

Nurse's Song (Songs of Experience) Literary Device

Writer: William Blake | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Symbols

Children:

The children in the poem symbolize innocence and youth. In "Songs of Experience," they also represent vulnerability and the need for protection as they face the challenges of growing up.

Green Meadow: The green meadow symbolizes childhood's idyllic and carefree nature. It's a place of joy and play, contrasting with the world's harsh realities.

Sunset: The setting sun symbolizes the end of childhood and innocence, as well as the approach of the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood.

Spring and Day vs. Winter and Night: These contrasting pairs symbolize the transition from youth to old age, from a time of happiness and play to a time of seriousness and responsibility.

Nurse: The nurse in the poem represents authority and guidance. She plays a dual role as both a protector and a figure who encourages the children to leave their play behind and face the world's difficulties.

Dews of Night: The dews of night symbolize the unknown and potentially treacherous aspects of the world that the children must navigate as they grow older.

Play and Work: Play represents the innocence and joy of childhood, while work symbolizes the responsibilities and challenges of adulthood. The poem juxtaposes these two concepts to underscore the transition from one stage of life to another.

Whisperings in the Dale: This phrase suggests hidden dangers or secrets in the world, hinting at the nurse's cautionary tone.

Others

- **Imagery:** Blake uses vivid imagery to paint a picture of the scene. The green meadow, the setting sun, and the children's play create a sensory experience for the reader, helping to

establish the tone and atmosphere of the poem.

- **Metaphor:** The poem employs metaphorical language, such as equating childhood with "spring and day" and adulthood with "winter and night." These metaphors symbolize the stages of life and the passage from innocence to experience.
- **Alliteration:** There is alliteration, where consonant sounds are repeated at the beginning of words nearby, as seen in the line: "Your spring and your day are wasted in play." The repetition of the "s" sound emphasizes the idea of wasting time.
- **Personification:** The sun is personified in the line, "The sun is gone down," giving it human-like qualities and enhancing the sense of day turning into night.
- **Symbolism:** As mentioned earlier, various symbols in the poem, such as the green meadow, sunset, and dews of night, are used to represent broader ideas and themes.
- **Irony:** There is a certain irony in the nurse's role as both a caregiver and a harbinger of the loss of innocence. While watching the children, she also warns them of the inevitable end of their carefree play.