

Dr. David L. Clark

15 January 2016

### Making videos of Blake's poems

Blake called the poems you have read for this course *songs*. They weren't in fact set to music although, given their attention to and work with the sounds of the English language, it's clear that they were meant not only to be read and looked at but also read aloud. Why does Blake invite us to think of them as *songs*? What is it in particular about music that appeals to Blake and that he would like us to associate with his engraved work?

Blake's illuminated text, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, has in fact often been set to music. Several of my previous students have done so, including Michael Griffin, who, five years ago, produced the video linked below. Perhaps a video of "London" is the 21<sup>st</sup>-century version of an illuminated text. Michael wrote, played, and recorded the music for the video, which features the paintings of the contemporary British painter George Morton-Clark. In the background of Michael's video you can hear the wonderful voice of his six year old daughter, Eden, who contributed her track in one take. As I said to Michael at the time, to have a daughter named "Eden" helping you create a video of Blake's "London," well, you just can't make this stuff up.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAkEyFbGjTc>

