2 The Chimney-sweeper

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 clothèd 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.’

1794 (from Songs of Experience)