

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Songs of Innocence and of Experience by William Blake

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Introduction.

Hear the voice of the Bard!
 Who Present, Past, & Future sees
 Whose ears have heard,
 The Holy Ward,
 That walk'd among the ancient trees.

Calling the lapsed Soul,
 And weeping in the evening dew;
 That might controul
 The starry pole;
 And fallen fallen light renew!

O Earth O Earth return!
 Arise from out the dewy grubs;
 Night is worn,
 And the morn
 Rises from the slumberous mists.

Turn away no more:
 Why wilt thou turn away
 The starry floor
 The watry shore
 Is given thee till the break of day.



EARTH'S Answer.

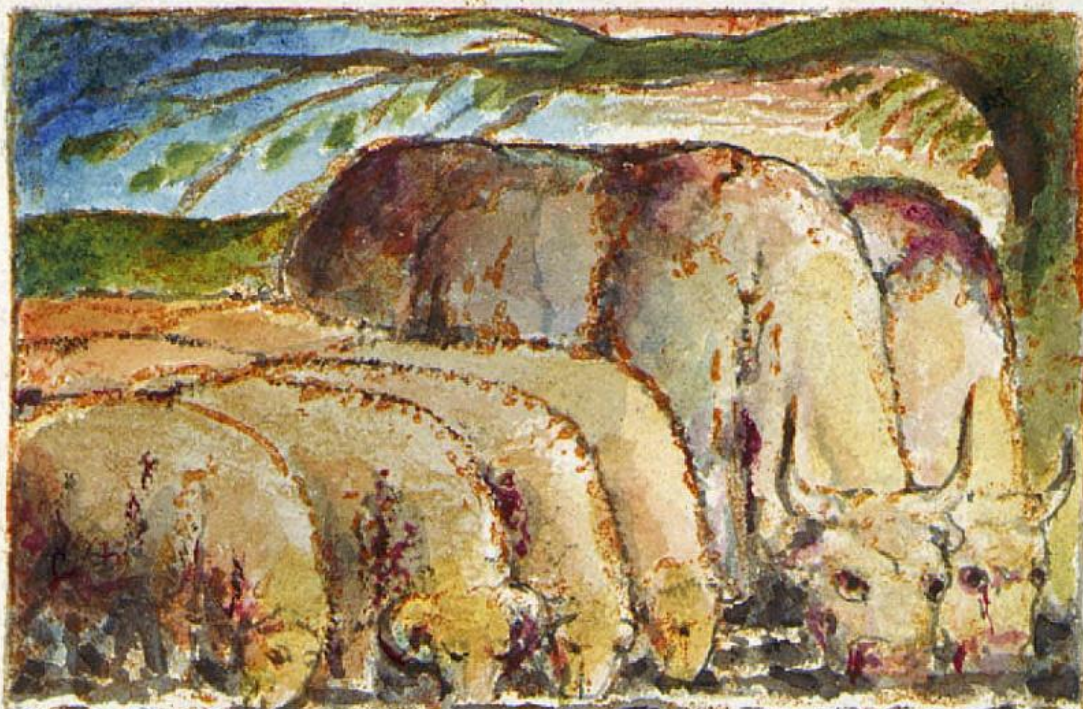
Earth raised up her head.
From the darkness's dread & drear.
Her light fled:
Stony dread!
And her locks cover'd with gray despair.

Prison'd on watery shore
Starry Jealousy does keep my den
Gold and hoar
Weeping o'er
I hear the father of the ancient men

Selfish father of men
Cruel jealous selfish fear
Can delight
Chain'd in night
The virgins of youth and morning bear.

Does spring hide its joy
When buds and blossoms grow?
Does the sower?
Sow by night?
Or the plowman in darkness's plow?

Break this heavy chain.
That does freeze my bones around
Selfish; vain;
Eternal bane!
That free Love with bandage bound.



The CLOD & the PEBBLE

Love seeketh not Itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care;
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hells despair.

So sang a little Clod of Clay,
Trodden with the cattles feet:
But a Pebble of the brook,
Warbled out these metres meet.

Love seeketh only Self to please,
To bind another to its delight:
Joys in anothers los of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heavens despite.





HOLY THURSDAY

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are black & bare,
And their ways are fill'd with thorns,
It is eternal winter there.

For where-er the sun does shine,
And where-er the rain does fall;
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appall.



The Little Girl Lost

In futurity
 I prophetic see,
 That the earth from sleep
 (Grieve 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 summers prime,
 Never fades away;
 Lovely Lyca lay.

Seven summers old
 Lovely Lyca told,
 One had wandered 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 in the,
 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 kindly lion Anod
 And the virgin view'd,
 Then he gambold round
 O'er the hallow'd ground.



Leopards, tigers 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 Lions
 Laid her slender dress,
 And naked they convey'd
 To caves the sleeping maid.



The Little Girl Found

All the night in woe,
 Lament parents go
 Over vallies deep,
 While the desert weep.
 Tired and woe-begone,
 Hoarse with making moan:
 Arm in arm seven days,
 They tread 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.

Farquhar



Leopards, tigers 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,
 Rusty tears there came;
 While the Lions
 Look'd her slender dress,
 And waked they convey'd
 To carry the sleeping maid.



The Little Girl Found

All the night in woe,
 Lye old parents go
 Over vallies deep.
 While the desert weep.
 Tired and woe-begone,
 Hoarse with making moan:
 Arm in arm seven days,
 They tread 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.

Janus



Faught, weeping, weak
 With hollow piteous shriek
 Rising from unrest,
 The trembling woman prest,
 With feet 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 lygers wild.

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



THE Chimney Sweeper

A little black thing among the snow:
Crying weep, weep, in notes of woe!
Where are thy father & mother, say?
They are both gone up to the church to pray

Because I was happy upon the hearth,
And smil'd among the winters snow:
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy, & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury;
And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery.



NURSES' Song

When the voices of children are heard on the green
And whistlings are in the dale: 1500
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale.

Then come home my children, the sun is gone down
And the dews of night arise
Your spring & your day are wasted in play
And your winter and night in disguise.





The SICK ROSE

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm:
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

THE FLY.

Little Fly
Thy summers play.
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.

Am not I so
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

If thought is life
And strength & breath;
And the want
Of thought is death;

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live.
Or if I die.

For I dance
And drink & sing;
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.





The Angel

I Dreamt a Dream, what can it mean?
And that I was a maiden Queen:
Guarded by an Angel mild;
Witless woe, was near beguiled!

And I wept both night and day
And he wip'd my tears away
And I wept both day and night
And hid from him my heart's delight

So he took his wings and fled:
Then the morn blush'd rosy red:
I dried my tears & armd my fears.
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my Angel came again:
I was armd, he came in vain:
For the time of youth was fled
And grey hairs were on my head

The Tyger.

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?



My Pretty ROSE TREE

A flower was afford to me:
 Such a flower as May never bare.
 But I said I've a Pretty Rose-tree.
 And I pass'd the sweet flower o'er.
 Then I went to my Pretty Rose-tree:
 To tend her by day and by night.
 But my Rose turn'd away with jealousy:
 And her thorns were my only delight.



AH! SUN-FLOWER

Ah Sun-Flower! weary of time,
 Who countest the steps of the Sun:
 Seeking after that sweet golden clime
 Where the travellers journey is done.
 Where the Youth pined away with desire,
 And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow:
 Arise from their graves and aspire,
 Where my Sun-Flower wishes to go.

THE LILLY

The modest Rose puts forth a thorn:
 The humble Sheep, a threatening horn:
 While the Lilly white, shall in Love delight,
 Nor a thorn nor a threat stain his beauty
 Bright.



THE GARDEN of LOVE

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And Thou shalt not, writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns, were walking their
rounds.

And binding with briars, my joys & desires,



The Little Vagabond

Dear Mother, dear Mother the Church is cold,
But the Ale-house is healthy & pleasant & warm;
Besides I can tell where I am used well,
Such usages in heaven will never do well.

But if at the Church they would give us some Ale,
And a pleasant fire, our souls to regale;
We'd sing and we'd pray all the live-long day;
Nor ever once wish from the Church to stray.

Then the Parson might preach & drink & sing,
And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring;
And modest dame Lurch, who is always at Church,
Would not have bawdy children nor fasting nor birch.

And God like a father rejoicing to see,
His children as pleasant and happy as he;
Would have no more quarrel with the Devil or the Devil,
But kiss him & give him both drink and apparel.





LONDON

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse



The Human Abstract.

Pity would be no more,
 If we did not make somebody Poor;
 And Mercy no more could be,
 If all were as happy as we;
 And mutual fear brings peace;
 Till the selfish loves increase.
 Then Cruelty knits a snare,
 And spreads his baits with care.
 He sits down with holy fears,
 And waters the ground with tears;
 Then Humility takes its root
 Underneath his foot.
 Soon spreads the dismal shade
 Of Mystery over his head,
 And the Caterpillar and Fly
 Feed on the Mystery.
 And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
 Ruddy and sweet to eat;
 And the Raven his nest has made
 In its thickest shade.
 The Gods of the earth and sea,
 Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree,
 But their search was all in vain,
 There grows one in the Human Brain.



INFANT SORROW

My Mother groand! my Father wept.
Into the dangerous world I leapt:
Helpless, naked, piping loud:
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my Father's hands:
Striving against my swaddling bands,
Bound and weary I thought best
To sulk upon my mother's breast.



A POISON TREE.

I was angry with my friend :
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe ;
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears ;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veild the pole,
In the morning glad I see :
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.



A Little BOY Lost

Nought loves another as itself
Nor venerates another so.
Nor is it possible to thought
A greater than itself to know:

And Father, how can I love you,
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door.

The Priest sat by and heard the child
In trembling zeal he seized his hair;
He led him by his little coat:
And all admired the Priestly care.

And standing on the altar high,
Lo what a fiend is here! said he:
One who sets reason up for judge
Of our most holy Mystery.

The weeping child could not be heard.
The weeping parents wept in vain:
They stripped him to his little shirt.
And bound him in an iron chain.

And buried him in a holy place,
Where many had been buried before:
The weeping parents wept in vain.
Are such things done on Albion's shore.



A Little GIRL Last

Children of the future Age,
Reading this indignant page;
Know that in a former time,
Love! sweet Love! was thought a crime.

In the Age of Gold,
Free from winters cold;
Youth and maiden bright,
To the holy light,
Naked in the sunny beams delight.

Once a youthful pair
Filled with sweetest care;
Met in garden bright,
Where the holy light,
Had just removed the curtains of the night.

There in rising day,
On the grass they play;
Parents were afar;
Strangers came not near;
And the maiden soon forgot her fear.

Tired with kisses sweet
They agree to meet,
When the silent sleep
Waves o'er heavens deep;
And the weary tired wanderers weep.

To her father white
Came the maiden bright;
But his loving look,
Like the holy book,
All her tender limbs with terror shook.

Opa! pale and weak!
To thy father speak;
O the trembling fear!
O the dismal care!
That shakes the blossoms of my hoary hair.

A DIVINE IMAGE

A Cruelty has a Human Heart
And Jealousy a Human Face
Terror. the Human Form Divine
And Secrecy. the Human Dress

The Human Dress is forged Iron
The Human Form. a fiery Forge
The Human Face. a Furnace seald
The Human Heart. its hungry Gorge.



To Tirzah

Whatever is Born of Mortal Birth,
Must be consumed with the Earth
To rise from Generation free;
Then what have I to do with thee?

The Sexes sprung from Shame & Pride
Blow'd in the morn; in evening died
But Mercy chang'd Death into Sleep;
The Sexes rose to work & weep.

Thou Mother of my Mortal part
With cruelty didst mould my Heart
And with false self-deceiving tears
Didst bind my Nostrils Eyes & Ears
Didst close my Tongue in senseless clay
And me to Mortal Life betray:
The Death of Jesus set me free,
Then what have I to do with thee?



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,
How can a child when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring.

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

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



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.



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