



William Blake

William Blake was born in 28A Broad Street, Golden Square, London, England on 28 November 1757, to a middle-class family. He was the third of 7 children, two of whom died in infancy. Blake's father, James, was a hosier. He never attended school, being educated at home by his mother. The Blakes were Dissenters, and are believed to have belonged to the Moravian Church. The Bible was an early and profound influence on Blake, and would remain a source of inspiration throughout his life.

Blake shared Dante's distrust of materialism and the corruptive nature of power, and clearly relished the opportunity to represent the atmosphere and imagery of Dante's work pictorially. Even as he seemed to near death, Blake's central preoccupation was his feverish work on the illustrations to Dante's *Inferno*; he is said to have spent one of the very last shillings he possessed on a pencil to continue sketching.

On the day of his death, Blake worked relentlessly on his Dante series. He ceased working and turned to his wife, who was in tears by his bedside. Beholding her, Blake is said to have cried, "Stay Kate! Keep just as you are - I will draw your portrait - for you have ever been an angel to me." Having completed this portrait, Blake laid down his tools and began to sing hymns and verses. At six that evening, after promising his wife that he would be with her always, Blake died. **



<http://www.william-blake.org/images/own/portrait.jpg> retrieved 08 20 2012

**<http://www.william-blake.org/biography.html>