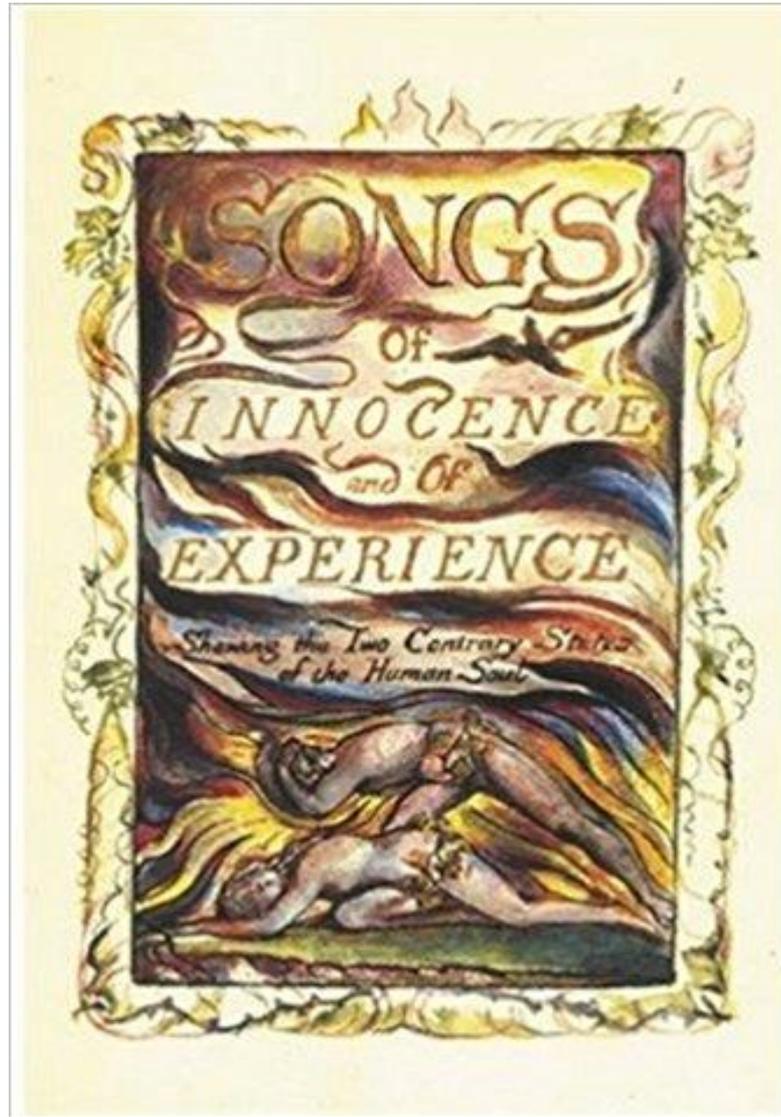


# WILLIAM BLAKE



# Life and works

- Born in 1757, he received a strict education
- He didn't go to school but started engraving when he was very young
- He started work as apprentice
- During this period, he began to write poetry and produced his own books: each page is hand-printed and coloured by Blake himself.
- He accompanied his poems with illustrations
- However, he lived thanks to the engravings that he made for the others. His poetry was not recognized during his life. He was considered mad because of his visions.

# Style

- Simple vocabulary and syntax
- Traditional metrical pattern
- Repetition, alliteration assonance, musicality:
- The SOUND is important AS the meaning
- Images and symbols, like the child and the lamb.

# *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience (1794)*

- They represent the 2 contrasting states of human mind. Each poem in the first part corresponds to a poem in the second part.
- Blake believed in the importance of **CONTRASTS**.
- Innocence and Experience are the two states of man's inner and outer world.

# Innocence & Experience complementary to reach KNOWLEDGE

## Innocence

- Symbolised by CHILDHOOD
- God is loving and caring
- The LAMB represents the purity of this world



## Experience

- Symbolised by ADULTHOOD
- Experience brings sadness and suffering
- The TIGER represents the dangerous and frightening forces of cities like LONDON.

**ADULTHOOD  
SUBSTITUTES  
CHILDHOOD.**



# Imagination and the POET

- Blake anticipated the Romantic movement.
- For Romantics imagination was central in the writing process and the poet was a teacher and a prophet.
- For BLAKE every poet is a VISIONARY and a PROPHET: he can CREATE, but also EXPOSE and DENOUNCE the evils & corruption of the society.



# Social involvement

- He had an isolated life but was worried about the society.
- He supported **French** and **American** Revolution: they represented ASPIRATION towards FREEDOM and JUSTICE and the fight against oppression.





# The Lamb

Little Lamb who made **thee**?  
Dost thou know who made thee  
gave thee life, and bid thee feed  
by the stream and 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 and he is mild,  
he became a little child:  
I a child and thou a lamb,  
we are called by his name.

Little Lamb, God bless thee!  
little Lamb, God bless thee!

Piccolo agnello chi ti fece?  
Lo sai tu chi ti fece  
ti diede vita e ti invitò a nutrirti  
accanto al ruscello e sopra il prato;  
ti diede abiti deliziosi, i più morbidi abiti  
di lana brillante;  
ti diede una voce così tenera,  
che fa gioire tutte le valli!

Piccolo agnello chi ti fece?  
Tu sai chi ti fece?

Piccolo agnello, te lo dirò,  
Piccolo agnello, te lo dirò!  
Egli viene chiamato col tuo nome,  
poiché chiama se stesso Agnello:  
è docile e mite;  
divenne un piccolo bambino:  
io un bambino e tu un agnello,  
siamo chiamati col suo nome.

Piccolo agnello, Dio ti benedica!  
Piccolo agnello, Dio ti benedica!

- With the same sense of wonder as a CHILD, the poet contemplates the mystery of CREATION, in the form of a little LAMB. Its creator was good, generous and loving, and the lamb lived in a JOYFUL world.
- The lamb shares the qualities of its CREATOR: it's good tender and innocent. The creator and the lamb are the same being.