

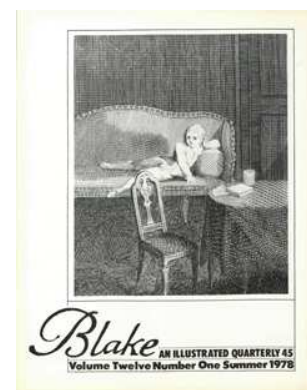
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

P O E M

Two Poems

Gunnar Harding

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POETRY

TRICKSTER'S SONG

After reading E. B. Murray's "*Jerusalem Reversed*" in *Blake Studies* vol. 7 no. 1, I opened my copy of Blake--conscious of imitating Blake's use of Bysshe--and began reading "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" as "in a mirror, darkly." The result is not the finest poetry, but note the energy of Blake's words is not destroyed and in some cases is enhanced with new meaning: "Her perplex roots tangled / there!" This is not meant as an example of extending Murray's criticism or of promoting a Cabbalistic dabbling in Blake's good book--just one poet's playful response to England's greatest.

Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate. . .
Paul, I Corinthians 13:12

Hither comes delight of youth,
morn opening to see. And
born new truth of Image.

Reason of clouds!
And fled is doubt
teasing artful, and dispute's dark
maze. Endless is folly's
way. Her perplex roots tangled

there! Fallen have many how
dead, the bones over night.
All stumble. They
care but what not know they feel. And
be led, should they? When others lead. Wish.
And

Joe Napora

MR BLAKE'S SPECTACLES

At the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Through Mr Blake's spectacles
the ranked Swedenborgian angels
ruffle their wings, as if in an aviary.

Flamingoes shower over Lambeth,
and the horses that draw the constellations
may be seen sparking,
for the tiles of the roof are translucent.

Through Mr Blake's spectacles
intersecting vortices
cannonade
over a strewn sea.
On the orlop deck
the suture moans for its lost friend.

Yet the bridges of London are held up by tawny
young giants the colour of Bath stone,
and the sky balloons like a tent over Primrose Hill.

The poet's work is done; follow him home
into a room contoured like an engraving
where Mr Blake's spectacles
are oriel windows looking over
the architectonics of Jerusalem.

Morton D. Paley

TWO POEMS

I.

SONG OF INNOCENCE

Deeper into September
the rose-hips are little spots of hares' blood.
In the perpetual cardgame
between the rowan and the bramble
the ace of spades has come up
in the shape of a rook
with folded wings.

Deep in there
in the wet grass
he was born, in 1757,
was born directly from the wet grass.
They threw him in the river.
He rode on the waves.
They threw him in the fire.
He rose from it
with eyes of fire.

He is William Blake
with a blue hat and pink cheeks.
Alive, he wandered
on the grass of death.
Dead, he wanders
in a humming cloud of bees
over Hampstead Heath.

II.

AN EVENING AT HOME WITH WILLIAM BLAKE

Even as a child he drew people
the way they look, as houses
with long legs
beginning under the chin. They
grew out of the ground
like grandfather clocks from the floor
like tables and chairs from the parquet. Houses
are built from within, built
from below, by hands
reaching up from the soil. They grow
out of dark basements.

And this house around you
is hell, and this house around you
is the law, is the power over you. In there
they buy you and sell you.

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