

Nurse's Song (Songs of Experience) Themes

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Adult Cynicism vs. Childhood Innocence: In this poem from *Songs of Experience*, a nurse watches children playing outside. But instead of feeling happy, she feels sick and sad. Their play reminds her of her own childhood, which she does not remember with joy. She feels that childhood is not a time of happiness, but a waste of time that leads to a hard adult life.

The children are playing, but not loudly or happily. They are only whispering, which makes the play seem strange or even secret. It suggests that the nurse does not let them enjoy it. She tells them to stop playing and come home because night is coming. She believes childhood joy is not real and that it will soon end. The poem shows how adults can lose their sense of joy and see childhood as useless. The nurse's view is negative, bitter, and full of disappointment.