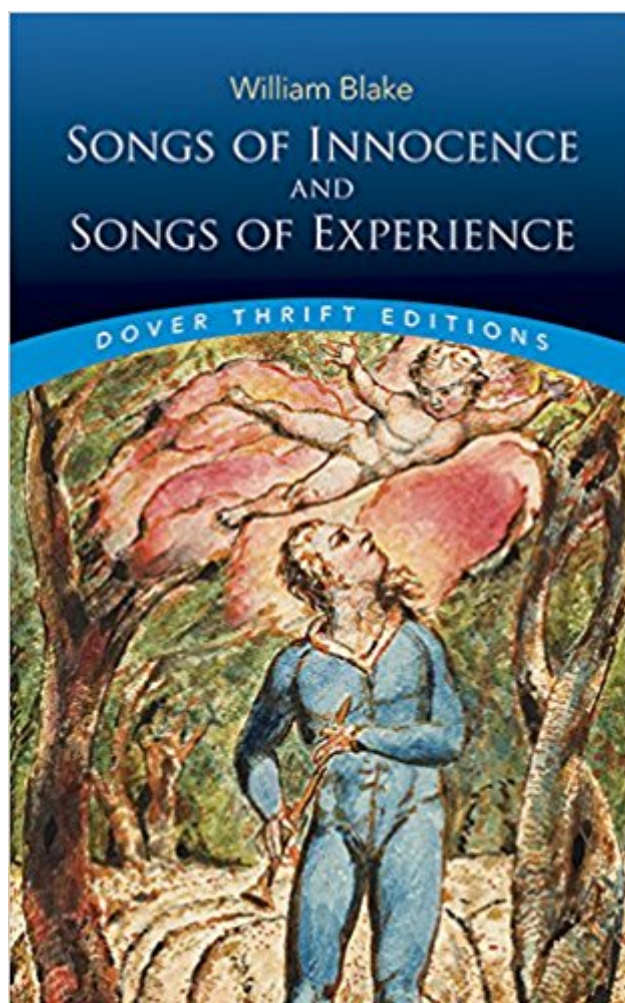


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Songs Of Innocence And Songs Of Experience (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

As both painter and poet, William Blake (1757–1827) was a powerful and visionary artist whose two early collections of poetry, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, contain memorable lyric verses embodying the emerging spirit of Romanticism. The two works were published together in 1794 with the subtitle, "Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul." The poems of *Songs of Innocence* describe childhood states of naturalness and purity in delicately beautiful lyrics that reveal a child's unspoiled and beatific view of life and human nature. In *Songs of Experience* the mood and tone darken, the poems suggesting the bitter corruptions and disillusionment that await the innocent. The contrast between the two sets of lyrics is perhaps at its most acute in the poems "The Lamb" and "The Tyger," the latter ultimately expressing wonderment at the seemingly paradoxical coexistence of good and evil. The full texts of all the poems in the 1794 edition of both collections are included in this volume. Includes a selection from the Common Core State Standards Initiative: "The Echoing Green."

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Customer Reviews

William Blake (1757–1827) was an English poet, painter, and printmaker. Largely unrecognized during his lifetime, Blake is now considered a seminal figure in the history of both the poetry and visual arts of the Romantic Age. His prophetic poetry has been said to form "what is in proportion to its merits the least read body of poetry in the English language". His visual artistry has

led one British art journalist to proclaim him "far and away the greatest artist Britain has ever produced". Although he lived in London his entire life except for three years spent in Felpham he produced a diverse and symbolically rich corpus, which embraced the imagination as "the body of God", or "Human existence itself". Considered mad by contemporaries for his idiosyncratic views, Blake is held in high regard by later critics for his expressiveness and creativity, and for the philosophical and mystical undercurrents within his work. His paintings and poetry have been characterized as part of both the Romantic movement and "Pre-Romantic", for its large appearance in the 18th century. Reverent of the Bible but hostile to the Church of England, Blake was influenced by the ideals and ambitions of the French and American revolutions, as well as by such thinkers as Jakob B  hme and Emanuel Swedenborg. Despite these known influences, the singularity of Blake's work makes him difficult to classify. The 19th century scholar William Rossetti characterised Blake as a "glorious luminary," and as "a man not forestalled by predecessors, nor to be classed with contemporaries, nor to be replaced by known or readily surmisable successors." Historian Peter Marshall has classified Blake as one of the forerunners of modern anarchism, along with Blake's contemporary William Godwin. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Both the student and connoisseur of the classics will enjoy this series of inexpensive audiobooks, each of which includes a Dover-Thrift edition of the text. The newcomer to classic poetry and prose, in particular, may experience in their spoken form an awakening to the beauty and power of these literary masters. It's hard to imagine a better introduction to William Blake's poetry than stage actors Brian Murray's and Suzanne Toren's audio rendition of SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE. Their alternating readings of Songs of Innocence vibrate with the reverence of Blake's vision of childhood as paradise lost; in Songs of Experience one fully senses Blake's later disillusion. The two books provide counterpoint to each other, an effect enhanced by the use of male and female readers. (c)AudioFile, Portland, Maine --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I'm reiterating previous reviewers: be prepared for a small book. You cannot (or at least my aging eyes cannot) read the poems as printed in Blake's engravings, though I can read them in the text on the facing page. If only this book were about two inches bigger in both dimensions! I have a similar book, issued by the Tate, containing The Proverbs of Heaven & Hell, and I was hoping this was a companion edition, but no such luck. Nevertheless, I'm keeping mine and ordering another for a poet-friend's birthday. Blake is extraordinary -- a genius of his own kind, his visions sprung

apparently from nowhere, his hearthuge, his awe religious and delicate, his compassion naked. He is the finest inveigher against the repressive, life-and-sex-denyingaspects of some religion (aspects he considers the work of the devil, not god) -- and the finest prophet againstthe "man forged manacles" of heartless industrialism -- that I have ever read. But there's much more to the "Songs" than this -- religious awe is embedded in the smallest detail of the human and natural world. Odd, strange, speaking to us from some other world. The poems alone are doorways to the infinite; and in tandem with his delicate, powerful illuminated engravings, a delight.

Mystic, visionary, artist, genius, craftsman, poet, social reformer, humanitarian -- all of these words and more have been used but do not adequately describe William Blake. "Songs of Innocence and Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul" is widely acknowledged as Blake's masterpiece and, for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see, the insights expressed in it are as moving and valuable now as they were when Blake first expressed them in 1789-94. Blake was as accomplished a craftsman as he was an artist and a poet. He was perhaps the first artist to express himself in the form of "multimedia". The media, in this case, being "Illuminated books". Blake invented a process where he could etch both poetry (text) and design on copper-plates and also formulated his own colors. What makes this particular edition special is that it contains Blake's original color etchings. Since I own the basic Kindle and wanted to view the colored illustrations, I downloaded this book to my PC, all 952 pages of it! I suggest that you do the same. The poetry is magnificent! The illustrations are amazing! Great gift, especially to accompany a Kindle Fire. (No, I do not work for !) You can't go wrong at \$2.99!

Bought this as a present. The recipient loved it. I was really hoping for one which had all of the original illustrations (well, reproductions of), and this one lived up to that hope. In addition to the illustrations, which had the poems, the poems were also transcribed in a highly readable font. There was also a small bit of discussion with each poem (I think all of them, but I didn't look that closely) giving some background and interpretation (again, I think). The book itself was in very good condition, and the slipcase was very nice, even having a section on the top and bottom to follow the curve of the spine of the book. All told, this was a good copy of this collection, and both I and the recipient were quite satisfied.

Beware! If you order this, you're ordering the Filiquarian edition, which is poorly printed, oddly laid out, and contains typos. It has NO illustrations. is mixing in a lot of reviews of other editions---which

is either sloppy or dishonest.

This review is specific to the Kindle edition which is impossible to read due to formatting problems. As a previous reviewer noted, even on the smallest size font the end of many of the poems is cut off. I even tried reading it on my PC to see if that helped - it didn't. A great pity because the content deserves five stars. Don't waste your time downloading this version, even if it is free. Either wait until the formatting issues have been resolved, or pay for a decent version.

Outstanding condition. Needed this to complete my set of The Hundred Greatest Books of All Time from The Franklin Library. Now, I need to find the time to read them. ;))

Inexpensive classic with illustrations

Yes, my daughter was very happy with the book. It was in perfect shape! Thank you!!

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