

The Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Innocence) Summary

Writer: William Blake | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

"The Chimney Sweeper" is a poem by William Blake. It was published in the *Songs of Innocence* collection in 1789. A little chimney sweep boy is the subject of this poem. The poem depicts the little boy's experience working as a chimney sweeper and his miserable life.

The poet introduces an important image in the first stanza. It is about a lonely little boy whose mother has died. His father then sold him as a child laborer. The speaker portrays the miserable and colorless life of chimney sweepers. Chimney sweepers clean chimneys all day and sleep in sooty places at night. One day, the speaker's friend, Tom Dacre, cries as his hair is cut. His hair gets much ash when he sweeps the chimney, so his hair is cut short to avoid this situation. However, the boy wants to keep his hair, so he cries.

Now, this pathetic image of the poem is suddenly transformed into happiness. One day, Tom dreams that all his other friends are locked in a coffin. Then, an angel comes and frees everyone. All the children play happily on the green field. Angel promises that if he is a good child, God will be his father in a beautiful place like heaven, who will love him very much. Then he wakes up. After waking up, all the children went back to cleaning the chimney. Through this dream, the poet portrays the pure innocence of a child's mind.