

# Elaborations on a Line by Blake

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (February 2021)



*The Prophecy of Isaiah*, Marc Chagall, 1969

*After Swinburne & Leonard Cohen*

Lovers perform a ballet, a  
Drama enacting the old  
Prophecy dazing Isaiah  
There in the beryl & gold  
Garden inside of the Zion  
Trapped in an hour of sleep:

*Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.*

Donning these sodden & tattered  
Skins will diminish the hard  
Worry of being the battered  
Thing of another's regard.  
Thanatos fastens his eye on  
What he endeavors to keep.

*Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.*

Gentle Marie Antoinette at-  
Tíres herself like a serf  
Herding flocks frantic to get at  
Clover mislaid in the turf-  
Foolery placing Versailles on  
Intimate terms with the Deep.

*Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.*

Soldiers uncaged by the Tsar in-  
Dígnantly pant in the hay,  
Hunting for women (...who are, in  
General, ready to say  
Something engagingly wry on  
Orders announced from a jeep.)

*Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.*

Naked & freezing, he kneels. Of  
Course all the national news  
Packages fulsome appeals of  
Tailors & seamstresses whose  
Robes of defeat you can buy on  
Credit; they never were cheap.

*Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.*

Everything's going to hell, or  
Hell is advancing to us.

Echoes at odds in a shell or  
Vault of the sunset discuss  
Why the white hand of Orion  
Clenches a pelt. And we weep:

*"Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep."*

"Tell us," the supplicants chanted,  
"Who can subsist from within  
Genuine, Providence-granted  
Eyes & original skin!"—  
Devils ordaining we die on  
Mellowing slopes of a heap.

*Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.*

Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.  
Lye is the caustic they ply on  
Both when their carcasses seep.  
Grace (like a vest) is awry on  
Mortals who cower & creep.

*Man wears the fell of the lion;  
Woman, the fleece of the sheep.*

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