

William Blake (1757-1827)

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, 5
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, 10
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*)

(From *The Poetical Works of William Blake*. Ed. With an
Introduction and Textual Notes by John Sampson. Oxford
UP, 1913)