## Introduction to the Songs of Innocence

## By William Blake

Piping down the valleys wild

Piping songs of pleasant glee

On a cloud I saw a child.

And he laughing said to me.

Pipe a song about a Lamb;

So I piped with merry chear,

Piper pipe that song again—

So I piped, he wept to hear.

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe

Sing thy songs of happy chear,

So I sung the same again

While he wept with joy to hear

Piper sit thee down and write

In a book that all may read—

So he vanish'd from my sight.

And I pluck'd a hollow reed.

And I made a rural pen,

And I stain'd the water clear,

And I wrote my happy songs

Every child may joy to hear

‘**Introduction to the Songs of Innocence’** is the first poem in William Blake’s collection of poetry the ‘Songs of Innocence’ written in 1789. The poems present in this collection expresses a naive, childlike view of salvation, as most of the poems are addressed to children. In his simple perspective of life, the world is beautiful and Jesus died for our sins. This poem titled ‘Introduction’ sets the tone for the entire sequence. The poet is projected as a visionary who is divinely inspired through angels. ‘Introduction’ also reflects the process of poetic composition. It defines the composition of poetry as a process of making what was formless to artistic creation.

**Summary**

The poem ‘Introduction’ introduces the poet’s purpose and inspiration behind penning down poetry. In this poem, the narrator is described as a piper. He is happily piping when he sees a child on a cloud. The child asks him to pipe a song about a lamb, when he does sing, the child weeps on hearing it. Again, the child asks the piper to sing and he sings the same song. But now the child cries with joy when he hears it. Further, the child tells the narrator to write a book before he disappears. Inspired by the child, the piper takes a reed to make a pen. With it, he writes happy songs for children to bring them joy. Therefore, the voice of the poems is written as that of a child and/or accessible to children.

**Theme and Settings**

The theme of the poem ‘*Introduction to the Songs of Innocence’* is about the poet’s inspiration for writing poetry. Like the other poems in this series the poem alludes to the poet’s simple perspective of life and his religious beliefs. Blake, as a young boy had visions of seeing angels in the trees, which returned throughout his life. As he disclosed about his dreams: “I am under the direction of Messengers from Heaven, Daily & Nightly; but the nature of such things is not, as some suppose, without trouble or care.”

Further, the [setting](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/setting/) of the poem substantiates the theme. The speaker is “piping down the valleys” before seeing the child on the cloud. There begins their conversation that the poet describes in the poem. The poet using the “reed as a pen” denotes the rustic setting. The theme and the setting evoke an ideal, idyllic world of innocence and simplicity, before the industrial revolution which considered by many as a Fall of humankind

**Analysis of Introduction to the Songs of Innocence**

**Stanza One and Two**

Piping down the valleys wild

Piping songs of pleasant glee

On a cloud I saw a child.

And he laughing said to me.

Pipe a song about a Lamb;

So I piped with merry chear,

Piper pipe that song again—

So I piped, he wept to hear

In the first and the second stanza of ‘Introduction’ to the Songs of Innocence, the narrator describes his encounter with the child. Here, the poet envisions himself as a shepherd. He is happily piping the songs of happiness “down the valleys wild.” As he does so, he sees a child on a cloud. The child seems to be admiring the songs the piper has been singing. So, he asks him to pipe a song “about a Lamb”. The “Child” represents the heavenly angel, while the capitalized “Lamb” alludes to Jesus Christ. The piper started piping the song with cheerfulness; the child felt happy and asked the piper to pipe the song again. When the piper pipes the song again, the child weeps hearing it.

### Stanza Three

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe

Sing thy songs of happy chear,

So I sung the same again

While he wept with joy to hear

In the third stanza of ‘Introduction to the Songs of Innocence, the child further encourages the piper to sing the song of about the Lamb. He asks the piper to “Drop his pipe” and sing his “songs of happy chear.” This time when the poet started singing the song, the child cries, but it wasn’t a cry of melancholy but of joy. The piper immediately agreeing to the child’s request denotes his obedience to his heavenly call.

### Stanza Four & Five

Piper sit thee down and write

In a book that all may read—

So he vanish’d from my sight.

And I pluck’d a hollow reed.

The conversation between the child and the piper ends in the fourth stanza and the piper continues with the task assigned in the fifth stanza. These stanzas explain the purpose of the poet behind penning down his poems. After enjoying the lyrics, the child tells the narrator to “sit down and write” the songs he has created. The child suggests that he write them down “In a book that all may read”. After the child disappears, the piper takes a reed to make a pen.

And I made a rural pen,

And I stain’d the water clear,

And I wrote my happy songs

Every child may joy to hear

The poet makes a pen of the reed that he picked. Also, he colored the water to use them as ink. With what he had at hand, he started writing his “happy songs.” The major purpose of his writing is to make his poetry available to all children. The poet reveals his ultimate purpose here. Especially, his concern for the poor children, who are often the major [subject](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/poem-subject/) of his poetry.