

## ON RE-READING BLAKE'S "JERUSALEM"

They have taken away from me my precious possessions;  
deep in the glowing shade of my heart they plundered  
the stored bric-a-brac of days unnumbered –  
says leaning like oak trees towards the blue mist,  
backwards to Iona, towards the vanishing point,  
towards the weary giving up of hazard for  
the safer claim of shining, clearly defined objects.

They, the vandal agents of unrest  
have torn up the altar cloths, swept  
the luminous haze from those immaculate features  
and made my God my own responsibility.

Must I forget that heaven-flooded floor of Ely,  
that couple in the Basilique de St. Ouen  
startled from their stone trance, etched  
in medieval twilight? Myriad tapers  
flickering through eternal darkness (ignore them?)  
fanned by the gentle breath of Tallis themes?

"I am not a God far off, I am a brother and a friend;  
within your bosoms I reside and you reside in me."

Seeds of a new bronze age are stirring  
in the firm-trodden soil underfoot  
where ivy spirals darkly, and the aconites  
are embers of a dying fire.

As babes, we reached for blossoms showered in spring;  
today, naught comes to hand but – aspiration!

Yet this they cannot take, when stringent fugues  
have filled the score, and phrases lacking melody  
have formed the arch-mould of a firmer music;  
as bare new structures rise from cowslip-covered  
ancient walls, - they shall not seize  
that chrysalis sphere wherein men turn from time to time  
to find tears lodged in the calyx of a rose.

*(circa 1942)*