

EUROPE: A PROPHECY

William Blake

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Five windows light the cavern'd Man: thro' one he breathes the air;
Thro' one hears music of the spheres; thro' one the Eternal Vine
Flourishes, that he may receive the grapes; thro' one can look
And see small portions of the Eternal World that ever groweth;
Thro' one himself pass out what time he please, but he will not;
For stolen joys are sweet, and bread eaten in secret pleasant.'

So sang a Fairy, mocking, as he sat on a streak'd tulip,
Thinking none saw him: when he ceas'd I started from the trees,
And caught him in my hat, as boys knock down a butterfly.
'How know you this,' said I, 'small Sir? where did you learn this song?'
Seeing himself in my possession, thus he answer'd me:
'My Master, I am yours! command me, for I must obey.'

'Then tell me, what is the Material World, and is it dead?'
He, laughing, answer'd: 'I will write a book on leaves of flowers,
If you will feed me on love-thoughts, and give me now and then
A cup of sparkling poetic fancies; so, when I am tipsy,
I'll sing to you to this soft lute, and show you all alive
The World, when every particle of dust breathes forth its joy.'

I took him home in my warm bosom: as we went along
Wild flowers I gather'd; and he show'd me each Eternal Flower:
He laugh'd aloud to see them whimper because they were pluck'd.
They hover'd round me like a cloud of incense. When I came
Into my parlour and sat down, and took my pen to write,
My Fairy sat upon the table, and dictated EUROPE.

Preludium

The nameless Shadowy Female rose from out the breast of Orc,
Her snaky hair brandishing in the winds of Enitharmon;
And thus her voice arose:

'O mother Enitharmon, wilt thou bring forth other sons,
To cause my name to vanish, that my place may not be found?

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For I am faint with travel,
Like the dark cloud disburden'd in the day of dismal thunder.

`My roots are brandish'd in the heavens, my fruits in earth beneath
Surge, foam, and labour into life, first born and first consum'd!
Consumèd and consuming!
Then why shouldst thou, Accursèd Mother, bring me into life?

`I wrap my turban of thick clouds around my lab'ring head,
And fold the sheety waters as a mantle round my limbs;
Yet the red sun and moon
And all the overflowing stars rain down prolific pains.

`Unwilling I look up to heaven, unwilling count the stars:
Sitting in fathomless abyss of my immortal shrine
I seize their burning power,
And bring forth howling terrors, all-devouring fiery kings,

`Devouring and devourèd, roaming on dark and desolate mountains,
In forests of Eternal Death, shrieking in hollow trees.
Ah, mother Enitharmon!
Stamp not with solid form this vig'rous progeny of fires.

`I bring forth from my teeming bosom myriads of flames,
And thou dost stamp them with a signet; then they roam abroad,
And leave me void as death.
Ah! I am drown'd in shady woe and visionary joy.

`And who shall bind the Infinite with an eternal band
To compass it with swaddling bands? and who shall cherish it
With milk and honey?
I see it smile, and I roll inward, and my voice is past.'

She ceas'd, and roll'd her shady clouds
Into the secret place.

A Prophecy

The deep of winter came,
What time the Secret Child
Descended through the orient gates of the Eternal day:
War ceas'd, and all the troops like shadows fled to their abodes.

Then Enitharmon saw her sons and daughters rise around;
Like pearly clouds they meet together in the crystal house;
And Los, possessor of the Moon, joy'd in the peaceful night,
Thus speaking, while his num'rous sons shook their bright fiery wings:

`Again the night is come,
That strong Urthona takes his rest;

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And Urizen, unloos'd from chains,
Glow like a meteor in the distant North.
Stretch forth your hands and strike the elemental strings!
Awake the thunders of the deep!

`The shrill winds wake,
Till all the sons of Urizen look out and envy Los.
Seize all the spirits of life, and bind
Their warbling joys to our loud strings!
Bind all the nourishing sweets of earth
To give us bliss, that we may drink the sparkling wine of Los!
And let us laugh at war,
Despising toil and care,
Because the days and nights of joy in lucky hours renew.

`Arise, O Orc, from thy deep den!
First-born of Enitharmon, rise!
And we will crown thy head with garlands of the ruddy vine;
For now thou art bound,
And I may see thee in the hour of bliss, my eldest-born.'

The horrent Demon rose, surrounded with red stars of fire,
Whirling about in furious circles round the Immortal Fiend.

Then Enitharmon down descended into his red light,
And thus her voice rose to her children: the distant heavens reply:

`Now comes the night of Enitharmon's joy!
Who shall I call? Who shall I send,
That Woman, lovely Woman, may have dominion?
Arise, O Rintrah! thee I call, and Palamabron, thee!
Go! tell the Human race that Woman's love is Sin;
That an Eternal life awaits the worms of sixty winters,
In an allegorical abode, where existence hath never come.
Forbid all Joy; and, from her childhood, shall the little Female
Spread nets in every secret path.

`My weary eyelids draw towards the evening; my bliss is yet but new.

`Arise! O Rintrah, eldest-born, second to none but Orc!
O lion Rintrah, raise thy fury from thy forests black!
Bring Palamabron, hornèd priest, skipping upon the mountains,
And silent Elynittria, the silver-bowèd queen.
Rintrah, where hast thou hid thy bride?
Weeps she in desert shades?
Alas! my Rintrah, bring the lovely jealous Ocalythron.

`Arise, my son! bring all thy brethren, O thou King of Fire!
Prince of the Sun! I see thee with thy innumerable race,
Thick as the summer stars;
But each, ramping, his golden mane shakes,

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And thine eyes rejoice because of strength, O Rintrah, furious King!

Enitharmon slept
Eighteen hundred years. Man was a dream,
The night of Nature and their harps unstrung!
She slept in middle of her nightly song
Eighteen hundred years, a Female dream.

Shadows of men in fleeting bands upon the winds
Divide the heavens of Europe;
Till Albion's Angel, smitten with his own plagues, fled with his bands.
The cloud bears hard on Albion's shore,
Fill'd with immortal Demons of futurity:
In council gather the smitten Angels of Albion;
The cloud bears hard upon the council-house, down rushing
On the heads of Albion's Angels.

One hour they lay buried beneath the ruins of that hall;
But as the stars rise from the Salt Lake, they arise in pain,
In troubled mists, o'erclouded by the terrors of struggling times.

In thoughts perturb'd they rose from the bright ruins, silent following
The fiery King, who sought his ancient temple, serpent-form'd,
That stretches out its shady length along the Island white.
Round him roll'd his clouds of war; silent the Angel went
Along the infinite shores of Thames to golden Verulam.
There stand the venerable porches, that high-towering rear
Their oak-surrounded pillars, form'd of massy stones, uncut
With tool, stones precious! such eternal in the heavens,
Of colours twelve (few known on earth) give light in the opaque,
Plac'd in the order of the stars; when the five senses whelm'd
In deluge o'er the earth-born man, then turn'd the fluxile eyes
Into two stationary orbs, concentrating all things:
The ever-varying spiral ascents to the Heavens of Heavens
Were bended downward, and the nostrils' golden gates shut,
Turn'd outward, barr'd, and petrify'd against the Infinite.

Thought chang'd the Infinite to a Serpent, that which pitieth
To a devouring flame; and Man fled from its face and hid
In forests of night: then all the eternal forests were divided
Into earths, rolling in circles of Space, that like an ocean rush'd
And overwhelmèd all except this finite wall of flesh.
Then was the Serpent temple form'd, image of Infinite,
Shut up in finite revolutions, and Man became an Angel,
Heaven a mighty circle turning, God a tyrant crown'd.

Now arriv'd the ancient Guardian at the southern porch,
That planted thick with trees of blackest leaf, and in a vale
Obscure enclos'd the Stone of Night; oblique it stood, o'erhung
With purple flowers and berries red, image of that sweet South,
Once open to the heavens, and elevated on the human neck,

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Now overgrown with hair, and cover'd with a story roof
Downward 'tis sunk beneath th' attractive North, that round the feet,
A raging whirlpool, draws the dizzy enquirer to his grave.

Albion's Angel rose upon the Stone of Night.
He saw Urizen on the Atlantic;
And his brazen Book,
That Kings and Priests had copièd on Earth,
Expanded from North to South.

And the clouds and fires pale roll'd round in the night of Enitharmon,
Round Albion's cliffs and London's walls: still Enitharmon slept.
Rolling volumes of grey mist involve Churches, Palaces, Towers;
For Urizen unclasp'd his Book, feeding his soul with pity.
The youth of England, hid in gloom, curse the pain'd heavens, compell'd
Into the deadly night to see the form of Albion's Angel.
Their parents brought them forth, and Agèd Ignorance preaches, canting,
On a vast rock, perceiv'd by those senses that are clos'd from thought
Bleak, dark, abrupt it stands, and overshadows London city.
They saw his bony feet on the rock, the flesh consum'd in flames;
They saw the Serpent temple lifted above, shadowing the Island white;
They heard the voice of Albion's Angel, howling in flames of Orc,
Seeking the trump of the Last Doom.

Above the rest the howl was heard from Westminster, louder and louder:
The Guardian of the secret codes forsook his ancient mansion,
Driven out by the flames of Orc; his furr'd robes and false locks
Adherèd and grew one with his flesh and nerves, and veins shot thro' them.
With dismal torment sick, hanging upon the wind, he fled
Groveling, along Great George Street, thro' the Park gate: all the soldiers
Fled from his sight: he dragg'd his torments to the wilderness.

Thus was the howl thro' Europe!
For Orc rejoic'd to hear the howling shadows;
But Palamabron shot his lightnings, trenching down his wide back;
And Rintrah hung with all his legions in the nether deep.

Enitharmon laugh'd in her sleep to see (O woman's triumph!)
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', and over the chimneys `Fear' is written:
With bands of iron round their necks fasten'd into the walls
The citizens, in leaden gyves the inhabitants of suburbs
Walk heavy; soft and bent are the bones of villagers.

Between the clouds of Urizen the flames of Orc roll heavy
Around the limbs of Albion's Guardian, his flesh consuming:
Howlings and hissings, shrieks and groans, and voices of despair
Arise around him in the cloudy heavens of Albion. Furious,
The red-limb'd Angel seiz'd in horror and torment
The trump of the Last Doom; but he could not blow the iron tube!

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Thrice he assay'd presumptuous to awake the dead to Judgment.
A mighty Spirit leap'd from the land of Albion,
Nam'd Newton: he seiz'd the trump, and blow'd the enormous blast!
Yellow as leaves of autumn, the myriads of Angelic hosts
Fell thro' the wintry skies, seeking their graves,
Rattling their hollow bones in howling and lamentation.

Then Enitharmon woke, nor knew that she had slept;
And eighteen hundred years were fled
As if they had not been.
She call'd her sons and daughters
To the sports of night
Within her crystal house,
And thus her song proceeds:

`Arise, Ethinthus! tho' the earth-worm call,
Let him call in vain,
Till the night of holy shadows
And human solitude is past!

`Ethinthus, Queen of Waters, how thou shinest in the sky!
My daughter, how do I rejoice! for thy children flock around,
Like the gay fishes on the wave, when the cold moon drinks the dew.
Ethinthus! thou art sweet as comforts to my fainting soul,
For now thy waters warble round the feet of Enitharmon.

`Manatha-Varcyon! I behold thee flaming in my halls.
Light of thy mother's soul! I see thy lovely eagles round;
Thy golden wings are my delight, and thy flames of soft delusion.

`Where is my luring bird of Eden? Leutha, silent love!
Leutha, the many-colour'd bow delights upon thy wings!
Soft soul of flowers, Leutha!
Sweet smiling Pestilence! I see thy blushing light;
Thy daughters, many changing,
Revolve like sweet perfumes ascending, O Leutha, Silken Queen!

`Where is the youthful Antamon, Prince of the Pearly Dew?
O Antamon! why wilt thou leave thy mother Enitharmon?
Alone I see thee, crystal form,
Floating upon the bosom'd air,
With lineaments of gratified desire.
My Antamon! the seven churches of Leutha seek thy love.

`I hear the soft Oothoon in Enitharmon's tents;
Why wilt thou give up woman's secrecy, my melancholy child?
Between two moments Bliss is ripe.
O Theotormon! robb'd of joy, I see thy salt tears flow
Down the steps of my crystal house.

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`Sotha and Thiralatha! secret dwellers of dreamful caves,
Arise and please the horrent Fiend with your melodious songs;
Still all your thunders, golden-hoof'd, and bind your horses black.
Orc! smile upon my children,
Smile, son of my afflictions!
Arise, O Orc, and give our mountains joy of thy red light!

She ceas'd; for all were forth at sport beneath the solemn moon
Waking the stars of Urizen with their immortal songs;
That Nature felt thro' all her pores the enormous revelry,
Till Morning opened the eastern gate;
Then every one fled to his station, and Enitharmon wept.

But terrible Orc, when he beheld the morning in the East,
Shot from the heights of Enitharmon,
And in the vineyards of red France appear'd the light of his fury.

The Sun glow'd fiery red!
The furious Terrors flew around
On golden chariots, raging with red wheels, dropping with blood
The Lions lash their wrathful tails!
The Tigers couch upon the prey and suck the ruddy tide;
And Enitharmon groans and cries in anguish and dismay.

Then Los arose: his head he rear'd, in snaky thunders clad;
And with a cry that shook all Nature to the utmost pole,
Call'd all his sons to the strife of blood.