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Little Lamb, Who Made Thee?



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by
Larry Nickel

movement fourteen:
A Cappella Christmas
Cantata

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Little Lamb, Who Made Thee?

William Blake 1789

Larry Nickel

Andante $\text{♩} = 8$

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Choir

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6 **A** *mp*

S. Lit - tle Lamb, who made thee? Do you know who made thee?

sostenuto - stagger breathing

A. *p*

Oo...

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T. *p*

Oo...

B. *p*

Oo...

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Pno.

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10

S. Gave thee life and bade thee feed by the stream and o'er the mead*;

A. Oo...

T. Oo...

B. Oo...

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*mead - (meadow)

==

B

14

S. *mp* Gave thee cloth - ing of de - light, soft - est cloth - ing, wool - y, bright;

A. *mp* Gave thee cloth - ing of de - light, soft - est cloth - ing, wool - y, bright;

T. Oo...

B. Oo...

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18

S. *mf*
 Gave thee such a ten-der voice, mak-ing all the vales re-joice?

A. *mf*
 Gave thee such a ten-der voice, mak-ing all the vales re-joice?

T. Oo...

B. Oo...

Pno.

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23

S. *mp*
 Lit-tle lamb, who made thee? Do you know _____ who made thee?

A. *mp* *p*
 Lit-tle lamb, who made thee? Do you know _____ who made thee?

T. *mf* *pp*
 Lit-tle lamb, who made thee? Do you know? _____

B. *mf* *pp*
 Lit-tle lamb, who made thee? Do you know? _____

Pno.



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29 *rit.*

Choir

Oo...

Oo...

C *hymn style - dolce*
a tempo

33 *mf* *mp*

Choir

Lit - tle lamb, I'll tell thee; lit - tle lamb I'll tell thee:

Lit - tle lamb, I'll tell thee; lit - tle lamb I'll tell thee:

37 *mf*

Choir

He is call - ed by thy name, for He calls Him - self a lamb. —

He is call - ed by thy name, for He calls Him - self a lamb. —

D

41

Choir

He is meek and He is mild, He be - came a lit - tle child;

He is meek and He is mild, He be - came a lit - tle child;

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45

S. *f*
I a child and thou a Lamb, we are call - ed by his name.

A. *f*
I a child and thou a Lamb, we are call - ed by his name. (by His name.)

T. *f*
I a child and thou a Lamb, we are call - ed by his name.

B. *f*
I a child and thou a Lamb, we are call - ed by his name.

Pno.

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50

S. *mf*
Lit - tle lamb, God bless thee. Lit - tle lamb (lit - tle lamb) God

A. *mf*
Lit - tle lamb, God bless thee. Lit - tle lamb (lit - tle lamb) God

T. *mf*
Lit - tle lamb, God bless thee. Lit - tle lamb (lit - tle lamb) God

B. *mf*
Lit - tle lamb, God bless thee. Lit - tle lamb (lit - tle lamb) God

Pno.

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54 rit.

S. *p* bless thee. Lit-tle lamb, lit-tle lamb, who made thee? *mp*

A. *p* bless thee. Lit-tle lamb, lit-tle lamb, who made thee? *mp*

T. *p* bless thee. Lit-tle lamb, lit-tle lamb, who made thee? *mp*

B. *p* bless thee. Lit-tle lamb, lit-tle lamb, who made thee? *mp*

Pno. rit.

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Commentary:

This poem is a child’s song, in the form of a question and answer. The first stanza is rural and descriptive, while the second focuses on abstract spiritual matters and contains explanation and analogy.

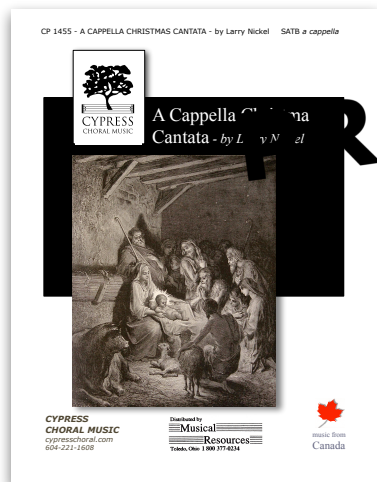
The child’s question is both naive and profound. The question (“who made thee?”) is a simple one, and yet the child is also tapping into the deep and timeless questions that all human beings have, about their own origins and the nature of creation. The poem’s apostrophic form contributes to the effect of naïveté, since the situation of a child talking to an animal is a believable one, and not simply a *voilà* contrivance. Yet by answering his own question, the child converts it into a rhetorical one, thus contradicting the initial spontaneous sense of the poem. The answer is presented as a puzzle or riddle, and even though it is an easy one—child’s play—this also contributes to an underlying sense of ironic knowingness or artifice in the poem. The child’s answer, however, reveals his confidence in his simple Christian faith and his innocent acceptance of its teachings.

The lamb of course symbolizes Jesus – the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29)
 The traditional image of Jesus as a lamb underscores the Christian values of gentleness, meekness, and peace.
 The image of the child is also associated with Jesus: in the Gospel, Jesus displays a special solicitude for children, and the Bible’s depiction of Jesus in his childhood shows him as guileless and vulnerable.

These are also the characteristics from which the child-speaker approaches the ideas of nature and of God. This poem, like many of the ‘Songs of Innocence’, accents what Blake saw as the more positive aspects of conventional Christian belief.

SparkNotes – poetry study guides



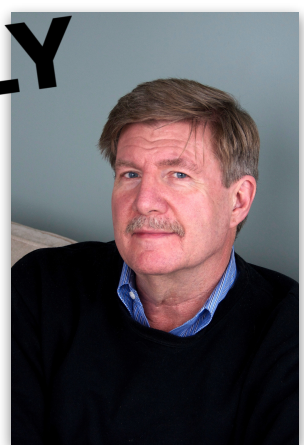


A Cappella Christmas Cantata was commissioned and premiered in 2017 in Guyton, Pennsylvania - directed by Dr. Guyton Muesel

- **15 movements** give a unique and compelling rendition of the Christmas story, from ancient prophecy to the immaculate conception and until the Holy Child was two years old.
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- 1) **First Fruits**
- 2) **Behold, A Great Light**
- 3) **Break Forth, O Beautiful Light**
- 4) **Mary Treasured All These Things**
- 5) **Joseph's Dream - part one**
- 6) **Caesar Augustus**
- 7) **No Room**
- 8) **The Grief of Pleasures**
- 9) **Tidings of Great Joy**
- 10) **Herod the Ruler**
- 11) **Joseph's Dream - part two**
- 12) **There's a Cry Over Bethlehem**
- 13) **Joseph Made a Treasure Box**
- 14) **Little Lamb, Who Made Thee?**
- 15) **Behold, a Great Light - reprise**

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Dr. Larry Nickel

