



# Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience (Dover Thrift Editions)

*William Blake*

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## **Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience (Dover Thrift Editions)** William Blake

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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