

“Let The Brothels of Paris Be Opened” by William Blake c. 1793

- (1) ‘To awake the Pestilence thro’ the city,’
Said the beautiful Queen of France.

The King awoke on his couch of gold,
As soon as he heard these tidings told:

- (5) ‘Arise & come, both fife & drum,
‘And the Famine shall eat both crust & crumb.’

The he swore a great & solemn Oath:
‘To kill the people I am loth,
‘But If they rebel, they must go to hell:

- (10) ‘They shall have a Priest & a passing bell.’

Then old Nobodaddy aloft
Farted & belch’d & cough’d,
And said, ‘I love hanging & drawing & quartering
‘Every bit as well as war & slaughtering.

- (15) ‘Damn praying & singing,
‘Unless they will bring in
‘The blood of ten thousand by fighting or swinging.’

The Queen of France just touched this Globe,
And the Pestilence darted from her robe;

- (20) But our good Queen quite grows to the ground,
And a great many suckers grow all round.

Fayette beside King Lewis stood;
He saw him sign his hand;
And he saw the famine rage

- (25) About the fruitful land.

Fayette beheld the Queen to smile
And wink her lovely eye;
And soon he saw the pestilence
From street to street to fly.

(30) Fayette beheld the King & Queen
In tears & iron bound;
But mute Fayette wept tear for tear,
And guarded them around.

Fayette, Fayette, thou'rt bought & sold,
(35) And sold is they happy morrow;
Thou gavest the tears of Pity away
In exchange for the tears of sorrow.

Who will exchange his own fire side
For the steps of another's door?
(40) Who will exchange his wheaten loaf
For the links of a dungeon floor?

O, who would smile on the wintry seas,
& Pity the stormy roar?
Or who will exchange his new born child
(45) For the dog at the wintry door?