

*William
Blake's
Songs
of
Innocence*



The Little Boy Found
The little boy lost in the lonely den,
Led by the wondrous light,
He gan to cry, but God ever nigh,
Appar'd like his father in white.
He kiss'd the child by the hand 'ed
And to his mother brought,
Who in sorrow pale thro' the haze call'd
Her little boy weeping sought.

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Faculty
Editor*

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Songs of Innocence

by

William Blake

Songs of Innocence was the first of Blake's illuminated books published in 1789. The poems and artwork were reproduced by copperplate engraving and colored with washes by hand. In 1794 he expanded the book to include *Songs of Experience*.



Frontispiece

Songs of Innocence

by

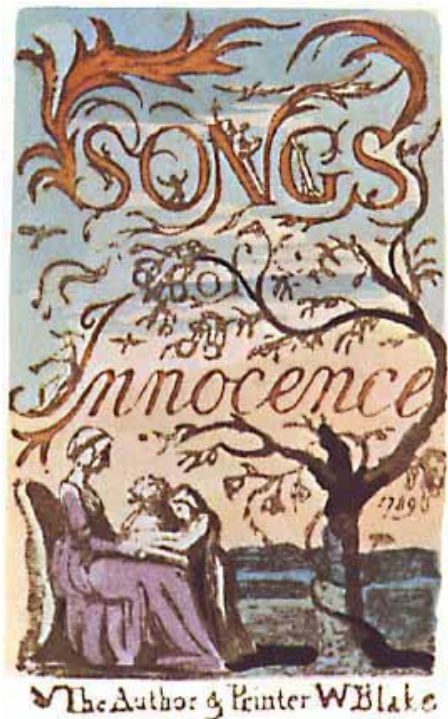
William Blake

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**The images contained
in this publication are
copies of William
Blake's originals for
his first publication.**

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Title Page

Introduction

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

“Pipe a song about a Lamb!”
So I piped with merry cheer.
“Piper, pipe that song again”
So I piped, he wept to hear.

“Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer-
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

“Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read.”
So he vanish'd from my sight,
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

The Shepherd

How sweet is the Shepherd's sweet lot!
From the morn to the evening he strays;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh.



Infant Joy

“I have no name:
I am but two days old.”
What shall I call thee:
“I happy am,
Joy is my name.”
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy, but two days old.
Sweet joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee!

On Another's Sorrow:

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too!
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief!

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
'Weep, nor be with sorrow fill'd!

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can he who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief & care,
Hear the woes that infants bear,

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast;
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear;

And not sit both night & day,
Wiping all our tears away?
O! no, never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

He doth give his joy to all;
He becomes an infant small;
He becomes a man of woe;
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy maker is not by;
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy maker is not near.

O! he gives to us his joy
That our grief he may destroy;
Till our grief is fled & gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

The School Boy

I love to rise in a summer morn
When the birds sing on every tree;
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the sky-lark sings with me.
O! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morn,
O! it drives all joy away;
Under a cruel eye outworn,
The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
And spend many an anxious hour,
Nor in my book can I take delight,
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn thro' with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing:
Hear can a child, when fears annoy,



But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring?

O! father & mother, if buds are nip'd
And blossoms blown away,
And if the tender plants are strip'd
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and care's dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear?

Holy Thursday

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two & two, in red & blue &
green,
Grey-headed beadles walk'd before, with wands as
white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames'
waters flow.

O what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers of
London town!
Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their
own.
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of
lambs,
Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent
hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the
voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven
among.

Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of
the poor;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your
door.

Nurse's Song

When the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

“Then come home, my children, the sun is gone
down,
And the dews of night arise;
Come, come, leave off play, and let us away
Till the morning appears in the skies.”

“No, no, let us play, for it is yet nay,
And we cannot go to sleep;
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all cover'd with sheep.”

“Well, well, go & play till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed.”
The little ones leaped & shouted & laugh'd
And all the hills echoed.

Laughing Song

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green.
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing “Ha, Ha, He!”

When the painted birds laugh in the shade.
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live & be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of “Ha, Ha, He!”

The Little Black Boy

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black. but O! my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And pointing to the east began to say:

“Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

“And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.
“For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,

The cloud will vanish: we shall hear his voice,
Saying: ‘Come out from the grove, my love & care.
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.’

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black and he from white cloud free.
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

The Voice of the Ancient Bard

Youth of delight, come hither,
And see the opening morn.
Image of truth new-born.
Doubt is fled & clouds of reason,
Dark disputes & artful teasing.
Folly is an endless maze.
Tangled roots perplex her ways.
How many have fallen there!
They stumble all night over bones of the dead,
And feel they know not what but care,
And wish to lead others, when they should be led.

Ecchoing Green

The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The sky-lark and thrush,
The birds of the bush.
Sing louder around
To the bells' chearful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Ecchoing Green.

Old John, with white hair.
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.



They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
“Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls & boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green.”

Till the little ones, weary.
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers.
Like birds in their nest.
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

The Chimney Sweeper

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 curl’d like a lamb’s back. was shav’d: so I said
“Hush. Tom! never mind it, for when your head’s bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.”

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 or Jack.
Were all of them lock’d up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open’d 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.
Tho’ the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

The Divine Image

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
An to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every dime
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.



And all must love the human form,
In heathen, turk, or jew;
Where Mercy, Love & Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

A Dream

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, wilder'd, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke I heard her say:

“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 drop'd a tear;
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied: “What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night!

“I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:

Follow now the beetle's hum;
Little wanderer, hie thee home."



The Little Girl Lost

In futurity
I prophetic see
That the earth from sleep
(Grave the sentence deep)

Shall arise and seek
For her maker meek;
And the desert wild
Become a garden mild.

In the southern clime,
Where the summer's prime
Never fades away,
Lovely Lyca lay.

Seven summers old
Lovely Lyca told;
She had wander'd long
Hearing wild birds' song.

“Sweet sleep. come to me
Underneath this tree.
Do father, mother. weep!
Where can Lyca sleep!

“Lost in desert wild
Is your little child.
How can Lyca sleep
If her mother weep!

“If her heart does ache
Then let Lyca wake;
If my mother sleep,
Lyca shall not weep.

“Frowning, frowning night,
O'er this desert bright,
Let thy moon arise
While I close my eyes.”

Sleeping Lyca lay
While the beasts of prey,
Come from caverns deep,
View'd the maid asleep.

The kingly lion stood,
And the virgin view'd,
Then he gambol'd round
O'er the hallow'd ground.

Leopards, tygers, play
Round her as she lay,
While the lion old
Bow'd his mane of gold

And her bosom lick.
And upon her neck
From his eyes of flame
Ruby tears there came;

While the lioness
Loos'd her slender dress.
And naked they convey'd
To caves the sleeping maid.

The Little Girl Found

All the night in woe
Lyca's parents go
Over vallies deep.
While the desarts weep.

Tired and woe-begone.
Hoarse with making moan,
Arm in arm seven days
They trac'd the desert ways.

Seven nights they sleep
Among shadows deep.
And dream they see their child
Starv'd in desert wild.

Pale, thro' pathless ways
The fancied image strays

Famish'd, weeping, weak,
With hollow piteous shriek.

Rising from unrest,
The trembling woman prest
With feel of weary woe:
She could no further go.

In his arms he bore
Her, arm'd with sorrow sore;
Till before their way
A couching lion lay.

Turning back was vain:
Soon his heavy mane
Bore them to the ground.
Then he stalk'd around.

Smelling to his prey;
But their fears allay
When he licks their hands,
And silent by them stands.

They look upon his eyes
Fill'd with deep surprise;
And wondering behold
A Spirit arm'd in gold.

On his head a crown;
On his shoulders down
Flow'd his golden hair.
Gone was all their care.

“Follow me.” he said;
“Weep not for the maid;
In my palace deep
Lyca lies asleep.”

Then they followed
Where the vision led,
And saw their sleeping child
Among tygers wild.

In this day they dwell
In a lonely dell;
Nor fear the wolfish howl
Nor the lions' growl.

The Little Boy Lost

“Father! father! where are you going!
O do not walk so fast.

Speak, father, speak to your little boy,
Or else I shall be lost.”

The night was dark, no father was there;
The child was wet with dew;
The mire was deep, & the child did weep,
And away the vapour flew.

The Little Boy Found

The little boy lost in the lonely fen.
Led by the wand'ring light,
Began to cry; but God, ever nigh,
Appear'd like his father, in white.

He kissed the child, & by the hand led.
And to his mother brought,
Who in sorrow pale, thro' the lonely dale.
Her little boy weeping sought.

A Cradle Song

Sweet dreams form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles in the night
Hover over my delight;
Sweet smiles, Mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans. dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

Sleep sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smil'd;
Sleep sleep, happy sleep.
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy maker lay and wept for me,

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When he was an infant small.
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,

Smiles on thee, on me, on all;
Who becarne an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven & earth to peace beguiles.

Spring

Sound the Flute!
Now it's mute.
Birds delight
Day and Night;
Nightingale

In the dale.
Lark in Sky.
Merrily,
Merrily, Merrily, to welcome in the Year.

Little Boy,
Full of joy;

Little Girl,
Sweet and small:
Cock does crow,
So do you;
Merry voice,
Infant noise,
Merrily, Merrily, to welcome in the Year.

Little Lamb,
Here I am;
Come and lick
My white neck;
Let me pull
Your soft Wool
Let me kiss
Your soft face:
Merrily, Merrily, we welcome in the Year.

The Blossom

Merry Merry Sparrow!
Under leaves so green.
A happy Blossom
Sees you, swift as arrow,
Seek your cradle narrow
Near my Bosom.

Pretty Pretty Robin!
Under leaves so green,
A happy Blossom
Hears you sobbing, sobbing,
Pretty Pretty Robin.
Near my Bosom.

The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life & bid thee feed,
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, wooly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek & he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child & thou a lamb.
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!



Night

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.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are cover'd 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 tygers 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,
Recieve each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

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, wash'd in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold.
As I guard o'er the fold."

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