

*William Walling*

## THE DEATH OF GOD: WILLIAM BLAKE'S VERSION

A LITTLE OVER a hundred and forty years ago, on December 17, 1825, a London lawyer named Henry Crabb Robinson paid a call on an obscure engraver who, despite a lifetime of unremitting toil, was living, in his sixty-eighth year, in abject poverty. "I found him", Robinson tells us, "in a small room which seems to be both a working-room and a bed-room. Nothing could exceed the squalid air both of the apartment and his dress; but in spite of dirt—I might say filth—an air of natural gentility is diffused over him; and his wife, notwithstanding the same offensive character of her dress and appearance, has a good expression of countenance." Looking around for a chair, Robinson was rather dismayed to discover that the only one available seemed ready to fall apart when he touched it, and he extemporized by sitting on the bed. More disturbingly, the conversation which ensued struck him as so strange that when he had returned home he decided that the engraver was hopelessly disordered in his thinking—disordered, in fact, to the point of madness. And so, in a gesture of dismissal of the whole experience, the London lawyer wrote in his diary: "I fear I shall not make any progress in ascertaining his opinions and feelings,—but there being really no system or connection in his mind, all his future conversation will be but varieties of wildness and incongruity."

Less than two years later the engraver died, singing on his deathbed a hymn of joy of his own composing. Perhaps the most supremely gifted mind to appear in England since the Renaissance had passed, to use his own term for the state of death, "out of one room into another".

Today, of course, William Blake can scarcely be dismissed, in Robinson's fashion, as an amiable madman. By one of those ironies of time, he has become a central figure in the study of English poetry after the Renaissance; and it is doubtful whether any other poet of the historical tradition (with the inevitable exception of Shakespeare) speaks with as much resonance to our

own generation. In 1945, crowds gathered before Transport House to celebrate the victory of the Labour Party in England, and the song of triumph that they sang was one of the world's great hymns—Blake's vision of the divinity of man in a pre-industrial society, juxtaposed against the brutal reality of a factory age:

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Aldous Huxley, on the other hand, in a book which perhaps initiated the general interest in such drugs as mescaline and LSD, could only go to Blake's poetry for his title. Writing in 1954 of his experiences with the consciousness-expanding power of mescaline, Huxley called his study *The Doors of Perception*, drawing upon Blake's assertion in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that "if the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite."

But although a great deal more could be said for Blake's relevance in such varied fields as psychology (where he anticipates the basic concepts of Freud and Jung), physics (where he anticipates Einstein's dissolution of the Newtonian world view), and the contemporary novel (where, for example, his influence on Joyce Cary has been profound), Blake is perhaps most centrally interesting to the modern reader for his religious views.

*Time* magazine, on Good Friday of 1965, no doubt believed that it was throwing some kind of intellectual bomb-shell into the American community when it printed the question *Is God Dead?* on its cover. Unhappily, like many of *Time's* intellectual bomb-shells, the detonation of this one, it may be suspected, was pretty much of a dud. Voiced in the America of the 1960s, the question *Is God Dead?* must almost certainly have drawn from the bulk of *Time's* subscribers its perhaps deserved—and certainly, one suspects again, largely unarticulated—rejoinder: "Dead? I never even knew He was alive." In fact, nearly a decade before *Time's* cover, Peter De Vries (in his novel *The Mackerel Plaza*) had suggested the bankruptcy of traditional theology in

America by presenting a clergyman-hero whose concept of the divine rested on his most pregnant insight: "It is the final proof of God's omnipotence that he need not exist in order to save us."

Yet the question on the cover of *Time*, belated or irrelevant at it may be, is a convenient starting point for a consideration of William Blake's ideas about God.—*Is God dead?* The phrasing of such a question, of course, carries us back at once to the 1880s and the publication of the first part of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. There Zarathustra, Nietzsche's ecstatic parody of Christ, descends from a ten-year solitude in the mountains to announce definitively the death of God—a God whose nature Nietzsche makes more explicit in a work written some year after *Zarathustra*:

The Christian conception of God—God as God of the sick, God as a spider, God as spirit—is one of the most corrupt conceptions of the divine ever attained on earth. It may even represent the low-water mark in the descending development of divine types. God degenerated into the *contradiction* of life, instead of being its transfiguration and eternal Yes! God as the declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live! God—the formula of every slander against "this world", for every lie about the "beyond"! God—the deification of nothingness, the will to nothingness pronounced holy! (*The Antichrist*, Kaufmann translation).

Obviously enough, the reputation of Nietzsche needs little elaboration: even to that legendary figure the average college freshman, Nietzsche's name, like Darwin's and Marx's, must conjure up visions of a cataclysmic disturbance in the accepted order of the nineteenth century. And yet almost a hundred years before the appearance of *Zarathustra* a far better balanced mind was composing outrageously irreverent poems to Nobodaddy—a scarcely subtle amalgam of Nobody and Daddy—the God of Christianity.

To Nobodaddy

Why art thou silent & invisible,  
 Father of Jealousy?  
 Why dost thou hide thyself in clouds  
 From every searching Eye?

Why darkness & obscurity  
 In all thy words & laws,  
 That none dare eat the fruit but from  
 The wily serpents jaws?  
 Or is it because Secresy gains  
 females' loud applause?

Again, in even blunter terms, Blake associates Nobodaddy with the brutality and violence of an oppressive social system, and, indeed, with war itself:

“Let the Brothels of Paris be opened  
 With many an alluring dance  
 To awake the Pestilence thro’ the city,”  
 Said the beautiful Queen of France.

The King awoke on his couch of gold,  
 As soon as he heard these tidings told:  
 “Arise & come, both fife & drum,  
 And the Famine shall eat both crust & crumb.”

Then he swore a great & solemn Oath:  
 “To kill the people I am loth,  
 But if they rebel, they must go to hell:  
 They shall have a priest & a passing bell.”

Then old Nobodaddy aloft  
 Farted & belch’d & cough’d,  
 And said, “I love hanging & drawing & quartering  
 Every bit as well as war & slaughtering.  
 Damn praying & singing,  
 Unless they will bring in  
 The blood of ten thousand by fighting or swinging.”

But Blake has far more to offer than a raucous buffoonery. Indeed, as J. G. Davis pointed out some time ago, “Blake, perhaps more than any other writer, was essentially a religious poet”, for the concept of the Godhead lies at the very centre of his work, inextricably interwoven with his view of man and his assessment of organized religion. Thus, in the crowning achievement of his early maturity, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake announces that “all deities reside in the human breast”, thereby emphasizing his lifelong belief that any theory of the divine must originate with man himself. But he also shows, in his ironic version of the creation myth, that humanity’s choice of a deity can lead to a profound diminution in the potentialities of life:

Then the Inhabitants of those Cities  
 Felt their Nerves change into Marrow,  
 And hardening Bones began

In swift diseases and torments,  
 In throbbings & shootings & grindings  
 Thro' all the coasts; till weaken'd  
 The Senses inward rush'd, shrinking  
 Beneath the dark net of infection [i.e., The Net of Religion] . . . .

Six days they shrunk up from existence,  
 And on the seventh day they rested,  
 And they bless'd the seventh day, in sick hope,  
 And forgot their eternal life (*The First Book of Urizen*).

Put succinctly, then, what Blake proposes is a twofold argument. On the one hand, his work echoes back to us again and again a cry of anguish at the price that organized religion with its transcendent God has exacted from humanity; and on the other, it reverberates with his insistent promise that the truly divine is identical with the fully human. As a result, he can present us with this extraordinary vision of a world—and a world-view—labouring under the delusion of Nobodaddy:

I stood among my valleys of the south  
 And saw a flame of fire, even as a Wheel  
 Of fire surrounding all the heavens: it went  
 From west to east, against the current of  
 Creation, and devour'd all things in its loud  
 Fury & thundering course round heaven & earth.  
 By it the Sun was roll'd into an orb,  
 By it the Moon faded into a globe  
 Travelling thro' the night; for, from its dire  
 And restless fury, Man himself shrunk up  
 Into a little root a fathom long.  
 And I asked a Watcher & a Holy-One  
 Its Name; he answered: "It is the Wheel of Religion."  
 I wept & said: "Is this the law of Jesus,  
 This terrible devouring sword turning every way?"  
 He answer'd: "Jesus died because he strove  
 Against the current of this Wheel; its Name  
 Is Caiaphas, the dark Preacher of Death,  
 Of sin, or sorrow & of punishment" (*Jerusalem*, Plate 77).

But he can also, by his insistence on the non-existence of a transcendent God, invite our own participation in a genuine Godhead. "Thou art a man",

he tells us in a famous couplet from *The Everlasting Gospel*, "God is no more,/ Thine own Humanity learn to Adore." For the familiarity of the couplet should not blind us to the rich ambiguity of its first line. Interpreted "in its infernal or diabolical sense" (as Blake would call it), that first line brilliantly underscores the radical direction of Blake's implication: once man learns to accept his own divinity, then "God"—the transcendent God of orthodoxy—is, indeed, "no more". In this respect at least, Blake, like Zarathustra, has become the messenger of his death.

But the issue is even more complicated than this. For it should not go unnoticed that Blake's theology, with its insistence on a God in terms of this world and its denial of One in any other, is inevitably Christological to its ultimate degree. "God is Jesus", Blake declares in one of the aphorisms engraved on his plate of *The Laocoön*, and at first glance the remark seems unexceptionable Christianity. And then, as with so many other of Blake's seemingly innocent comments, we look again and realize that a subtle reversal has taken place: instead of the conventional Jesus-as-God, with its unavoidable suggestion of a transcendent divinity existing parallel in time to Christ's earthly career, Blake, with his "God is Jesus", has made the Divine entirely immanent within human experience—adding, apparently in the same year as *The Laocoön* (c. 1820), an unmistakable gloss among his annotations to Berkeley's "Siris": "God is Man & exists in us & we in him."

What is central to Blake's thought, then, is that an other-worldly God—a cloudy figure of ineffable majesty—is a terrible fiction imposed on us by our own self-delusion. Because we have fallen away from a primordial, paradisaical unity through a misguided emphasis on the abstract "Reasoning Power in every Man" (*Jerusalem*, Plate 54), a near-overwhelming sense of diminution and fragmentariness has resulted:

Lo, a shadow of horror is risen  
 In Eternity! Unknown, unprolific,  
 Self-clos'd, all-repelling: what Demon  
 Hath form'd this abominable void,  
 This soul-shudd'ring vacuum? Some said  
 "It is Urizen." But unknown, abstracted,  
 Brooding, secret, the dark power hid (*The First Book of Urizen*, Plate 3).

(What Blake has done here, of course [and the play on "your reason" is typically rich, for Urizen also echoes the Greek *ourizein*—that is, the horizon—an illusory boundary] is to anticipate brilliantly the notion that the birth of

consciousness represented an apparently irremediable breach between man and nature, that "existence", to cite Tillich, "is separation"—a concept that underlies much of the *Angst* of post-Hegelian philosophy.)

In order to ease this sense of isolation, man has evolved a moral order to simulate a secondary unity. Because he is now less than man, he will try to become more than man:

Till a Web, dark & cold, throughout all  
The tormented element stretch'd  
From the sorrows of Urizen's soul. . . .  
And all call'd it The Net of Religion (*Urizen*, Plate 25).

Unfortunately, because the abstracted "Reasoning Power" is divorced from a true psychic integration, no genuine relief is provided:

The Spectre is the Reasoning Power in Man, & when separated  
From Imagination and closing itself as in steel in a Ratio  
Of the Things of Memory, It thence frames Laws & Moralities  
To destroy Imagination . . . by Martyrdom & Wars (*Jerusalem*, Plate 74).

Indeed, the moral order, because it runs counter to the actual nature of man (denying, for one thing, the ultimate reality of his passions), exacerbates the human dilemma of self-consciousness and isolation:

Every house a den, every man bound: the shadows are fill'd  
With spectres, and the windows wove over with curses of iron:  
Over the doors "Thou shalt not", & over the chimneys "Fear" is written  
(*Europe*, Plate 12).

And all the while, flattering man's passivity and distorting the direction of his energies, the concept of Nobodaddy (or Urizen deified) sits enthroned above the repressive scheme—

this abstract non-entity,  
This cloudy God seated on waters,  
Now seen, now obscur'd, King of sorrow (*Ahania*, Plate 2).

But for Blake, of course, as we know, the one true God is the very antithesis of Nobodaddy—that is, Jesus, the image of the divine entirely immanent in humanity. "He is the only God", Blake told Crabb Robinson in

1825 during their discussion of the nature of Jesus; and then went on to confuse the lawyer thoroughly by explaining that "so am I and so are you" Jesus. In other words, as Blake attempts to make clear again and again in his work, each one of us is potentially identical with Christ, possessing within himself the essence of divinity. What blocks our realization of this is our misguided self-interest and cowardice, defects of imagination which have led us into the delusion that the Godhead lies somewhere outside, in some transcendental realm—or that it lies nowhere at all. ("Everything is atheism which assumes the reality of the natural and unspiritual world."—Blake to Robinson, c. 1825-26.)

And yet what exactly does Blake mean by Jesus? Has he simply substituted one abstraction for another, with Nobodaddy in place of Nobosonny? Most non-Christians will think so, probably, unless they have read Blake with care. After all, what can this passage—from *The Everlasting Gospel*—mean even to a practising Christian in the second half of the twentieth century?

There is not one Moral Virtue Jesus Inculcated but Plato & Cicero did Inculcate before him; what then did Christ Inculcate? Forgiveness of Sins. This alone is the Gospel, & this is the Life & Immortality brought to light by Jesus, Even the Covenant of Jehovah, which is This: If you forgive one another your Trespases, so shall Jehovah forgive you, That he himself may dwell among you; but if you Avéngé, you Murder the Divine Image, & he cannot dwell among you; because you Murder him he arises again, & you deny that he is Arisen, & are blind to Spirit.

At this point, however, we must make a distinction between two aspects of Blake's Christology: the first, his concept of Christ as an historical figure who suffered an actual Crucifixion in the first century of our era; the second, his concept of Christ as a non-historical symbol for the Godhead eternally immanent in the human psyche. Such concepts, of course, are hardly exclusive of one another; together, indeed, they can be said to form the basis for a great deal of traditional Christian pietism. But although Blake is highly original in his handling of both (we shall return to the first later), it is in his treatment of the second aspect of Christ's nature—as a symbol for the fully human—that the contemporary reader will find a relevance most immediately pertinent.

One aspect of it has already been indirectly touched upon: how Blake's idea of Urizen anticipates one of the fundamental assumptions of post-Hegelian philosophy—that the consciousness of self, along with its concomitant sense

of isolation, is an irremediable fact in man's existence. Yet although Blake anticipates this view, he refuses to accept it as a genuine *donnée* of the human condition. Rather, in perhaps his most brilliant insight of all, he argues that the creation of the world was identical with man's fall from primordial unity:

With trembling horror pale, aghast the Children of Man  
 Stood on the infinite Earth & saw these visions in the air,  
 In waters & in earth beneath; they cried to one another,  
 "What are we terrors to one another? Come, O brethren, wherefore  
 Was this wide Earth spread all abroad? not for wild beasts to roam."  
 But many stood silent, & busied in their families.  
 And many said, "We see no Visions in the darksome air.  
 Measure the course of that sulphur orb that lights the darksome day;  
 Set stations on this breeding Earth & let us buy & sell."  
 Others arose & schools erected, forming Instruments  
 To measure out the course of heaven. Stern Urizen beheld  
 In woe his brethren & his sons . . . (*The Four Zoas*, Night the Second).

In other words, Blake is suggesting here that the birth of consciousness (the rise to dominance of Urizen in the human psyche) led, by its very process of individuation, to the simultaneous creation of an objective universe recognizable as such to the perceiver. For how, to paraphrase Sartre, can consciousness exist except as an awareness of an *en-soi*—of something other than itself—of, in short, a separate and inevitably distinct objective world? Blake, however, a century and a half before Sartre, had the acuteness to see that the perception of an objective world (as distinct from the self) must necessarily involve the creation of that world as well.

Once this is grasped, a great deal of Blake's so-called "obscurity" vanishes and we are much closer to understanding his Christology. For if the birth of consciousness (and of individuation) represents a fall from integration, then the ordinary selfhood is clearly a barrier to any return to a paradisiacal state. And so it is in Blake, where the ordinary self—the selfhood of man in the Urizeniac world—is equated with Satan: "I in my Selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One!" (*Milton*, Plate 14). More important, the concepts of Satan, the Self, Nobodaddy, and Urizen are all bound together in a failure of vision:

"I am your Rational Power, O Albion, & that Human Form  
 You call Divine is but a Worm seventy inches long" . . .

So spoke the Spectre to Albion: he is the Great Selfhood:  
 Satan, Worship'd as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth  
 (Jerusalem, Plate 33).

Consequently, and inevitably, Christ becomes a symbol in Blake's thought for that power in the human psyche which is capable of returning man to an integration with himself and with his fellows and with his universe—the power, in short, of the human imagination at its highest:

our infinite senses  
 . . . expanding, we behold as one,  
 As One Man all the Universal Family, and that One Man  
 We call Jesus the Christ; and he in us, and we in him  
 Live in perfect harmony in Eden, the land of life (Jerusalem, Plate 38).

For what Blake essentially suggests is this: if the birth of consciousness has led to the perception of an alien world, then that alien world can be de-created through the exercise of something other than the perceptions of ordinary consciousness. "How do you know", Blake asks in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,/Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?" And at once we sense the revolutionary direction of the question. For the bird, seen Urizeniacally, is Sartre's *en-soi*: an object to be perceived and analyzed as distinct from ourselves. But once we truly *imagine* it as "an immense world of delight", the distinction between *en-soi* and *pour-soi* vanishes (like that between the nightingale and Keats in the middle stanzas of the *Ode*) and we find ourselves active collaborators in a new and radically different universe. This empathetic power of the imagination, then—this potential for cancelling out the self through vision—is, Blake believed, identical with the symbolic nature of Christ. "This was Christ", he wrote as an annotation to the following aphorism by Lavater: "The greatest of characters, no doubt, was he, who, free of all trifling accidental helps, could see objects through one grand immutable medium, always at hand, and proof against illusion and time, reflected by every object, and invariably traced through all the fluctuation of things."

And Blake, in what is probably the boldest attempt at synthesis he ever attempted, tries to show how the forgiveness of sins—the virtue he associated most specifically with the historical Christ—is inextricably bound up as well with the symbolic nature of Christ, with, in other words, the power of the human imagination to function at its highest: "what then did Christ Inculcate?"

Forgiveness of Sins. This alone is the Gospel, & this is the Life & Immortality brought to light by Jesus . . . but if you avenge, you Murder the Divine Image, & he cannot dwell among you."

For "the Divine Image" is nothing else than the "Imagination", "the Divine Body in Every Man", that is, Christ himself (Annotations to Berkeley's "Siris"). And the sins which Christ forgives—what are they, really? What, in fact, one is tempted to ask, could conceivably be called "sin" in a relativistic age like ours? Doubtless all of us are familiar enough with guilt, but *sin* . . .? Yet Sartre implicitly suggests an answer with the cry of Garcin in his *Huis Clos*: "Hell is . . . other people!" Or, to restate it in the mid-Victorian prose of a great novelist: "We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves", moving about under "the sense of a stupendous self and an insignificant" milieu (*Middlemarch*). For the ultimate sin which can be committed against us, Blake would contend—the sin we must learn to forgive, or die—is the existence of other selves in a world our Urizeniac selfhood wants for its own. That, indeed, is why Blake so emphatically insists on the negative nature of sin—how it is always "the omission of act in self & the hindering of act in another" (Annotations to Lavater)—and why he places such emphasis on Christ's opposition to the restraining nature of the moral law: "I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments. Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*). As a result,

when Jesus said to Me,  
 "Thy sins are all forgiven thee",  
 The Christian trumpets loud proclaim  
 Thro' all the World in Jesus' name  
 Mutual forgiveness of each Vice,  
 And oped the Gates of Paradise (*The Everlasting Gospel*).

For to Blake, the moral law, no matter how sincerely followed and enforced, is simply the Urizeniac mask of cruelty and self-interest posing as justice, the concealed "sense of a stupendous self" in each of us striving for hegemony, not only over others, but over our own true (i.e., imaginative) selfhood as well:

The Moral Virtues in Great fear  
 Formed the Cross & Nails & Spear  
 And the Accuser standing by

Cried out, "Crucify! Crucify!  
 Our Moral Virtues ne'er can be,  
 Nor Warlike pomp & Majesty;  
 For Moral Virtues all begin  
 In the Accusations of Sin" (*The Everlasting Gospel*).

Thus in Blake, vision and self-abnegation—imagination and re-integration—are all fused together. And in these lines from *Jerusalem*, his longest and his greatest poem, Blake tries to show how we can achieve our own re-integration. Albion, the first speaker, is man in the natural world—that is, Blake's version of Everyman—and Albion's plea is Everyman's plea: what can be done in a world where the sense of isolation and of failure and of self-accusation is often so overwhelming?

Albion said: "O Lord, what can I do? my Selfhood cruel  
 Marches against thee, deceitful, from Sinai and from Edom  
 Into the Wilderness of Judah, to meet thee in his pride.  
 I behold the Visions of my deadly Sleep of Six Thousand Years  
 Dazling around thy skirts like a Serpent of precious stones & gold  
 I know it is my Self, O my Divine Creator & Redeemer."  
 Jesus replied: "Fear not Albion: unless I die thou canst not live;  
 But if I die I shall arise again & thou with me.  
 This is Friendship & Brotherhood: without it Man Is Not". . . .  
 Albion reply'd: "Cannot Man exist except without Mysterious  
 Offering of Self for Another? is this Friendship & Brotherhood?" . . . .  
 Jesus said: "Wouldest thou love one who never died  
 For thee, or ever die for one who had not died for thee?  
 And if God dieth not for Man & giveth not himself  
 Eternally for Man, Man could not exist; for Man is Love  
 As God is Love; every kindness to another is a little Death  
 In the Divine Image, not can Man exist but by Brotherhood" (Plate 96).

In other words, what Blake has done here is transform the historical Crucifixion into a paradigm for our own full existence. In an anticipation of Buber (although the poet goes much farther), Blake argues that the I-Thou relationship—the full acceptance of another's selfhood—is the only existence which truly deserves the name of life. Put in Buber's terms, of course, there is an obvious emphasis on the necessity of mutuality:

Only he who himself turns to the other human being and opens himself to him receives the world in him. Only the being whose otherness, accepted by my

being, lives and faces me in the whole compression of existence, brings the radiance of eternity to me. Only when two say to one another with all that they are, "It is *Thou*", is the indwelling of the Present Being between them (*Between Man and Man*).

But although Blake would applaud much of this, the emphasis on mutuality throughout Buber's work (e.g., "All real living is meeting", *I and Thou*) would also, doubtless, strike him finally as a Urizeniac caution. Christ is God for Blake because he has had the imaginative power to see that the "Thou" is nothing other than the all of humanity, while the Crucifixion is the ultimate, truly imaginative abnegation of self, not because it arose from a corresponding abnegation in mankind, but because it posits by example an eventual mutuality so great as to negate all selfhoods in the transcendence of an eternal and universal Thou.

This is truly, then, Blake's version of the death of God—a version both more audacious and more traditional than Nietzsche's a hundred years later. For as Thomas Altizer points out in his recent book on Christian atheism, Blake was the first radical Christian of modern times. By turning the emphasis from God as Jesus to Jesus as God, by accepting the historical concept of the Incarnation in its ultimate implications, Blake isolated the central relevance of Christianity for modern society: not in its moral code caught in a world of relativity, but in its emphasis on the potential worth of man. With the historical Crucifixion God dies into this world, dies there finally and irrevocably in a total abnegation of self, bequeathing his divinity to man by the example of a supreme imaginative act. "God becomes as we are", Blake tells us, "that we may be as he is" (*There Is No Natural Religion*). Again: "God is a man, not because he is so perceiv'd by man, but because he is the creator of man" (Annotations to Swedenborg).

And in the opening of *Jerusalem*, Blake confronts our inevitable skepticism by having the imaginative Jesus—the potential divinity in all of us—call out:

"Awake! awake O sleeper of the land of shadows, wake! expand!  
I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine. . . .  
I am not a God afar off, I am a brother and friend;  
Within your bosoms I reside, and you reside in me:  
Lo! we are One, forgiving all Evil, not seeking recompense."

And the poet, well aware of our reaction to such a call, presents us with a picture of the price our caution will exact, a price that has found its expression

since Blake's time in the politics of rigid nationalisms, and in the nightmare of a profound racial malaise:

But the perturbed Man away turns down the valleys dark:  
 Saying: "We are not One: we are Many, thou most simulative  
 Phantom of the over heated brain! shadow of immortality!  
 Seeking to keep my soul a victim to thy Love! which binds  
 Man, the enemy of man, into deceitful friendships,  
 Jerusalem is not! her daughters are indefinite:  
 By demonstration man alone can live, and not by faith.  
 My mountains are my own, and I will keep them to myself:  
 The Malvern and the Cheviot, the Wolds, Plinlimmon & Snowdon  
 Are Mine: here will I build my Laws of Moral Virtue.  
 Humanity shall be no more, but war & pryncedom & victory!"

### FULFILMENT

*Alastair Macdonald*

Smoke-bite in far air of February  
 blue from wood and hill  
 stirs eighteen's expectancy  
 with false sense of a spring  
 soon to be real:  
 the breathless stretch of whitening road  
 to doing, and the loved unknown,  
 and the yellow seas of summer,  
 forward, go and go, to the attainable  
 I have not now,  
 and the smell of rain-veils stirring  
 and all in tune with sunlit seeming,  
 on and on, and the years are passing,  
 drifts of being,  
 over all we will be doing  
 in that when the February smoke is bringing  
 soon and soon —  
 though this is done and that is done,  
 and something gone, and nothing come,  
 and it is time, for we have seen,  
 to catch the memory of a dream,  
 for we have had, and we have been.