

## 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 5  
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, 10  
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves  
The feet of angels bright;  
Unseen, they pour blessing,  
And joy without ceasing,  
On each bud and blossom, 15  
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest  
Where birds are covered warm;  
They visit caves of every beast,  
To keep them all from harm: 20  
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, 25  
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, 30  
Receive 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, 35  
And walking round the fold:  
Saying: 'Wrath by His meekness,  
And, by His health, sickness,  
Is driven away  
From our immortal day. 40

'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, washed in life's river, 45  
My bright mane for ever  
Shall shine like the gold,  
As I guard o'er the fold.'

### Discussion Questions:

1. How is personification used in Blake's poem?
2. Explain the structural shift in the poems and how that helps create meaning.

## 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                    5  
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,                    10  
He led him by his little coat,  
And all admired his priestly care.

And standing on the altar high,  
'Lo, what a fiend is here!' said he:  
'One who sets reason up for judge                    15  
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,                    20

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?

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does the rhyme scheme contribute to the tone?
2. How is the tone of the poem juxtaposed against the meaning?

"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 5  
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, 10  
And my foe beheld it shine,  
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 15  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

Discussion Questions:

1. Explain the use of symbolism and its affect within this poem.
2. How ideas are juxtaposed in this poem, and for what purpose?

## America: A Prophecy (Extract)

### A Prophecy

The Guardian Prince of Albion burns in his nightly tent,  
Sullen fires across the Atlantic glow to America's shore:  
Piercing the souls of warlike men, who rise in silent night,  
Washington, Franklin, Paine & Warren, Gates, Hancock & Green;  
Meet on the coast glowing with blood from Albions fiery Prince. 5

Washington spoke; Friends of America look over the Atlantic sea;  
A bended bow is lifted in heaven, & a heavy iron chain  
Descends link by link from Albions cliffs across the sea to bind  
Brothers & sons of America, till our faces pale and yellow;  
Heads deprest, voices weak, eyes downcast, hands work-bruis'd, 10  
Feet bleeding on the sultry sands, and the furrows of the whip  
Descend to generations that in future times forget.----

The strong voice ceas'd; for a terrible blast swept over the heaving sea;  
The eastern cloud rent; on his cliffs stood Albions wrathful Prince.  
A dragon form clashing his scales at midnight he arose, 15  
And flam'd red meteors round the land of Albion beneath[.]  
His voice, his locks, his awful shoulders, and his glowing eyes,

Appear to the Americans upon the cloudy night.

Solemn heave the Atlantic waves between the gloomy nations,  
Swelling, belching from its deeps red clouds & raging Fires! 20  
Albion is sick. America faints! enrag'd the Zenith grew.  
As human blood shooting its veins all round the orb'd heaven  
Red rose the clouds from the Atlantic in vast wheels of blood  
And in the red clouds rose a Wonder o'er the Atlantic sea;  
Intense! naked! a Human fire fierce glowing, as the wedge 25  
Of iron heated in the furnace; his terrible limbs were fire  
With myriads of cloudy terrors banners dark & towers  
Surrounded; heat but not light went thro' the murky atmosphere

The King of England looking westward trembles at the vision 29

### Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss Blake's use of imagery throughout the poem.
2. How does the last line of the extract change your understanding of the poem as a whole?

## Auguries of Innocence (Extract)

To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour.

A robin redbreast in a cage 5  
Puts all heaven in a rage.  
A dove-house fill'd with doves and pigeons  
Shudders hell thro' all its regions.  
A dog starv'd at his master's gate 10  
Predicts the ruin of the state.  
A horse misused upon the road  
Calls to heaven for human blood.  
Each outcry of the hunted hare  
A fibre from the brain does tear.  
A skylark wounded in the wing, 15  
A cherubim does cease to sing.  
The game-cock clipt and arm'd for fight  
Does the rising sun affright.

Every wolf's and lion's howl 20  
Raises from hell a human soul.  
The wild deer, wand'ring here and there,  
Keeps the human soul from care.  
The lamb misus'd breeds public strife,  
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.  
The bat that flits at close of eve 25  
Has left the brain that won't believe.  
The owl that calls upon the night  
Speaks the unbeliever's fright.  
He who shall hurt the little wren 30  
Shall never be belov'd by men.

### Discussion Questions:

1. To what advantage does Blake use animal symbolism throughout the poem?
2. Examine the structure of the extract. What does stanza one do, in relation to the following stanzas?

"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. 5

"Prisoned on watery shore,  
Starry jealousy does keep my den  
Cold and hoar,  
Weeping o'er,  
I hear the father of the ancient men. 10

"Selfish father of men!  
Cruel, jealous, selfish fear!  
Can delight,  
Chained in night,  
The virgins of youth and morning bear? 15

"Does spring hide its joy,  
When buds and blossoms grow?  
Does the sower  
Sow by night,  
Or the plowman in darkness plough? 20

"Break this heavy chain,  
That does freeze my bones around!  
Selfish, vain,  
Eternal bane,  
That free love with bondage bound." 25

Discussion Questions:

1. Explain Blake's use of personification and how it affects meaning.
2. What is the effect of quotation marks in this poem?

## Garden of Love

I laid me down upon a bank,  
Where Love lay sleeping;  
I heard among the rushes dank  
Weeping, weeping.

Then I went to the heath and the wild,           5  
To the thistles and thorns of the waste;  
And they told me how they were beguiled,  
Driven out, and compelled to the chaste.

I went to the Garden of Love,  
And saw what I never had seen;           10  
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 turned to the Garden of Love           15  
That so many sweet flowers bore.

And I saw it was filled with graves,  
And tombstones where flowers should be;  
And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,  
And binding with briars my joys and desires.   20

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does Blake use poetic devices to create meaning in this poem?
2. How does rhyme scheme contribute to the overall tone of the poem?

## JERUSALEM (*from 'Milton'*)

**A**ND did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine 5  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
Bring me my arrows of desire! 10  
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem 15  
In England's green and pleasant land.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Explain Blake's use of punctuation and how it affects the meaning of the poem.
2. How does rhyme scheme create tone in Blake's poem?



## 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, 5  
And not feel my sorrow's share?  
Can a father see his child  
Weep, nor be with sorrow filled?

Can a mother sit and hear  
An infant groan, an infant fear? 10  
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 and care, 15  
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? 20

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: 25  
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:

30  
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 and gone

35  
He doth sit by us and moan.

Discussion Questions:

1. Explain the use of punctuation. What affect does the punctuation have on the meaning of the poem?
2. How is conflict used in this poem?

## 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 ne'er beguiled!

And I wept both night and day,                    5  
And he wiped 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 blushed rosy red.                    10  
I dried my tears, and armed my fears  
With ten-thousand shields and spears.

Soon my Angel came again;  
I was armed, he came in vain;  
For the time of youth was fled,                    15  
And grey hairs were on my head.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the tone of the poem and how does Blake create that tone?
2. What is the affect of repetition in the poem?

**“The Argument” Extract from “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell”**

**Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burden'd air;  
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.**

**Once meek, and in a perilous path,  
The just man kept his course along  
The vale of death. 5  
Roses are planted where thorns grow,  
And on the barren heath  
Sing the honey bees.**

**Then the perilous path was planted:  
And a river and a spring 10  
On every cliff and tomb:  
And on the bleached bones  
Red clay brought forth.**

**Till the villain left the paths of ease,  
To walk in perilous paths, and drive 15  
The just man into barren climes.**

**Now the sneaking serpent walks  
In mild humility,  
And the just man rages in the wilds  
Where lions roam. 20**

**Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burden'd air;  
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.**

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1. What is the significance of framing this poem in repetition?**
- 2. How does the narration juxtapose good and evil?**

## "The Fly"

Little Fly,  
Thy summer's play  
My thoughtless hand  
Has brushed away.

Am not I  
A fly like thee?                    5  
Or art not thou  
A man like me?

For I dance,  
And drink, and sing,                 10  
Till some blind hand  
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life  
And strength and breath,  
And the want                         15  
Of thought is death;

Then am I  
A happy fly.  
If I live,  
Or if I die.                         20

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does the structure of "The Fly" affect meaning?
2. How does Blake use poetic devices to enact meaning throughout his poem?

## 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,           5  
Till the selfish loves increase;  
Then Cruelty knits a snare,  
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with his holy fears,  
And waters the ground with tears;   10  
Then Humility takes its root  
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade  
Of Mystery over his head,  
And the caterpillar and fly       15  
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.               20

The gods of the earth and sea  
Sought through nature to find this tree,  
But their search was all in vain:  
There grows one in the human Brain.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does rhyme discord establish tone?
2. Who is "He" and what might "He" represent?

## 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,                   5  
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,       10  
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       15  
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

‘For, when our souls have learned the heat to bear,  
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,  
Saying, “Come out from the grove, my love and care,  
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.”’       20

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           25  
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.

### Discussion Questions:

How does the structure of the poem enhance the tone or meaning?

How is color symbolism used to advance the theme?

## **The Little Vagabond**

**by: William Blake (1757-1827)**

**Dear mother, dear mother, the Church is cold;  
But the Alehouse is healthy, and pleasant, and warm.  
Besides, I can tell where I am used well;  
The poor parsons with wind like a blown bladder swell.**

**But, if at the Church they would give us some ale,           5  
And a pleasant fire our souls to regale,  
We'd sing and we'd pray all the livelong day,  
Nor ever once wish from the Church to stray.**

**Then the Parson might preach, and drink, and sing,  
And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring;           10  
And modest Dame Lurch, who is always at church,  
Would not have bandy 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 barrel, 15  
But kiss him, and give him both drink and apparel.**

### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. How is the rhyme scheme important in regards to theme?**
- 2. How does the author use figurative language within this piece?**

## THE SCHOOLBOY

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! 5

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. 10

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 through with the dreary shower. 15

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? 20

O father and mother, if buds are nipped,  
And blossoms blown away;  
And if the tender plants are stripped  
Of their joy in the springing day,  
By sorrow and care's dismay,— 25

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? 30

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does repetition affect tone in this work?
2. How does the use of language reveal tensions in this work?



## 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                    5  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
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?        10  
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            15  
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?    20

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

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does "forced rhyme" affect the tone of the poem?
2. How does Blake use capitalization throughout the poem?