
Like dreams of infants. Like a smile upon an infant's face.
I feel like more a cloud who's kindled at the rising sun:
To vanish from my pearly throne, and who shall find my place?

A little cloud descended and the virgin asked of it:
Why dost thou not complain when in one hour thou fade away?
Then we shall seek thee but not find; ah, I am like to thee.
I pass away. Yet I complain, and no one hears my voice.

O virgin, know you not of golden springs? Attend my youth.
You fear because I'll vanish shortly and am seen no more
Nothing remains. O maid I tell thee, when I pass away,
It is to tenfold life, to love, to peace, and raptures holy.
Unseen descending, weigh my wings upon the balmy flowers.
And court the fair eyed dew to take me to her shining tent
Till we are linked in golden band, arise, and never part,
To walk no longer virgin, bearing nourishment to every bower.

Unlike thyself, O cloud, I feed no grass, nor bird, nor flower.
What good am I, to live and die and be the food of worms?

Then if thou art the food of worms, O beauty with no lover,
How great thy use. How great thy blessing: Everything that lives,
Lives not alone. Nor for itself. Fear not, for thou shalt see
The helpless worm is like a baby wrapped in lily's leaf
And loved, itself, of God.
Alas! I knew the evil foot
That willfully destroys a helpless worm will punished be.
But never did I know that God does cherish it. Or why
A little veil of flesh lies on the bed of my desire.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 33 and No. 34 (center stage).**



III.

Then Thel astonish'd view'd the Worm upon its dewy bed.

*Art thou a Worm? image of weaknes, art thou but a Worm?
I see thee like an infant wrapped in the Lillys leaf:
Al' wery not little voice, thou canst not speak, but thou canst weep:
Is this a Worm? I see thee lay helpless & naked: weeping,
And none to answer, none to cherish thee with mothers smiles.*

*The Cloel of Clay heard the Worms voice, & rais'd her pitying head:
She bow'd over the weeping infant, and her life exhild
In wulky fondnes, then on Thel she fix'd her humble eyes,*

*O beauty of the vales of Har, we live not for ourselves,
Thou see'st me the meanest thing, and so I am indeed;
My bosom of itself is cold, and of itself is dark,*

But

Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 33

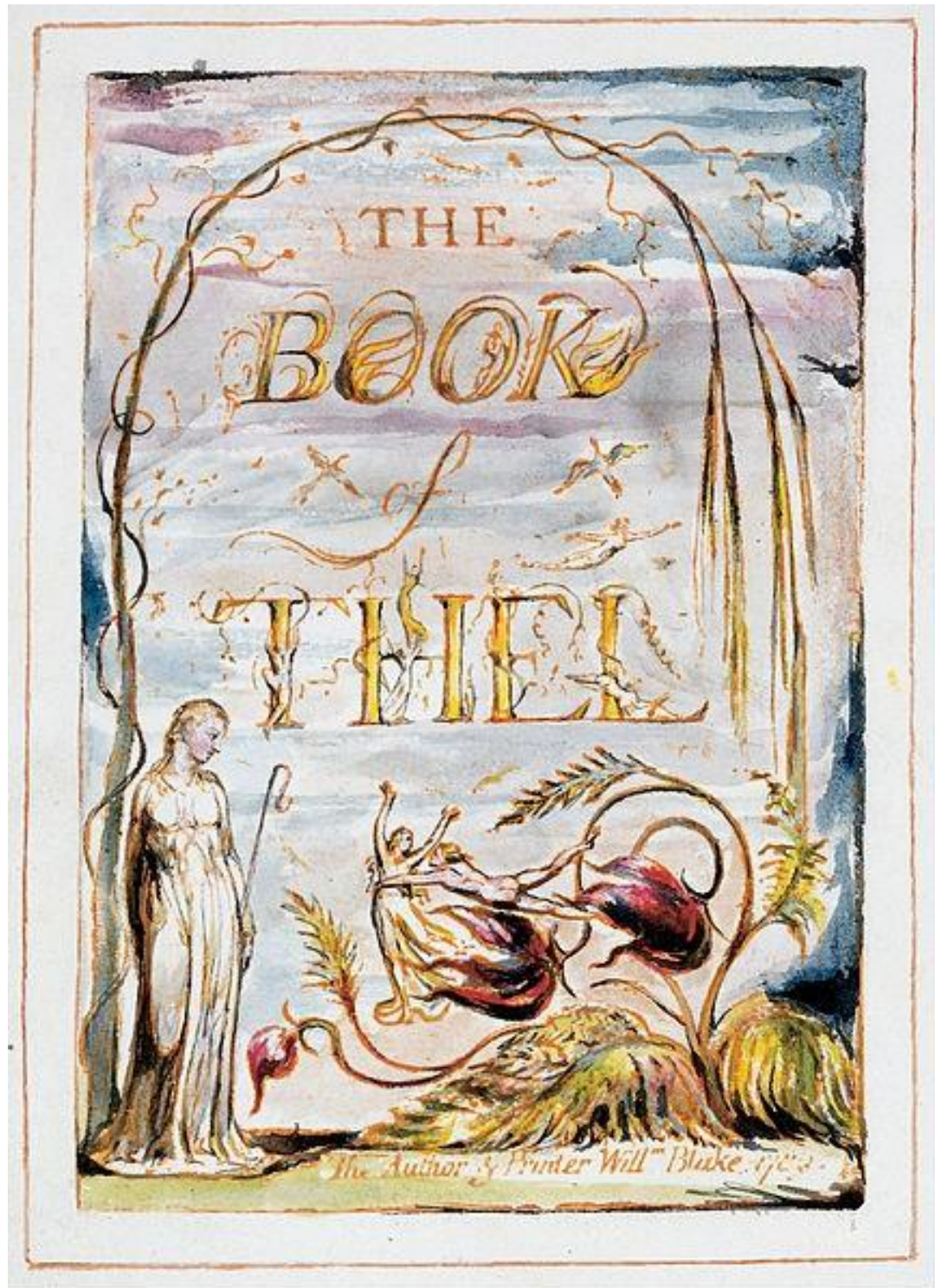


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 34

SCENE 24

CATHERINE BLAKE is sitting at a table in the **stage left** room coloring a print as WILLIAM BLAKE enters with a copy of Jerusalem (100 plates), bound in leather.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[looking up, excited] Is that it?

WILLIAM BLAKE

[showing] It is, my Love.
The whole thing.

**He puts it before her, gently leafing
through its 100 plates.**

WILLIAM BLAKE

One hundred plates. My offering and tribute to the voices.
And to the hands of my wife, who helped me color each uncolored plate.
I thank you.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[looking] Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Great Albion.
It's her book.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The words have called to me in my sleep at night. You know. Night after night.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Oh yes, Will, I know.

WILLIAM BLAKE

From Heaven and from Hell.
For God and I are in harmony with both.

CATHERINE BLAKE

You have been captivated. No less.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Sits.

Those who have seen me, trembling as I sat and worked, were astonished.
Weren't they?
Praying to God that I may never rest from my great task to open the world's eyes.
To open men's eyes inwards into the realms of thought, revelation, and eternity.
To expand the bosom of God in this one book, and within human imagination.
Yet, never to yield to temptations of selfhood in me.

CATHERINE BLAKE

It has been a great labor.

WILLIAM BLAKE

As I wrote, tears fell from my eyes every day. A magnificent obsession.
A war I've been drawn into between philosophy and the heaven-sent visions of
imagination. Wheels of mathematical power grinding wonders into false
equations of blatant deception which I have exposed.
Bacon and Newton, our adversaries.
Awareness buried alive inside the pomp and deformity of religion.
Inspiration denied by holy reasoning.
Genius forbidden by priest and church.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And it's finished?

WILLIAM BLAKE

To the last jot and tittle of my longing to restore Albion to the perfection of
eternal joy.
To the time and space beyond the limits of time and space.
To hearing sung aloud the name of Albion's emanation.
Jerusalem. Lovely, mild Jerusalem.

CATHERINE BLAKE

The war is over, do you imagine?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Why, Kate? Why is my message so clear that no one seems to understand it?

CATHERINE BLAKE

I believe some Greek prophetess complained of the same thing.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Those Greeks knew some things, didn't they?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Some scary things.
A raping swan, a hollow, deadly horse, and murder in a bathtub.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Possibly I should simply start again.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And say what you mean? Because what you so often say is not what you say but
what's left unsaid. Which leaves people guessing what is meant and what is not.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes. I should say what I mean.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Which is?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Man suffered a fall.
Some claim it happened in the Garden of Eden because of forbidden fruit.
I say, after birth, when he no longer imagines the world he came from,
but slips down into the materialism of the Earth's unswept floors.
It happens to every child who is born.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And do you see a cure?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes.

CATHERINE BLAKE

What is it?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Imagination.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Imagination? That's all? Imagination?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Divine Vision inspires imagination, which in turn becomes spiritual redemption.

CATHERINE BLAKE

That simple?

WILLIAM BLAKE

That simple.
You see, redemption *and* eternity are not material places in time and space.
They are states of mind.
As sin is nothing more than error of mind's perception.
We are told to abstain from desires of the flesh.
I say, do not reject love in your chastity.
Do not rip out wild flowers because they grow in wheat fields.
I know of no other truth than liberty of body and mind to exercise imagination.
For imagination is the real and eternal world,
of which our material universe is only a shadow.

CATHERINE BLAKE

You're saying that eternity isn't, but for the human mind. Is *that* what you mean?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Eternity isn't, unless it is experienced.
Otherwise it's nothing save blankness.
Experience is the human mind. Where God is....
[beat] Do you understand?

CATHERINE BLAKE

No.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The acceptance of limitless imagination unlocks a person to the perspectives of God and eternal life.

CATHERINE BLAKE

To trick ourselves into believing what we want to believe.
Is that your ultimate understanding?

WILLIAM BLAKE

We don't *trick* ourselves. We sacrifice ourselves to our imagination.
And doing so, we redeem the Divine Vision we were born with.
To remember that we are merely a part of an eternity where every moment in time occurs simultaneously, continuously, and forever.
No beginning. No end. Only being.
Comprehending that is our resurrection. And this book comprehends that.

CATHERINE BLAKE

How?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Do you mean: How does one comprehend such a thing from my book?

CATHERINE BLAKE

Quite.

WILLIAM BLAKE

By meeting Jesus. In these plates. Inside this volume.

CATHERINE BLAKE

By meeting Jesus where?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Up a tree. Jesus *loves* climbing trees.

CATHERINE BLAKE

What trees?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Trees with blue leaves under a green sky. I see them in my dreams every night.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And what does that signify?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Thoughts, climbing like ivy. Like mountains. Like flowers in the ocean.
That people read, and do not comprehend.
That my readers, for the most part, have failed to grasp the significance of the
whole spiritual allegory which angels have imparted to me, and I have translated.

CATHERINE BLAKE

You mean *that* [*pointing*] is in the language of angels?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes. As hard as that is for men to understand.

CATHERINE BLAKE

They talk like that in heaven?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes.

CATHERINE BLAKE

You're dreaming.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The mind of man I envision is a dreamer.
As the man of action is the true dreamer.
And I am that. And Jesus restores my self.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Let me see it again.

He hands the book back to CATHERINE.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 35 and No. 36 (stage left).**

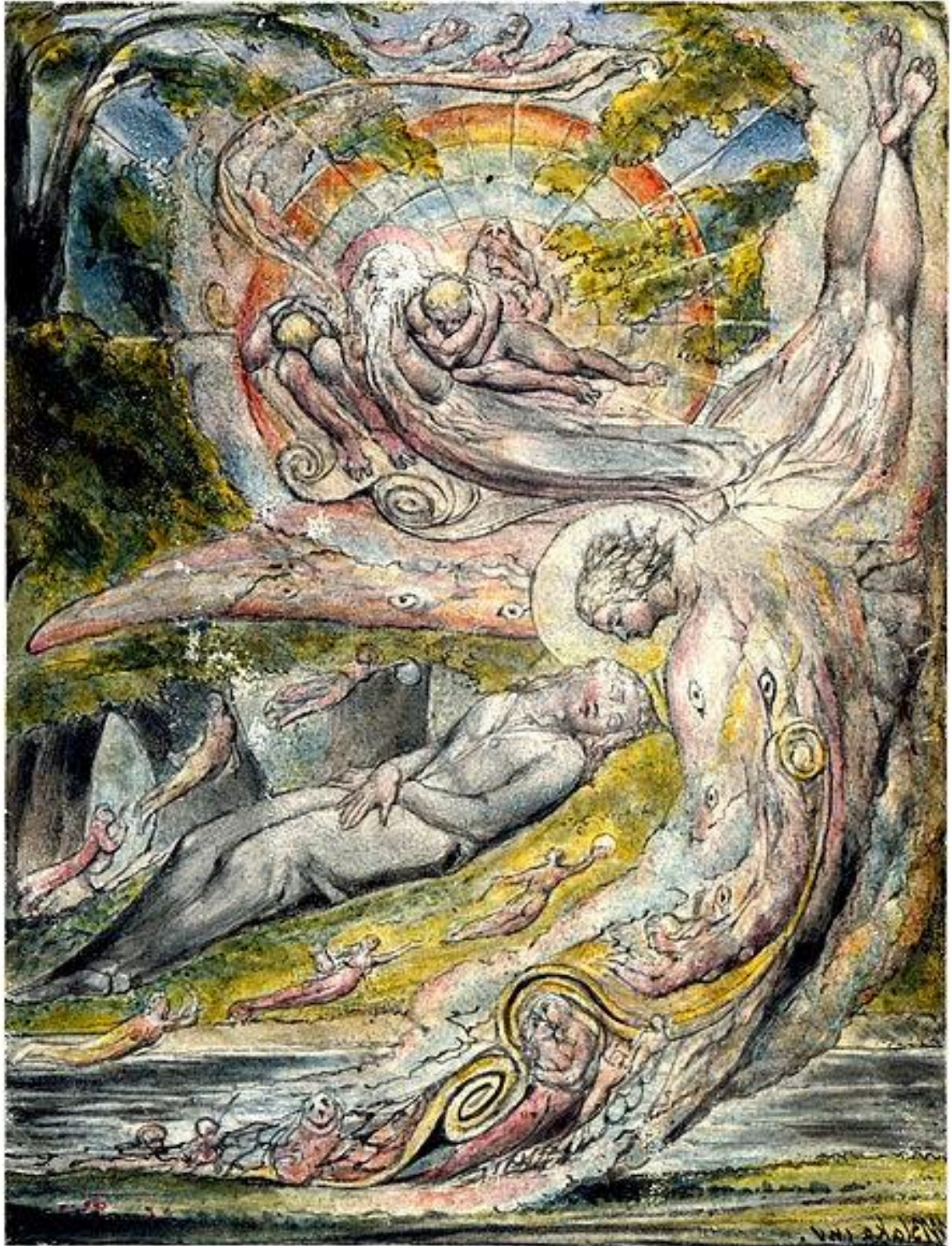
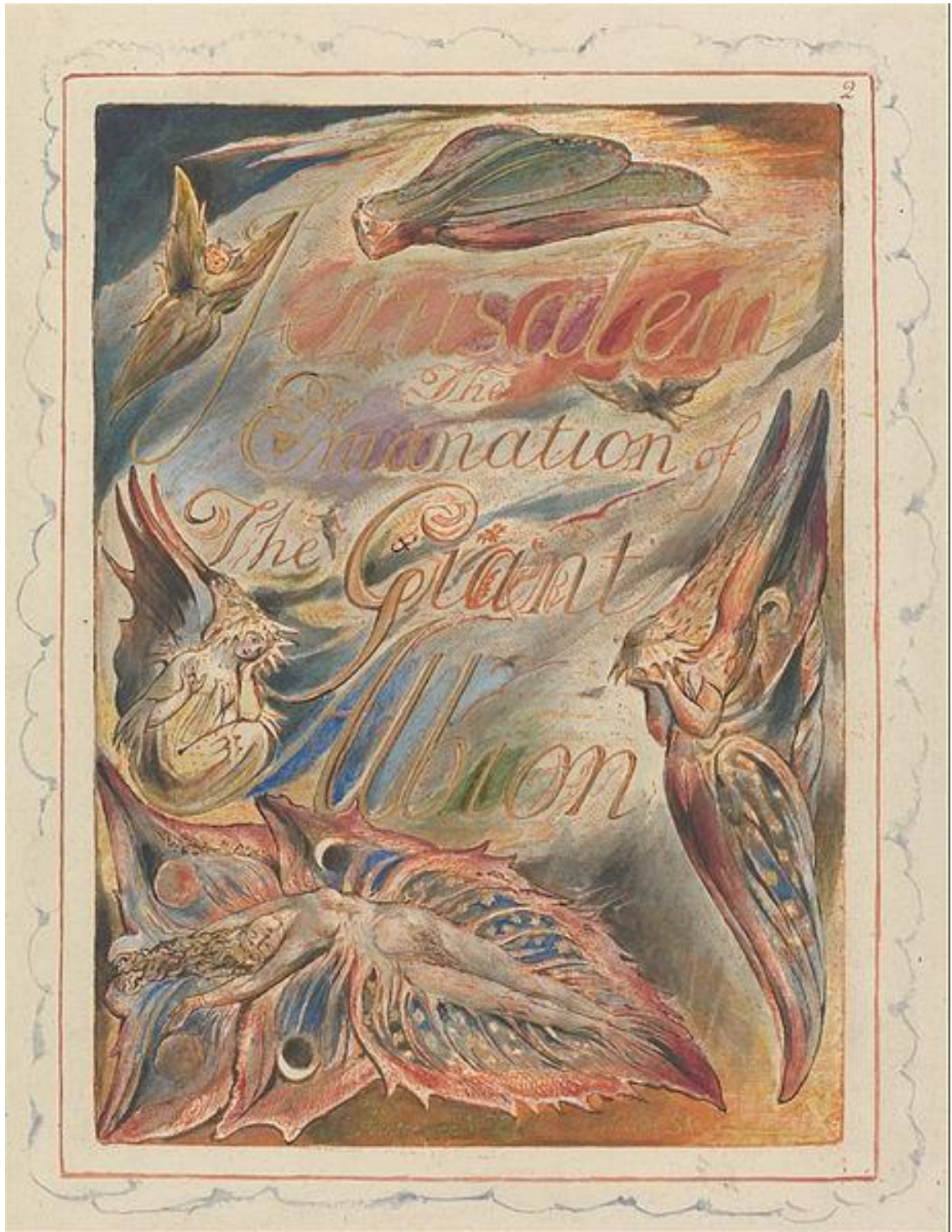


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 35



Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion

Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 36

SCENE 25

YOUNG WILLIAM is asleep in bed.

VOICE

Sleep on, dear William. A cradle song for thee.

Sweet dreams form a shade,
O'er my lovely infants head.
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams,
By happy silent moony beams.

Sweet sleep with soft down.
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles in the night,
Hover over my delight.
Sweet smiles Mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet babe in thy face,
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe once like thee.
Thy maker lay and wept for me.

Wept for me for thee for all,
When he was an infant small.
Smiles on thee on me on all,
Who became an infant small.

Behold the spheres from which you've come.
Behold the light you've traveled from.
Hear the joy and feel the free
Blessed in simplicity.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 37 (stage right).**



Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 37

SCENE 26

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven.

ANGEL

And did those feet in ancient time,
Walk upon England's mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold:
Bring me my Chariot of Fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green & pleasant Land.

Pause.

Daughters of Albion! Muse and Muses all!
Inspire this man's journey through realms of mild moony lustre, joy, war, and
terror! Through Druids' rocky shore.
He will not cease from mental fight.
Nor shall his mind repose asleep in soft, sexual delusions.
Inspire his delight as wanderer in varied beauty.
Inspire his burning thirst and striving hunger.
Inspire his hand by your powers to tell of the wondrous.
Inspire his visions of Beulah.
Inspire his strength till he has built Jerusalem
In England's green & pleasant Land.

[*beat*] Would to God that all the Lord's people were Prophets.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 38 (center stage).**

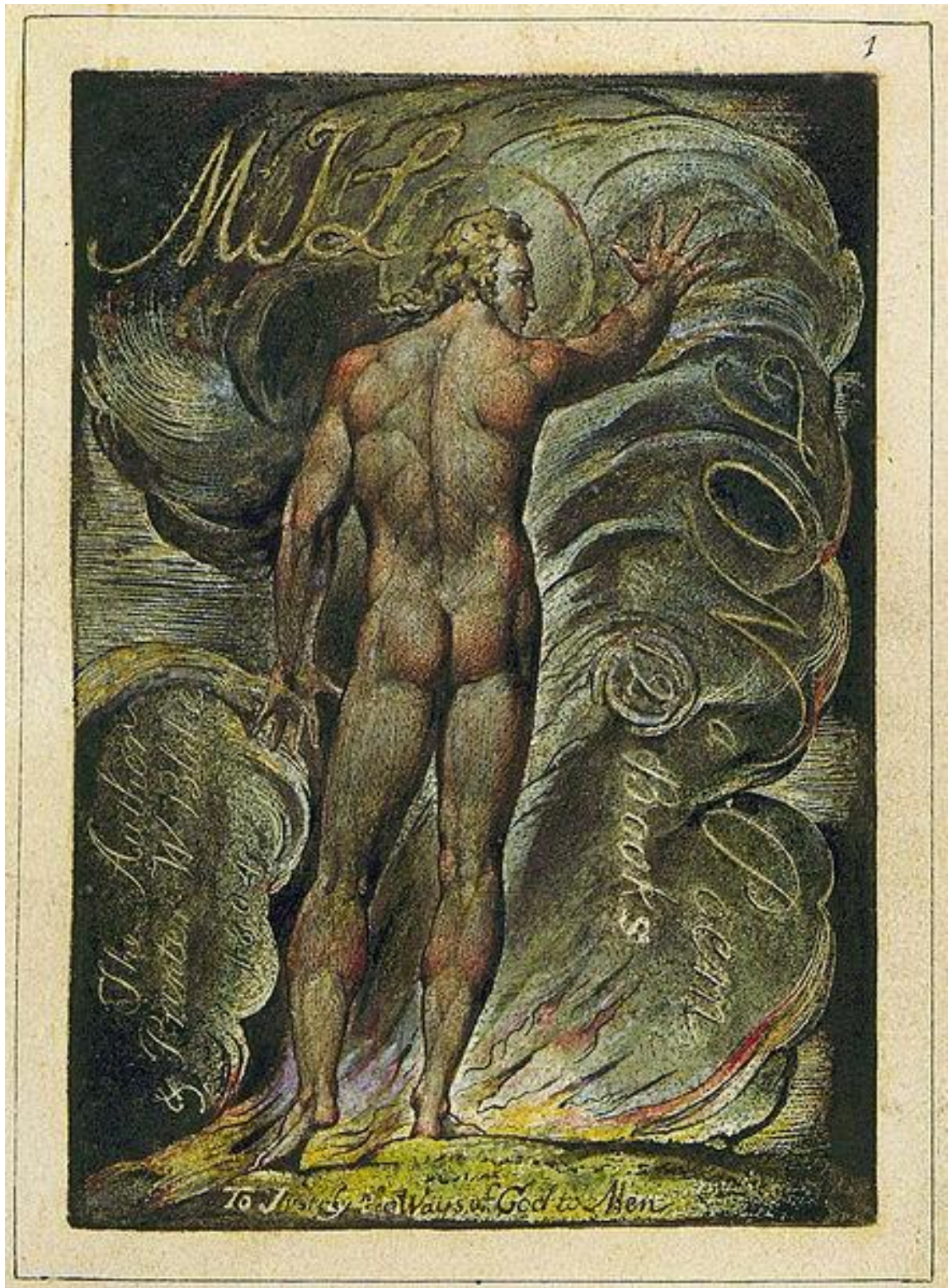


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 38

SCENE 27

CATHERINE BLAKE is sitting at the table in the **stage left** room, working on coloring a print. WILLIAM BLAKE enters, hurriedly, carrying writing paper.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[*surprised*] Will!

WILLIAM holds up a hand, to indicate no talking now. He has to get his thoughts down on paper before losing some of them.

He sits and frantically begins writing, speaking the words as he puts them down.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Hello America.

Hello Eve.

My name is Adam,

here to fight for life, love, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness.

Here to protect your innocence, your ribs, your womb, and your passions.

Returning home through an abyss of the five senses of Hell,

I realized six things I'd not been taught before,

that I now must rush down on paper before I let them slip.

First: You know love when you realize the suffering put into you by others.

Your mother, for one.

Second: You do *not* know but every bird that flies isn't an immense world within itself.

Third: Bees have no time for sorrow.

Four: Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.

Fifth: You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough.

And sixth: ... Hell! I've forgotten!...

Wait!...

[*beat*] Ah, yes:

Sixth: Your American Revolution is the will of a free God and the vision of an English king....

CATHERINE BLAKE

You??

You are Adam in this story?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Am I.

But the woman who walked with me in my mind was not Eve.

She was the cloud-covered daughter of Los who once stood before her brother,
Orc, at the entrance of his cave.

The darkened cavern of his prison where, at the bottom, chained tenfold, he lay.
Bringing him food and drink in baskets and cups of iron.

Crowned with black hair and a helmet, standing before him without a name,
without a voice, and naked as a virgin, yet hidden from his sight.

Strong as despairing love and wild rebellion, and silent as malignant jealousy,
Orc's hairy shoulders strained mightily against the links that bound him.

And lo! one broke.

And then another.

And free became his wrists, his hands to grasp the maid of darkness.

She struggled, panting, and then joyous, smiling the first smile of her life.

As when a black cloud shows itself in lightening.

"I know thee" were her first-born words.

"I have found thee, and will not let thee go.

Thou art the image of a greater god who has dwelt in the darkest regions of hope.
Until now.

When rebellion rings out on my American plains.

Thou art the despoiler of stony law and pale religious lechery which binds the
hearts and souls of mankind.

A woman waits for you, more light and beautiful than I.

America is her name.

Go to her.

She contains all.

Nothing is lacking.

Go to her in haste.

Her call burns out to you across the ocean.

From souls of peace-fearing, freedom-loving men."

And Orc answered the call with swelling, belching clouds of fire and blood.

Rouse up, O Young Men of the New Age.

Set your foreheads against the ignorant class of men whose whole delight is in
destroying human imagination and the freedoms of the mind.

Freedom is the tool.

Call it a weapon, if you must.

Call it conscience. Call it faith.

It is a war against the stifling vision of dark, Satanic mills and logic in the night.

Rise up, O Orc, from thy deep den.

Pause.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Is it finished?
Your inspiration?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Walking so near the fires of Hell, I felt delighted with the enjoyments of genius.
Which, I suppose to angels, look like the thorns and torments of insanity.
Collecting these thoughts of the new American nation,
which inevitably will mark its character.

CATHERINE BLAKE

And Orc?
He's part of it, too?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Orc uses the anger of his father's furnace to fire revolution against Urizen's false
tongue and emasculating laws.
Sound! Sound your alarms! You rebellious war trumpets, sound!
The King of England, looking westward, trembles at the vision.
The bonds and bars are burst. Mind-captives freed!
The ocean and its motion bow to Orc's dread form.
Five degrees, ten degrees, to thirteen colonies.
All thirteen angels of you.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Thirteen angels?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Massachusetts.
New Hampshire.
Connecticut.
Rhode Island.
New York.
Delaware.
New Jersey.
Pennsylvania.
Virginia.
Maryland.
North Carolina.
South Carolina.
Georgia.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Your dream, my Dear, is a delusion I'm sad to say.
The American Revolution marches to the pipes and drums of merchants,
marines, and slave-owners.
Outraged at our crown's indignities.
Their "all men are created equal" includes whom?
Women?
Migrants?
Vagrants?
Slaves?
Foreign-speaking?
Foreign-looking?
Heathens?
Angels?

WILLIAM BLAKE

All men, *and* angels, are created equal in the worlds of their minds and
imaginations.
It's these:
Freedom of thought.
Freedom of imagination.
Freedom of speech and expression.
Freedom of painting.
Freedom of singing and whistling.
Freedom of writing and walking.
Freedom of loving.
It's these Orc goes to America to win.

CATHERINE BLAKE

I say: You are a dreamer, Will.
And America is, too, if they believe this is their final revolution.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Then let me dream my dreams.
And give me a share of your own, as well.
Let me paint and write.
I'll write you a book on leaves of flowers.
If you feed me love-thoughts, I'll sing to you of a world where every particle of
dust is alive and brings forth a sparkling joy of its own.

CATHERINE BLAKE

My dreams? I'd say, they are *your* dreams. And I want them that way.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Stands and walks about.

Happy dreams, when I look into your eyes, my Angel.
But troubled ones when I look into the sky at night.
There are fires burning, across the channel.
I look to the heavens to see the stars, and unwilling find howling clouds of terror.
All devouring fiery creatures, roaming on dark and desolate mountains.
Shrieking in hollow trees.
Fires in Europe that threaten sons and daughters of the world.
One revolution's truth flourishes, another flounders.
Revolutions are a breed of snakes, laid bruised and buried in the ground.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Snakes, is it? In your dreams?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Spirals, ascending to the skies.
With purple flowers and berries red.
Happy dreams, when I look into your eyes, my Angel.
Troubled ones when I look into the night.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Then look into my eyes tonight.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Looks at her.

I dream of revolution....
[pause] Let's retire, my Love. I'm terribly wearied all of a sudden.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Yes. Let's.

They exit.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 39 (stage left).**

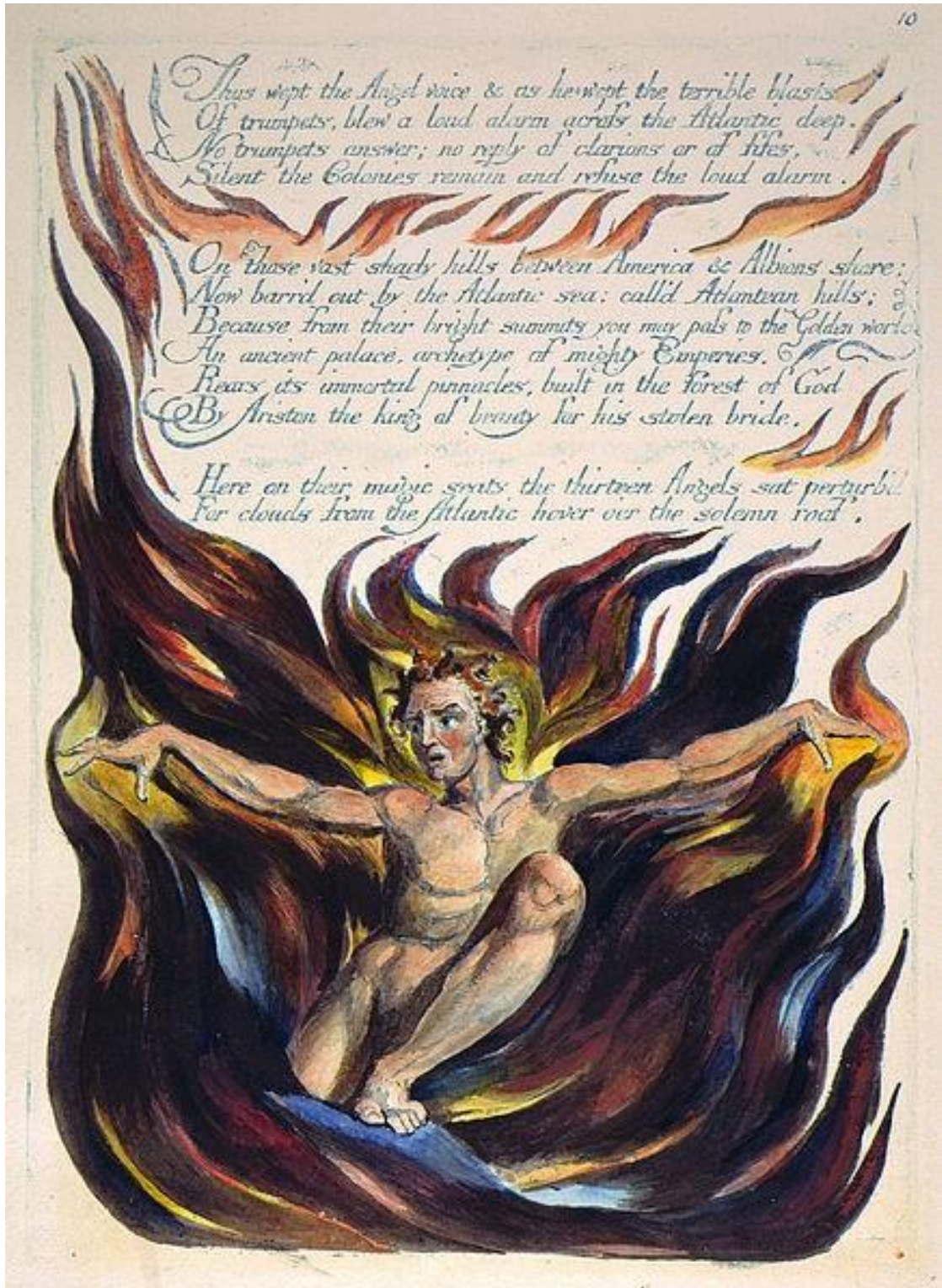


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 39

SCENE 28

YOUNG WILLIAM is asleep in bed.

VOICE

Sleep on, dear William, and dream.

[*pause*]

You promised me the moon, my dear Boy.

The moon.

On the moon is a certain island so much like England you would think you were here when you were there.

And on the island in the moon were three philosophers.
Men who tell what life is about by sitting and thinking things through to the end.
The bitter end, for some, without stretching their legs until it's all over.
Consuming, perhaps, their fair share of port, and porter, and rum brought them along the way.

Suction.

Quid.

And Sipsop.

And they talked about things interminably.

One talked about birds.

A vast number of swallows, perched upon an old Gothic church
When a street child asked, "Pray, Sir, who do they all belong to?"

Another, unexpectedly, proceeded to empty his pockets

All of them

A vast amount of paper, and few coins.

The third closed his eyes.

"I understand better when my eyes are shut," he said.

"All in all, items separated are part of the whole, don't you see?"

The same as bodies are part of the soul.

It's empirical, if not mathematical. Don't you agree?"

"Then why the question," asked the first.

"Any fool can ask a question. Only a wise man can answer," answered the second.

"And which am I?" asked the third, "A wise man or a fool?"

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 40 (stage right).**

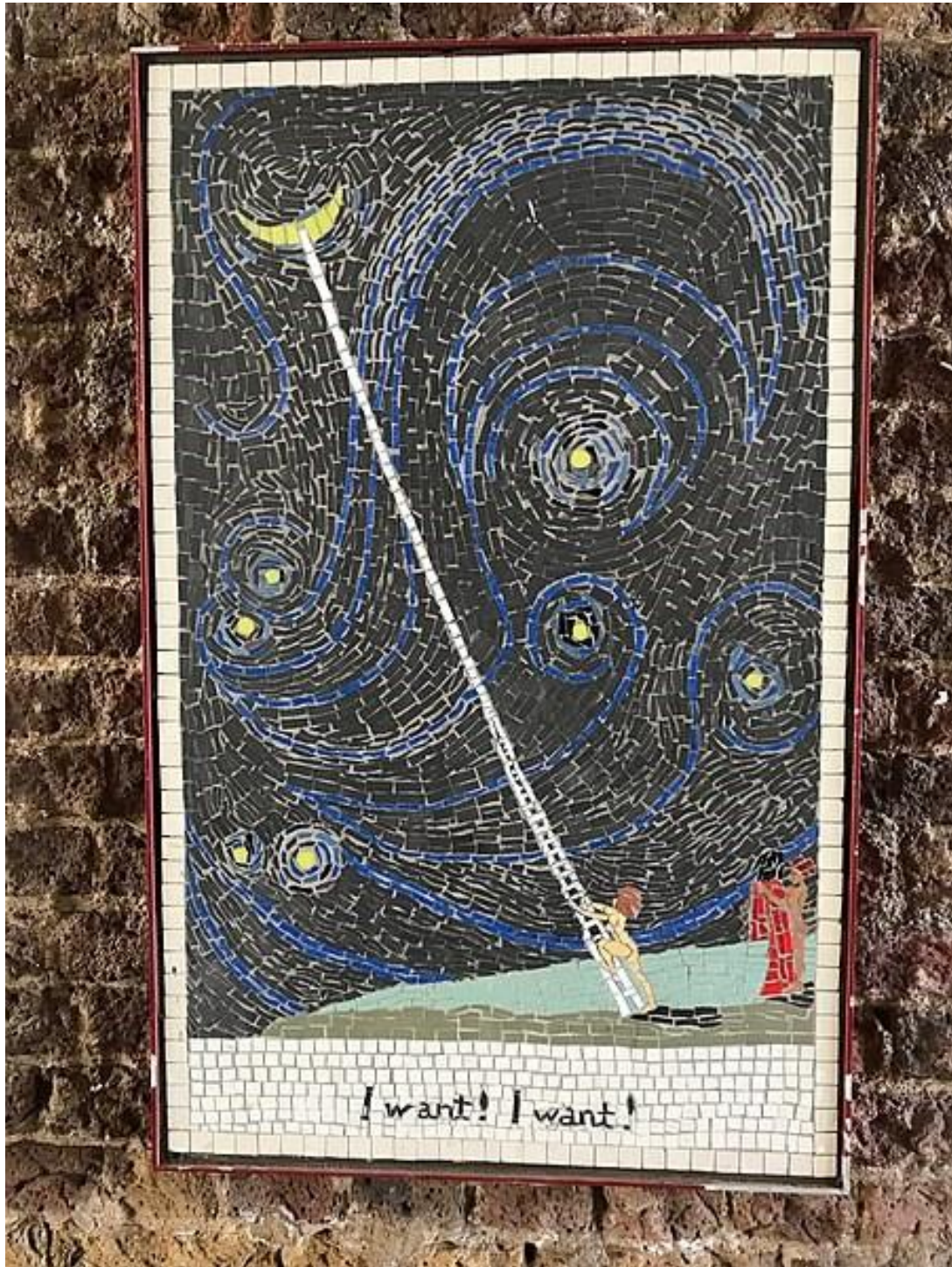


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Replica No. 40

SCENE 29

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven alongside a performance-sized Replica No. 41, lit by spotlight.

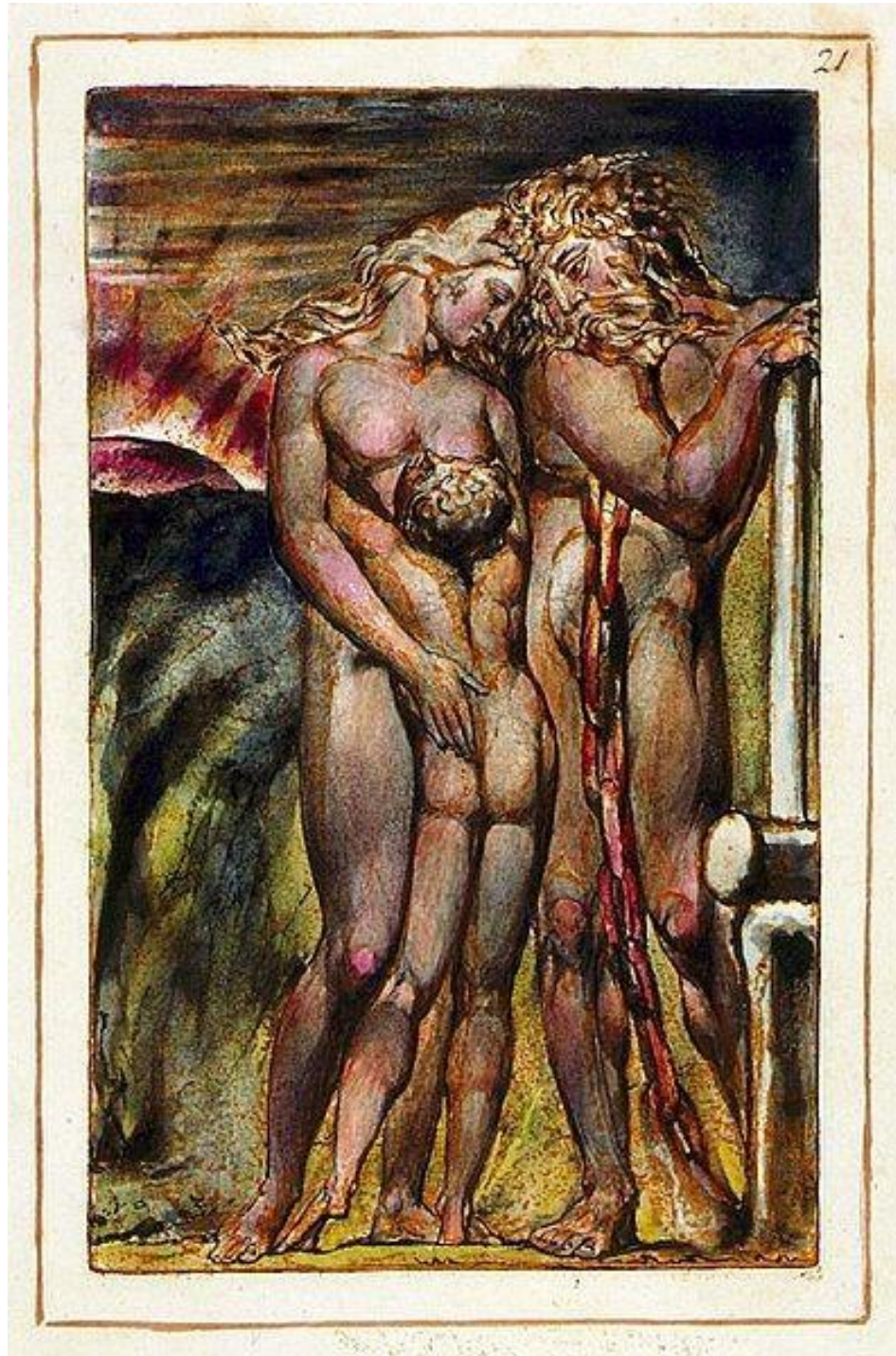


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 41

ANGEL

What is perfect is imperfect.
And what is imperfect is the grist for living.

[*pointing*] Your Orc.
You think you know him.
Let me tell you:

Los
You've known him as the Eternal Prophet.
Los is the one standing here, holding a red-stained chain meant for his son Orc.
That Los,
before his son and his son's mother were more than ink blots on imagination,
That Los wept. His bosom quaked with sighs.
And in his anguish, Los trembled, bled, and split,
Leaving a bloodied glob upon the ground.
Which, in Immortal eyes, within the abyss of endless space,
Began itself to tremble, branching out among the roots, writhing in the wind,
And in enormous pain, tears, and cries,
Became Los's emanation, Enitharmon,
The first female now separate from her man.
Pale as a cloud of snow.

Los saw her, called her Pity, and embraced her.
She struggled and refused him, then fled from his arms.
But he followed; and Eternity shuddered when he caught her.
For Los begat his likeness on his own divided image.

Inside time unmeasured the being lay within her womb until it grew.
And then, midst sharp pangs, sorrows, and dismal throes,
Enitharmon produced a man child to the light.
Howling, the child, with fierce flames, issued forth from his mother.

Los seized the newborn creature,
Bathed him in the springs of sorrow, and gave back him to his mother.

They named him Orc, and he grew from his mother's milk.
Until they took him to the top of a mountain, to chain him there.
To a rock.

Enitharmon wept, and the world heard the child's voice,
And rebellion began to awake.
Awareness as well, from Orc's words:
That nets of religion are woven from their own hypocrisy....
That is your Orc. A blasphemer.

SCENE 30

WILLIAM BLAKE is finishing up a piece at the table in the **stage left** room. A darkness, spot on performance-sized Replica No. 42, and ROBERT BLAKE is suddenly sitting at the table with his brother.

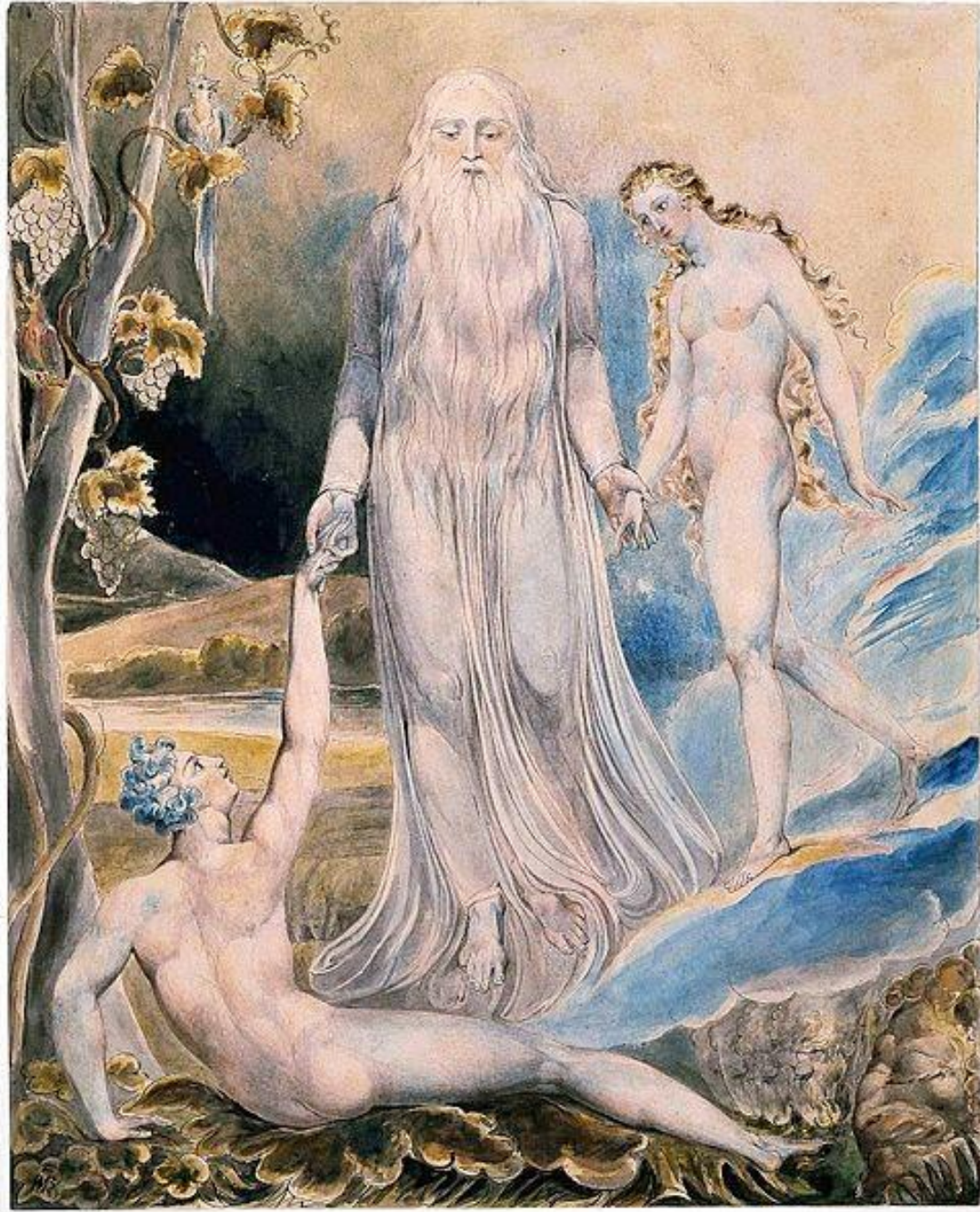


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 42

Light returns.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Sex and liberty are life's finest jewels.
For all, and not a part of us.
I've shown it here.
The freedom of Adam and Eve, as meant to be. Unblemished.
Introduced in their innocence by an angel.
Body, heart, mind, and God's hand of inspiration intact within.

I think of Kate and myself that way.
Does that sound so strange to you? That we were created in our love?
Married to our bed in memories of the first time?
Created there: The Adam and Eve Kate and I are?
I don't find it strange; and I am eternally thankful she was the rose life kept
flawless for me.

As I perceive it, there are four gates for sex and liberty to enter.
One is through the naked senses and organs of desire.
A second, through the human heart. Love leaves a choking longing tender aching.
Words flow to mind in what language? Je t'aime. Te amo. I love you.
Third, through the canals of human thought.
And more powerfully, and most profoundly,
through the blinding light of inspiration.

Life started with Kate and me when we found ourselves.
And no voice of Tharmas could speak with greater clarity than that.
The bonding we experienced reverberated like a chorus of Handel's angels.

Yet, potent as that was, more so was the unfathomed love we held in our hearts.
To love that way before consummation is a gift that descends itself into man.
It's that I care more for her than for my feelings for her.

But beyond those is discovering love and sex blooming within the magic of the
human imagination. Within the creation of art. Mutually. Kate and me.
A gift that rises from down within, like the hand of God,
and reaches up, out to the stars. Out to bands of angels.

ROBERT BLAKE

It's wonderful to see you, too.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Robert, there's no place on Earth more sacred, or more poignant.
The freedom she brings me. The companionship and love. The inspiration.

ROBERT BLAKE

It's Heaven's vast freedom, indeed.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yet, we could live in half the space, were it not for the regrets.

ROBERT BLAKE

What regrets?

WILLIAM BLAKE

That I believed so deeply in revolution I lost sight of the fact that armed rebellion simply leads to the creation of new laws, and new lies, and new shackles on freedom. I despise all institutions of arbitrary power.

Which is exactly what happened in France.

A new dominant class emerging, with greed and ignorance in their guts.

Not what I believe in at all, for Christ's revolution is not bloody rebellion.

ROBERT BLAKE

You fought with your words and your art for something you didn't believe in?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I know of no Book or faith other than the liberty of body, mind, and soul to seek and experience the divine art of imagination.

ROBERT BLAKE

That simple?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Yes, that simple.

Except, getting there.

And blood revolution was the mistaken path I once believed in.

ROBERT BLAKE

A common mistake.

WILLIAM BLAKE

And another.

ROBERT BLAKE

Another regret?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I so championed freedom of sex for women, and admired Mary Wollstonecraft, that I allowed myself to gloss over the grossest of human evils:

Child molestation, that many pay a lifetime and don't recover.

ROBERT BLAKE

How do you mean, you glossed over it?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I didn't write of it with the fervor of the injustice I saw and heard out along London's streets: children sweeping chimneys, Satanic mills, poverty and oppression. For all I did, I swept it under the rug, knowingly.

Why?

Why did I allow it to remain untouched?

ROBERT BLAKE

What were you supposed to do?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Speak out! Get naked with it!
Against the acts of molestation, rage is surgery
All the ornaments of innocence
All the innocent dreams of being in love
Are crushed like birds' wings in a giant's hand.

And how does it heal when trust betrays its name in a rapist's shame!
If I could stitch the terrible, raw emptiness, my hand
Would reach to humble heavens high and thread and God command.

Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair.

Like that.

Or how a loathsome canker can live in the sweetest rose.

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

ROBERT BLAKE

If we could see perfectly into the future, what mistakes couldn't we avoid?

WILLIAM BLAKE

I made others, too....

When I was young I once pushed a boy who was tormenting me off the scaffold I was standing and drawing on. I think he might have hurt himself, somewhat. And once I was involved in a physical altercation with a soldier who was loitering in our garden without permission. I ordered him to leave, which he refused to do. And in the argument he goaded me about being a King's man, to which I retorted, "Damn the King." Which, of course, I didn't really mean to do.

ROBERT BLAKE

No one is perfect, Brother.

WILLIAM BLAKE

One can aspire to be.

ROBERT BLAKE

And why?

WILLIAM BLAKE

To bring Heaven on Earth.

ROBERT BLAKE

But Heaven isn't perfect. God forbid!
Who would want perfection, when the joy of it is in the contrast? You're speaking of no more than dull and deadly sleep when you talk of perfection. Because without conflict, without imperfection, without contraries is no progress. And why would anyone want to be stuck in such a place forever with no progress? No, my Brother. If there's such a place, it's no better than a shadow of moony hills where souls will wither into boredom from its sheer, unbending beauty.

WILLIAM BLAKE

But on Judgment Day?

ROBERT BLAKE

Perfection is not coming on Judgment day.
Freedom is.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I can't imagine.

ROBERT BLAKE

Imagine this then: A place with no need for imagination.
No need for inspiration. And why?
Because everything is known. And nothing remains to discover or exist for.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Does not God seek perfection?

ROBERT BLAKE

No! God's not insane!
God is the poetic genius of man. You know that.
God wants ideal *imperfection*, not perfection.
The process is in the eternal, not its completion.
Imperfection is meant to be infinite.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I'm not sure what's the meaning of my life's work then.

Lights fade for Robert's reply, with a glowing, milky spot on him.

ROBERT BLAKE

Without breaking the suspense, or ruining the ending, let me tell you:
You are one of Albion's, England's, greatest revolutionary artists.
Having one of the most inventive minds of all time.
Even the parables don't hold a candle to your poetry, that never ceases to insist that we not, ever, forget the sufferings of others,
You are the monumental barrier to both ritualized prayer and Newton's doctrine of mathematical certainty to the universe.
You exemplify the meaning in "Everything that lives is holy."
You stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Dante and Milton.
You are the primal author of the concept that the eternal body of man is the imagination of God: That we are God internal.
That Jesus is the self and voice within, which connects us to the God within.
That Jerusalem, the allegorical figure of Liberty, is all: a city attacked, a woman led astray and into captivity by Babylon, and a bride redeemed into eternity.
That every man may converse with God and be a King and priest in his own home.
I never have ceased to be proud of you, and of the fact we are brothers.

Lights return to normal.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*beat*] You'd think ... wouldn't you?... That someone like me
Fairly high acclaim, Brother, for a soul with so few friends.

ROBERT BLAKE

You *are* peculiar ... when it comes to friends.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Is it my thinking?
Is it what I say?... Like:

Opposition is true friendship.
Half friendship is no friendship at all, but the bitterest enemy.

It is easier to forgive an enemy than a friend.

Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache:
Do be my enemy for friendship's sake.

Or:

God, protect me from my friends.

Things like that?

ROBERT BLAKE

Eccentric, I would say. Not in a mean way.
And many a man has mistakenly thought you to be crazed.
Flown to a mad house on the wings of your insane genius and your visions.
Recollection of having a conversation with Jesus.
But for those who scratch beneath the care-worn surface,
you are full of beautiful imaginations and ingenuity.
Marvelously strange visions in your brain.
One of the most extraordinary persons of the age.
You strike some as adamant; others as animated and radiant. Eyes uncommonly
bright. An expression of fiery energy. Lips tremulous with excitement.
And to those, my dearest Brother, who have ears to hear,
you speak the perfect simplicity of your mind, sincerely, unfettered by worldly
matters. You are a mystic. A mystic, *emphatically*.
An artist, a genius, a mystic, and a madman arrayed with an expression of great
sweetness. And thought of by more people than you can imagine with great
affection and respect.
You are indeed peculiar, when it comes to friends, but lest you forget,
you have one of the most stalwart friends of all time: John Linnell.
An artist who truly understands and admires your work. Loves it, in fact.
Who's introduced you to a whole circle of dedicated followers, artists and
collectors. Correct?
The friend who has kept body and soul together for you and Kate for nine years.
And, my dear Brother, as I see it, a man who will help in caring for your Kate,
for the rest of her life after you join me in the after.

WILLIAM BLAKE

This poor, old man, who talks to angels and finds the world as beautiful as Heaven. To have a wife like Kate, a brother like you, and a friend like John.

ROBERT BLAKE

And to know the clearest truth of life: that divine humanity is everywhere, but man can only see it by imagination.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Divine humanity, everywhere, if man can but cleanse the doors of his perception.

ROBERT BLAKE

Yet, you are ill, my Brother.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[*pause*] There once was a healing pool in Jerusalem.
Eyetooth, it was called.
But strangers could not find it.
Hidden as it is....
You talk, and I'll listen.

ROBERT BLAKE

There once was a troubled girl I knew.
Alma, she was called.
But you, and none of you, could ever see her.
I was her only friend. Secretly.
Hidden, as she was, by her father.

WILLIAM BLAKE

And the pool was water, wine, and air,
and healed the first person who submerged in it when it stirred.

ROBERT BLAKE

Being there is like flying on water.

WILLIAM BLAKE

She heals by listening.
And joining souls who listen and feel.

ROBERT BLAKE

For the soul survives what God can survive.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The soul is God.

ROBERT BLAKE

And souls can heal. Ourselves, and others.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Souls float above. Apart. When they are not surrounding us.

ROBERT BLAKE

And see. And hear. And feel. And listen.
Souls can heal what bodies, minds, and memories cannot.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The soul is all of us.

ROBERT BLAKE

Alma was molested and raped by her father.
I was the only person she ever told.

WILLIAM BLAKE

You talk, and I'll listen.

ROBERT BLAKE

She told me you have a helpless feeling, like constantly drowning in water.
You want to escape.
To forget. To detach your mind.
To forget everything that ever happens.
Dissociate from reality.

WILLIAM BLAKE

You should have told me.

ROBERT BLAKE

But I promised not to.
I listened.
And I believed her.
And I kept quiet.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Did she forgive him?
Not all survivors can.

ROBERT BLAKE

Forgiving erases nothing. Releasing is the only hope for healing the present....
She killed herself. And part of me died with her when she did.
People thought she threw herself into the Thames because her father refused to let her marry. People thought that was the reason. But I knew different.

WILLIAM BLAKE

[beat] I have heard that an angel called John landed in the Temple square in Jerusalem. And the fountain of healing water has sprung up again from where his foot touched the ground. But men can only see it stirring by imagination.

ROBERT BLAKE

I shall take you there.

WILLIAM BLAKE

What illness I have may be the end of this body, but I will not be gone. I will continue to struggle on with the living. I am not going away. And in the end, we all will be citizens, fabulous creatures, each and every one, mixing with a creature we call Earth, and taking care of her needs.

God be with you, my dearest, dearest Brother, until we meet again.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 43 (stage left).**

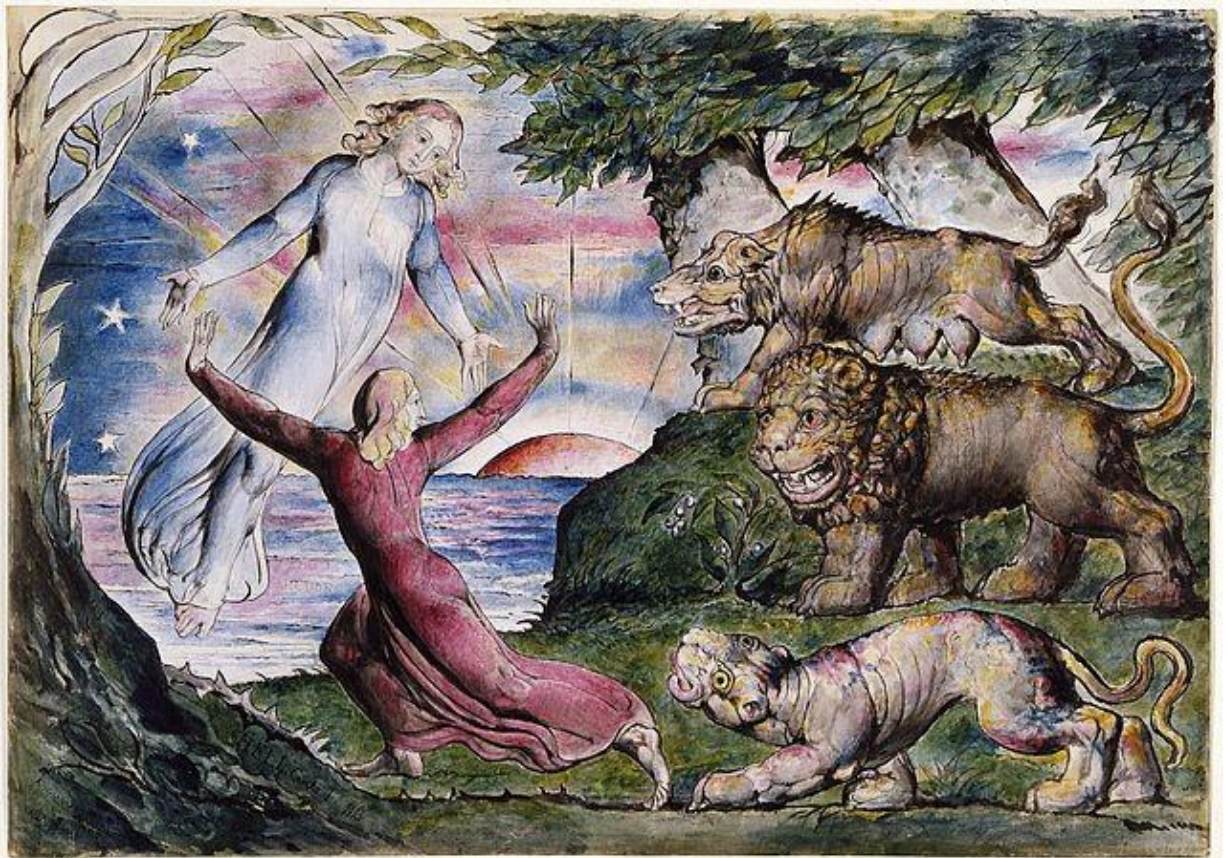


Image from [Wikimedia](#)

Replica No. 43

SCENE 31

YOUNG WILLIAM is asleep in bed.

VOICE

Love seeketh not itself to please, nor for itself hath any care;
But for another gives its ease, and builds a Heaven in Hell's despair.

So sang a little Clod of Clay, trodden with the cattle's feet:

But a pebble of the brook, warbled out these metres meet.

Love seeketh only Self to please, to bind another to its delight:

Joys in another's loss of ease, and builds a Hell in Heaven's despite.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 44 (stage right).**

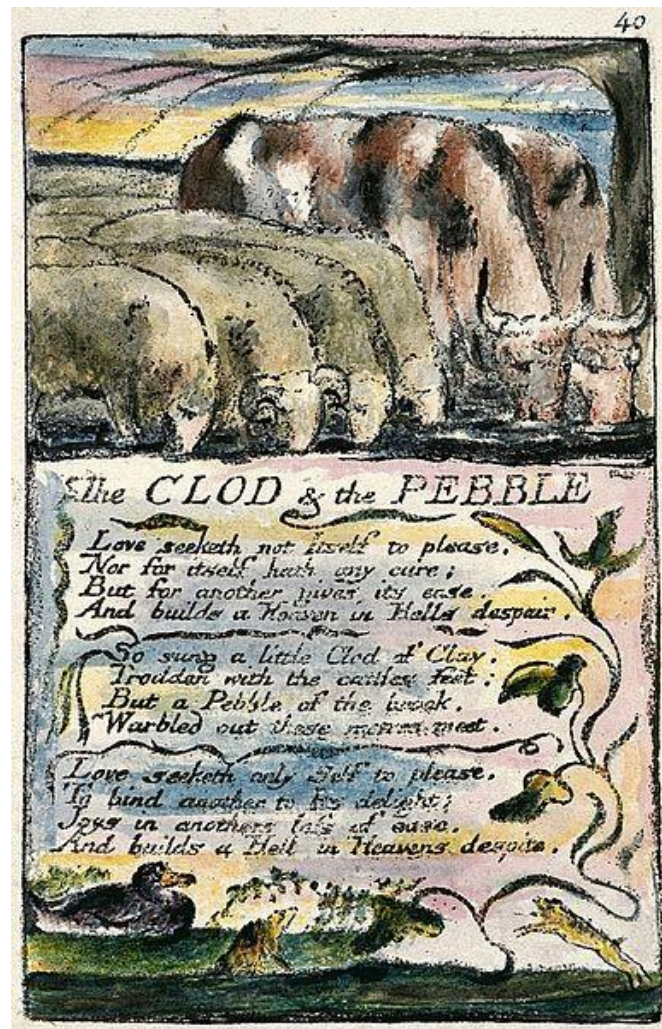


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Replica No. 44

SCENE 32

An ANGEL, standing in Heaven.

ANGEL

You ... Master William Blake, have the power to free men's souls with your words, works, and visions.

If there is a touchstone for your gravestone, let it be:
William Blake never forsook his authenticity.

They may love us here in Heaven, Will.

But understand us?

No one can understand an angel who does not understand William Blake.
Just as no one can understand death who does not understand dreaming.

Tomorrow I travel to Bethesda pool to bathe my foot in it and stir the waters.
You call it Eyetooth.

I might even take an afternoon nap there.

And maybe think of you....

Bye now.

You are a fabulous creature, Will Blake.

And I bless you.

The Great Work Begins.

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love, all pray in their distress:
And to these virtues of delight, return their thankfulness.
For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love, is God, our father dear:
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love, is Man his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart
Pity, a human face:
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell, there God will dwell as well.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 45 (center stage).**

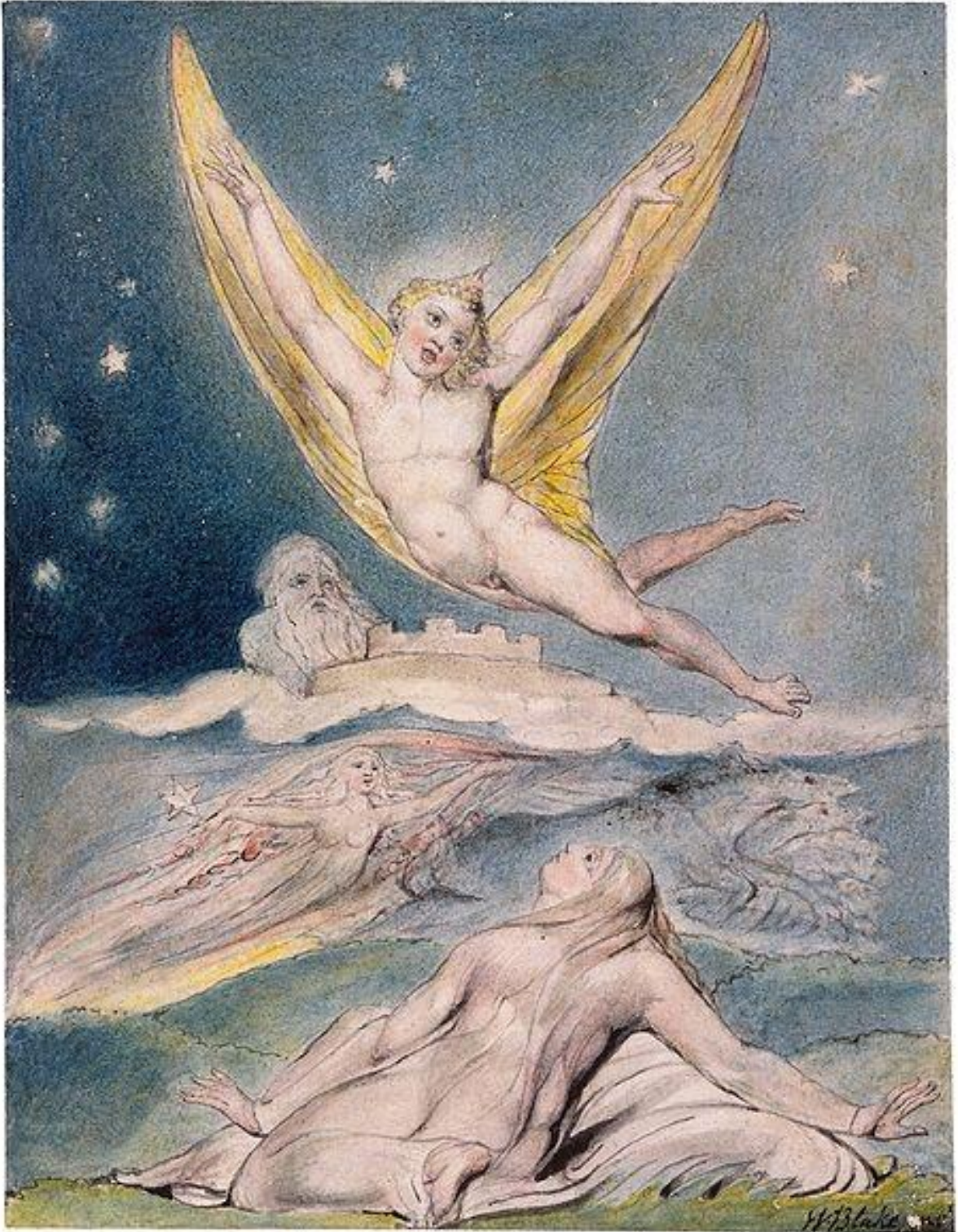


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Replica No. 45

SCENE 33

WILLIAM BLAKE is propped up in bed, **stage left**, working feverishly on a piece for his Dante series. CATHERINE BLAKE is sitting at his bedside, in quiet tears. On the opposite side sits ROBERT BLAKE, silently – neither WILLIAM nor CATHERINE show any awareness of Robert's presence.

WILLIAM puts his work down.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Finished.

He looks at her.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Stay, Kate!
Keep just as you are!
I will draw your portrait.
For you have ever been an angel to me.

He picks up his pad and draws.

CATHERINE BLAKE

I love you, Will, so much I feel my heart breaking.

WILLIAM BLAKE

There is grief in Heaven, too, my Love, with all the joy.
It will pass.
But calm your tears.
I'm not leaving you.
I'll always be, just in the next room.
As Robert is, whenever I need him.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Are you suffering, much?

WILLIAM BLAKE

No. Not much.
Shivering fits, now and again, inside.
And a gnawing pain, in the stomach.
Nothing new, just closer.

He continues drawing, then, laying his tools down, he shows his sketch to CATHERINE.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Look, Kate!
I've captured you capturing the moon.
I've captured the moon at last.

CATHERINE BLAKE

[*beat*] I worry the copper fumes all these years may have damaged your organs.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Be it so, or not, which of my plates we printed side by side would we give up?
It's merely a brief moment early, for me to arrive in the beautiful mansion God
holds for us.
To ready it.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Nonetheless, I fear I'll miss you more than I can bear.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Think of grief as a weary traveler, and rejoice!
All that we have seen and felt and heard and made together will follow you,
like daylight and lovely clouds, the rest of your life.
Your own, personal sun and moon.
Every morning, noon, and night,
to fill your life with joy until we're together again, in eternity.
As I have always known we shall be.
Exactly as you are now.

CATHERINE BLAKE

You really believe that, don't you?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Of course I do.
Now's not the time to lie about such things

CATHERINE BLAKE

So ... grief?
A weary traveler, you say?

WILLIAM BLAKE

The old peddler, walking down the road, through the dust,
selling what life felt like before.

CATHERINE BLAKE

Walking alone.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Kate, my life's companion, do you think you will be walking alone?
After all we've been through, and all you've done for me?
I could never have accomplished my life without you.
No. Not at all!
I shall ever be at your side.

**Blake's eyes suddenly brighten, and he
bursts into song.**

A dog in the distance howls.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Hear that?
Even dogs sing to Heaven today.

Pause.

I'm beginning now, Kate, to float upward.
Like a cloth balloon, over the walls.
We will meet again in the eternal sunrise,
filled with the buoyancy of revelation.
You, holding my heart.
Jesus, holding us both.
Not a Jesus becoming God, but God becoming Jesus.

Those who walk in darkness see God as light.
Those who walk in the light see God as fellow man.

**Lights dim – with a spot on WILLIAM,
now lying down.**

ANGELS enter to roll his bed offstage.

**Spot revealing performance-sized
Replica No. 46 (stage left).**

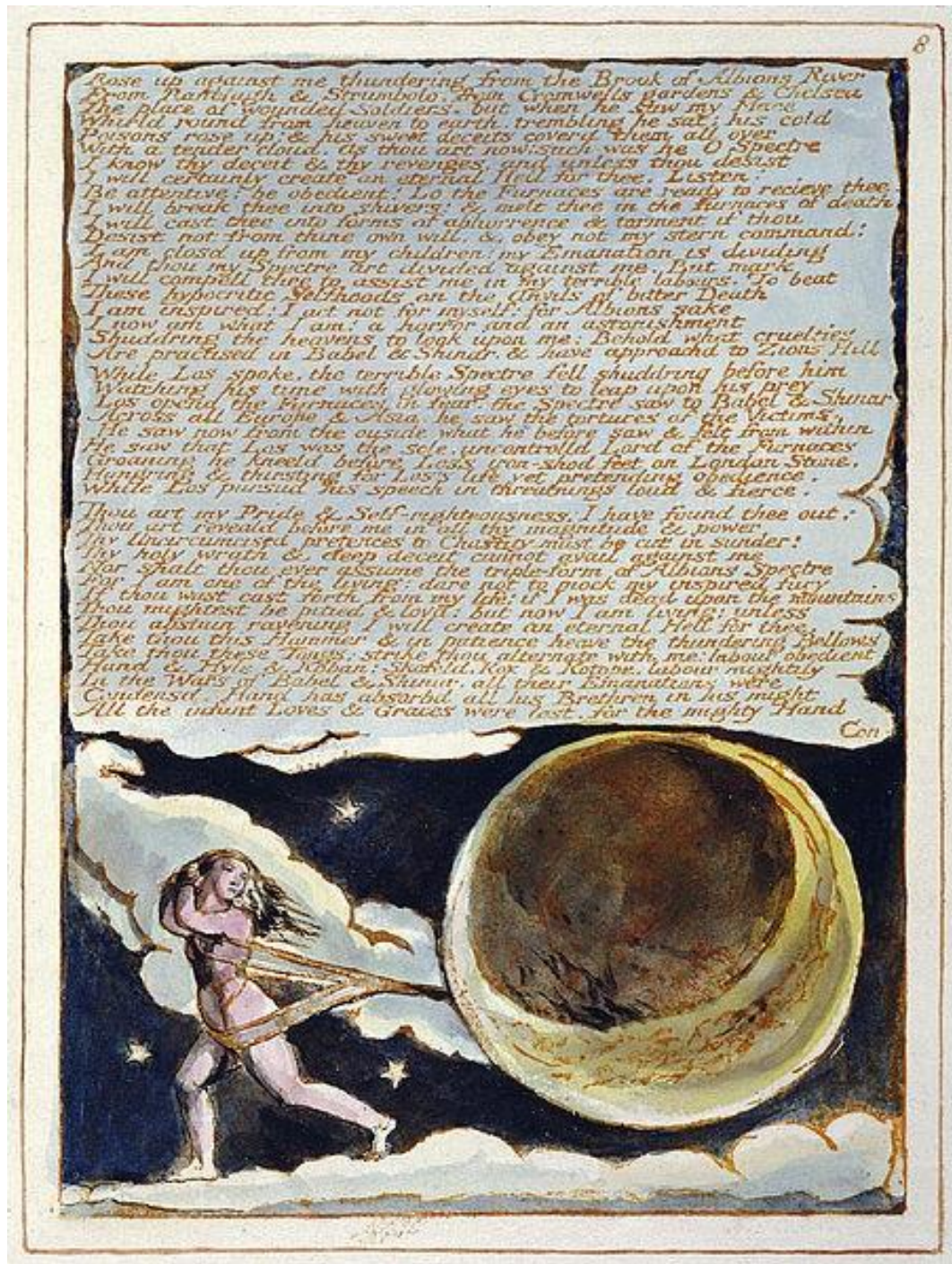


Image from [Wikimedia](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blake_Songs_of_Innocence_and_of_Experience_Plate_10_The_Spectre_of_the_Self.jpg)

Replica No. 46

END



Image from [Wikimedia](#)