

Visionary Heads
By William Blake, 1757-1827
Pencil, 1820



Blake visited his friend John Varley, a landscape painter, over several nights in 1819. Here, from nine in the evening until the

early hours, Blake is said to have sketched visions that appeared before him.

His drawings included long-dead historical figures such as Robert the Bruce and Alexander the Great and characters of myth and legend including Merlin and Robin Hood. Blake continued to make these visionary drawings over a number of years. Most were gathered together in sketchbooks with inscriptions written by Varley.

The *Visionary Heads* in this drawing are Greek historical figures - Pindar the poet and Lais, a beautiful courtesan. The fine, delicate lines give the drawings a dream-like quality, the figures appear to hover on the page as if in a trance.

Purchased in 1891