SONGS OF Innocence

The Author & Printer W. Blake

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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.
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
Pipe sit thee down and write:
In a book that all may read:
So he vanished 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 morn to evening, he sings;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lambs' innocent call,
And he hears the ewes' tender reply,
He is watchful while they are in pens,
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 not 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 sorrows share,
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow laid.
Can a brother 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 birds' grief and care
Hear the woes that infants bear.
And not sit beside the near
Pouring pity in their breast.
And not sit the cradle near
Weeping tears an infant's tear.
And not sit both night and 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 cannot sigh a sigh.
And thy maker is not by.
Think not, thou cannot 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 and 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 skylark 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 learnings bower.
Worn thru' 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 and mother, if buds are nipt,
And blossoms blown away.
And if the tender plants are stript
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 des
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 and two in red and blue and green,
Grey-headed beakers, and were white, as white as snow,
With into the high dome of Paul's, they like, Thames waters flow.

What a multitude they seem, these flowers of London tow.
Seated in companies, they sit, vast radiance all their own.
The hill of architecture was there, but multitude of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising up innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wave, they raise to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thundering, the seats of heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men wise, guardian of the poor.
Then cherish, lest you lose 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 dew 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 day
And we cannot go to sleep.
Besides in the sky the little birds fly
And the hills are all covered with sheep.

Well well go and play till the light fades away
And then go home to bed.
The little ones leaped and shouted and laughed
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
Comic 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 bereaved 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 noon day.

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 sun-burnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

For
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 kiss'd 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 fathers knee.
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair.
And he like him and he will then love me.
The Voice of the Ancient Bard.

Youth of delight come hither.
And see the evening morn.
Image of truth new born.
Doubt is fled & clouds of reason.
Dark disputes & arduous 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.
The Echoing Green

The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies,
The merry bells ring,
To welcome the Spring,
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around,
To the bells cheerful sound.
While our sports shall be seen,
On the Echoing Green.

Old John with white hair
Does laugh very 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:
Lilie 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 weep weep.
So your chimney 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 heads are bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.

And so he was quiet, y 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 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,
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 near his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
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;
And 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 clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine:
Love Mercy Pity Peace.

And all must have 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 solemn
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 beetles hum,
Little wanderer hie thee home.
The Little Girl Lost.

In futurity
I prophetic see.
That the earth from sleep,
(Grace the sentence deep)
Shall arise and seek
For her maker seek;
And the desert wild
Become a garden mild.

In the southern clime,
Where the summers prime,
Never fades away;
Lovely Lyca lay,
Seventeen summers old
Lovely Lyca told,
She had wandered long,
Hearing wild birds song.
Sweet sleep come to me.
Underneath this tree;
My 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 fromaning night,
O'er the desert bright.
Let the moon arise,
While I close my eyes.

Sleeping Lyca lay;
While the beasts of prey,
Come from caverns deep,
Viewed the maid asleep.

The king lion stood.
And the virgin fain
Then the gambold round.
O'er the hallowed ground.
Leopards, grizzles play,
Round her as she lay;
While the lion old,
Bore'd his state of gold.

And her brow so rich,
And upon her neck,
From his eyes of flame.
Ruby was there cast.

While she banished,
Loosed her slender dress,
And asked they squaward
To ears the sleeping maid.

The Little Girl Found

All the night in weep,
Lyres parents sigh;
O'er vallies deep.
While the desarts weep.

Tired and wan-begone,
Flange with walking means;
Are in arm seven days.
They track the desert ways.

Seven nights they sleep,
Among shadowes deep.
And dream they see their child
Bound in desert wild.

Pale thro' pathles ways
The fancied image slumers.
Laments poor, weeping week
With hollow prison shriek
Rising from unrest,
The trembling woman preest,
With feet of weary woe;
She could no farther 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
Wield'd vast deep surprise:
And wonder'd ere behold:
A spirit arm'd in gold.

On his head a crown
On his shoulders down,
Laid his golden hair.
Gone was all their care.

Follow me he said;
Weep not for the maid:
In my palace deep,
You lies asleep.

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

To this day they dwell
In a lonely cell.
Nor fear the woful 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's found

The little boy lost in the lonely fen,
Led by the wandering light,
Began to cry, but God ever nigh,
Appeared like his father in white.

He kissed the child and 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 moon's 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 Mothers 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 smiled.
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 became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles.
Heaven & earth to peace beguiles.
Espring

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
Little Boy
Full of joy.
Little
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 and bid thee feed:
By the stream and over the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing woolly 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:
A child and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee,
Little Lamb God bless thee.
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 heavens 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 blessings
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom
And each sleeping boscom.

They look in ebery 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.

And there the lions ruddy eyes,
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries;
And wandering 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 bare thy name.
Gracious after thee and weep.
For washed in life's river.
My bright mans may ever.
Shall shine like the gold.
As I guess o'er the fold.