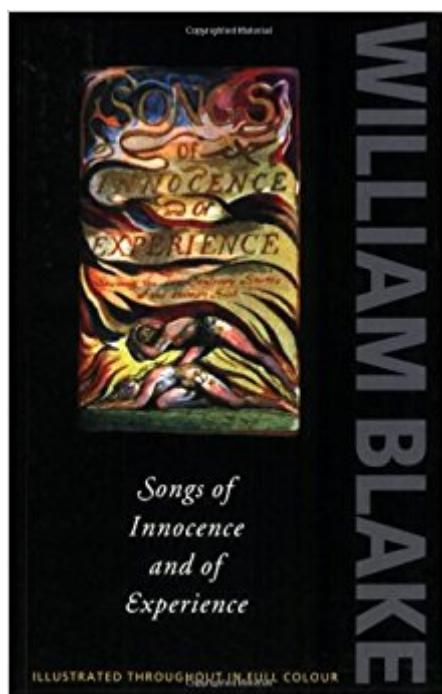


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Songs Of Innocence And Experience: Shewing The Two Contrary States Of The Human Soul, 1789-1794 (Oxford Paperbacks)



Synopsis

Here is a beautifully illustrated edition of Blake's classic poems. The text of each poem is given in letterpress on the page facing the color plate, and a brief commentary by Sir Geoffrey Keynes on each poem follows. It is printed on paper especially manufactured to match the tint of that used by Blake.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Masterpieces of English lyric poetry, written and illustrated by William Blake. Songs of Innocence, published in 1789, was Blake's first great demonstration of "illuminated printing," his unique technique of publishing both text and hand-colored illustration together. The rhythmic subtlety and delicate beauty of both his lyrics and his designs created rare harmony on his pages. The poems transformed his era's street ballads and rhymes for children into some of the purest lyrics in the English language. In 1794 Blake published Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul. It contained a slightly rearranged version of Songs of Innocence with the addition of Songs of Experience. The poems reflect Blake's views that experience brings the individual into conflict with rules, moralism, and repression; as a result, the songs of experience are bitter, ironic replies to those of the earlier volume. The Lamb is the key symbol of Innocence; in Experience its rival image is the Tyger, the embodiment of energy, strength, lust, and aggression. See also THE TYGER. -- The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature

William Blake (1757-1827) was an English poet, painter, and printmaker.

I'm reiterating previous reviewers: be prepared for a small book. You cannot (or at least my aging eyes cannot) read the poems as printed in Blake's engravings, though I can read them in the text on the facing page. If only this book were about two inches bigger in both dimensions! I have a similar book, issued by the Tate, containing *The Proverbs of Heaven & Hell*, and I was hoping this was a companion edition, but no such luck. Nevertheless, I'm keeping mine and ordering another for a poet-friend's birthday. Blake is extraordinary -- a genius of his own kind, his visions sprung apparently from nowhere, his hearthuge, his awe religious and delicate, his compassion naked. He is the finest inveigher against the repressive, life-and-sex-denying aspects of some religion (aspects he considers the work of the devil, not god) -- and the finest prophet against the "man forged manacles" of heartless industrialism -- that I have ever read. But there's much more to the "Songs" than this -- religious awe is embedded in the smallest detail of the human and natural world. Odd, strange, speaking to us from some other world. The poems alone are doorways to the infinite; and in tandem with his delicate, powerful illuminated engravings, a delight.

Mystic, visionary, artist, genius, craftsman, poet, social reformer, humanitarian -- all of these words and more have been used but do not adequately describe William Blake. "Songs of Innocence and Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul" is widely acknowledged as Blake's masterpiece and, for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see, the insights expressed in it are as moving and valuable now as they were when Blake first expressed them in 1789-94. Blake was as accomplished a craftsman as he was an artist and a poet. He was perhaps the first artist to express himself in the form of "multimedia". The media, in this case, being "Illuminated books". Blake invented a process where he could etch both poetry (text) and design on copper-plates and also formulated his own colors. What makes this particular edition special is that it contains Blake's original color etchings. Since I own the basic Kindle and wanted to view the colored illustrations, I downloaded this book to my PC, all 952 pages of it! I suggest that you do the same. The poetry is magnificent! The illustrations are amazing! Great gift, especially to accompany a Kindle Fire. (No, I do not work for !) You can't go wrong at \$2.99!

Bought this as a present. The recipient loved it. I was really hoping for one which had all of the original illustrations (well, reproductions of), and this one lived up to that hope. In addition to the

illustrations, which had the poems, the poems were also transcribed in a highly readable font. There was also a small bit of discussion with each poem (I think all of them, but I didn't look that closely) giving some background and interpretation (again, I think). The book itself was in very good condition, and the slipcase was very nice, even having a section on the top and bottom to follow the curve of the spine of the book. All told, this was a good copy of this collection, and both I and the recipient were quite satisfied.

Beware! If you order this, you're ordering the Filiquarian edition, which is poorly printed, oddly laid out, and contains typos. It has NO illustrations. is mixing in a lot of reviews of other editions---which is either sloppy or dishonest.

This review is specific to the Kindle edition which is impossible to read due to formatting problems. As a previous reviewer noted, even on the smallest size font the end of many of the poems is cut off. I even tried reading it on my PC to see if that helped - it didn't. A great pity because the content deserves five stars. Don't waste your time downloading this version, even if it is free. Either wait until the formatting issues have been resolved, or pay for a decent version.

Outstanding condition. Needed this to complete my set of The Hundred Greatest Books of All Time from The Franklin Library. Now, I need to find the time to read them. ;))

Inexpensive classic with illustrations

Yes, my daughter was very happy with the book. It was in perfect shape! Thank you!!

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