

**TIRIEL**

**WILLIAM BLAKE**

1

And Aged Tiriél. stood before the Gates of his beautiful  
palace

With Myratana. once the Queen of all the western plains  
But now his eyes were darkned. and his wife fading in  
death

They stood before their once delightful palace. and thus  
the Voice

Of aged Tiriél. arose. that his sons might hear in their  
gates

Accursed race of Tiriél. behold your father  
Come forth and look on her that bore you. come you  
accursed sons.

In my weak arms. I here have borne your dying mother  
Come forth sons of the Curse come forth. see the death  
of Myratana

His sons ran from their gates. and saw their aged parents  
stand

And thus the eldest son of Tiriél raisd his mighty voice

Old man unworthy to be calld. the father of Tiriéls race  
For evry one of those thy wrinkles. each of those grey  
hairs

Are cruel as death. and as obdurate as the devouring pit  
Why should thy sons care for thy curses thou accursed  
man

Were we not slaves till we rebeld. Who cares for Tiriéls  
curse

His blessing was a cruel curse. His curse may be a blessing

He ceast the aged man raisd up his right hand to the heavens

His left supported Myratana shrinking in pangs of death  
The orbs of his large eyes he opend. and thus his voice went forth

Serpents not sons. wreathing around the bones of Tiriell  
Ye worms of death feasting upon your aged parents flesh  
Listen and hear your mothers groans. No more accursed  
Sons

She bears. she groans not at the birth of Heuxos or Yuva  
These are the groans of death ye serpents These are the groans of death

Nourishd with milk ye serpents. nourishd with mothers tears and cares

Look at my eyes blind as the orbless scull among the stones

Look at my bald head. Hark listen ye serpents listen  
What Myratana. What my wife. O Soul O Spirit O fire  
What Myratana. art thou dead. Look here ye serpents  
look

The serpents sprung from her own bowels have draind her dry as this

Curse on your ruthless heads. for I will bury her even here

So saying he began to dig a grave with his aged hands  
But Heuxos calld a son of Zazel. to dig their mother a  
grave

Old cruelty desist and let us dig a grave for thee  
Thou hast refusd our charity thou hast refusd our food  
Thou hast refusd our clothes our beds our houses for thy  
dwelling

Chusing to wander like a Son of Zazel in the rocks  
Why dost thou curse. is not the curse now come upon  
your head

Was it not you enslavd the sons of Zazel. and they have  
cursd

And now you feel it. Dig a grave and let us bury our  
mother

There take the body. cursed sons. and may the heavens  
rain wrath

As thick as northern fogs. around your gates. to choke  
you up

That you may lie as now your mother lies. like dogs. cast  
out

The stink. of your dead carcasses. annoying man and  
beast

Till your white bones are bleachd with age for a  
memorial.

No your remembrance shall perish. for when your  
carcasses

Lie stinking on the earth. the buriers shall arise from the  
east

And. not a bone of all the soils of Tiriell remain

Bury your mother but you cannot bury the curse of Tiriell

He ceased and darkling o'er the mountains sought his  
pathless way

2

He wandered day and night to him both day and night  
were dark

The sun he felt but the bright moon was now a useless  
globe

O'er mountains and thro' vales of woe. the blind and aged  
man

Wandered till he that leadeth all. led him to the vales of  
Har

And Har and Heva like two children sat beneath the Oak  
Mnetha now aged waited on them. and brought them  
food and clothing

But they were as the shadow of Har. and as the years  
forgotten

Playing with flowers. and running after birds they spent  
the day

And in the night like infants slept delighted with infant  
dreams

Soon as the blind wanderer entered the pleasant gardens  
of Har

They ran weeping like frightened infants for refuge in  
Mnetha's arms

The blind man felt his way and cried peace to these open doors

Let no one fear for poor blind Tiriël hurts none but himself

Tell me O friends where am I now. and in what pleasant place

This is the valley of Har said Mnetha and this the tent of Har

Who art thou poor blind man. that takest the name of Tiriël on thee

Tiriël is king of all the west. who art thou I am Mnetha  
And this is Har and Heva. trembling like infants by my side

I know Tiriël is king of the west and there he lives in joy  
No matter who I am O Mnetha. if thou hast any food  
Give it me. for I cannot stay my journey is far from hence

Then Har said O my mother Mnetha venture not so near him

For he is the king of rotten wood and of the bones of death

He wanders. without eyes. and passes thro thick walls and doors

Thou shalt not smite my mother Mnetha O thou eyeless man

A wanderer. I beg for food. you see I cannot weep

I cast away my staff the kind companion of my travel  
And I kneel down that you may see I am a harmless man

He kneeled down and Mnetha said Come Har and Heva  
rise

He is an innocent old man and hungry with his travel

Then Har arose and laid his hand upon old Tiriels head

God bless thy poor bald pate. God bless. thy hollow  
winking eyes

God bless thy shriveld beard. God. bless. thy many  
wrinkled forehead

Thou hast no teeth old man and thus I kiss thy sleek bald  
head

Heva come kiss his bald head for he will not hurt us  
Heva

Then Heva came and took old Tiriel in her mothers arms

Bless thy poor eyes old man. and bless the old father of  
Tiriel

Thou art my Tiriels old father. I know thee thro thy  
wrinkles

Because thou smellest. like the figtree. thou smellest like  
ripe figs

How didst thou lose thy eyes old Tiriel. bless thy  
wrinkled face

Mnetha said come in aged wanderer tell us of thy name

Why shouldest thou conceal thyself from those of thine  
own flesh

I am not of this region. said Tiriël dissemblingly  
I am an aged wanderer once father of a race  
Far in the north. but they were wicked and were all  
destroyd  
And I their father sent an outcast. I have told you all  
Ask me no more I pray for grief hath seal'd my precious  
sight

O Lord said Mnetha how I tremble are there then more  
people  
More human creatures on this earth beside the sons of  
Har

No more said Tiriël but I remain on all this globe  
And I remain an outcast. hast thou any thing to drink

Then Mnetha gave him milk and fruits. and they sat  
down together

3

They sat and eat and Har and Heva smild on Tiriël

Thou art a very old old man but I am older than thou  
How came thine hair to leave thy forehead how came thy  
face so brown

My hair is very long my beard. doth cover all my breast

God bless thy piteous face. to count the wrinkles in thy  
face

Would puzzle Mnetha. bless thy face for thou art Tiriell

Tiriell I never saw but once I sat with him and eat  
He was as chearful as a prince and gave me  
entertainment

But long I staid not at his palace for I am forced to wander

What wilt thou leave us too said Heva thou shalt not  
leave us too

For we have many sports to shew thee and many songs  
to sing

And after dinner we will walk into the cage of Har

And thou shalt help us to catch birds. and gather them  
ripe cherries

Then let thy name be Tiriell and never leave us more

If thou dost go said Har I wish thine eyes may see thy  
folly

My sons have left me did thine leave thee O twas very  
cruel

No venerable man said Tiriell ask me not such things

For thou dost make my heart to bleed my sons were not  
like thine

But worse O never ask me more or I must flee away

Thou shalt not go said Heva till thou hast seen our  
singing birds

And heard Har sing in the great cage and slept upon our fleeces

Go not for thou art so like Tiriell. that I love thine head

Tho it is wrinkled like the earth parchd with the summer heat

Then Tiriell rose up from the seat and said god bless these tents

My Journey is oer rocks and mountains. not in pleasant vales

I must not sleep nor rest because of madness and dismay

And Mnetha said Thou must not go to wander dark. alone

But dwell with us and let us be to thee instead of eyes

And I will bring thee food old man. till death shall call thee hence

Then Tiriell frownd and answerd. Did I not command you saying

Madness and deep dismay posses the heart of the blind man

The wanderer who seeks the woods leaning upon his staff

Then Mnetha trembling at his frowns led him to the tent door

And gave to him his staff and blest him. he went on his way

But Har and Heva stood and watchd him till he enterd  
the wood

And then they went and wept to Mnetha. but they soon  
forgot their tears

4

Over the weary hills the blind man took his lonely way  
To him the day and night alike was dark and desolate  
But far he had not gone when Ijim from his woods come  
down

Met him at entrance of the forest in a dark and lonely  
way

Who art thou Eyeless wretch that thus obstructst the  
lions path

Ijim shall rend thy feeble joints thou tempter of dark Ijim  
Thous hast the form of Tiriell but I know thee well  
enough

Stand from my path foul fiend is this the last of thy  
deceits

To be a hypocrite and stand in shape of a blind beggar

The blind man heard his brothers voice and kneeld down  
on his knee

O brother Ijim if it is thy voice that speaks to me  
Smite not thy brother Tiriell tho weary of his life  
My sons have smitten me already. and if thou smitest me  
The curse that rolls over their heads will rest itself on  
thine

Tis now seven years since in my palace I beheld thy face

Come thou dark fiend I dare thy cunning know that Ijim  
scorns

To smite thee in the form of helpless age and eyeless  
policy

Rise up for I discern thee and I dare thy eloquent tongue

Come I will lead thee on thy way and use thee as a scoff

O Brother Ijim thou beholdest wretched Tiriell

Kiss me my brother and then leave me to wander  
desolate

No artful fiend. but I will lead thee dost thou want to go  
Reply not lest I bind thee with the green flags of the  
brook

Ay now thou art discovered I will use thee like a slave

When Tiriell heard the words of Ijim he sought not to  
reply

He knew twas vain for Ijims words were as the voice of  
Fate

And they went on together over hills thro woody dales  
Blind to the pleasures of the sight and deaf to warbling  
birds

All day they walkd and all the night beneath the pleasant  
Moon

Westwardly journeying till Tiriell grew weary with his  
travel

O Ijim I am faint and weary for my knees forbid  
To bear me further. urge me not lest I should die with  
travel

A little rest I crave a little water from a brook  
Or I shall soon discover that I am a mortal man  
And you will lose your once lovd Tiriel alas how fain I  
am

Impudent fiend said Ijim hold thy glib and eloquent  
tongue

Tiriel is a king. and thou the tempter of dark Ijim  
Drink of this running brook. and I will bear thee on my  
shoulders

He drank and Ijim raisd him up and bore him on his  
shoulders

All day he bore him and when evening drew her solemn  
curtain

Enterd the gates of Tiriels palace. and stood and calld  
aloud

Heuxos come forth I here have brought the fiend that  
troubles Ijim

Look knowst thou aught of this grey beard. or of these  
blinded eyes

Heuxos and Lotho ran forth at the sound of Ijims voice  
And saw their aged father borne upon his mighty  
shoulders

Their eloquent tongues were dumb and sweat stood on.  
their trembling limbs

They knew twas vain to strive with Ijim they bowd and  
silent stood

What Heuxos call thy father for I mean to sport to night  
This is the Hypocrite that sometimes roars a dreadful  
lion

Then I have rent his limbs and left him rotting in the  
forest

For birds to eat but I have scarce departed from the place  
But like a tyger he would come and so I rent him too  
Then like a river he would seek to drown me in his  
waves

But soon I buffeted the torrent anon like to a cloud  
Fraught with the swords of lightning. but I bravd the  
vengeance too

Then he would creep like a bright serpent till around my  
neck

While I was Sleeping he would twine I squeezd his  
poisnous soul

Then like a toad or like a newt. would whisper in my  
ears

Or like a rock stood in my way. or like a poisnous shrub  
At last I caught him in the form of Tiriell blind and old  
And so Ill keep him fetch your father fetch forth  
Myratana

They stood confounded. and Thus Tiriell raisd his silver  
voice

Serpents not sons why do you stand fetch hither Tiriell  
Fetch hither Myratana and delight yourselves with scoffs

For poor blind Tiriell is returned and this much injured head  
Is ready for your bitter taunts. come forth sons of the  
curse

Mean time the other sons of Tiriell ran around their father  
Confounded at the terrible strength of Ijim they new twas  
vain

Both spear and shield were useless and the coat of iron  
mail

When Ijim stretched his mighty arm. the arrow from his  
limbs

Rebounded and the piercing sword broke on his naked  
flesh

Then is it true Heuxos that thou hast turned thy aged  
parent

To be the sport of wintry winds. (said Ijim) is this true  
It is a lie and I am like the tree torn by the wind

Thou eyeless fiend. and you dissemblers. Is this Tiriell's  
house

It is as false as Matha. and as dark as vacant Orcus  
Escape ye fiends for Ijim will not lift his hand against ye

So saying. Ijim gloomy turned his back and silent sought  
The secret forests and all night wandered in desolate ways

5

And aged Tiriell stood and said where does the thunder  
sleep

Where doth he hide his terrible head and his swift and  
fiery daughters

Where do they shroud their fiery wings and the terrors of  
their hair

Earth thus I stamp thy bosom rouse the earthquake from  
his den

To raise his dark and burning visage thro the cleaving  
ground

To thrust these towers with his shoulders. let his fiery  
dogs

Rise from the center belching flames and roarings. dark  
smoke

Where art thou Pestilence that bathest in fogs and  
standing lakes

Rise up thy sluggish limbs. and let the loathsomest of  
poisons

Drop from thy garments as thou walkest. wrapt in yellow  
clouds

Here take thy seat. in this wide court. let it be strewn  
with dead

And sit and smile upon these cursed sons of Tiriels

Thunder and fire and pestilence. here you not Tiriels  
curse

He ceast the heavy clouds confusd rolld round the lofty  
towers

Discharging their enormous voices. at the fathers curse

The earth trembled fires belched from the yawning clefts

And when the shaking ceast a fog possest the accursed  
clime

The cry was great in Tiriels palace his five daughters ran  
And caught him by the garments weeping with cries of  
bitter woe

Aye now you feel the curse you cry. but may all ears be  
deaf

As Tiriels and all eyes as blind as Tiriels to your woes  
May never stars shine on your roofs may never sun nor  
moon t

Visit you but eternal fogs hover around your walls  
Hela my youngest daughter you shall lead me from this  
place

And let the curse fall on the rest and wrap them up  
together

He ceast and Hela led her father from the noisom place  
In haste they fled while all the sons and daughters of  
Tiriels

Chaind in thick darkness utterd cries of mourning all the  
night

And in the morning Lo an hundred men in ghastly death  
The four daughters stretchd on the marble pavement  
silent all

falln by the pestilence the rest moped round in guilty  
fears

And all the children in their beds were cut off in one  
night

Thirty of Tiriels sons remaind. to wither in the palace  
Desolate. Loathed. Dumb Astonishd waiting for black  
death

6

And Hela led her father thro the silent of the night  
Astonishd silent. till the morning beams began to spring

Now Hela I can go with pleasure and dwell with Har and  
Heva

Now that the curse shall clean devour all those guilty  
sons

This is the right and ready way I know it by the sound  
That our feet make. Remember Hela I have savd thee  
from death

Then be obedient to thy father for the curse is taken off  
thee

I dwelt with Myratana five years in the desolate rock  
And all that time we waited for the fire to fall from  
heaven

Or for the torrents of the sea to overwhelm you all  
But now my wife is dead and all the time of grace is past  
You see the parents curse. Now lead me where I have  
commanded

O Leagued with evil spirits thou accursed man of sin  
True I was born thy slave who askd thee to save me from  
death—

Twass for thy self thou cruel man because thou wantest  
eyes

True Hela this is the desert of all those cruel ones

Is Tiriël cruel look. his daughter and his youngest  
daughter  
Laughs at affection glories in rebellion. scoffs at Love:  
I have not eat these two days lead me to Har and Hevas  
tent  
Or I will wrap the up in such a terrible fathers curse  
That thou shalt feel worms in thy marrow creeping thro  
thy bones  
Yet thou shalt lead me. Lead me I command to Har and  
Heva

O cruel O destroyer O consumer. O avenger  
To Har and Heva I will lead thee then would that they  
would curse  
Then would they curse as thou hast cursed but they are  
not like thee  
O they are holy. and forgiving filld with loving mercy  
Forgetting the offences of their most rebellious children  
Or else thou wouldest not have livd to curse thy helpless  
children

Look on my eyes Hela and see for thou has eyes to see  
The tears swell from my stony fountains. wherefore do I  
weep  
Wherefore from my blind orbs art thou not siezd with  
poisnous stings  
Laugh serpent youngest venomous reptile of the flesh of  
Tiriël  
Laugh. for thy father Tiriël shall give the cause to laugh  
Unless thou lead me to the tent of Har child of the curse

Silence thy evil tongue thou murderer of thy helpless children

I lead thee to the tent of Har not that I mind thy curse  
But that I feel they will curse thee and hang upon thy bones

Fell shaking agonies. and in each wrinkle of that face  
Plant worms of death to feast upon the tongue of terrible curses

Hela my daughter listen. thou art the daughter of Tiriell  
Thy father calls. Thy father lifts his hand unto the heavens

For thou hast laughed at my tears. and curst thy aged father

Let snakes rise from thy bedded locks and laugh among thy curls

He ceast her dark hair upright stood while snakes infolded round

Her madding brows. her shrieks apalld the soul of Tiriell

What have I done Hela my daughter fearst thou now the curse

Or wherefore dost thou cry Ah wretch to curse thy aged father

Lead me to Har and Heva and the curse of Tiriell

Shall fail. If thou refuse howl in the desolate mountains

She howling led him over mountains and thro frighted  
vales

Till to the caves of Zazel they approachd at even tide

Forth from their caves old Zazel and his sons ran. when  
they saw

Their tyrant prince blind and his daughter howling and  
leading him

They laughd and mocked some threw dirt and stones as  
they passd by

But when Tiriell turnd around and raisd his awful voice  
Some fled away but Zazel stood still and thus began

Bald tyrant. wrinkled cunning listen to Zazels chains  
Twas thou that chaind thy brother Zazel where are now  
thine eyes

Shout beautiful daughter of Tiriell. thou singest a sweet  
song

Where are you going. come and eat some roots and drink  
some water

Thy crown is bald old man. the sun will dry thy brains  
away

And thou wilt be as foolish as thy foolish brother Zazel

The blind man heard. and smote his breast and trembling  
passed on

They threw dirt after them. till to the covert of a wood

The howling maiden led her father where wild beasts  
resort

Hoping to end her woes. but from her cries the tygers  
fled

All night they wanderd thro the wood and when the sun  
arose

They enterd on the mountains of Har at Noon the happy  
tents

Were frighted by the dismal cries of Hela on the  
mountains

But Har and Heva slept fearless as babes. on loving  
breasts

Mnetha awoke she ran and stood at the tent door and saw  
The aged wanderer led towards the tents she took her  
bow

And chose her arrows then advand to meet the terrible  
pair

8

And Mnetha hasted and met them at the gate of the lower  
garden

Stand still or from my bow recieve a sharp and winged  
death

Then Tiriell stood. saying what soft voice threatens such  
bitter things

Lead me to Har and Heva I am Tiriell King of the west

And Mnetha led them to the tent of Har. and Har and  
Heva

Ran to the door. when Tiriels felt the ankles of aged Har  
He said. O weak mistaken father of a lawless race

Thy laws O Har and Tiriels wisdom end together in a  
curse

Why is one law given to the lion and the patient Ox t  
And why men bound beneath the heavens in a reptile  
form

A worm of sixty winters creeping on the dusky ground  
The child springs from the womb. the father ready stands  
to form

The infant head while the mother idle plays with her dog  
on her couch

The young bosom is cold for lack of mothers  
nourishment and milk

Is cut off from the weeping mouth with difficulty and  
pain

The little lids are lifted and the little nostrils open  
The father forms a whip to rouse the sluggish senses to  
act

And scourges off all youthful fancies from the newborn  
man

Then walks the weak infant in sorrow compelled to  
number footsteps

Upon the sand. and  
And when the drone has reached his crawling length  
Black berries appear that poison all around him. Such  
was Tiriels

Compelled to pray repugnant and to humble the immortal  
spirit

Till I am subtil as a serpent in a paradise

Consuming all both flowers and fruits insects and  
warbling birds

And now my paradise is falln and a drear sandy plain  
Returns my thirsty hissings in a curse on thee O Har  
Mistaken father of a lawless race my voice is past

He ceast outstretchd at Har and Hevas feet in awful death