

# THE HYDRA

MICHAEL KEITH  
Salem, Oregon

The poem below is a transformation of William Blake's "The Tyger" via an unusual linguistic constraint. Your challenge is to determine the constraint, given the hint that strict application of the rule will invariably result (as it does here) in a composition containing exactly 109 words.

Hydra, hydra, looming bright  
(Be calm now, O forest night!)  
No man's art--so plainly, see--  
Can ask, know, capture symmetry!

Translate, villain--can man feel,  
Capture now Creator's zeal?  
Gauntly go as sorrows brew,  
Knowing, really seeing you?

Zounds! No more! This riddle rare  
Puts a catch in Satan's snare.  
Thus I exorcise, cast by,  
Lucifer's cursed progeny.

Now, please, sir, elucidate,  
Grapple thus, disseminate:  
How e'en thrives your lofty heads?  
Tell, what reigneth overhead?

I pause, asking: has this place  
But possessed a ravaged face?  
Resurrect again, tonight,  
Precious unseen Nazarite!

Polyhead and crafty blight,  
Creeping eastward from my night;  
Lord remote--descend, supply,  
Break his multisymmetry!