

1794

THE TYGER (From Songs of Experience)

William Blake

Blake, William (1757-1827) - English poet, engraver, and mystic who illustrated his own works. A rare genius, he created some of the purest lyrics in the English language. Blake believed himself to be guided by visions from the spiritual world; he died singing of the glories of heaven. The Tyger (1794) - "Did he who make the Lamb make thee?" illustrates Blake's belief that the fierce tiger is simply another manifestation of the Divine unity of all creation and that each element thereof is valid and necessary.

THE TYGER

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

THE END