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INTRODUCTION

‘Piping down the valleys wild’

‘Piping down the valleys wild’ William Blake (1757–1827) began his own ‘Introduction’, the first poem of what remains the poet, artist and engraver’s best-known work. Perhaps with the exception of the lyric that has become the hymn ‘Jerusalem’, all Blake’s most familiar poems, including ‘London’, ‘The Sick Rose’, and ‘The Tyger’, are included in Songs of Innocence and of Experience (1794). Like many collections, Blake’s evolved over the course of his lifetime, but in ways very different from most other gatherings of poetry. Innocence (1789) had a few years of existence on its own, before being joined by Experience (1794), but the real distinction of Songs is that it was printed by Blake himself on his own press in the form of an illuminated book. Early responses to the poems tended be based on an encounter with the ‘composite art’ (a phrase that entered Blake criticism relatively early), but an irony of the wider dissemination of the poems from the mid- to later nineteenth century was that it required more traditional forms of typography and the sundering of the verbal and the visual. So Blake’s songs have been mainly encountered in the classroom separated from the visual aspects of Songs of Innocence and of Experience as published by their author. This situation has changed of late with the internet Blake Archive (discussed at length in Chapter 7) making the illuminated books available to the reader in something like their full glory, but the issue of teaching Songs with access to their original form remains a vexed one.

There is a further complication. Part of the evolution of Blake’s books was that they were reissued over the course of his life, even in its final decades, in ways that took advantage of the engraver-publisher’s freedom to alter the colouring or ordering of different plates, and even the position of individual poems within the collection. So particular songs were moved across the two sections or omitted entirely, as discussed in our first chapter. The Blake Archive can bring comparison of different copies of Songs to the classroom, but the collection will always evade any simple idea of authorised form.
Most readings have understood the key to the collection to be the relation between Innocence and Experience, ‘the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul’ as Blake put it in his sub-title, but it soon becomes apparent on any close inspection that the two states are not absolutely different (as the movement of particular poems across them suggests). Many students have embarked on a reading of poems in terms of the signifying contexts of their place in *Innocence or Experience*, before realising that this position was altered later in the history of the collection, although this need not mean one cannot advance a reading of a particular ‘edition’ of *Songs*, to use Joseph Viscomi’s terms discussed in Chapter 7. In this study, we have followed a convention of using the unitalicised Innocence and Experience to indicate the state of the soul, as it were, and *Innocence* and *Experience* to indicate the part or the free-standing book (where they were published separately). Where particular poems under discussion moved, we have tried to mention the fact when germane to any particular discussion, but it would have been tedious to have done it in every case, and the reader is duly warned before erecting any interpretative edifice of their own, based on position, or for that matter the colouring of any particular illumination.

Unusually for books in this ‘Readers’ Guide’ series, a whole chapter is devoted to what might be called bibliographical matters to give the student a good sense of the unusual and complicated history of the production of *Songs* as a book (and its editions). One of the consequences of its unique production history is that *Songs* initially reached only a tiny audience. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the Guide give in some detail the early reception history of the poems, in a sense prefiguring what has been a recent important addition to criticism of *Songs* discussed in our final chapter, that is, reception history as an object of critical attention in its own right. These early chapters concentrate primarily on British responses, along with brief nods towards North America, although the question of Blake’s reception in other places is starting to gain some scholarly attention, as we note at the end of Chapter 9. Chapter 2 surveys responses to *Songs* by writers during Blake’s lifetime, including Benjamin Heath Malkin, Henry Crabb Robinson, William Hazlitt, William Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, and S. T. Coleridge. Chapter 3 shows an awareness of *Songs* still muted, but sustained and growing from the time of Blake’s death, by obituarists, biographers such as John Thomas Smith and Allan Cunningham, and the Swedenborgian John James Garth Wilkinson. In this early period, key terms for understanding Blake emerged which have retained a surprising longevity in the criticism: ‘simplicity’, ‘pastoral’, ‘childlikeness’, ‘genius’, ‘madness’, ‘enthusiasm’, ‘Swedenborgianism’, ‘mysticism’. Such terms, and others
that emerged into prominence later but have come to play a similarly pervasive role in the criticism, like ‘composite art’, are registered in the index for readers to follow through the book.

With the responses in the 1860s of major literary figures such as Alexander Gilchrist and Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Songs* began to be known to a much wider public, as Chapter 4 shows. Chapter 5 picks up the tale with reference to W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, the major bibliographical work of Geoffrey Keynes, and the systematic study provided by S. Foster Damon. Yet it took time even for Damon’s study to be accepted by the academy. It was only with work by critics like Jacob Bronowski, Northrop Frye, David Erdman, and Harold Bloom in the 1940s and 1950s that Blake moved into the critical mainstream and secured a place as a major canonical figure within Romanticism, as Chapter 6 describes. Chapter 7 follows the ramification of this change in status in the proliferation of different kinds of criticism: the formalist studies of the 1960s, many taking the form of books entirely devoted to *Songs*; the development of criticism building on the tradition of Bronowski and Erdman of reading Blake against the ideologies of his time, as a revolutionary poet; other studies, often with a psycho-analytical approach, which understood his revolt against repression to be primarily a question of psychology; and, finally, the emergence of feminist criticism, often questioning how far Blake was in revolt against patriarchal authority. Chapter 8 looks at the major development of a deconstructive criticism much less invested in discovering a unified system in *Songs* and more interested in the way Blake’s radicalism lay in the proliferation of meaning and the corrosive questioning of received patterns of thought. At around the same time, interest in ‘the composite art’ resurfaced, both as a hermeneutic relationship in the work of W. J. T. Mitchell, and as the material form of the book and its means of production pursued by critics such as Robert Essick, Michael Phillips, and Joseph Viscomi. Our final chapter looks at more recent developments, like gender studies, eco-criticism, reception studies, and more global perspectives, and provides some speculation as to where criticism of *Songs* might go from here. Given the complex course charted over the nine chapters of this book, it seems easier to be certain that *Songs* will remain an important text for literary studies than to be confident of what form future responses will take.

This guide is not a guide to Blake criticism in general, that is, its primary concern is with approaches to *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Nevertheless, some of the most influential critical responses, including those of Frye and Erdman, for instance, were embedded in works devoted to Blake’s whole career. Often such works, following Swinburne, have
tended to use the long and more obscure works usually called ‘prophecies’ that Blake began engraving from around the mid-1790s as providing a mythic template from which the earlier Songs collection is understood. These include The Book of Urizen (1794), Milton (c. 1804–11), and Jerusalem (c. 1804–20). The mythemes and aphorisms of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1790) have also had a rich part to play in criticism of Songs, not least because the two texts partially overlapped in their early development and first printings. Necessarily, we have had to bring these other works by Blake into the discussion when they are the basis of an interpretation of Songs. Chapters 2 to 4 have applied the same criteria to discussions of Blake’s biography and temperament.

The work of making sense of Songs has gone on for some time now in numerous individual articles and books. We do not presume to conduct an exhaustive survey here; for this, the student might consult G. E. Bentley’s Blake Bibliography and the various updates in Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly. Our guide is essential in so far it covers what we regard as ‘essential’, but the reader should not assume that everything worthwhile said about Blake’s Songs is covered in these pages. Furthermore, the general organisation of the guide takes a chronological form, a relatively easy decision for the criticism prior to the proliferation of academic studies from the 1950s. Thereafter, we have tried to map critical responses in terms of the emergence of key critical methodologies, many motivated by changes in the academic study of English Literature beyond Blake studies. These include, for instance, the emergence of the deconstructive and post-structuralist criticism discussed in Chapter 8, but also the powerful sway of the category of Romanticism, especially in a consolidated form from the late 1950s, more easily assumed to be simply a category of nature implicit somehow in the text, than another critical movement. The category continues to be a powerful one even now, and has played its part both in consolidating Blake’s importance to English Literature more generally, but also in eliciting hostile responses that may or may not have more to do with the sins of canonicity than with anything to be found in Songs. Whether Blake himself would have wanted the sanctity of critical tradition is an interesting question. Certainly he tends to emerge in nineteenth-century criticism as a counter-cultural figure. In any case, the final four chapters of the guide do not rigidly adhere to the chronological structure. If some important later work seems more obviously relevant to some earlier development than the other criticism being written in its own time, then it has been discussed in relation to the earlier development, but overall we have tried to show how different responses to Songs have emerged in relation to each other.
In general terms, this guide is written with the idea that it will help elucidate criticism encountered by the student in the library, online, or from the bookshop, explaining the intellectual context of particular readings in terms of their own time and the development of Blake criticism. But it is not intended to replace an encounter with *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. If the reader is encouraged to seek out the criticism we discuss, furthermore, then so much the better. Governing our selection has been the idea that students will want to know why and how, for instance, the idea of ‘pastoral’ has been seen as relevant to Blake or in what ways ‘composite art’ has been used as a term of analysis in relation to *Songs*. Blake himself once suggested: that ‘which is made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care’. Our aim has been to elucidate the responses of others without treating anyone as an idiot: ‘The wisest of the Ancients considerd what is not too Explicit as the fit- test for Instruction because it rouzes the faculties to act’ (E702). *Songs* necessarily will remain inexplicit, the complexities that lie within its seeming simplicity continuing to rouse the imaginations of generations of readers. Our hope is that this guide to the criticism of the most debated of Blake’s illuminated books will make future readers aware of possibilities within the responses of the past which may provide the stimuli for their own faculties in their present.
CHAPTER ONE

Producing Songs: ‘In a Book that All May Read’

Songs of Innocence and of Experience (1794) is a book of two halves. Its first edition brings together an earlier illuminated book of 1789, Songs of Innocence, with Songs of Experience, first issued as a discrete illuminated volume in 1794, slightly earlier in the year than the joint Songs. Two halves, then, or perhaps two wholes – for as we shall see, in the course of the next three or so decades Blake continued to issue copies of Innocence and Experience separately as well as together. Likewise some readers – for there were readers, even within Blake’s lifetime – read one and not the other, and those who owned both innocence and Experience could and did have them bound together, or have the combined Songs separated. Readers, including William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Hazlitt, could encounter Blake’s poems and designs in other ways too, as we discuss in Chapter 2, and here our arithmetic of halves and wholes breaks down: individual lyrics or groups of lyrics from Songs were hived off, copied out by hand and circulated, excerpted and published in reviews and miscellanies, even sung and heard. Here we see Blake’s illuminated book, a distinct, etched, hand-printed, and often hand-coloured artefact, turned to a variety of forms and uses. That said, a degree of adaptability is written into Songs of Innocence and of Experience itself, a collection of poems whose ordering in particular Blake was liable to change. Over the years from 1789 to 1827, working with his wife Catherine, he assembled some 25 copies of Songs of Innocence, 13 of Songs of Experience (pairing some together), and 16 copies of the joint Songs. In the majority of copies, the order of poems varies, and as time went on some poems even migrated from one book to the other.

This chapter aims to give as neutral an account of Blake’s productive processes as possible, albeit informed and mediated by the pioneering work of two recent studies, Joseph Viscomi’s Blake and the Idea of the Book
(1993) and Michael Phillips’s *The Creation of the Songs* (2000), whose approaches are discussed in Chapter 8. The chapter is in two parts. The first examines Blake’s composition and drafting of some of the poems in manuscript in his first collection, *Poetical Sketches* (1783), an unpublished satire, *An Island in the Moon* (c. 1784–5), and his notebook (in 1793). The second describes the distinctive method of printing by which Blake produced *Songs* as an illuminated book, and also takes an overview of the run of copies that he produced throughout his life, noting some of the differences and similarities between them, and explaining how these might shape our interpretations of individual poems.

**THE GENESIS OF SONGS IN MANUSCRIPT**

*Songs of Innocence, Poetical Sketches and An Island in the Moon*

Before Blake’s piper made a rural pen, before he sang, before he piped, even, the *Songs of Innocence* had begun. For four of the poems of *Innocence* had already appeared in earlier works by Blake. In 1783, Blake’s first collection of writings, *Poetical Sketches*, was privately printed in conventional letterpress (and without illustrations). Handwritten in one copy is a version of ‘Laughing Song’. Versions of ‘Holy Thursday’, ‘Nurses Song’, and ‘The Little Boy Lost’ appeared shortly afterwards in about 1784, in a manuscript satire by Blake, again unillustrated, known as *An Island in the Moon*. So remarkable and unusual is *Songs of Innocence* as a material artefact, and so celebrated, nowadays, are its poems that it is easy to chart its development only from 1789, the date that appears on its illuminated title page. To begin the story of its material composition earlier, though, in 1783, reminds us that despite the piper’s spontaneity, and indeed Blake’s own claims later in life that he raised up entire sequences of lines ‘without Labour or Study’, *Songs* was subject to drafting and revision (E729).

Relative to *Songs* and later illuminated books such as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), *America: A Prophecy* (1793) and *Jerusalem* (1804–20), *Poetical Sketches* and *An Island in the Moon* are little commented on today. Within Blake’s lifetime the former was mentioned but seldom and there is no record of the latter being read – indeed *Island* was not printed and so not widely accessible until the early twentieth century (although its songs may have been sung by Blake at informal intellectual gatherings called ‘salons’). Present neglect is egregious; the bold formal experiments of *Poetical Sketches*, the exuberant, carnivalesque
dialogue of *An Island in the Moon*: both deserve attention in their own
right, as well as for how they make sound strains of sensibility and
satire, and an affinity to popular culture, that run throughout Blake’s
writings.\(^2\) They are also, of course, significant as precursors to *Songs*.

*Poetical Sketches* comprises an array of materials – ‘lyrics, seasons
poems, dramatic sketches, created mythology, and experimental prose
just one step removed from blank verse’ (Bentley 2001, 79) – that
according to the volume’s ‘Advertisement’, written by Blake’s friend
and sponsor the Reverend Anthony Stephen Mathew, were composed
by Blake between his twelfth and his twentieth year. Noteworthy for
our purposes are the poems that show Blake ‘working out his own voice
within the English pastoral tradition’ (Phillips 2000, 6), including two
songs (‘How sweet I roamed from field to field’ and ‘I love the jocund
dance’) quoted admiringly by Benjamin Heath Malkin in 1806 along-
side, and indeed undistinguished from, poems from *Songs of Innocence
and of Experience* (BR 569–70). These two songs belong to the printed
text of *Poetical Sketches*; however, the ‘Song 2d by a young Shepherd’
that was to be adapted by Blake into ‘Laughing Song’ appears as one
of three ‘Songs by Mr Blake’ ‘transcribed in an unknown contempo-
rary hand’ in a copy of the *Sketches*, on the blank pages preceding the
text. In the most comprehensive study to date of the genesis of *Songs* in
manuscript, Michael Phillips calls Blake’s ‘choice of language’ in both
‘Song 2d’ and ‘Laughing Song’ ‘simple, native and unaffected in rela-
tion to the still prevailing fashion for a Latin poetic diction’. While
the names in ‘Song 2d’ of *Poetical Sketches* are classical (Edessa, Lyca,
and Emilie), though, they are translated in *Innocence*’s ‘Laughing Song’
into the vernacular (Mary, Susan, and Emily). In using native English
names, Blake makes the same ‘signal departure from convention’ in
*Songs of Innocence* as Edmund Spenser made in *The Shepheardes Calender*

By contrast, as a primary site of the largely pastoral songs of
*Innocence*, the urban, domestic setting of *An Island in the Moon* is initially
incongruous. In the manner of contemporary semi-scripted popular
dramatic entertainments and witty literary magazines (see England
1970, 3–29, and Hecimovich 2008, 32–5), Blake’s manuscript stages a
skewed dialogue between a number of punningly-named characters
(Quid the Cynic, Etruscan Column the Antiquarian, Obtuse Angle,
Mrs Nannicantipot), variously interpreted by twentieth-century critics
either as analogues of individuals known to Blake, or as caricatured
social or intellectual types, examples of which, says the narrator of
*Island*, would have been so familiar ‘you would think you was among
your friends’ (E449). *An Island in the Moon* is part of a tradition of writing
that runs from Renaissance satires of learned folly, through Laurence Sterne’s *Tristam Shandy* (1760–7), to James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922). It is ‘something between a burlesque and a satire and a comic vignette of a self-important society in which everybody talks but nobody listens: “their tongues went in question & answer, but their thoughts were otherwise employed”’ (Bentley 2001, 81; E449). This dialogue is punctuated by some twenty-one outbursts of song modelled by Blake on urban ballads or popular pastorals. In Chapter 11, ‘at the house of Steelyard the Lawgiver’ (E462), these songs include Obtuse Angle’s rendition of ‘Upon a holy Thursday’, which makes the company sit ‘silent for a quarter of an hour’; Mrs Nannicantipot’s rendition of ‘my grandmothers song’ (which in *Innocence* becomes ‘Nurse’s Song’); and Quid’s rendition of ‘O father father where are you going’ (*Innocence*’s ‘The Little Boy Lost’).

The to and fro that we hear between conversational combatants in *An Island in the Moon* is also inscribed in the difference between their songs. In Obtuse Angle’s ‘Upon a holy Thursday’, children walk ‘two & two’ overseen by ‘revrend men’, while in Mrs Nannicantipot’s ‘grandmothers song’, children ‘go & play till the light fades away’ and ‘leaped & shouted & laughed’ (E462–3). ‘Whether or not she realizes that it is a counterpoint to “Holy Thursday”, her song offers a Blakean contrary,’ writes Steve Newman, inferring in the *Island* poems and implying in *Songs of Innocence* a dialogic play of what the title-page of the combined *Songs* calls ‘Contrary States’ (Newman 2007, 145).

As Phillips has documented, the changes Blake made to the texts of these three songs when transferring them to *Songs of Innocence* were relatively minor. But the claims Phillips makes for the influence of *An Island in the Moon* are on a larger scale. The manuscript is, he writes, ‘the matrix of the *Songs*. Composed of parody and satire, street cries and nursery rhymes, dramatic personae and ironic point of view, it contains the essential elements that formed the basis of Blake’s conception’ (Phillips 2000, 1). One thing to note about Phillips’ description of *An Island in the Moon* here is its implication that the social, urban engagement that we perceive most readily in later *Experience* poems such as ‘London’ also framed certain lyrics of *Innocence* in their earliest incarnation.

In the early to mid-1780s, when *Poetical Sketches* and *An Island in the Moon* were produced, Blake was living, as he did for most of his life, in London. Having completed a seven-year engraving apprenticeship with James Basire in 1779, Blake was active as a professional engraver, largely engaged in inscribing onto sheets of copper designs made by other artists. Still, by the middle of 1784, when he was composing
An Island in the Moon, it seemed that ‘every citizen with a project or a little stock in trade [could] seek his fortune as one of the “skilful and able”’ (Erdman 1977, 90). Both personally and nationally, this time held the promise of prosperity (see also Bentley 2001, 78).

Key to the publication of Poetical Sketches and a satiric impetus of An Island in the Moon was Blake’s involvement from 1782 to perhaps 1785 with Harriet Mathew, her husband the Reverend Anthony Stephen Mathew, and their circle, especially as it met in Harriet’s salons or ‘conversaziones’ at 27 Rathbone Place, their home. Harriet Mathew was a generous patron, especially of musicians and artists. Her conversaziones were frequented by many such (see G 46–7 and Bentley 1958), including, according to the recollections of the artist and antiquarian John Thomas Smith, one ‘William Blake, the artist, to whom she [...] had been truly kind. There I have often heard him read and sing several of his poems. He was listened to by the company with profound silence, and allowed by most of the visitors to possess original and extraordinary merit’ (BR 30). It is possible that one of the poems sung by Blake at these gatherings was to become a song of Innocence.

With the Mathew salon, we see Blake participating in the informal intellectual life of his day – a point that is worth emphasising because it has rather been Blake’s isolation (and allegedly, willed isolationism) that has been stressed by certain later critics, influenced by the fact that with illuminated books like Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Blake was, atypically for the time, not only the author, but also the printer and publisher of his works. Undoubtedly a participant in contemporary intellectual and artistic circles, though, Blake tended not to be received as an equal. His position in the hierarchy is suggested by the politics of the puff (the advertisement) written for Poetical Sketches by Anthony Mathew. In common with other labouring-class writers – the ‘Thresher Poet’, Stephen Duck, of the 1730s, the milkmaid Ann Yearsley and ploughman Robert Burns of the 1780s, and indeed the ‘Peasant Poet’ John Clare of the 1830s – Blake, as a working engraver, was introduced into the literary marketplace by means of an authorising apology. As Mathew writes, acknowledging in Blake a lack of the formal schooling so bucked against by the ‘School Boy’ of Songs:

■ The following sketches were the production of untutored youth [...] [H]is talents having been wholly directed to the attainment of excellence in his profession, he has been deprived of the leisure requisite to such a revisal of these sheets, as might have rendered them less unfit to meet the public eye.
Conscious of the irregularities and defects to be found in almost every page, his friends have still believed that they possessed a poetic originality, which merited some respite from oblivion. These their opinions remain, however, to be now reproved or confirmed by a less partial public. □

(BR 29)

It is not clear what Mathew perceived the volume’s ‘irregularities and defects’ to be: certainly the volume as printed contained many typographical errors; varying and idiosyncratic metrical patterns that were to be found by Malkin ‘to leave harmony unregarded’ (BR 572); and subject matter, in ‘Edward the Third’, that seems to criticise English imperialism. What is clearer, albeit in its obfuscation, is Mathews’ euphemism: distracted by training for his ‘profession’, Blake might as well be a middle-class clergymen as a labouring-class engraver (Bentley 2001, 76). Certainly authorising peritext, or framing, like this, which proliferates in eighteenth-century publications, is dispensed with by Blake in his independent printing and publishing of Songs. Yet the tenor of Mathew’s remarks continued to mark the collection epitextually: his critical idiom and mingling of praise (‘poetic originality’) with blame (‘irregularities and defects’) are to be found in the contemporary reception of Songs likewise, as Chapter 2 surveys.

*Songs of Experience* and the Manuscript Notebook

We have seen that Blake’s accumulation of poems for *Songs of Innocence* began over five years before the book’s first publication in 1789. By 1791, Blake had started work on a companion volume, *Songs of Experience*, the majority of whose poems he drafted by hand over the next two years in a notebook, originally a sketchbook belonging to his younger brother Robert.

Since printing *Songs of Innocence*, Blake had been busy: producing numerous engravings and book illustrations for commercial publishers, including for Erasmus Darwin’s *Botanic Garden* (1791) and Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Original Stories from Real Life* (1791), and printing further illuminated books, *The Book of Thel* (1789), and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (c. 1790), the first of the so-called ‘prophetic books’. The fiery energy of revolution was burning just beyond English shores, in France, although in the early 1790s it seemed ‘still in England [to be] damned and frozen by cold abstractions and proclamations of “Thou shalt not”’ (Erdman 1977, 250).
If *An Island in the Moon* may be regarded as the matrix of *Songs*, then the notebook – held now by the British Library in London and accessible online – is the creative hub of a lot more besides. Jostling together on its pages; drafted, revised, sometimes erased and written over; are passages of text and designs that were to be worked by Blake into numerous subsequent collections, including small drawings which would become the emblem book *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* (1793); illustrations of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*; prose passages about the contemporary art market and artistic vision (published by later editors as *Public Address* and *A Vision of the Last Judgment*); passages of a heterodox religious poem (posthumously stitched together and known as *The Everlasting Gospel*); vituperative personal and political epigrams; and some fifty poems, eighteen of which were to find a place in *Songs of Experience*. The notebook also contains a ‘Motto to the Songs of Innocence & of Experience’:

\[\text{The Good are attracted by Mens perceptions}\\text{And Think not for themselves}\\text{Till Experience teaches them to catch}\\text{And to cage the Fairies & Elves}\\text{And then the Knave begins to snarl}\\text{And the Hypocrize to howl}\\text{And all his good Friends shew their private ends}\\text{And the Eagle is known from the Owl.} \]

(E499)

This motto marks the first time the conflated title of *Songs* was used, although it was not to be printed within the collection.

The Notebook is fascinating for the hints it gives of autobiography: ‘I say I shant live five years | And if I live one it will be a Wonder,’ Blake writes in 1793, perhaps expressing a fear for his personal safety as counter-revolutionary controls took root in Britain, and any criticism of its government, monarchy, or national church was discountenanced and indeed punished (see Phillips 2000, 112, and Phillips, 1994). It has also proved fascinating as a kind of puzzle, an enigma: a scene of multiple compositional traces that a series of scholars and editors, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Sampson, Geoffrey Keynes, David Erdman, and Michael Phillips have attempted to order and decode. Finally, like *Poetical Sketches* and *An Island in the Moon* only more so, the Notebook shows the multiple bursts of vision, perhaps the faltering stops and starts of revision, that went into the making of *Songs*. 
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