

## **The Chimney Sweeper**

**BY: WILLIAM BLAKE**

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 smil'd 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 make up a heaven of our misery."

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**Answer the following questions:**

- 1. Who is the speaker in the poem?**
- 2. Who does the chimney sweeper really blame for his woe? And why? Do you think he's right?**
- 3. Does the fact that a young child speaks most of the poem take away from its message, effect, or seriousness? Can we trust him, in other words ?**
- 4. What's up with the speaker? Does he care at all about this poor child?**
- 5. Why not just narrate this poem in the voice of the chimney-sweeper? Why choose to have it be in dialogue, with another speaker who doesn't say much at all?**
- 6. What's the effect of the rhythms and rhymes on your understanding of the poem?**
- 7. What is the overall message of the poem?**