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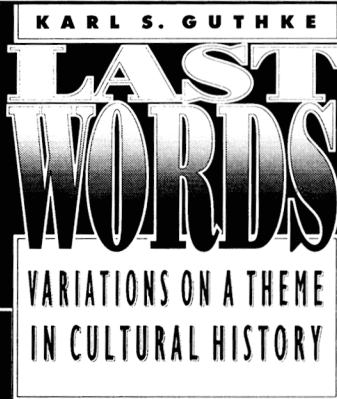
Publications of the
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OCTOBER

VOLUME 107 ■ NUMBER 5

Princeton



Last Words

Variations on a Theme in Cultural History

Karl S. Guthke

Whether Goethe actually cried "More light!" on his deathbed, or whether Conrad Hilton checked out of this world after uttering "Leave the shower curtain on the inside of the tub," last words, regardless of authenticity, have long captured our imaginations. In this playfully serious investigation based on factual accounts, anecdotes, literary works, and films, Karl Guthke explores the cultural importance of those words spoken at the border between this world and the next. The exit lines of both famous and ordinary people embody for us a sense of drama and truthfulness and reveal much about our thoughts on living and dying.

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Blake and the Idea of the Book

Joseph S. Viscomi

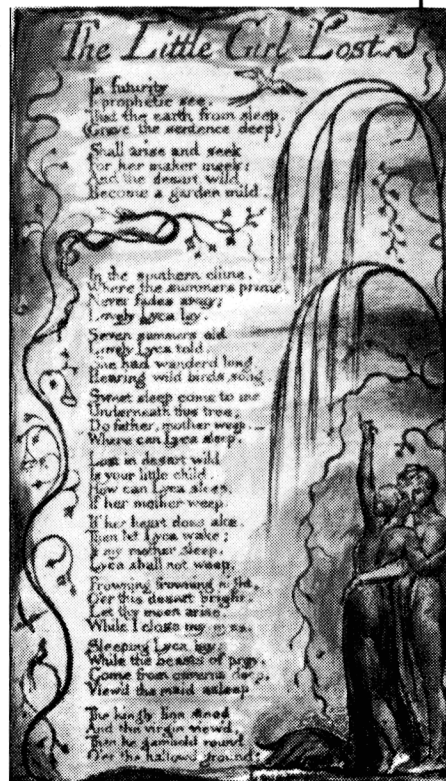
Joseph Viscomi drastically revises our understanding of William Blake as he explores the technology behind the Illuminated Books. By using facsimiles created in his own studio, Viscomi offers the most complete explanation of how the illuminated plates were made, how the plates were printed and the impressions colored. His analysis reveals that the Illuminated Books were produced in small editions and not, as is assumed, one copy at a time and by commission. These new facts of production redefine such basic concepts in Blake scholarship as "style," "period," "intention," and "difference," which in turn alter the dates of nearly all copies of all the Illuminated Books and refute current approaches to reading and editing Blake.

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October 1992

PMILA

Publications of the
Modern Language Association
of America

Volume 107, Number 5

Published six times a year by the association

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PMLA (ISSN 0030-8129) is published six times a year, in January, March, May, September, October, and November, by the Modern Language Association of America. Membership in the association is open to persons who are professionally interested in the modern languages and literatures. Annual dues, which include subscription to *PMLA*, are based on members' incomes and are graduated as follows: student members (four years maximum), \$20; new regular members (first year), \$35; regular members (income under \$15,000), \$25; regular members (income \$15,000–\$20,000), \$40; regular members (income \$20,000–\$30,000), \$50; regular members (income \$30,000–\$40,000), \$65; regular members (income \$40,000–\$50,000), \$75; regular members (income \$50,000–\$60,000), \$85; regular members (income \$60,000–\$70,000), \$95; regular members (income \$70,000–\$80,000), \$105; regular members (income over \$80,000), \$125; foreign members, same as regular members (use the American-dollar equivalent to ascertain the dues category). Membership applications are available on request.

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Issues for the current year are available from the Member and Customer Services Office of the association (212 614-6377). Claims for undelivered issues will be honored if they are received within one year of the publication date; thereafter the single-issue price will be charged.

For information about the availability of back issues, inquire of Kraus Reprint, Millwood, NY 10546; 914 762-2200. Early and current volumes may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Purchase of current volumes on film is restricted to subscribers of the journal.

The office of publication and editorial offices are located at 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981; 212 475-9500.

All communications including notices of changes of address should be sent to the Member and Customer Services Office of the association. If a change of address also involves a change of institutional affiliation, that office should be informed of this fact at the same time.

Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing office.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 12-32040. United States Postal Service Number 449-660.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *PMLA*, Member and Customer Services Office, Modern Language Association of America, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981.

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Published six times a year Indexes: Vols. 1–50, 1935; 51–60, 1945; 51–79, 1964

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PMLA welcomes essays of interest to those concerned with the study of language and literature. As the publication of a large and heterogeneous association, the journal is receptive to a variety of topics, whether general or specific, and to all scholarly methods and theoretical perspectives. The ideal *PMLA* essay exemplifies the best of its kind, whatever the kind; addresses a significant problem; draws out clearly the implications of its findings; and engages the attention of its audience through a concise, readable presentation. Manuscripts in languages other than English are accepted for review but must be accompanied by a detailed summary in English (generally of 1,000–1,500 words) and must be translated into English if they are recommended to the Editorial Board. Articles of fewer than 2,500 words or more than 9,000 words are not considered for publication. The word count includes notes but excludes translations, which should accompany foreign language quotations. The MLA urges its contributors to be sensitive to the social implications of language and to seek wording free of discriminatory overtones.

Only members of the association may submit articles to *PMLA*. Each article submitted is sent to at least one consultant reader and one member of the Advisory Committee. Articles recommended by these readers are then sent to the members of the Editorial Board, who meet periodically with the editor to make final decisions. Until a final decision is reached, the author's name is not made known to consultant readers, to members of the Advisory Committee and the Editorial Board, or to the editor.

Submissions, prepared according to *The MLA Style Manual*, should be sent in duplicate and addressed to the Managing Editor, *PMLA*, Modern Language Association, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981. With each submission please include a self-addressed envelope and enough postage for both copies to be returned. Authors' names should not appear on manuscripts; instead, a cover sheet, with the author's name and address and the title of the article, should accompany each manuscript. Authors should not refer to themselves in the first person in the submitted text or notes if such references would identify them; any necessary references to the author's previous work, for example, should be in the third person.

Criticism in Translation

MLA members are invited to submit to the *PMLA* Editorial Board proposals for translations. Articles, as well as chapters or sections of books that can function as independent units, will be considered. The originals may be in any language. Two types of proposals are welcome: (1) significant scholarship from earlier periods that has not lost its forcefulness and whose retrieval in English in *PMLA* would be a noteworthy event for a broad body of readers or (2) contemporary work of sufficient weight and potential influence to merit the attention of the field as a whole.

A member who wishes to make a proposal should first ascertain that no previous English translation exists. The proposer should then provide the managing editor with the following materials: (1) a photocopy of the original essay, (2) an extended summary of the entire essay in English, (3) an introductory statement of approximately 1,000 words, prepared in accordance with MLA style, that will be published with the essay if the essay is accepted, (4) information on the copyright status of the original (if the translation is accepted for publication, the proposer will be responsible for obtaining permission to print it). In addition, if the proposer wishes to serve as translator of the essay or to designate a translator (who must also be an MLA member), a 1,000-word sample of the translation should be submitted; otherwise the Editorial Board will select a translator.

The translated essays should normally not exceed *PMLA*'s 9,000-word limit. The Editorial Board will approve or decline the proposals, evaluate the quality of the translations, and cooperate with the proposers and translators.

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Cover illustration: Book cover design by Tao Yuan-qing for Lu Xun's *Wandering* (Beijing: Beijing Beixin, 1929). Collection Minick/Jiao.

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