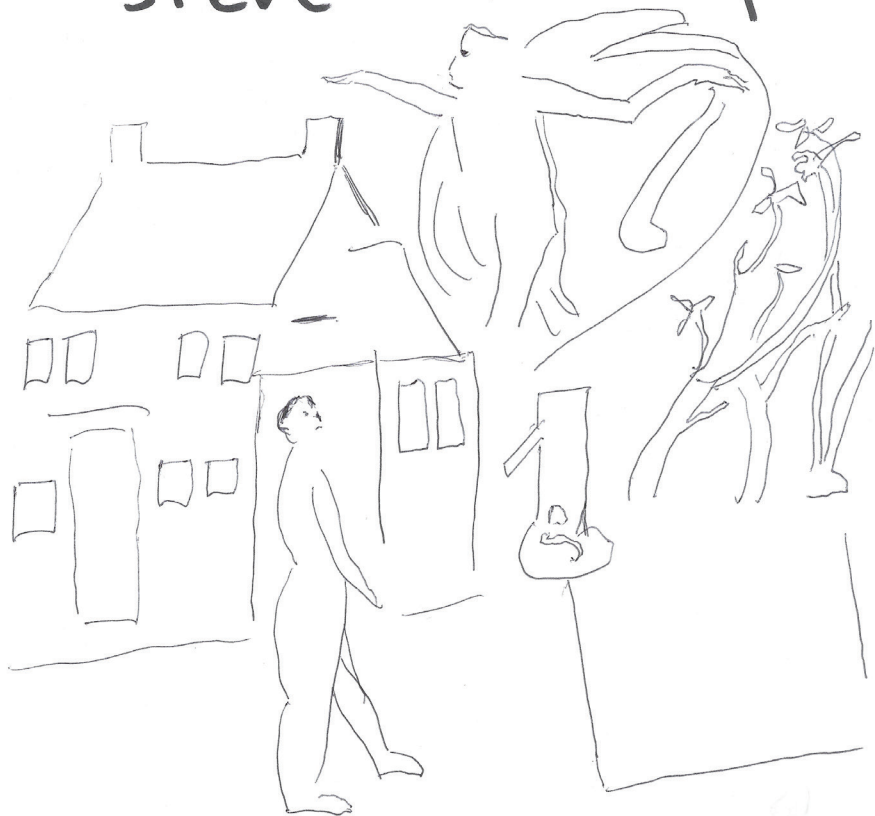


Blake and Hayley
The
Felpham Poems
Steve by Micalef



Blake and Hayley

The Felpham Poems

by Stephen Micallef

Foreword

This is my own poetic Blake, my heroic, defiant, antinomian Blake who follows his conscience when he finds he is enslaved by another man's system for a time in Felpham. He got through it and learnt hugely at the Hayley university then succeeded in breaking away and moving on.

Although this book has many faults it takes in the great Blakean scholarship of Frye, Raine, Bentley, Morton Paley, Foster Damon, Erdman and the popular historical sweep of Ackroyd as well as lifting Blake's words to conjure up the atmosphere of the times in Felpham under threat of invasion. England had 40,000 troops ready and billeted at the coast waiting to do battle. Blake got caught up in it when he struggled to remove a soldier from his garden.

These poems are little Blakeulations - speculations from the gut-feeling of a poet, some fictionalisations - dramatising a scene and some deliberate, plagiarised Blakebytes to hammer home what I regard as essential Blake moments and themes. A cosmology is included to guide the neophyte.

I wanted to include the much denigrated and maligned patron of Blake in these years and afterwards for a time of gratitude to Hayley in London. Flaxman first introduced Blake to Hayley in 1784 in the hope that his patron would cough up some money to send Blake to Italy to learn about classical art. The project failed and Blake turned violently against classical to embrace totally gothic art. Blake came to Felpham when his known revolutionary fervour was getting him into trouble in London. He was one of the last men wearing the Bonnet Rouge after the disgusting bloodshed of the reign of Terror had begun. He swapped the chartered streets of London for the sheep-filled streets of Felpham for 3 years slumber by the ocean to commune with long-dead Milton in his garden.

Hayley was far higher socially and far more famous as a poet. He was the world expert on Milton, his biography was

influential for a hundred years. He was friends with The Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Egremont who judged Blake when he was tried for sedition at the court sessions at Petworth and Chichester in 1804. He was even friends with Pitt the prime Minister - Urizen himself ! Hayley had looked after Cowper in his madness and Romney in his depression and he looked after Blake in his troubles.

The downside was this Swedenborgian didn't have enough spiritual depth for Blake and tried to suffocate him into being a mere copying engraver. Hayley was a linguist - could speak seven languages fluently but as Robert Southey said of him - "Everything was good about the man but his poetry".

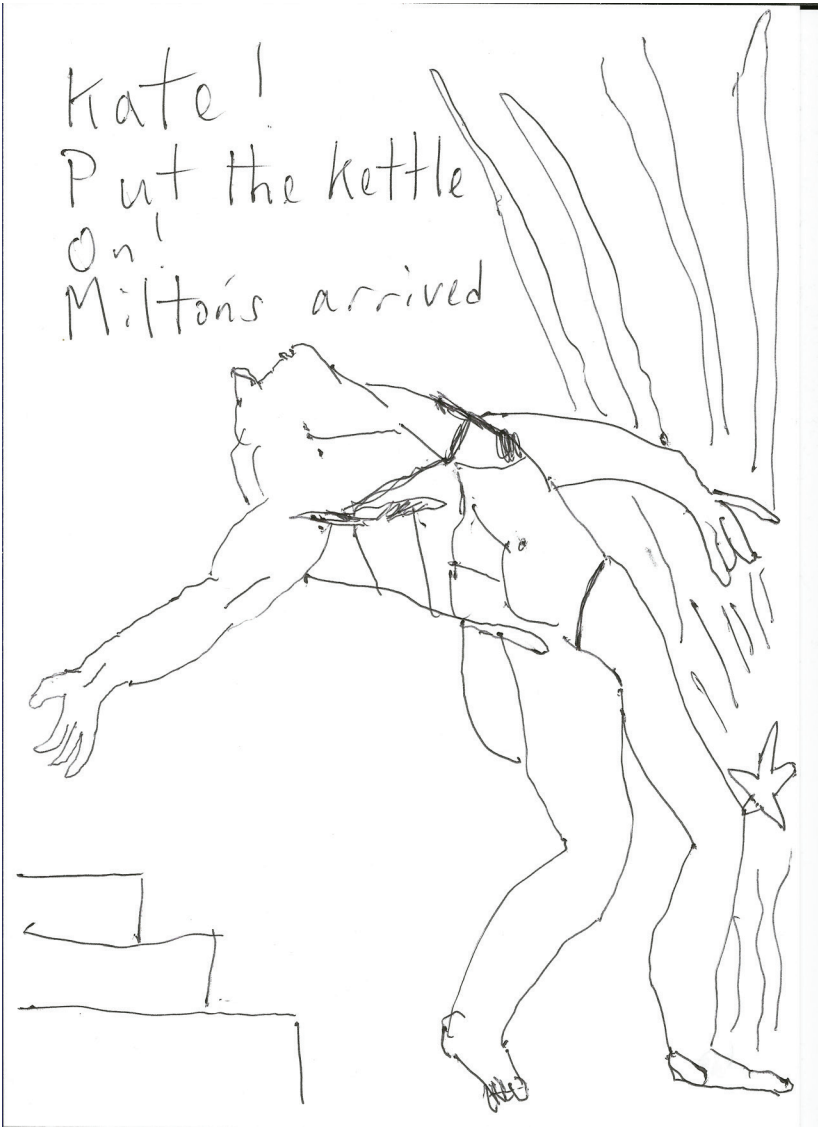
Hayley promoted the idea of English epic poetry but never realised he had the greatest of his century sitting right next to him. Blake wrote 2 prophetic visionary epic poems - Milton and Jerusalem - directly inspired by his experiences in Felpham.

Blake lived on in great poverty true to himself believing Fear and Hope are Vision.

This is my personal Blake - subjective, unsubstantiated. A man who perpetually inspires my poetic flashes out of the puzzling hiatus created by 'Tatham's Holocaust'. Blake leaves many a missing piece in the jigsaw and a Blakean tries to fill in the missing piece with his own heart but can never stand in Blake's shoes, though Blake always invites us to slip into his shoes and follow his path into the Almighty.

Stephen Micallef
Summer 2017

Kate!
Put the kettle
On!
Milton's arrived



Index of Poems

Thomas Alphonso

Felpham - Shadow Of the Eternal Drama

The Big Move

The Angel on Blake's Roof

The White Cat Nobody Knows

Kate and William Go Shopping

Hayley, Blake, John Marsh and The Bard of Oxford

Blake founders under Hayley

Blake Feels Disenchanted

The Thistleman

Hayley Cracks his Skull

Blake's Seaside Thunderstorm

Blake Vanquishes Milton's Puritanism

Gwendolin and Hyle

Get Out of My Garden

He Said No Such Thing

Hope in a Grain of Sand

Lady Hesketh

Blake A Free Man

Blake's Gallop

The Victory Party

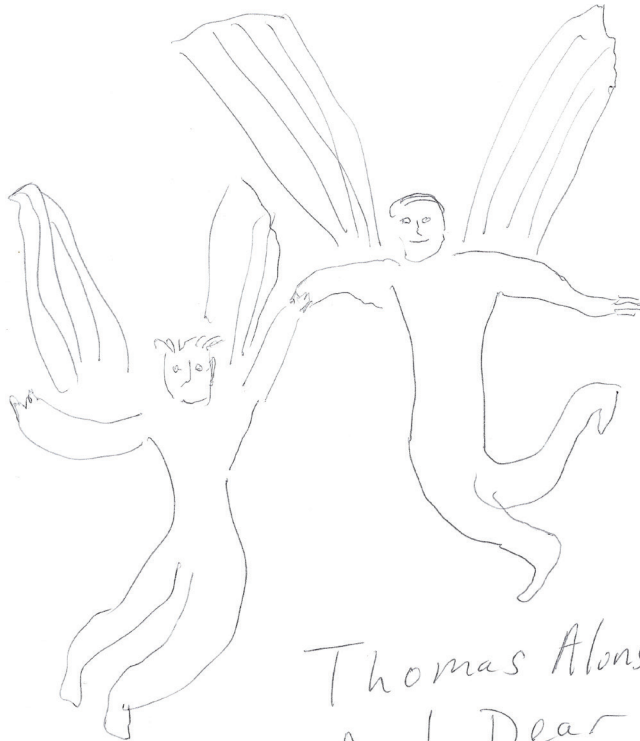
Back to The London Fray

Hayley at Blake's Show

Thomas Alphonso

Blake would have recognised the poet and playwright Hayley living with his mum
a few doors down at no.5 Great Queen St
Flaxman gave him “Poetical Sketches” in 1784
apologising for Blake’s lack of education
Alphonso, Hayley’s illegitimate son, called
“The Invalid - The Beloved Cripple”
by his devoted father,
spouted Shakespeare at 3 and Latin at 4 years old
Apprenticed to Flaxman who likewise suffered from curvature of the spine
told him stories of the genius of Blake
Alphonso was so fired up by 1796 he walked from the studio in Fitzroy Square
to take tea at the Flora Tearooms
in the hope of meeting Mr Blake who lived in a house opposite
Finally brought together
when Blake engraved Alphonso’s drawings
of Pericles and Demosthenes and Flaxman suggested Blake draw Alphonso for Hayley’s “Essay on Sculpture” -
A verse epistle to Flaxman
But Alphonso was dying
“Your Sorrows and your dear son’s May Jesus and his Angels assuage” wrote Blake
Hayley and the dear cripple found Blake’s engraving
“a mortifying disappointment”
Hayley got Blake to redo the engraving twice
“Truth, precision and force of character can escape the firmest ablest hand”
Hayley criticised gently
Sadly Blake failed to finish when Alphonso died aged 19
yet gave Hayley immeasurable spiritual solace in his letter of May 6th 1800

“I know that our deceased friends are more
really with us than when they were apparent to our mortal part.
I lost a brother and with his spirit I converse daily and hourly
in the spirit
and see him in my remembrance
I hear his advice and even now write from his dictate
a source of immortal joy - by it I am the companion of angels -
Every mortal loss is an immortal gain
The ruins of Time build mansions in Eternity”
Hayley found great comfort in his hour of loss
and a plan was hatched for Blake in Felpham



Thomas Alonzo
And Dear
Robert sport
in Heaven

Felpham - a shadow of the life not drama

Bread riots in London - bad harvest, Napoleon's blockade in diversion of grain
To troops meant a huge shortage
Bread will be sold the quarter - assemble
Monday at Cornmarket - posters stuck

On Monument for a riot. On Tuesday
Baker's shops ransacked by the mob
At White chapel. On Wednesday they
were handed out to "starved fellow
creatures" St. George's Fields -

Bring proper weapons "we'll put
the bloodthirsty soldiers to flight"
Blaker's delayed a day - Col. Catherine
ill with exhaustion from leaving camp

Felpham thought it meritorious excites
Her into a flame of many precious
jewelled colours - finally leave Lambeth

At 6 in the morning so - arriving
Heavy boxes in Blaker's sister's cottage
At the damp, cold Marine Cottages
Before midnight - 70 miles in 17 hours

Changing horses 7 x's. Blaker was a fireball
of hyperbole enthralling of Felpham's "Bread
of sweet thought" - his cottage THE shadow
of the House of Celestial Inhabitants
Hearing the spirits of them more clearly
No distinctly in Felpham's magical arms
welcoming

Felpham - Shadow of the Eternal Drama

“Bring proper weapons” exhorted fliers for a bread riot

“We`ll put the bloodthirsty soldiers to flight”

London poor were starving

The Blakes delayed leaving a day

Kate was exhausted

Mention Felpham and she turns into a flame

of many precious jewelled colours

They leave at 6 in the morning with Blake’s sister helping

all their belongings crammed in 16 heavy boxes

A pleasant day - no grumbling

changing horses 7 times

70 miles in 17 hours

arriving at the cold, damp marine cottage just before midnight

Blake a fireball of hyperbole

Felpham all “the Bread of sweet Thought and Wine of Delight”

His cottage “The shadow of the house of Celestial Inhabitants”

At last he could hear the spirits

see them more clearly

All was distinct and fresh

in Felpham’s welcoming arms