The Ladder

Jennifer Grotz

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 43, Issue 2, Fall 2009, p. 79
"I want! I want!" cries the figure climbing up the skinny ladder, such a long climb to be filled with wanting, such a long shadow cast onto the surface of the ground while the ladder sips like a straw from the moon it leads to, here as tiny as a rind of fingernail, suspended in the night William Blake scratched and darkened save for seven fuzzy stars. It looks like punishment: you hook your leg on the third rung and look up, such a long climb for what you lack. It must be said twice to show how saying does not in fact release it.

Perhaps, after climbing, you will reach the reclining crescent and sleep upon it like a hammock before you realize that home is the barren moon below: beautiful, light-reflecting, but missing you. And if wanting is a ladder between two moons, then the stars will hang neglected. Surely Blake made the print no larger than a playing card so that the ladder could lean without tearing a paper sky gently pierced by stars.


WILLIAM BLAKE

Songs of Innocence and of Experience

Meticulously researched by William Blake scholar Michael Phillips, this edition includes 18 facsimile impressions from plates that have been relief etched following Blake's method, inked using a leather dauber, and wiped and printed exactly as he produced the first combined issue of the Songs in 1794.

An illustrated booklet is included detailing the research and printing process. The edition is limited to 33 copies, each presented in a cloth bound box. Orders and information:

FLYING HORSE EDITIONS
University of Central Florida
www.flyinghorse.cah.ucf.edu/blake • 407-823-4995