

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

- English poet and painter.
- Largely unrecognized during his lifetime, Blake's work is now considered influential in the history of both poetry and the visual arts.
- Considered mad for his personal views by contemporaries, later criticism regards Blake highly for his expressiveness and creativity and the philosophical and mystical ideas within his work.
- His poetry has been characterized as part of both the Romantic movement and "Pre-Romantic", for its largely having appeared in the 18th century. He was respectful of the Bible, but hostile to the Church of England.

“LONDON” (1794)

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

“LONDON” (1794)

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER (1794)

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,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

'And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and His priest and king,
Who made up a heaven of our misery.'

William Blake