

The Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Experience) Quotes

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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."

Explanation:

This is a very powerful and touching opening stanza of this poem. This shows how the parents of this little chimney sweeper care more about religion than their child. The child is a "little black thing" because he is covered in black soot. His chimney sweeping job is very difficult and deadly. This stanza clearly shows that this kind of religion is false. Because it cannot protect our child.

They clothed me in the clothes of death,

And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

Explanation:

These lines show that the child is forced to join child labour—and do a deadly job like cleaning chimneys. He had to accept his suffering.

"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."

Explanation:

Like the first stanza, it also shows that the children are neglected. People do not care about children's suffering. Instead, they think they are good citizen—because they pray and follow orders.

LxNotes