“The Lamb” and “The Tyger”

Two Poems by Blake
Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee?
“The Lamb” cont’d

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
  Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
  Little lamb, God bless thee!
  Little lamb, God bless thee!
“The Lamb” Explication (Clarification)

• Connotations of innocence

• “Soft” imagery/diction (meek, mild, tender, softest)

• Symbolism:
  • Lamb = Jesus (“Lamb of God”)
    • Jesus is also known as a shepherd who leads stray sheep (sinners) back to the flock (humanity)

• Tone: joyful, bright, happy (contrast with “The Tyger”)

• Slant rhyme (name/lamb)
“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, and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and 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?
“The Tyger”

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered 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 Tyger” Explication

• Big Question: “Did he who made the Lamb make thee?”
• Questions the reason for the existence of evil in the world; did God create evil?
• “Hard” imagery/diction (hammer, anvil)
• Symbolism:
  – Blacksmith = God/Creator
  – Tyger = evil/violence
• Tone: dark, fearful, questioning
Three “Tygers”