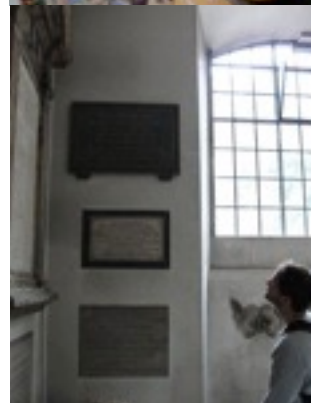




# WALKING BLAKE'S LONDON PILGRIMS IN THE FOURFOLD CITY

A VISUAL REPORT OF HENRY  
ELIOT'S WALKING TOUR THROUGH  
BLAKE'S LONDON

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# Blake's Fourfold Vision of London

A visual report of Henry Eliot's Fourfold Blake Walk

Blake's *London* is something not only to be read, but also walked. As Henry Eliot's wonderful walking tour through Blake's Fourfold City revealed, 'London' for Blake was both a place and a state, a process of endless destruction and regeneration. Standing in the midst of the Crossrail construction site at Bond Street, a stone's throw from Blake's only remaining London home, Henry evocatively drew our attention to this dynamic facet of London: that it is something perpetually being brought into being - built not simply out of bricks and mortar but also from human hopes and despair, conversations and compositions, the collective form of our shared anxieties and aspirations: "*the Spiritual Fourfold London, continually building & continually decaying desolate*". Wandering through these chartered streets brings home the reality of this endless collision of interior and literal: to be there in the middle of its myriad living arteries and voices is to experience at full force its embodied, energetic character. In Blake's vision the City is not a pollution of nature but a divine incarnation: it represents the outer soul or form of our shared decisions and desires, our values, needs, our appetites, and our creativity. Blake called these giant forces that shape our world the Four Zoas - the immense physical, intellectual, emotional and imaginative operating systems (Tharmas, Urizen, Luvah, and Urthona respectively) that exist within each of us. Blake's work traces their historical and psychological fall into "division" and dissociation, and Henry's tour of the city brilliantly captured this sense of London as a fragmented and dissociated psyche, riven by divided and divisive processes, a living and spectacular body at war with itself. To walk through London, as Blake himself understood, is to encounter these splits and shifts in an immediate and peculiarly powerful way, its different programs and powers like shards of some compulsive and incoherent mindset obsessed with hierarchy and control, but also pitying and protective. Experiencing this Fourfold City in the company of other Blakean 'pilgrims' provided an extraordinary and highly imaginative way of recognizing, and therefore potentially repairing, these aspects - integrating outer and inner, psychology and city - as we walked and talked through Soho and Southwark, Lambeth and Westminster, a human golden string threading through the streets. As the journey both evoked and embodied, Blake's London lives not only in the imagination but also in the heart, in the head, and in the feet - it is the bejeweled sandal of the vegetative world that Henry urged us to put on, as he led us - left foot first of course - through the concourses, alleys, arches and above all portals of this exhilarating and translucent city. Here are a few of the visual fragments of the Tour.







# Inside Blake's House

*"My Houses are Thoughts: my Inhabitants, Affections"*

One of the most exciting and compelling themes of Henry Eliot's tour was the idea of London as a living construct, a continual act of imaginative rebuilding and regeneration, so it was perhaps fitting that Blake's only remaining house in London was also undergoing major renovation. The Jerusalem builders were definitely in on the morning of our walk: Tim Heath, the Chair of the Blake Society, very kindly introduced the tour by showing us around Blake's rooms on South Molton Street, where William and Catherine lived from 1803-1821, the longest they stayed anywhere in London. They had two rooms here, on the first floor: one, a tiny back room where they both slept and ate, and a slightly larger room which looked out onto the street and acted as Blake's studio. As Tim poignantly observed, this space would have been full of Blake's production materials and apparatus: his printing presses, acids, engraving tools, copperplates, drying sheets of paper. And yet out of these confined and humble spaces Blake opened up eternity. Being inside Blake's own space is an unnerving and very moving experience. He and Catherine lived here for seventeen years, working on a number of projects including the only public exhibition of his artistic works (1809); his epic canvas 'A Vision of the Last Judgment'; his extraordinarily radical and daring portraits of William Pitt and Lord Nelson; and above all *Jerusalem*, his vast, liberational vision of a reintegrated and imaginatively transformed society.

It's odd to be able to stand in Blake's rooms looking out of the windows onto the London he saw, constantly building and rebuilding itself. Windows and light were of course profound metaphors for an artist such as Blake, someone minutely attuned to perception and the different forms of vision available to us, and it is startling to find oneself in the space that once contained his own vision:

*I write in South Molton Street what I both see and hear*

*In regions of Humanity, in London's opening streets.*

And those opening streets now beckoned.

## Inside Blake's Other House

The Blake Society is currently trying to acquire for the nation Blake's only other remaining house, in Felpham, through an imaginative 'crowdsourcing' campaign. This relies on a lot of people donating a little, and through this collective form of organisation - a very Blakean project - we can prevent this house from being lost or turned into a car park, and instead create for it a home for the imagination. Please click [here](#) to find out more.

## In Blake's Footsteps

Descending like a star into the left foot of Soho, Henry guided us first into the world of Blake's birth, baptism and his early apprenticeship ('Vegetative Blake').

Then through the portal of the British Museum we were led into the realm of ideas that forged and informed Blake's work: Newton, Swedenborg, the failed Revolutions of France and America, Albion's "fall into Division", represented daily in Westminster and Tyburn. This was the world of the godless straight lines of Urizen and the sacrificial stone of his Laws.

Passing through the Blakean rooms at Tate Britain we entered Luvah, the emotional life of Blake - his marriage to Catherine, his deep attachment to South London and the compassionate boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark: worlds of pity, love, desire, and passion; the abode of benefits and misery, prostitution and pleasure gardens, hospices, hospitals, and asylums.

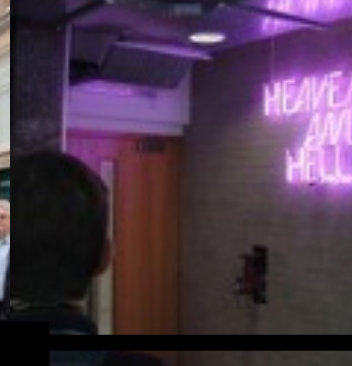
Finally, crossing the Thames, we entered into the City, the "Human awful wonder of God", riven between commerce and religion - divided and divisive worlds that the human imagination must somehow engage with and transform. We wandered through its chartered streets, its glass Satanic shards, its brutal stones and dark druidic Towers where a ceramic sigh still runs in blood down Palace walls.

The tour ended at the final portal of all, on the spot of Blake's grave in Bunhill. Here, Henry brilliantly and spontaneously urged us to call out the name of each Zoa, encouraging us to awaken and unite these titanic sleeping forces and figures within all of us and become the golden builders of our collective imaginative space, London.

**Henry Eliot** has devised and led guided walks in London for the National Trust, Google, the City of London, City Lit and the cheese shop in Leadenhall Market. He has lectured on Geoffrey Chaucer on the London Eye, led recreations of *The Canterbury Tales* and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and written for The Independent, Time Out, and The Guardian. He edits Curiosity, a map magazine of unusual things to do and see in London.







# THARMAS

## THE PHYSICAL BODY

And all this Vegetable World appear'd on my left Foot  
As a bright sandal form'd immortal of precious stones & gold.  
I stooped down & bound it on to walk forward thro' Eternity  
(Milton, 21.4)



## THARMAS THE BODY



## VEGETABLE BLAKE

A walk around Soho and Covent Garden, exploring Blake's earthly life: his birth, education and death.

### 17 South Molton Street

- William and Catherine lived here on their return from Felpham, Sussex, 1803-1821. It is the last of Blake's London residences to survive. A blue plaque marks the site.

*I write in South Molton Street what I both see and hear*

*In regions of Humanity, in London's opening streets.*

### 28 Broad Street

- Blake was born here on Monday, 28 November 1757. William's father, James, was a hosier. In 1808 he held his only public exhibition here in his brother's hosiery shop, in the first-floor room in which he had been born. The site is marked by text on the steps of William Blake House, Marshall Street.

*The Angel that presided o'er my birth*

*Said, 'Little creature, form'd of Joy & Mirth,*

*Go love without the help of any Thing on Earth.'*

### Golden Square

#### St James's Church, Piccadilly

- The Wren church in which Blake was christened on Sunday, 11 December 1757. The Grinling Gibbons font, in which Blake and his siblings were all baptised, is still in use. It represents the Tree of Knowledge.



### Par's Drawing Classes

- At the Corner of Agar St & King William St. In 1767, aged ten, Blake was sent to Mr Par's drawing classes, and spent four years copying plaster casts. The school was in Castle Court.

*Thank God, I never was sent to school*

*To be flog'd into following the Style of a Fool.*

### 3 Fountain Court

- Now the site of Savoy Buildings, 100 Strand (next to Simpson's in the Strand). William and Catherine lived here until his death on Sunday, 12 August 1827. From the steps of Savoy Buildings you can catch Blake's last view of the Thames, looking 'like a bar of gold'.

*I live in a hole here, but God has a beautiful mansion for me elsewhere.*

### The Royal Academy

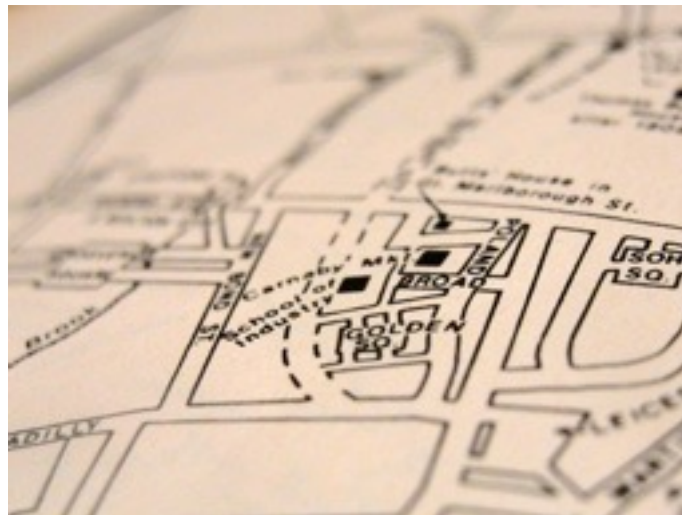
- The Royal Academy was founded in 1768, with Joshua Reynolds as its first President. Until 1837, the Academy was situated in Somerset House. In 1779, Blake became a student at the Academy.

### Great Queen Street

- Blake was apprenticed here to the engraver James Basire, 1772-1779. The Freemasons' Hall across the road was established in 1775, while Blake was living here.

### British Museum, Great Russell Street

- The British Museum has the largest collection of Blake's books in existence.



BRITISH MUSEUM: PORTAL INTO URIZEN





# URIZEN

## THE RATIONAL BODY

it is the Reasoning Power  
 An Abstract objecting power, that Negatives every thing  
 This is the Spectre of Man: the Holy Reasoning Power ...  
 Therefore Los stands in London building Golgonooza  
 Compelling his Spectre to labours mighty; trembling in fear  
 The Spectre weeps, but Los unmoved by tears or threats remains

I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans  
 I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create  
*(Jerusalem, 10: 13-21)*





## URIZEN YOUR REASON



## RADICAL BLAKE

A walk to Tyburn and around Westminster, discussing Blake's intellectual life : his philosophy and politics.

### 28 Poland Street

- William and Catherine lived here, 1785-1790.

### The Kings Arms

- The Ancient Order of Druids was revived here on Blake's birthday, 1781. A blue plaque marks the spot at 23 Poland Street.

### 31 Great Queen Street

- Blake was apprenticed here to the engraver James Basire, 1772-1779. The studio has since been rebuilt as the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys. At the end of his term, aged 21, he became a professional engraver. The Freemasons' Hall across the road was established in 1775, while Blake was living here. In June 1780, Blake was walking towards Basire's shop in Great Queen Street, and was swept up by a rampaging mob that stormed Newgate Prison (the Gordon Riots).

### Oxford Circus

*There is in Albion a Gate of Precious stones and gold  
Bending across the road of Oxford Street. It from Hyde Park  
To Tyburn's deathful shades admits the wandering souls*



### **Tyburn Tree**

- Tyburn Tree' was a triangular gibbet that could execute as many as 24 felons simultaneously. Named after the Tyburn Brook that ran close by, it stood at the western entrance to London from 1571 until 1783. Today the site is marked on a traffic island near Marble Arch.

*He sat by Tyburn's brook, and underneath his heel shot up  
A deadly Tree ... The Shuttles of death sing in the sky to Islington & Pancrass,  
Round Marybone to Tyburn's River, weaving black melancholy as a net,  
And despair as meshes closely wove over the west of London  
Where mild Jerusalem sought to repose in death & be no more.*

### **Westminster Abbey**

- Blake was sent by Basire to draw the monuments here. He clambered on to the tombs to draw them more accurately. There is a memorial bust of Blake in Poets' Corner, by Sir Jacob Epstein.

*Let them look at Gothic Figures & Gothic Buildings & not talk of Dark Ages or of any Age. Ages are all Equal. But  
Genius is Always Above the Age.*

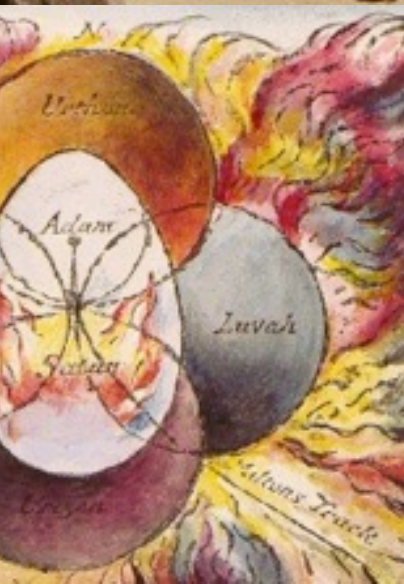
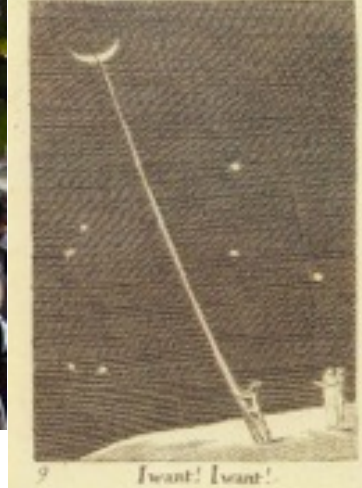
### **Tate Britain**

- Built on the site of Millbank Prison, the museum has a dedicated Blake room on its Upper Floor. The octagonal Gallery II (ground floor) has a mosaic floor by Boris Anrep, representing Blake's Proverbs of Hell.



TATE BRITAIN: PORTAL INTO LUVAH





# LUVAH

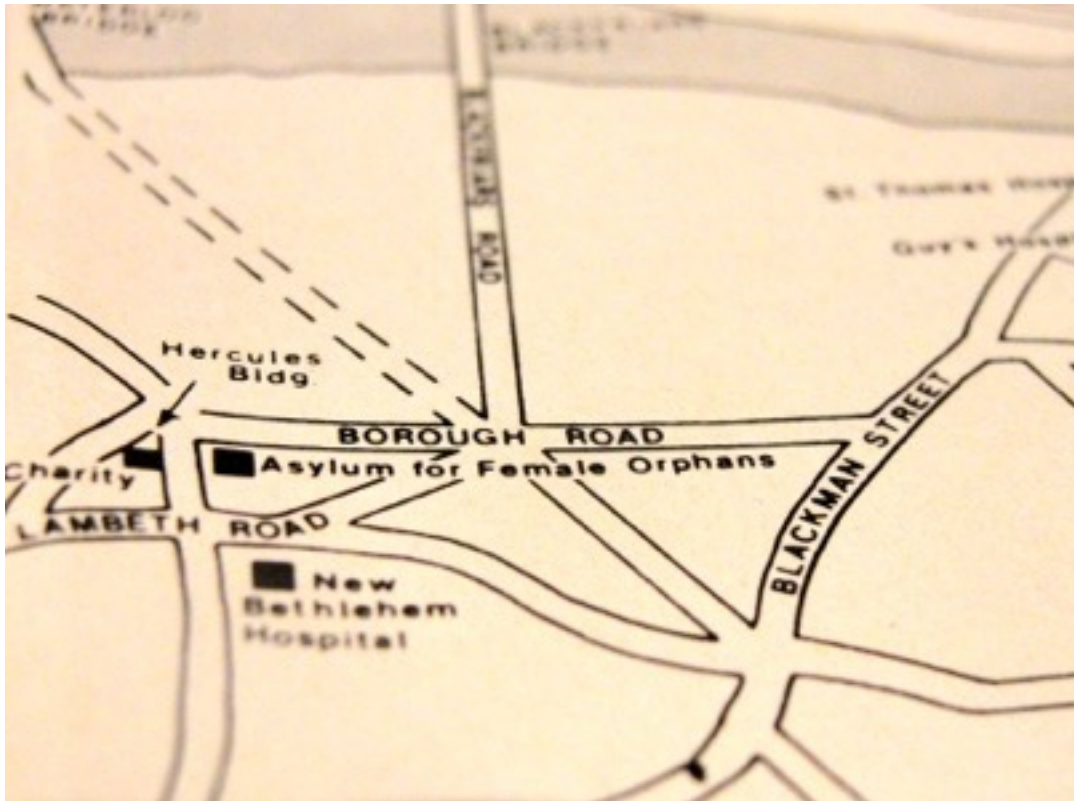
## THE EMOTIONAL BODY

*Here, on the banks of the Thames, Los builded Golgonooza,  
Outside of the Gates of the Human Heart beneath Beulah  
In the midst of the rocks of the Altars of Albion. In fears  
He builded it, in rage & in fury. It is the Spiritual Fourfold  
London, continually building & continually decaying desolate.  
(Jerusalem, 53.15)*





## LUVAH THE LOVER



## EMOTIONAL BLAKE

A walk around Lambeth, feeling Blake's emotional life: his marriage and his passions.

### From Tate Britain: Walk along The Thames

*I wander thro' each charter'd street,  
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.*

### Lambeth Bridge

*Lambeth! the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, loveth thee.  
Thou art one with her & knowest not of self in thy supreme joy.*

### St Mary's, Battersea

- William met Catherine in Battersea in 1782. They were married on Sunday, 18 August 1782. There is a memorial stained glass window celebrating the church's connection to Blake.

### 13 Hercules Buildings, Lambeth

- William and Catherine lived here, 1790-1800. A blue plaque marks the site on what is now the William Blake Estate, Hercules Road. Thomas Butts, Blake's patron, purportedly discovered them reading *Paradise Lost*, naked in the garden.

### Centaur Street, Virgil Street, & Carlisle Lane (N)

- There are seventy Blake-inspired mosaics in the Waterloo tunnel arches, on Centaur Street, Virgil Street and Carlisle Lane.

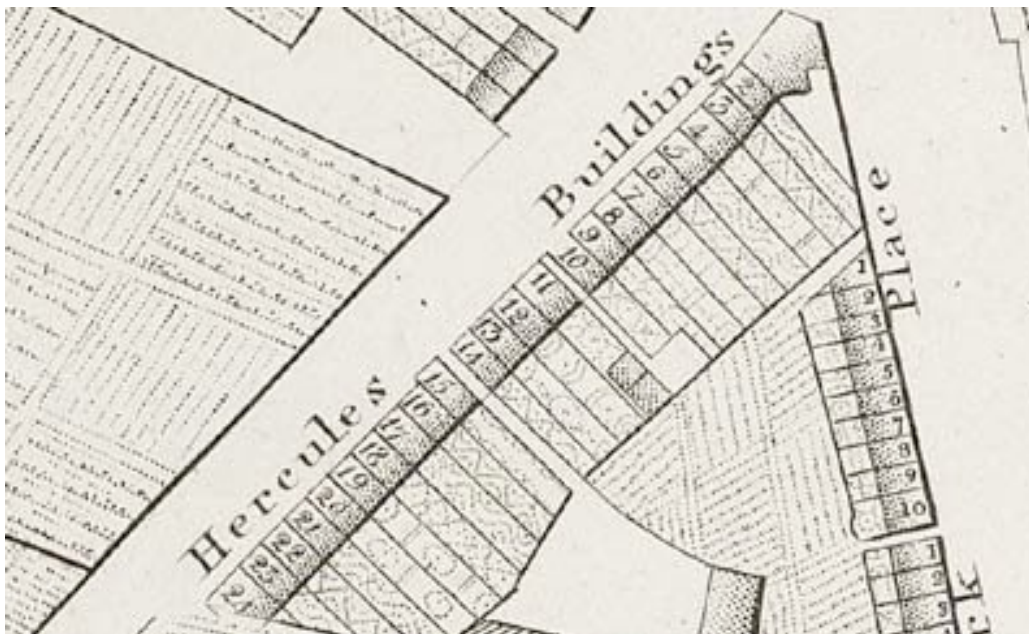
### Albion Mill

- Now Falcon Point, Hopton Street. The first great factory in London, an automated mill powered by steam engines. In 1791 it burnt down and remained a ruined shell until 1809. Today the site off Blackfriars Road is known as Falcon Point.

*And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic Mills?*

### Blackfriars Bridge

*Here, on the banks of the Thames, Los builded Golgonooza,  
Outside of the Gates of the Human Heart beneath Beulah  
In the midst of the rocks of the Altars of Albion.*



BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE: PORTAL INTO URTHONA





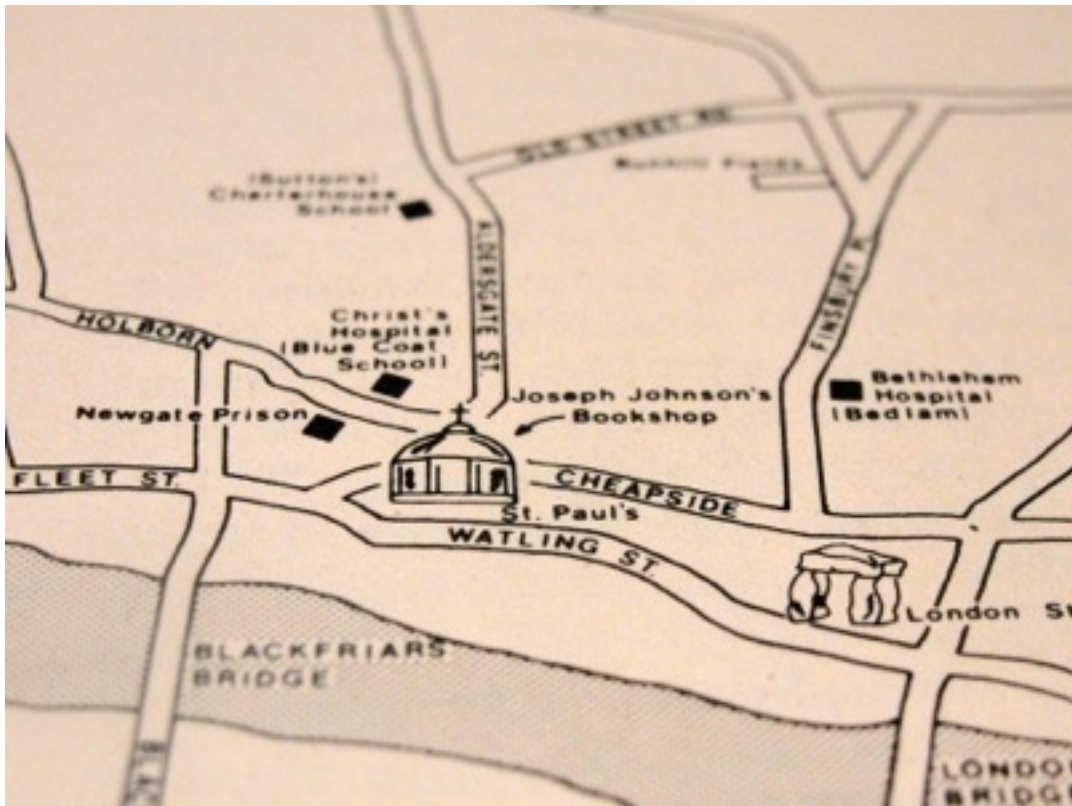
# URTHONA

## THE IMAGINATIVE BODY

*My Streets are my Ideas of Imagination.  
Awake Albion, awake! And let us awake up together.  
My Houses are Thoughts: my Inhabitants, Affections,  
The children of my thoughts walking within my blood-vessels,  
Shut from my nervous form which sleeps upon the verge of Beulah  
In dreams of darkness, while my vegetating blood in veiny pipes  
Rolls dreadful thro' the Furnaces of Los and the Mills of Satan.  
(Jerusalem, 38.32)*



## URTHONA THE IMAGINATION



### VISIONARY BLAKE

A walk around the City and Clerkenwell, envisaging Blake's creative life: his poetry, art and transfiguration of London.

#### St Paul's Cathedral

- There is a memorial to Blake in the crypt of St Paul's.

*A wondrous golden Building immense with ornaments sublime  
Is bright Cathedron's golden Hall, its Courts, Towers & Pinnacles.*

#### London Stone

- 111 Cannon Street: 'London Stone', the ancient block of oolitic limestone, visible through an aperture in the wall opposite Cannon Street station, was believed by William Camden to be a Roman millarium, from which distances were measured.

*They build a stupendous Building on the Plain of Salisbury, with chains  
Of rocks round London Stone, of Reasonings, of unhewn Demonstrations  
In labyrinthine arches*

#### London Bridge

*I see London, blind & age-bent, begging thro' the Streets  
Of Babylon, led by a child. His tears run down his beard.*



**Billingsgate, Lower Thames Street**

*Los saw the envious blight above his Seventh Furnace  
On London's Tower on the Thames; he drew Cambel in wrath  
Into his thundering Bellows, heaving it for a loud blast,  
And with the blast of his Furnace upon fishy Billingsgate,  
Beneath Albion's fatal Tree before the Gate of Los,  
Shew'd her the fibres of her beloved to ameliorate  
The envy.*

**The Tower of London**

*thence thro' the narrows of the River's side ...  
To where the Tower of London frown'd dreadful over Jerusalem*

**Bethlem Hospital**

• Moorgate (to the west, outside the old wall)  
*thence to Bethlehem, where was builded  
Dens of despair in the house of bread.*

**Bunhill Fields, Old Street**

• The dissenters' burial ground, where Blake was interred in an unmarked grave in 1827.  
*I cannot think of death as more than the going out of one room into another.*

*Urizen & Luvah & Tharmas & Urthona arose into  
Albion's Bosom. Then Albion stood before Jesus in the Clouds  
Of Heaven, Fourfold among the Visions of God in Eternity*



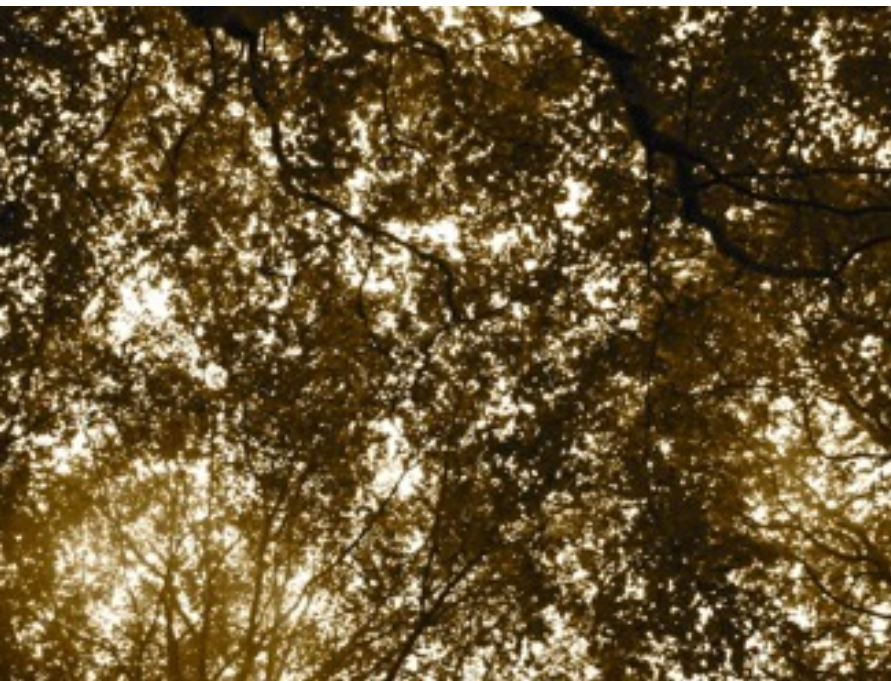
PORTAL INTO ETERNITY



**THE END**

**BUNHILL FIELDS**

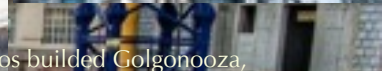
*"I cannot think of death as more than the  
going out of one room into another."*







# BUILDING GOLGONOOZA



Here, on the banks of the Thames, Los built Golgonooza,  
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