

To The Revd Dr Trusler
Hercules Buildgs Lambeth Augst 16. 1799

Revd Sir

I find more & more that my Style of Designing is a Species by itself. & in this which I send you have been compell'd by my Genius or Angel to follow where he led if I were to act otherwise it would not fulfill the purpose for which alone I live. which is in conjunction with such men as my friend Cumberland to renew the lost Art of the Greeks

I attempted every morning for a fortnight together to follow your Dictate. but when I found my attempts were in vain. resolv'd to shew an independence which I know will please an Author better than slavishly following the track of another however admirable that track may be At any rate my Excuse must be: I could not do otherwise, it was out of my power!

I know I begged of you to give me your Ideas & promised to build on them here I counted without my host I now find my mistake

The Design I have Sent. Is

A Father taking leave of his Wife & Child. Is watch'd by Two Fiends incarnate. with intention that when his back is turned they will murder the mother & her infant--If this is not Malevolence with a vengeance I have never seen it on Earth. & if you approve of this I have no doubt of giving you Benevolence with Equal Vigor. as also Pride & Humility. but cannot previously describe in words what I mean to Design for fear I should Evaporate [some of m] the Spirit of my Invention. But I hope that none of my Designs will be destitute of Infinite Particulars which will present themselves to the Contemplator. And tho I call them Mine I know that they are not Mine being of the same opinion with Milton when he says That the Muse visits his Slumbers & awakes & governs his Song when Morn purples The East. & being also in the predicament of that prophet who says I cannot go beyond the command of the Lord to speak good or bad

If you approve of my Manner & it is agreeable to you. I would rather Paint Pictures in oil of the same dimensions than make Drawings.& on the same terms. by this means you will have a number of Cabinet pictures. which I flatter myself will not be unworthy of a Scholar of Rembrant & Teniers. whom I have Studied no less than Rafael & Michael angelo--Please to send me your orders respecting this & In my next Effort I promise more Expedition

I am Revd Sir
Your very humble servt
WILLm BLAKE