

# **SONGS FROM AN ISLAND IN THE MOON**

William Blake



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**William Blake**

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## SONGS FROM AN ISLAND IN THE MOON

I

Little Phoebus came strutting in,  
With his fat belly and his round chin.  
What is it you would please to have?  
Ho! Ho!  
I won't let it go at only so and so!

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II

Honour and Genius is all I ask,  
And I ask the Gods no more!  
No more! No more!  
No more! No more! } *The Three Philosophers bear chorus.*

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III

When Old Corruption first begun,  
Adorn'd in yellow vest,  
He committed on Flesh a whoredom —  
O, what a wicked beast!

From then a callow babe did spring,  
And Old Corruption smil'd  
To think his race should never end,  
For now he had a child.

He call'd him Surgery and fed  
The babe with his own milk;  
For Flesh and he could ne'er agree:  
She would not let him suck.

And this he always kept in mind;  
And form'd a crooked knife,  
And ran about with bloody hands  
To seek his mother's life.

And as he ran to seek his mother  
He met with a dead woman.  
He fell in love and married her —  
A deed which is not common!

She soon grew pregnant, and brought forth  
Scurvy and Spotted Fever,  
The father grinn'd and skipt about,  
And said `I'm made for ever!

`For now I have procur'd these imps  
I'll try experiments.'  
With that he tied poor Scurvy down,  
And stopt up all its vents.

And when the child began to swell  
He shouted out aloud —  
`I've found the dropsy out, and soon  
Shall do the world more good.'

He took up Fever by the neck,  
And cut out all its spots;  
And, thro' the holes which he had made,  
He first discover'd guts.



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### IV

Hear then the pride and knowledge of a sailor!  
His sprit sail, fore sail, main sail, and his mizen.  
A poor frail man — God wot! I know none frailer,  
I know no greater sinner than John Taylor.

**V. The Song of Phoebe and Jellicoe**

Phoebe drest like beauty's queen,  
Jellicoe in faint pea-green,  
Sitting all beneath a grot,  
Where the little lambkins trot.

    Maidens dancing, loves a-sporting,  
All the country folks a-courting,  
Susan, Johnny, Bob, and Joe,  
Lightly tripping on a row.

    Happy people, who can be  
In happiness compar'd with ye?  
The pilgrim with his crook and hat  
Sees your happiness complete.

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VI

Lo! the Bat with leathern wing,  
Winking and blinking,  
Winking and blinking,  
Winking and blinking,  
Like Dr Johnson.

*Quid.* `O ho!' said Dr. Johnson  
To Scipio Africanus,  
*Suction.* `A ha!' to Dr. Johnson  
Said Scipio Africanus,

And the Cellar goes down with a step. (*Grand Chorus.*)

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**VII**

*1st Vo.* Want Matches?

*2nd Vo.* Yes! Yes! Yes!

*1st Vo.* Want Matches?

*2nd Vo.* No!

*1st Vo.* Want Matches?

*2nd Vo.* Yes! Yes! Yes!

*1st Vo.* Want Matches?

*2nd Vo.* No!

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VIII

As I walk'd forth one May morning  
To see the fields so pleasant and so gay,  
O! there did I spy a young maiden sweet,  
Among the violets that smell so sweet,  
smell so sweet,  
smell so sweet,  
Among the violets that smell so sweet.

IX

Hail Matrimony, made of Love!  
To thy wide gates how great a drove  
On purpose to be yok'd do come;  
Widows and Maids and Youths also,  
That lightly trip on beauty's toe,  
Or sit on beauty's bum.

Hail fingerfooted lovely Creatures!  
The females of our human natures,  
Formèd to suckle all Mankind.  
'Tis you that come in time of need,  
Without you we should never breed,  
Or any comfort find.

For if a Damsel's blind or lame,  
Or Nature's hand has crook'd her frame,  
Or if she's deaf, or is wall-eyed;  
Yet, if her heart is well inclin'd,  
Some tender lover she shall find  
That panteth for a Bride.

The universal Poultrice this,  
To cure whatever is amiss  
In Damsel or in Widow gay!  
It makes them smile, it makes them skip;  
Like birds, just curèd of the pip,  
They chirp and hop away.

Then come, ye maidens! come, ye swains!  
Come and be cur'd of all your pains  
In Matrimony's Golden Cage —

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X

To be or not to be  
Of great capacity,  
Like Sir Isaac Newton,  
Or Locke, or Doctor South,  
Or Sherlock upon Death —  
I'd rather be Sutton!

For he did build a house  
For agèd men and youth,  
With walls of brick and stone;  
He furnish'd it within  
With whatever he could win,  
And all his own.

He drew out of the Stocks  
His money in a box,  
And sent his servant  
To Green the Bricklayer,  
And to the Carpenter;  
He was so fervent.

The chimneys were threescore,  
The windows many more;  
And, for convenience,  
He sinks and gutters made,  
And all the way he pav'd  
To hinder pestilence.

Was not this a good man —  
Whose life was but a span,  
Whose name was Sutton —  
As Locke, or Doctor South,  
Or Sherlock upon Death,  
Or Sir Isaac Newton?

SONGS FROM AN ISLAND IN THE MOON

XI

This city and this country has brought forth many mayors  
To sit in state, and give forth laws out' of their old oak chairs,  
With face as brown as any nut with drinking of strong ale —  
Good English hospitality, O then it did not fail!

    With scarlet gowns and broad gold lace, would make a yeoman sweat;  
With stockings roll'd above their knees and shoes as black as jet  
With eating beef and drinking beer, O they were stout and hale —  
Good English hospitality, O then it did not fail!

    Thus sitting at the table wide the mayor and aldermen  
Were fit to give law to the city; each ate as much as ten:  
The hungry poor enter'd the hall to eat good beef and ale —  
Good English hospitality, O then it did not fail!



**XII**

O, I say, you Joe,  
Throw us the ball!  
I've a good mind to go  
And leave you all.  
I never saw such a bowler  
To bowl the ball in a tansy,  
And to clean it with my hankercher  
Without saying a word.  
    That Bill's a foolish fellow;  
He has given me a black eye.  
He does not know how to handle a bat  
Any more than a dog or a cat:  
He has knock'd down the wicket,  
And broke the stumps,  
And runs without shoes to save his pumps.

SONGS FROM AN ISLAND IN THE MOON

**XIII**

Leave, O leave me to my sorrows;  
Here I'll sit and fade away,  
Till I'm nothing but a spirit,  
And I lose this form of clay.

Then if chance along this forest  
Any walk in pathless ways,  
Thro' the gloom he'll see my shadow  
Hear my voice upon the breeze.

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**XIV**

There's Doctor Clash,  
And Signor Falalaso,  
O they sweep in the cash  
Into their purse hole!  
Fa me la sol, La me fa sol!  
    Great A, little A,  
Bouncing B!  
Play away, play away,  
You're out of the key!  
Fa me la sol, La me fa sol!  
    Musicians should have  
A pair of very good ears,  
And long fingers and thumbs,  
And not like clumsy bears.  
Fa me la sol, La me fa sol!  
    Gentlemen! Gentlemen!  
Rap! Rap! Rap!  
Fiddle! Fiddle! Fiddle!  
Clap! Clap! Clap!  
Fa me la sol, La me fa sol!