



A NOTE AND A DEDICATION

The type stands as is: the "words" are those of an 1892 edition of *Paradise Lost* I picked off a Seattle bookshop shelf the day after hearing Lucas Foss' Baroque Variations. He writes of Variation I, on Handel's Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 12, "Groups of instruments play the Larghetto but keep submerging into inaudibility (rather than pausing). Handel's notes are always present but often inaudible. The inaudible moments leave holes in Handel's music (I composed the holes). The perforated Handel is played by different groups of the orchestra in three different keys at one point, in four different speeds at another."

This is the first of three sections of four—Milton's divisions being twelve. It is the book Blake gave me (as Milton entered Blake's left foot—the first foot, that is, to exit Eden), his eyes wide open through my hand. *To etch* is "to cut away," and each page, as in Blake's concept of a book, is a single picture.

I would like particularly to thank Robert Duncan for his encouragement through my solitary quest in the cloud chamber—that place, he assured me, "The Authors are in Eternity."

Ronald Johnson

SAN FRANCISCO, 1976

O f Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

O

tree
into the World,

Man

the chosen

Rose out of Chaos:

song,