

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

N E W S

The Limit of Opakeness

Michael Ferber

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NEWSLETTER

BLAKE SOCIETY NEWS

The Blake Society's autumn program includes the following events:

23 October

Female Reason in Blake

A lecture by Steve Clark, British Academy Research Fellow at Queen Mary and Westfield College

28 November

Ninth William Blake Congregation

Readings on the Steps of Blake House

12 December

Blake Society's annual general meeting

In association with the Interfaith and Creation Centered Spirituality Projects at St. James's Church, the Blake Society is presenting a series on art, covering psychological, religious, and political approaches entitled "The Art of God Incarnate," Tuesdays, 30 October - 11 December at 6:30 pm in the Church Hall, St. James's Church.

THE LIMIT OF OPAKENESS

Blake announces a regular feature to be called "The Limit of Opakeness." It will consist of one or more brief articles that attempt to solve a Blakean crux.

With each issue we shall propose one or two difficult short passages and invite essays of no more than 750 words on one of them. What is a crux for one person, of course, may seem easy to another, and some of our passages will strike some readers as poor choices. For that reason we will welcome suggestions. We may even print a consensus list of opaque passages.

Many of us Blake scholars remember first reading some of the magisterial critics and wondering how they came to know everything so confidently (and why they passed over in silence just those passages that were bothering us); they were as intimidating as they were inspiring. Some of us

still hate to admit we can't figure certain passages out. "The Limit of Opakeness" will encourage candor and collaboration, and it ought to be rewarding to diminish Satan's domain bit by bit, issue by issue.

We welcome any and all approaches and will judge them all by the same rough standard: do they seem to clear up the difficulty to any appreciable extent? We recognize that some schools of criticism might find this a retrograde enterprise, and offer to deconstruct the opposition between crux and "easy" passage. Let them do so, and if in the process they actually throw light on what we call a crux, we'll publish their essays, too. We ask only that the writing be clear and succinct: there is no Limit of Translucence.

This feature will run on a trial basis, and will last as long as good articles are submitted. We might set design cruxes as well (and welcome suggestions for them), but at first we will confine ourselves to the words.

For the first round, we invite essays on either of two passages from the

"Bard's Song" of *Milton*: 5:39-41 (on Charles, Milton, Cromwell, and James) and 8:11-12 (Los puts his left sandal on his head).

Please send essays to Michael Ferber, Department of English, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824, USA. He will give them a first reading and then confer with the editors over which of them will be published.

Michael Ferber

CORRECTION

Readers may have noticed that the last issue (summer, volume 24, #1) was a bibliographer's nightmare; that is, instead of starting the pagination at zero with the new volume number, we continued it from the last issue of volume 23. In fact, we blundered. Essick's "Blake in the Marketplace" should have started on page 4, "Blake's Tiger" by Pedley on page 22, "A Caricature Source" by Wood on page 31, and so on. See below for correct pagination. The managing editor will be wearing sackcloth and ashes till further notice.

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