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## Blake's Ghost

V.Q.

2013

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On August 7 2011, cops shot dead an unarmed black man in London, one of countless murders by the police. The murder of Mark Duggan, together with widespread fury at the social conditions of many people as the poor get poorer and the rich get richer, fuelled five days of rioting across England. it was the usual situation Blake had been here before when he had watched the fiery coition lick wordlessly at Newgate's door now it was carpet shops, clothes outlets and the odd electrical store broken glass, cardboard boxes and anti-theft tags on the floor Blake sang with pride and joy feeling that ferocious feral feeling he had felt before all those centuries ago when, almost still a boy, he had joined the long-awaited insurrection of the poor he was dead now, of course, but as 'progress' turned about-face his ghost became sandwiched in the narrowing of time and he was sucked rudely out of sleep by the dream of wanton plunder at the core still stilling the conscience of the sheep that let the rich and vicious destroy their own and nature's store Blake found himself drawn forth by recollection, the wheels of history turning always in the same mud, giving merely the impression of movement Blake loved the August flames as he had once loved those that battered Newgate's

shore his ghostly hand lit fires from Salford to the Thames and he cried out, with the others, for more, O more! And no more too. No more poverty, politicians, bankers, no more cops let's just press on until the thing itself collapses, til it stops Blake felt right at home as he pulled Nike trainers on over ancient leather shoe noting that the style was different, the accents strange in tone and round black robots in the sky watched your every move but the people still sang strong their loss of innocence, their songs of experience and they had not, he saw, forgotten how to set fires at the enemy four months later, Newgate is full once more the herd clamouring for morality in hell when there is none in heaven and the poor are plundered yet again in the Autumn speech, a month before the bankers collect their Christmas reward for pious observation of the Seven Blake turns in for the night, but he keeps one ear cocked and hoping because he knows that riots like to dream out in the open [ed. - William Blake was a visionary libertarian poet in Britain, fiercely anti-racist and anti-slavery. During the Gordon Riots of 1780, led by African-Americans at the time of the war between Britain and rebel colonists there and during which rioters systematically destroyed every prison in London, he took part in the burning of the newly-completed Newgate Jail (a mob attacked the prison gates with shovels and pickaxes, set the building ablaze, and released the 300 prisoners inside. Blake was reportedly in the front rank during this attack). He also wrote against wars and the blighting effects of the industrial revolution.]