

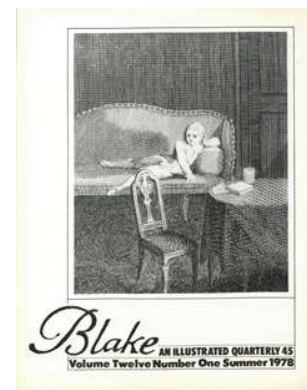
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P O E M

The Last Judgement

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The lines in his brow know
 that the time of the Tiger must come
 before the time of the Lamb,
 that there are words other than those
 that fill the mines with children
 and the colonies with soldiers
 in red coats. The engraver's burin
 cuts lines in the metal. The contours of the world
 are etched in the acid bath, his veins
 in the boards of the walls.

Walls around us. Walls
 within us. Shut in
 we speak to a wall
 we speak to a wall
 within ourselves.

2.

William Blake's wife lifts the clothes-iron
 from the stove, carries it to the table. Heavily
 it slides over the damp shirt
 over warm white cloth. His thoughts
 are so heavy. They have stuck in the clothes
 that are so full of thoughts
 that they will never be really clean again.

She comes to him
 lies down beside him on the bed.
 Their shoes meet under the bed
 in front of the china pot
 with the green garland of flowers. His sex
 presses in between her thighs
 among soft curly hairs, presses
 into the moist cleft
 where the Universe is created, slippery wet walls
 becoming tense and then lax. The Universe pulsates
 with their movements
 from star to star
 from darkness to darkness.

Freedom comes flowing in
 through their nostrils, opens
 doors and shutters, draws the wind
 through the chimney
 kindling the fire. A gust of wind
 goes through the houses, shakes them
 so that the pans fall down
 from their racks.

Only their heavy breathing
 separates them from the darkness
 until it too begins to breathe violently
 dies and is born again, is filled with light
 growing up around them. Another house
 where the sky comes flowing blue through the windows
 where the clouds glide through the rooms, the floor
 greens and is covered with flowers
 when his semen falls on it.

Quivers and creaking
 from the bed, soft liquid
 running between their thighs. For a second
 it was they who made the Universe grow,
 who made men rise and continue their journey,
 roots of trees
 press deeper into the earth
 for water.

3.

The same grey-headed God
 his muscular body covered with silvery down.
 The same white Goddess
 made pregnant by a flow of stars.
 The same rain
 between the furrows. The oxdriver's cry
 forces the plough through the soil
 with the power of brown muscles.

The same sun
 chained among the boughs of the trees.
 The same face
 nailed to the trunk of a tree. The same blood
 on the wet clay
 making everything move forward
 making the new Albion rise
 from the sea of Time.

4.

With the shutters wide open
 their house is filled with light.
 Their brains are burning
 like overheated lamps, burning
 the air in the room, lighting up
 the whole city. Giant cats
 come out of the alleys
 showing the tattered men
 the way home.

It is the beginning of the time of the Tiger.
 The cries
 of the masses flow in through the windows.

When the walls are falling within you
 the walls of the Bastille will fall. When
 the walls fall within us
 we become a single living force
 that rifle bullets cannot harm
 not a river but a sea
 like time, not a river
 but a sea.

Tomorrow or a thousand years from now
 we will open the roof hatch
 and arise
 our faces turned toward the sun, arise
 from our houses
 as from murky wooden coffins. Tomorrow
 or a thousand years from now
 we will live the lives
 we were meant to live. William Blake
 blows out the candle. Tomorrow
 we will color the pictures,
 he says.

Gunnar Harding

Translated from the Swedish by Gunnel Tottie

THE LAST JUDGEMENT

1.

Sometimes
 fishermen haul in their nets,
 or an ox tongue curls
 to lick a word from its eye, or from the earth
 a diaphanous rain

takes flight, *Be there*
 someone says,
 so the stars reappear
 like hands full of milk, glowing
 like barley
 thrown on a fire,
 like lenticular breasts
 gnawing holes
 in the sky, through which the summoned dead
 slowly walk.

2.

And a book falls open.
 Fishermen
 sort the load from their nets:
 stars
 in one basket, the filetable
 silver disks in another,
 and in a third
 light wrung from the moon's
 scars, which at night
 soothe themselves in darkness.

3.

Christ
 is seated on the bronze throne,
 and behind Him
 the meaning of bread and water,
 wine
 with the waterbrash odor
 of blood, the night unravelling like a scroll.

And the benches
 are lined with the bearded elders,
 each alike
 having lived through death,
 having the same opsacronic gaze
 of linemen
 who, for injury, upholster the bench.
 The sun is up.
 But a ghost moon rises
 from Christ's head, where angels arch their wings
 in a P. And there are infants
 and virgins
 who are the nipple's hope, and lovers who
 when they kiss
 become clouds touching, they are
 I think

in some sense
 castaways, always pity
 in the luciferin air of fire,
 and in the pity
 a trumpeteer angel
 with lungs, and in the lungs
 a psalm
 that mingles faith
 with blood, that rises and blossoms
 with fire.

4.

A garden:
 doves peck an apple which is a fist
 of wine, the branch
 and Man's hematoma.

Eli! Eli!
 screams Araunah,
 the Jebusite, but a flint
 leaps out

against the tongue
 of Man, and an angel
 with a sword
 saws fingers from their hands,
 chords
 from their silent and bleeding
 harps, gouramis
 from their tropical waters.
 And somewhere
 a red sea ebbs in a crater, stumps
 tumble down
 through the smiling dusk,

then *Eli, Eli*,
 this time rising
 in a bubble
 of blood, an apple, a plum,
 a flame
 that in a church
 drifts from its candle,
 floats
 like a scarlet moth
 toward the light, then
 bursts, an erythematous ounce
 of hope, against a brittle and stained-
 glass window.

5.

At last
 the melanotic once
 upon a time,
 the day
 loping happily off
 like a lamb, the fish-souls soaked
 and sorted in their baskets:
 black bass in
 one, salmon and blowfish on the cooling
 moon,
 which the earth full of sperm
 comes to kiss.

And even though
 the blind have visions of breasts,
 and even though the mute
 find loaves of bread in their mouths,
 and even if
 we cover our eyes completely,
 and seal
 the vintage blood of the heart
 with wax, there would
 still be

a virgin
 in a pitch pool
 digging, burying a key untinted
 by blood, and there would still be the book
 of Shem & Noah & Japhet,
 and Christ
 in disgust filling the book
 with worms, and with disphasia
 and a tear engraved with *I am*, even though there's
 no one
 who isn't.

--from *The First Book of Og, King of Bashan*, poems
 written after Blake's illustrations for Blair's
Grave.

Frank Graziano