



William Blake

Azizova Adile, 171

His Early Life

William Blake was a famous poet, painter and engraver of the late **18th century** and early **19th century**. Blake was a **radical, anti authority figure**.

William Blake was born at 28 Broad Street in Soho, London on 28 November 1757. His father James Blake was a hosier. He and his wife Catherine had 6 children. Apart from William they had 4 boys and 1 girl. From an early age William Blake was artistic. ***He also had 'visions' of things like angels.*** When he was 14 William was made apprentice to an engraver called James Basire.

William served 7 years and became an engraver himself in 1779. Blake also wanted to paint and the same year he became a student at the *Royal Academy of Arts*.

On 18 August 1782 William Blake married Catherine Sophia Boucher at the Church of St Mary in Battersea. Blake also wrote poems. A book of poems called **Poetical Sketches** was published in 1783. In 1789 he published a book of poems called **The Song of Innocence**.

In 1793 Blake published *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. The same year, 1793 Blake published **The Marriage of Heaven and Hell**. Also in 1793 Blake published **America**, a Prophecy.

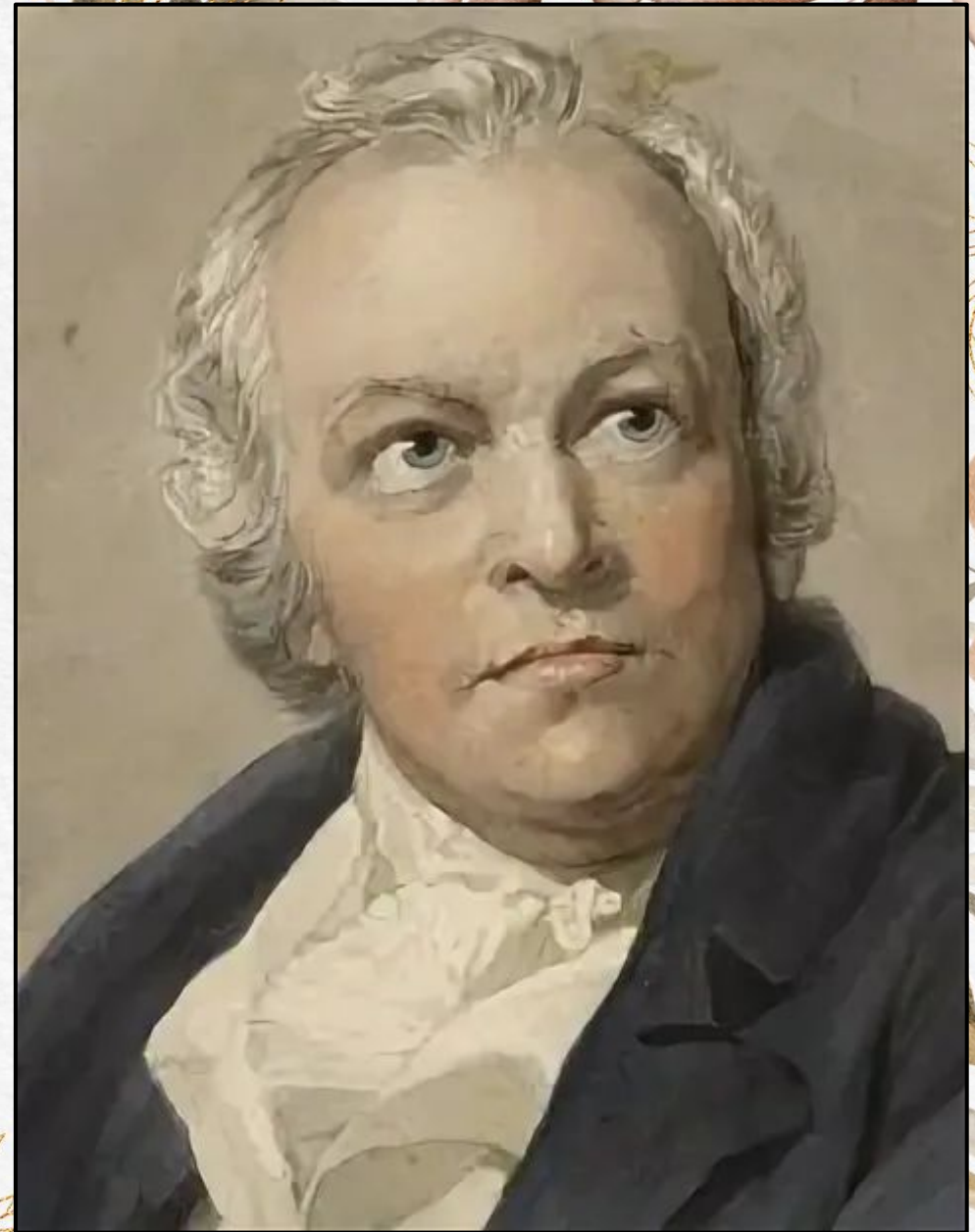


The Great Poet

In 1794 Blake published a book of poems called *Songs of Experience*. It included the famous poem *The Tiger*. The Book of Urizen was also published in 1794. Also in 1794 William Blake published *Europe*, a Prophecy.

In 1800 William Blake moved to the village of Felpham near Bognor in Sussex. Then on 12 August 1803 Blake got into a fight with a soldier named John Schofield who entered his garden. Schofield later told a magistrate that Blake damned the king of England during the altercation. William Blake was tried for sedition (a serious charge) in Chichester in January 1804. However he was acquitted. Meanwhile in 1803 Blake and his wife returned to London. In the years 1804-1810 William Blake wrote and illustrated his work Milton *A Poem in Two Books*. The preface included the famous poem now know as *Jerusalem*, which was written in 1804. (Blake did not actually give it that title. It was originally called 'And did those feet in ancient time'. Hubert Parry wrote music for it in 1916). In 1820 Blake painted The Goblin. He also painted a miniature called *The Ghost of a Flea*.

In 1825 Blake was commissioned illustrate Divine Comedy by Dante but he died before he could complete the task. William Blake died on 12 August 1827. He was buried in Bunhill Fields in London.



Cradle Song

**Sleep sleep beauty bright
Dreaming in the joys of night;
Sleep sleep; in thy sleep
Little sorrows sit and weep**

**Sweet babe in thy face
Soft desires I can trace
Secret joys and secret smiles
Little pretty infant wiles.**

**As thy softest limbs I feel
Smiles as of the morning steal
O'er thy cheek and o'er thy breast
Where thy little heart doth rest.**

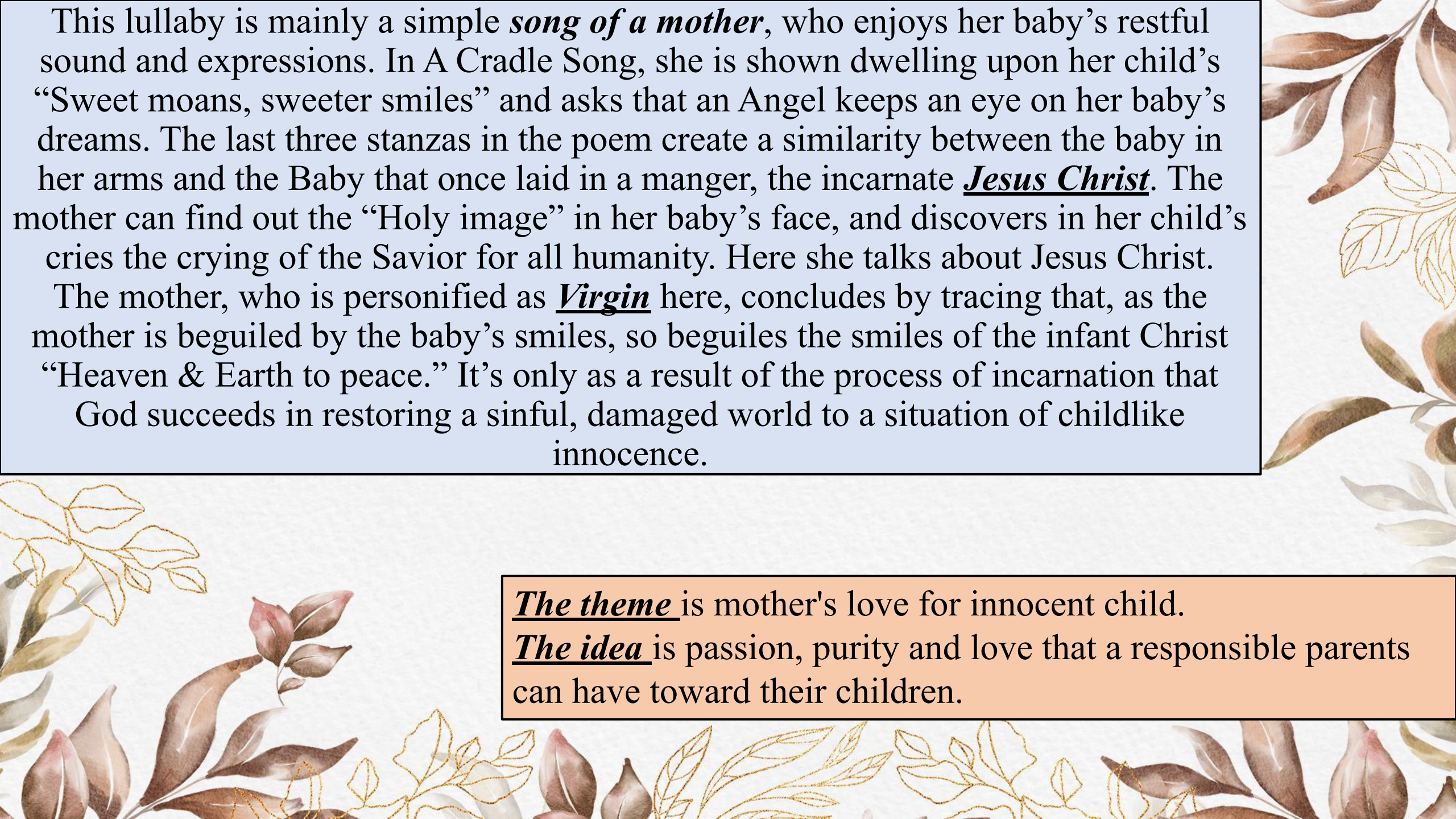
**O the cunning wiles that creep
In thy little heart asleep!
When thy little heart doth wake
Then the dreadful night shall break.**

**Сон, сон, блистанье красоты,
И радость ночи в сновиденье.
Спать, спать, во сне всегда пусты
Печали и слезы паденье.**

**О, детка, вижу у тебя
В лице прелестные желанья;
Улыбку радости и тайны,
И хитрость малого дитя.**

**Как ручки мягкие твои,
Так чувствую улыбку утра;
Она на щёчках, на груди,
Как будто сердце твоё будит.**

**И хитрость, и лукавство спят
В твоём малюсеньком сердечке.
Когда ж оно проснётся, вспять
Растают страхи ночи свечкой.**



This lullaby is mainly a simple *song of a mother*, who enjoys her baby's restful sound and expressions. In A Cradle Song, she is shown dwelling upon her child's "Sweet moans, sweeter smiles" and asks that an Angel keeps an eye on her baby's dreams. The last three stanzas in the poem create a similarity between the baby in her arms and the Baby that once laid in a manger, the incarnate *Jesus Christ*. The mother can find out the "Holy image" in her baby's face, and discovers in her child's cries the crying of the Savior for all humanity. Here she talks about Jesus Christ. The mother, who is personified as *Virgin* here, concludes by tracing that, as the mother is beguiled by the baby's smiles, so beguiles the smiles of the infant Christ "Heaven & Earth to peace." It's only as a result of the process of incarnation that God succeeds in restoring a sinful, damaged world to a situation of childlike innocence.

The theme is mother's love for innocent child.

The idea is passion, purity and love that a responsible parents can have toward their children.

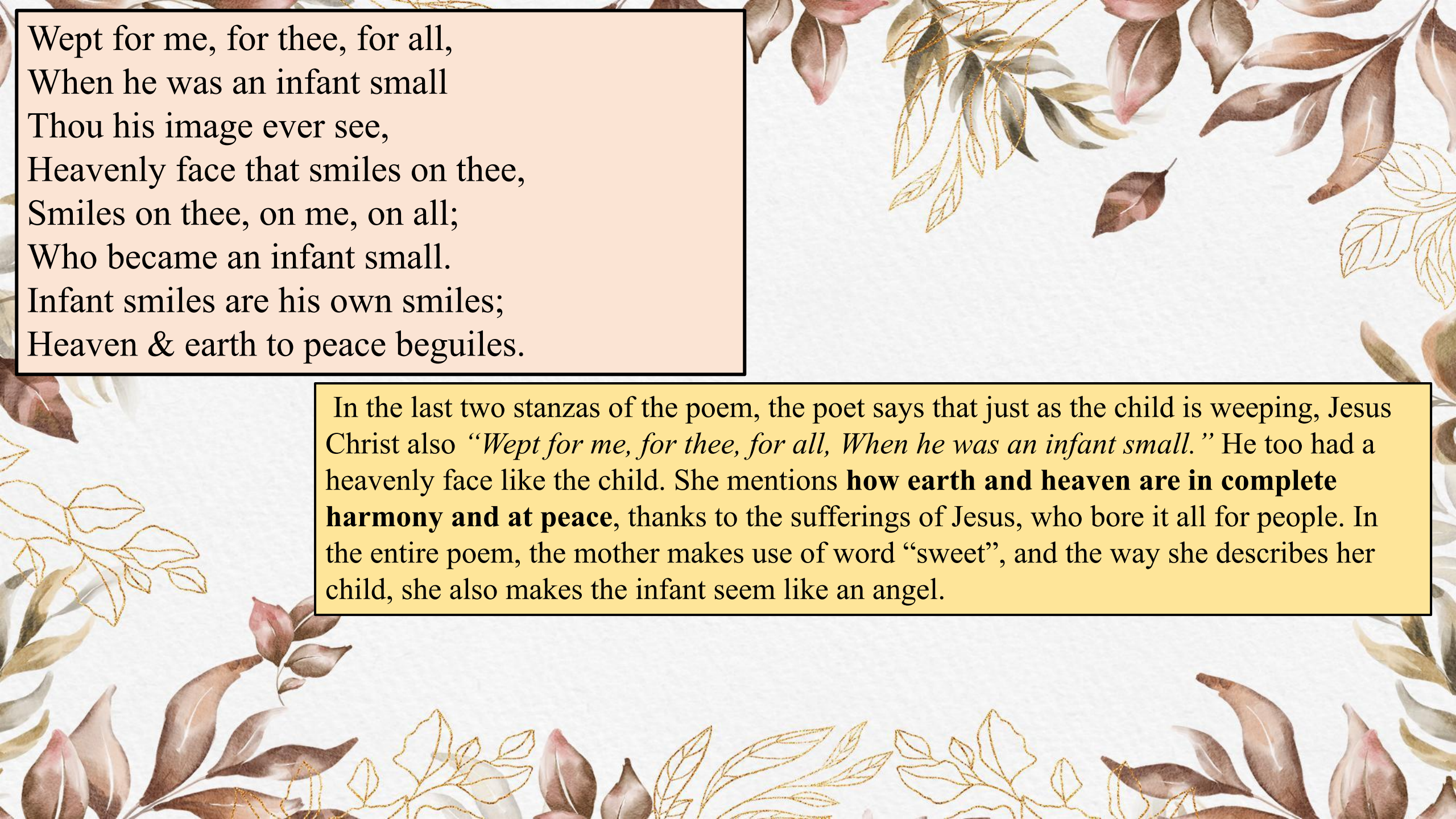
Structure

A Cradle Song is written in very simple form of four line stanzas with rhyming couplets. The structure of the poem is interesting; the first four stanzas each begin with the word “sweet” which is repeated in the third line, but moves from “Sweet dreams” to “Sweet sleep” to “Sweet moans”, probably suggesting a progression from the world of innocence to experience, although the mother is wishing the world of experience away from her infant. The rhyme scheme is AABB.

Analysis

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smil'd;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.
Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy maker lay and wept for me.

In the above two stanzas, the mother sings her child to sleep (*Sleep, sleep, happy child, sweet babe*). She says all creation of the God is slept, the baby should also sleep. The mother is weeping and sad (*thy mother weep*), which appears to contrast the general tone of *A Cradle Song*. Mother, staring at her child, is very well aware of the fact that her child is fated to grow up, suffer the pains. Though she can do her best to protect her child, and calm herself. The Christ also faced the sufferings of crucifixion and execution, but he bore all these sufferings for the people.



Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When he was an infant small
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,
Smiles on thee, on me, on all;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven & earth to peace beguiles.

In the last two stanzas of the poem, the poet says that just as the child is weeping, Jesus Christ also *“Wept for me, for thee, for all, When he was an infant small.”* He too had a heavenly face like the child. She mentions **how earth and heaven are in complete harmony and at peace**, thanks to the sufferings of Jesus, who bore it all for people. In the entire poem, the mother makes use of word “sweet”, and the way she describes her child, she also makes the infant seem like an angel.

Stylistic devices

Symbol: weeping of the mother as the symbol of weeping for the sufferings the human race is going to take.

Epithetic: heavenly face

Inversion: infant small

Repetition: sleep, sleep, happy child – to show that baby has to sleep.

Allusion: Holy image – Jesus Christ.

The poem has four quatrains (**stanzas with four lines**). Each stanza follows an "AABB" rhyme scheme.



In conclusion

Through his poetry, Blake wants to assert that Christ was born for all of us, and he had *'Wept for me for thee for all, /When he was an infant small.'* Through the verse like *'Heavenly face that smiles on thee, /Smiles on thee on me on all, /Who became an infant small,* Blake wants to express God's love toward all human race. Thus, **the theme of the poem is not just parental care, but it also talks about the relationship between the human perspective of God and the way People avoid, or approach, the co-existence of 'woe and joy' in human life.**



Thank you for your attention!