

Songs of Innocence & Songs of Experience

William Blake



- The Chimney Sweeper*
- Night*
- A Dream*



DR. MD NAUSHAD ALAM

William Blake: Introduction

An English poet, painter, and printmaker, engraver, and visionary William Blake worked to bring about a change both in the social order and in the minds of men. Though in his lifetime his work was largely neglected or dismissed, he is now considered one of the leading lights of English poetry, and his work has only grown in popularity.

Born: 28 November 1757, Soho, London, United Kingdom

Died: 12 August 1827, London, United Kingdom





Songs of Innocence : Introduction

William Blake's collection of poetry the 'Songs of Innocence' written in 1789. The poems present in this collection expresses a naive, childlike view of salvation, as most of the poems are addressed to children. They present a very simplistic view of the world, in which the world is beautiful and Jesus died for our sins.

The Songs of Innocence dramatize the naive hopes and fears that inform the lives of children and trace their transformation as the child grows into adulthood. Some of the poems are written from the perspective of children, while others are about children as seen from an adult perspective.



The Chimney Sweeper

The Chimney Sweeper" is the title of a poem by William Blake, published in two parts in Songs of Innocence in 1789 and Songs of Experience in 1794. The poem "The Chimney Sweeper" is set against the dark background of child labour that was prominent in England in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

T
E
X
T

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry " 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.
There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved, so I said,
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

The Chimney Sweeper

And so he was quiet, & that very night,

As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!

That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,

Were all of them locked up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,

And he opened the coffins & set them all free;

Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,

And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,

They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.

And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,

He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark

And got with our bags & our brushes to work.

Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy &
warm;

So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

T
E
X
T

Night

"*Night*" is a poem in the illuminated 1789 collection *Songs of Innocence* by William Blake. '*The Night*' is ostensibly about heaven and the angels. It is laden with references to nature and the natural world as you would expect from a romantic era poem. The poem references several animals but primarily uses a lion to represent the spirit of protection. There are several religious references throughout '*The Night*' that lead me to believe it is describing heaven.

"Night" speaks about the coming of evil when darkness arrives, as angels protect and keep the sheep from the impending dangers.

T E X T

**The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower,
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.**

**Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight.
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.**

Night

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep;
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

T
E
X
T

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Saying, 'Wrath, by His meekness,
And, by His health, sickness
Is driven away
From our immortal day.

'And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep;
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee and weep.
For, washed in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold.'

A Dream

A Dream" is a poem by English poet William Blake. The poem was first published in 1789 as part of Blake's collection of poems entitled *Songs of Innocence*.

is about William Blake's vision of three insects: an ant ('emmet'), a beetle, and a glow-worm, which is in fact a kind of beetle. Not only that, but these are talking insects: the emmet confides that she has lost her children, and the bright glow-worm offers to light the way for her through the night, so she can recover them.

Blake portrays the concepts of the return to innocence from experience. No wonder the artist thought first of including it in "Songs of Experience" at first, finally deciding to move it back to "Songs of Innocence"

T
E
X
T

**Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my angel-guarded bed,
That an emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.**

**Troubled, wildered, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke, I heard her say**

A Dream

**'O my children! do they cry,
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see,
Now return and weep for me.'**

**Pitying, I dropped a tear:
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied, 'What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night?**

**T
E
X
T**

**'I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:
Follow now the beetle's hum;
Little wanderer, hie thee home!'**

Thank You.....

