

The Book of Los

William Blake

1795

I

- 1: Eno aged Mother,
 Who the chariot of Leutha guides,
Since the day of thunders in old time
- 2: Sitting beneath the eternal Oak
Trembled and shook the stedfast Earth
 And thus her speech broke forth.
- 3: O Times remote!
 When Love & joy were adoration:
And none impure were deem'd.
 Not Eyeless Covet
Nor Thin-lip'd Envy
 Nor Bristled Wrath
Nor Curled Wantonness
- 4: But Covet was poured full:
Envy fed with fat of lambs:

Wrath with lions gore:
Wantonness lulld to sleep
With the virgins lute,
Or sated with her love.

5: Till Covet broke his locks & bars,
And slept with open doors:
Envy sung at the rich mans feast:
Wrath was follow'd up and down
By a little ewe lamb
And Wantoness on his own true love
Begot a giant race:

6: Raging furious the flames of desire
Ran thro' heaven & earth, living flames

Intelligent, organiz'd: arm'd
With destruction & plagues. In the
midst
The Eternal Prophet bound in a chain
Compell'd to watch Urizens shadow

7: Rag'd with curses & sparkles of fury
Round the flames roll as Los hurls his
chains
Mounting up from his fury, condens'd
Rolling round & round, mounting on

high
Into vacuum: into non-entity.
Where nothing was! dash'd wide apart

His feet stamp the eternal fierce-raging
Rivers of wide flame; they roll round
And round on all sides making their way
Into darkness and shadowy obscurity

8: Wide apart stood the fires: Los remain'd
In the void between fire and fire.
In trembling and horror they beheld him
They stood wide apart, driv'n by his
hands
And his feet which the nether abyss
Stamp'd in fury and hot indignation

9: But no light from the fires all was
Darkness round Los: heat was not;
for bound up
Into fiery spheres from his fury
The gigantic flames trembled and hid

10: Coldness, darkness, obstruction, a
Solid
Without fluctuation, hard as adamant

Black as marble of Egypt; impenetrable
Bound in the fierce raging Immortal.
And the seperated fires froze in
A vast solid without fluctuation,
Bound in his expanding clear senses

II

- 1: The Immortal stood frozen amidst
The vast rock of eternity; times
And times; a night of vast durance:
Impatient, stifled, stiffend, hardned.
- 2: Till impatience no longer could bear
The hard bondage, rent: rent, the
vast solid
With a crash from immense to immense
- 3: Crack'd across into numberless frag-
ments
The Prophetic wrath, strug'ling for vent
Hurls apart, stamping furious to dust
And crumbling with bursting sobs; heaves

The black marble on high into frag-
ments

4: Hurl'd apart on all sides, as a falling
Rock: the innumerable fragments away

Fell asunder; and horrible vacuum
Beneath him & on all sides round.

5: Falling, falling! Los fell & fell
Sunk precipitant heavy down down
Times on times, night on night, day on
day
Truth has bounds. Error none: falling,
falling:

Years on years, and ages on ages
Still he fell thro' the void, still a void
Found for falling day & night without
end.

For tho' day or night was not; their
spaces

Were measur'd by his incessant whirls
In the horrid vacuity bottomless.

6: The Immortal revolving; indignant
First in wrath threw his limbs, like
the babe
New born into our world: wrath subsided
And contemplative thoughts first arose

Then aloft his head rear'd in the Abyss
And his downward-borne fall. Chang'd
oblique

7: Many ages of groans: till there grew
Branchy forms. organizing the Hu-
man
Into finite inflexible organs.

8: Till in process from falling he bore
Sidelong on the purple air, wafting
The weak breeze in efforts o'erwearied

9: Incessant the falling Mind labour'd
Organizing itself: till the Vacuum
Became element, pliant to rise,
Or to fall, or to swim, or to fly:
With ease searching the dire vacuity

III

1: The Lungs heave incessant, dull and
heavy
For as yet were all other parts form-
less
Shiv'ring: clinging around like a cloud

Dim & glutinous as the white Poly-
pus
Driv'n by waves & englob'd on the tide.

2: And the unformed part crav'd repose
Sleep began: the Lungs heave on the wave

Weary overweigh'd, sinking beneath
In a stifling black fluid he woke

3: He arose on the waters, but soon
Heavy falling his organs like roots
Shooting out from the seed, shot be-
neath,
And a vast world of waters around him
In furious torrents began.

4: Then he sunk, & around his spent
Lungs
Began intricate pipes that drew in
The spawn of the waters. Outbranching
An immense Fibrous form, stretching
out
Thro' the bottoms of immensity raging.

5: He rose on the floods: then he smote
The wild deep with his terrible wrath,
Seperating the heavy and thin.

6: Down the heavy sunk; cleaving around

To the fragments of solid: up rose
The thin, flowing round the fierce fires
That glow'd furious in the expanse.

IV

1: Then Light first began; from the fires
Beams, conducted by fluid so pure.
Flow'd around the Immense: Los beheld
Forthwith writhing upon the dark void

The Back bone of Urizen appear
Hurtling upon the wind
Like a serpent! like an iron chain
Whirling about in the Deep.

2: Upfolding his Fibres together
To a Form of impregnable strength
Los astonish'd and terrified, built
Furnaces; he formed an Anvil
A Hammer of adamant then began
The binding of Urizen day and night

3: Circling round the dark Demon, with
howlings

Dismay & sharp blightings; the Prophet

Of Eternity beat on his iron links

4: And first from those infinite fires
The light that flow'd down on the winds
 He siez'd; beating incessant, condens-
 ing
The subtil particles in an Orb.

5: Roaring indignant the bright sparks
Endur'd the vast Hammer; but unwea-
 ried
 Los beat on the Anvil; till glorious
An immense Orb of fire he fram'd

6: Oft he quench'd it beneath in the
 Deeps
Then survey'd the all bright mass. Again
 Siezing fires from the terrific Orbs
He heated the round Globe, then beat,
 While roaring his Furnaces endur'd
The chain'd Orb in their infinite wombs

7: Nine ages completed their circles
When Los heated the glowing mass, cast-
 ing
 It down into the Deeps: the Deeps

fled
Away in redounding smoke; the Sun
 Stood self-balanc'd. And Los smild
 with joy.
He the vast Spine of Urizen siez'd
 And bound down to the glowing illusion

8: But no light, for the Deep fled away
 On all sides, and left an unform'd
Dark vacuity: here Urizen lay
 In fierce torments on his glowing bed

9: Till his Brain in a rock, & his Heart
 In a fleshy slough formed four rivers
Obscuring the immense Orb of fire
 Flowing down into night: till a Form
Was completed, a Human Illusion
 In darkness and deep clouds involvd.

The End of The Book of Los

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