

## The Golden Compass: sources for Pullman's title.

In Raphael's account of the creation, the Son employs "golden Compasses, prepar'd in God's Eternal store, to circumscribe This Universe, and all created things" (*Paradise Lost*, VII 225-27).

The late 18<sup>th</sup> century poet and engraver William Blake translated this phrase into visual terms for one of his most famous images of God; unlike Pullman, Blake imagines the compass as a drawing instrument rather than as a directional aid.

To view Blake's image:

- Go to the [William Blake Archive](#).
- At the bottom of the Archive home page, there's a "click to enter" button, US Home.
- Go to "Works in the Archive"> Illuminated Books/ Europe a Prophecy/ copy#/ object 1. (Blake hand-colored his engravings, such that each physical copy of his works was unique; view any copy).

For more Blakean fun, click on Search/ Image Search/ Object/ Compasses. You'll find several other appearances of the compasses in other contexts; the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" has a specific reference to Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

To view the site, I've had best results using Internet Explorer (rather than Firefox); see the site Help page for more on "Known Hazards and Most Favorable Conditions." If you open the image of a poem but are having trouble bringing up the image, try the "non-Java" button at the bottom of the page. To use all the features of the site (most importantly, viewing textual transcription), you will need to enable pop-ups.

For true compass fans, John Donne's early 17<sup>th</sup> century poem, "[A Valediction Forbidding Mourning](#)", combines the drawing and directional functions of the compass in a single image.

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