

“O Rose, Thou Art Sick” — **William Blake**

“O Rose, Thou Art Sick” is a short lyric poem by **William Blake**, taken from Songs of Experience. Though brief, the poem carries a deep message about how hidden harmful influences can destroy beauty and innocence.

General Meaning

The poem shows that something beautiful can be ruined by a silent and unseen force working secretly.

Poet’s Intention

Blake intends to show how a hidden harmful influence can destroy beauty and innocence. He warns that secret forces, working silently in darkness, can damage what seems pure.

Stanza 1

The speaker addresses the rose and says it is sick. An invisible worm moves at night in a storm, suggesting

secrecy and danger. This hidden force begins the rose's suffering.

Stanza 2

The worm discovers the rose's resting place, described as joyful and richly colored. Its dark, secret thing destroys the rose's life, showing how unseen harmful influences can ruin beauty.

Detailed Meaning

In the poem, the speaker directly addresses a rose and tells it that it is sick. The cause of this sickness is an invisible worm that moves at night during a violent storm. These images suggest secrecy and danger. The worm enters the rose's resting place, described as a place of beauty. Because the worm's love is hidden and dark, it slowly destroys the life of the rose. Through this image, Blake suggests that unseen harmful forces can damage even the purest things.

Main Theme

- Hidden danger and corruption

Literary Devices

- **Symbolism:** The rose and worm represent deeper ideas
- **Metaphor:** The poem works as an extended metaphor. The whole poem is built on one main comparison:
 - The rose is not only a flower → it represents something beautiful and pure
 - The worm is not only an insect → it represents a hidden harmful influence
 - The sickness and destruction represent the damage caused by that hidden influence
- **Personification:** The worm is given human qualities
- **Imagery:** Night and storm create a dark mood