

Enitharmon's Bower

for Catherine Blake

i. Innocence

Adorn'd she was indeed, and lovely to attract thy love, not thy subjection.
Milton, Paradise Lost

He said *then I love you...* and I was his,
x on our wedding vow, illiterate in this world,
I understood him in the other.
He taught me as though a child.
Soon I was cutting plates.
We engraved each other's souls.
I illuminated his broken heart.
Our love held forty-five years.

ii. Experience

So dear I love him, that with him, all deaths I could endure, without
him, live no life.
Milton, Paradise Lost

He called me his shadow of delight.
I handled the money and was barren.
We prayed to our Lord
for a Swedenborgian surrogate,
consulted Judges, on concubines;
Clement of Alexandria, as to whether
wives should be held in common.
I turned away *no William...*
stay Kate. I will draw your portrait...
then his hands lost purchase on the tools.

iii. Innocence Regained

What hath night to do with sleep? *Milton, Paradise Lost*

Each marker a stone tongue,
a vast conversation plot of soul.
Rows of granite books, resting on bones.
I run my fingers along grooved
edges of sympathy and remembrance,
the chisel-cut small space allowed us
in the Dissenter's Burial Ground.
Open mausoleum of stars above, I long
for my own stone voice to shout

heaven, speak fluently the last language.
Mr Blake is patiently teaching me.
Word-by-word, illuminating my suffering,
as if he were in the next room.
Soon, I will have a bright volume to give him.
He knows I am coming.
It will not be long