Would not have bandy children, nor fasting, nor

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 barrel,

But kiss him, and give him both drink and apparel.

I wander through each chartered street,

#### LONDON

Near where the chartered Thames does flow, A mark in every face I meet, Marks of weakness, marks of woe. In every cry of every man, In every infant's cry of fear, In every voice, in every ban, The mind-forged manacles I hear: How the chimney-sweeper's cry Every blackening church appals, And the hapless soldier's sigh Runs in blood down palace-walls. But most, through midnight streets I hear How the youthful harlot's curse Blasts the new-born infant's tear,

# Songs of **Experience**

**William Blake** 

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cynrch, And modest Dame Lurch, who is always at And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring; 'buis

Then the Parson might preach, and drink, and Nor ever once wish from the Church to stray. We'd sing and we'd pray all the livelong day, And a pleasant fire our souls to regale, But, if at the Church they would give us some ale, Such usage in heaven will never do well. Besides, I can tell where I am used well;

But the Alehouse is healthy, and pleasant, and Dear mother, dear mother, the Church is cold;

#### THE LITTLE VAGABOND

And binding with briars my joys and desires. 'spunoa And priests in black gowns were walking their And tombstones where flowers should be; And I saw it was filled with graves, That so many sweet flowers bore. So I turned to the Garden of Love And 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door;

Is given thee till the break of day.' Why wilt thou turn away? Rises from the slumbrous mass. Arise from out the dewy grass!

'O Earth, O Earth, return! And fallen, fallen light renew!

The starry pole,

The watery shore,

Turn away no more;

The starry floor,

And the morn Aight is worn,

That might control

And weeping in the evening dew;

Calling the lapsed soul,

That walked among the ancient trees;

The Holy Word

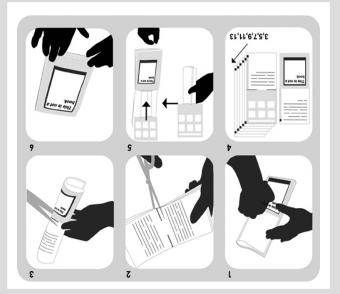
Whose ears have heard

Who present, past, and future, sees; Hear the voice of the Bard,

INTRODUCTION







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Songs of Experience William Blake Created on: Wed Mar 5 15:54:27 2008

## **EARTH'S ANSWER**

Earth raised up her head
From the darkness dread and drear,
Her light fled,
Stony, dread,
And her locks covered with grey despair.
'Prisoned on watery shore,
Starry jealousy does keep my den

Cold and hoar;

Weeping o'er,

I hear the father of the ancient men.

'Selfish father of men!

Cruel, jealous, selfish fear!

Can delight,

Chained 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 ploughman in darkness plough?

'Break this heavy chain,

That does freeze my bones around!

Selfish, vain,

Eternal bane,

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land, Babes reduced to misery,
Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

## **YAGSAUHT YJOH**

Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a heaven in hell's despair.'
So sung a little clod of clay,
Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet:
'Love seeketh only Self to please,
'Love seeketh only Self to please,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
Joys in another's loss of ease,

# THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

That free love with bondage bound.'

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And wish to lead others, when they should be led. And feel--they know not what but care; They stumble all night over bones of the dead; How many have fallen there! Tangled roots perplex her ways; Folly is an endless maze; Dark disputes and artful teazing. Doubt is fled, and clouds of reason,

And their sun does never shine, And their fields are bleak and bare, And their ways are filled 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 appal.

## THE LITTLE GIRL LOST

In futurity I prophesy 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 wandered long,

O'er the hallowed ground. Then he gambolled round And the virgin viewed: The kingly lion stood, Viewed the maid asleep. Come from caverns deep, While the beasts of prey, Sleeping Lyca lay, While I close my eyes.' Let thy moon arise, O'er this desert bright 'Frowning, frowning night, Lyca shall not weep. If my mother sleep, Then let Lyca wake; 'If her heart does ache, If her mother weep? How can Lyca sleep Is your little child. Lost in desert wild Where can Lyca sleep? Do father, mother, weep? Underneath this tree; Sweet sleep, come to me, Hearing wild birds' song.

Or bless the mellowing year, When the blasts of winter appear?

#### **TO TIRZAH**

Whate'er 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 and pride, Blowed in the morn, in evening died; But mercy changed death into sleep; The sexes rose to work and weep. Thou, mother of my mortal part, With cruelty didst mould my heart, And with false self-deceiving tears Didst blind my nostrils, eyes, and ears, Didst close my tonque 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 VOICE OF THE ANCIENT BARD

Youth of delight! come hither And see the opening morn, Image of Truth new-born.

Leopards, tigers, play Round her as she lay; While the lion old Bowed his mane of gold, And her bosom lick, And upon her neck, From his eyes of flame, Ruby tears there came: While the lioness Loosed her slender dress, And naked they conveyed To caves the sleeping maid.

### THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND

All the night in woe Lyca's parents go Over valleys deep, While the deserts weep. Tired and woe-begone, Hoarse with making moan, Arm in arm, seven days They traced the desert ways. Seven nights they sleep Among shadows deep, And dream they see their child Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy, Or the summer fruits appear? How shall the summer arise in Joy, By sorrow and care's dismay, -Of their joy in the springing day, And if the tender plants are stripped tyews nwold smossold bnA O father and mother if buds are nipped, And forget his youthful spring! But droop his tender wing, How can a child, when fears annoy, Sit in a cage and sing? How can the bird that is born for joy Worn through with the dreary shower. Nor sit in learning's bower, Nor in my book can I take delight, And spend many an anxious hour; Ah then at times I drooping sit, .yemsib bne gnidgis nI The little ones spend the day Under a cruel eye outworn, O it drives all joy away! But to go to school in a summer morn, -O what sweet company! And the skylark sings with me:

> A spirit armed in gold. And wondering behold Filled with deep surprise; They look upon his eyes, And silent by them stands. When he licks their hands, But their fears allay Smelling to his prey; Then he stalked around, Bore them to the ground, Soon his heavy mane Turning back was vain: A couching lion lay. Till before their way Her, armed with sorrow sore; In his arms he bore She could no further go. With feet of weary woe; The trembling woman pressed Rising from unrest, With hollow piteous shriek. Famished, weeping, weak, The fancied image strays, Pale through pathless ways Starved in desert wild.

The human face a furnace sealed, The human heart its hungry gorge.

#### A CRADLE SONG

Sleep, sleep, beauty bright, Dreaming in the joys of night; Sleep, sleep; in thy sleep Little sorrows sit and weep. Sweet babe, in thy face Soft desires I can trace, Secret joys and secret smiles, Little pretty infant wiles. As thy softest limbs I feel, Smiles as of the morning steal O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast Where thy little heart doth rest. O the cunning wiles that creep In thy little heart asleep! When thy little heart doth wake, Then the dreadful light shall break.

#### THE SCHOOLBOY

I love to rise in a summer morn, When the birds sing on every tree; The distant huntsman winds his horn,

On his head a crown, On his shoulders down Flowed 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 tigers wild. To this day they dwell In a lonely dell, Nor fear the wolvish howl Nor the lion's growl.

## THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER

A little black thing among the snow, Crying! 'weep! weep!' in notes of woe! 'Where are thy father and mother? Say!' -'They are both gone up to the church to pray. 'Because I was happy upon the heath, And smiled among the winter's snow, They clothed me in the clothes of death,

The human form a fiery forge, The human dress is forged iron, And Secrecy the human dress. Terror the human form divine, And Jealousy a human face; Cruelty has a human heart,

## **A DIVINE IMAGE**

That shakes the blossoms of my hoary hair! O the dismal care O the trembling fear! To thy father speak! Ona, pale and weak, All her tender limbs with terror shook. Like the holy book, But his loving look, Came the maiden bright; To her father white And the weary tired wanderers weep. Waves o'er heaven's deep, When the silent sleep They agree to meet Tired with kisses sweet, And the maiden soon forgot her fear. Strangers came not near,

> Has found out thy bed In the howling storm, That flies in the night, The invisible worm, O rose, thou art sick!

## THE SICK ROSE

Your spring and your day are wasted in play, And the dews of night arise; 'umop Then come home, my children, the sun is gone My face turns green and pale. The days of my youth rise tresh in my mind, And whisperings are in the dale,

And your winter and night in disguise.

When the voices of children are heard on the

## **NURSE'S SONG**

dreen,

Who made up a heaven of our misery.' And are gone to praise God and His priest and They think they have done me no injury, And because I am happy and dance and sing, And taught me to sing the notes of woe. They stripped him to his little shirt,
And bound him in an iron chain,
And burned him in a holy place
Where many had been burned before;
The weeping parents wept in vain.

Are such things done on Albion's shore?

#### A LITTLE GIRL LOST

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 winter's cold, Youth and maiden bright, To the holy light, Naked in the sunny beams delight. Once a youthful pair, Filled with softest 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,

Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

## THE FLY

Little Fly, Thy summer's play My thoughtless hand Has brushed away. Am not I A fly like thee? Or art not thou A man like me? For I dance, And drink, and sing, Till some blind hand Shall brush my wing. If thought is life And strength and breath, And the want Of thought is death; Then am I A happy fly. If I live, Or if I die.

The weeping parents wept in vain: The weeping child could not be heard, Of our most holy mystery.' 'One who sets reason up for judge 'Lo, what a fiend is here!' said he: And standing on the altar high, And all admired his priestly care. He led him by his little coat, In trembling zeal he seized his hair, The Priest sat by and heard the child; That picks up crumbs around the door.' I love you like the little bird Or any of my brothers more? And, father, how can I love you A greater than itself to know. Nor is it possible to thought Nor venerates another so, Mought loves another as itself,

#### **TSOJ YOB 3JTTIJ A**

And he knew that it was mine, -And into my garden stole When the night had veiled the pole; In the morning, glad, I see My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

Tiger, tiger, 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?

# языт энт

And grey hairs were on my head. For the time of youth was fled, I was armed, he came in vain; Soon my Angel came again; With ten thousand shields and spears. I dried my tears, and armed my fears Then the morn blushed rosy red. So he took his wings, and fled; And hid from him my heart's delight. And I wept both day and night, And he wiped my tears away; And I wept both night and day, Witless woe was ne'er beguiled! Guarded by an Angel mild: And that I was a maiden Queen I dreamt a dream! What can it mean?

**THE ANGEL** 

But their search was all in vain: There grows one in the human Brain.

#### **INFANT SORROW**

My mother groaned, 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 watered it in fears
Night and 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,

On what wings dare he aspire? What the hand dare seize the fire? And what shoulder and what art Could twist the sinews of thy heart? And, when thy heart began to beat, What dread hand and 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 watered heaven with their tears, Did He smile His work to see? Did He who made the lamb make thee? Tiger, tiger, 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 offered to me, Such a flower as May never bore; But I said, 'I've a pretty rose tree,' And I passed the sweet flower o'er. Then I went to my pretty rose tree, Sought through nature to find this tree, The gods of the earth and sea th its thickest shade. And the raven his nest has made Ruddy and sweet to eat, And it bears the fruit of Deceit, Feed on the Mystery. And the caterpillar and fly Of Mystery over his head, Soon spreads the dismal shade Underneath his foot. Then Humility takes its root And waters the ground with tears; He sits down with holy fears, And spreads his baits with care. Then Cruelty knits a snare, Till the selfish loves increase; And mutual fear brings Peace, It all were as happy as we. And Mercy no more could be If we did not make somebody poor, PITY would be no more

## THE HUMAN ABSTRACT

And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.

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,

## THE GARDEN OF LOVE

The modest Rose puts forth a thorn,

The humble sheep a threat'ning horn:

While the Lily white shall in love delight,

Nor a thorn nor a threat stain her beauty bright.

## **YJIJ 3HT**

Ah, sunflower, weary of time, Who countest the steps of the sun; Seeking after that sweet golden clime Where the traveller's 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 Sunflower wishes to go!

#### AH, SUNFLOWER

To tend her by day and by night; But my rose turned away with jealousy, And her thorns were my only delight.