

## *Blake At Last*

*Consume my heart away sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal.  
It knows not what it is and gathers me  
Into the artifice of eternity.*  
—William Butler Yeats

They say that I am mad. Is this madness then  
that the mysteries of childhood which are mercies  
return as revelations, corpses of goats wrapped in feathers  
of peacocks delivered by warty hags  
and always in winter; that, finally, the dancers of life  
rearrange themselves into cold, black triangles.

I was the son of a haberdasher.  
We lived in London in ordinary time which contains  
models of the soul.

The spirit tells me everything.  
Trees have minds. The body is a box  
with a lion in it prepared to act out  
the inevitability of designs.  
A blue-silk door in the wind leads to barbarous  
worlds were molten angels' wings shudder and,  
like the power of a familiar face,  
call up blood and longing.

I have seen emerald tygers in the garden  
waiting to tear my heart's sacrarium  
with grappling hooks, spikes of crimson;  
waiting to carry my scream across  
the ecliptic of Earth, across the Rubicon.

It is clear that I am dying. I am painting  
stark naked in my garden, as you can see.

I will not, at least, stumble all day  
between my bed and my chamber pot  
on which path my shrunken member leaks  
moldy, steaming toads. I am aware of pressures,  
of the sinking of the marrow, of the blood, of the giant's  
drag on the reins of the breath horse,  
the weight of the coins on the eyelids.

I tremble all day under this violent-grape umbrella.  
As you can see, a ghost hanging over the stone wall begs me  
to paint a different scene over the watercolor pond  
in which she drowned herself.

They say that I need permission from a king who wears water  
to become the faint tripudium of cells,  
to learn that the unreal takes energy from the real  
and becomes real, to forfeit the ancient poppies  
of desire.

I wonder, what is this place? My toes  
are black and blue. My heart  
beats rapidly as if to explain  
the color red, as if to explain  
so many gods who came to announce  
the presence of human imagination.

Once, late at night,  
the idea came to me that everything  
might be broken into unimaginable parts and that  
those parts, while seeming to move predictably, would leap  
away and spin off like burning hair.

The dogs have come to eat the light.  
There is a great custom hall where one presents  
papers.