

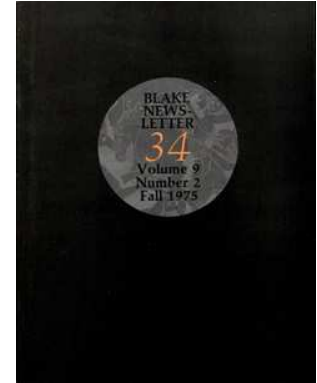
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Nobodaddy: Through the Bottomless Pit, Darkly

L. Edwin Folsom

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"I GRANT that publishers who mind the PURSE
SEE VALue* in the books these scholars write.
I'd rather hear a HAG STRUM on a HARP
ER watch RAINE beating down yon blasted BLOOM
Than, with back BENT, LEYn reading through the
night,
Conning their jargon by the PALEY light.

"ADAM'S a GARDNER who has lost his place
Through sad neGLECK, NER do I find it odd
That when aN URMI of the pedants' race
ROSE up, our father left that sacred sod.

"He could not TAYLER to their sketches Gray
Eden's bright scenes, and so he fled away.
From that day on, the CUR RAN wild, small FRYE
Anatomized each WITT REICH merrily."

The prophetic thunder ceased. Another spoke:
"I tells yer, gov'ner, this, an' no mistake--
That last loud chap ain't none of Billy Blake.
'Aven't yer 'ERD, MAN? 'e's a Cockney bloke!"

* Another MS reads "PERCIVALue"

1 I have edited the fragment heuristically according to the following principles: (1) all substantive features of the text have been transcribed literally; (2) all accidental features have been emended to conform to my notion of what constitutes communicative English.

Nobodaddy: Through the Bottomless Pit, Darkly By L. Edwin Folsom

The names of Blake's poetic characters are, of course, vast in their associations, often incorporating puns, connotations and anagrams based upon key words or Biblical, classical, and historical characters.¹ Nobodaddy, the farting, belching "Father of Jealousy" (E 462) who hides himself in clouds and loves "hanging & drawing & quartering / Every bit as well as war & slaughtering," (E 490) has received general critical agreement as to the significance of his name. "Old daddy Nobody" and "Nobody's daddy"² seem logical expansions of the compact name of this destructive divinity who appears in several of the Notebook poems and who manifests himself elsewhere as Urizen, Winter, the Will, and the Old Testament God.³ But "Nobodaddy," it should be noted, is also a close anagram of the name of a character who appears in two of Blake's favorite Biblical books, Job and Revelation: Abaddon (Hebrew for "destruction"). Anagrammatized, "Abaddon" becomes "Nobadad." He is "the angel of the bottomless pit" who appears in Revelation 9:11 and is mentioned in Job 26:6.⁴

Like Blake's Nobodaddy, who hides himself in clouds and thrives in "darkness & obscurity," (E 462) Abaddon exists, too, in an obscure beclouded place; when an angel of the apocalypse

opens the shaft of Abaddon's realm, there "arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Rev. 9:2).⁵ Abaddon is the king of the locusts that are released during the apocalypse in order to torture but not to kill "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Rev. 9:4). Old Nobodaddy, who is (with his love of "hanging & drawing & quartering . . . war & slaughtering"), like Abaddon, the personification of destruction, reflects nonetheless Abaddon's less than humane decision to torture but not to kill: "To kill the people I am loth," (E 490) swears Nobodaddy solemnly and hypocritically. And in his satiric verse, "When Klopstock England Defied" (E 491), Blake portrays Nobodaddy ordering a miniature apocalypse, with Blake himself commanded by Nobodaddy to inflict torture but not death on the infidel Klopstock. As the smoke rising from Abaddon's bottomless pit accompanies the release of the locusts, Nobodaddy's "Fart[ing] & Belch[ing] & cough[ing]" (l. 4) bring on "a ninefold yell" from "all the devils that were in hell" (ll. 13-14), and the moon "blush[es] scarlet red" (l. 11) in a parody of "the moon [becoming] as blood" (Rev. 6:12) when the sixth seal is opened. No seal is opened in Blake's poem, however; rather, Klopstock's bowels are sealed shut as Blake obeys Nobodaddy and inflicts "nine fold pain" (l. 28) on the hapless German poet who "defied" England by attempting to carry on Milton's legacy in German, reason enough to be fit, like those in Revelation, for torture. Klopstock's plight--not to be relieved until "to the last trumpet it was farted" (l. 20)--can be likened to that of the men tortured by the locusts, who, in their pain, "shall . . . seek death, and shall not find it . . ." (Rev. 9:6). Nobodaddy, however, ultimately withdraws his sadistic, destructive orders and by the end of the poem Blake characteristically begins to pity Klopstock: "From pity then he redend round / And the Spell removed unwound" (ll. 29-30).

Abaddon, then, the embodiment of destruction, sadistic torturer of any man who failed to gain God's favor, cloud-obscured and smoke-hidden angel of the bottomless pit, is an ideal Biblical model for Blake's Nobodaddy, whose name reflects Abaddon's in a scrambled, "dark and obscure" way.

1 See the informative footnotes explaining the origins of many of the names in David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, rev. ed. (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1969), especially the notes on pp. 25, 253.

2 See Erdman, *Prophet*, p. 179.

3 See Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), p. 106, and Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), pp. 62-63.

4 Abaddon also appears as a place of destruction in Psalms 88:11 and in Proverbs 15:11. In the King James Version, Abaddon is translated into "destruction" in the passages in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs, but remains in the Hebrew form "Abaddon" in Revelation. Revelation 9:11 tells us that the "name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." Blake, of course, chooses to work with the Hebrew name.

5 This description of the smoke-filled abyss also parallels several scenes elsewhere in Blake's works; see, for example, "A Memorable Fancy" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* where "we beheld the infinite Abyss, fiery as the smoke of a burning city" (E 40); *Jerusalem* where the Sons of Albion divide and "Arise as the smoke of the furnace" from "a hideous orifice" (E 222); and in *The Four Zoas*, Night the Third, where Urizen's fall takes place amidst "thunders & thick clouds" and moves into the "smoke" of "The nether Abyss" (E 322-23).

Blake's Beulah & Beulah Hill, Surrey

By Eileen Sanzo

Much is written concerning Blake's nature myth of Beulah, but one important fact which has as yet not been pointed out, is that there is an actual Beulah Hill in Surrey--in Blake's day, located in the countryside adjoining London; today, considered part of the city itself. If the mythic Golgonooza is the "spiritual Four-fold London / eternal"¹ and Jerusalem can be identified also with London, it may be that the mythical, naturally beautiful Beulah also has a parallel in Blake's concrete experience of the suburbs and bordering countryside of the city he lived in.

The actual Beulah Hill, Surrey, is just north of Norwood, which Blake refers to frequently as a kind of southern boundary to greater London.² Roche's Map of 1745 of London and its environs transcribes the spot as Bewley's Farms and Bewley's Woods. The English Place-Name Society records that the name for the spot is ancient, taking the form of Bewley in 1493, Beaulieu Hill and Bulay Hill in 1823, and Beulah Spa in 1836. They write: "The forms are late, but it may be that the name is . . . of post-Conquest origin, from OFr *Be(a)u L(i)eu*, beautiful spot."³ The present-day spelling of Beulah Hill, Surrey seems to indicate that although the spellings were different (eighteenth century and early nineteenth century spellings varied in general), the pronunciation of "Beaulieu" or "Bulay" was like that of Blake's "Beulah." The meaning of the names of the actual locality was the same as the connotated meaning of the Biblical Beulah, as developed by Bunyan--a naturally beautiful paradise.

The actual Beulah Hill may have inspired an identification between Blake's Beulah and the country south of London. This may be indicated by Blake's phrase--"Thames and Medway, rivers of Beulah" (J 4.34); the tributaries of the Thames and Medway rivers watered Surrey. That Beulah was country adjoining the city seems indicated by the lines about--

. . . the Sleeping Man
Who, stretch'd on Albion's rocks, reposes
amidst his Twenty-eight
Cities, where Beulah lovely terminates in the
hills and valleys of Albion.
(J 85.24-26)

Norwood may well have been one of Blake's destinations on his walks south of London, and

the sleep of Beulah may have occurred literally (as well as in the many ways already commented upon, imaginatively) when he rested. We know that Blake took long walks both in London and out into the country surrounding it because he tells us so in his poetry. Thus the mythical Beulah, with its allusions to Scripture⁴ and John Bunyan, may have a special basis in fact and a parallel with Blake's personal experience of London and its countryside. If Jerusalem can be imaginatively identified with London, Palestinian Beulah may also have been identified by him with the London countryside of Beulah Hill, Surrey.

1 M 6.1.

2 M 6.5; J 42.51; J 42.80.

3 J. E. B. Gover et al., *The Place Names of Surrey* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1934), pp. 49-50.

4 In Scripture, Beulah means "married." It represents Palestine--"Thy land [shall be called] Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" Isaiah 1xii.4. Cited by S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971), p. 42.

The Influence of Wynne's *Emblems* on Blake

By Judith Wardle

In a footnote on page 9 of the D. V. Erdman and D. K. Moore edition of Blake's *Notebook* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), reference is made to Wynne's *Choice Emblems Natural, Historical, Fabulous, Moral and Divine, For the Improvement and Pastime of Youth* . . . (London: Printed for George Riley, 1772) as a possible influence upon Blake. Some of the details in this note are inaccurate. John Wynne's second name was Huddleston, not Middleton. Emblem 2 is *not* dropped from later editions of the work. It appears in the 2nd edition, 1775 (British Museum). The only later editions I have seen are the 6th, 1788 and 7th, 1792 (Cambridge University Library), and it is also in them. As for other changes between the 1st and 2nd editions: the frontispiece is indeed different. Emblems 12 and 13 are dropped and others substituted, number 47 goes to the end as 53 and 47-52 are new. The only plate which has been re-engraved, as far as I can tell, is Emblem 27, "Of Vain Pursuits." (All have the addition of a bow of ribbon on top, but that is unimportant.) The differences between the 1772 and 1775 plates of Emblem 27 are as follows: the picture has been reversed, the shape of trees and bushes has been changed, the house lacks its chimney, and the area of the boy's shadow has decreased. But none of these seem to me to matter in regard to the question of the emblem's influence upon Emblem 4 of the *Notebook*.

I wish now to consider the question of whether Wynne's emblems did influence Blake's, and if so which edition. I do not think there is any evidence for choosing one edition rather than another, from the 1st to 6th (the 7th being too late). All the