

The Tyger

*Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

In this opening stanza, the speaker addresses the tiger directly, describing it as “burning bright.” This suggests that the tiger’s appearance—its fiery orange color and intense energy—stands out vividly, even in the darkness of the forest at night. The image creates a sense of both beauty and danger.

The speaker then asks a profound question: **What “immortal” being** could have created a creature so powerful and fearsome? The phrase “fearful symmetry” refers to the tiger’s perfect yet terrifying design.

This question implies wonder, awe, and even fear toward the creator who was capable of making something so majestic and dangerous. It also introduces the poem’s central theme: the mystery and complexity of creation itself.

The “fearful symmetry” is a nuanced trait that has dual allusions, one for the tiger and the other referring to a divine deity. The sublime characteristic refers to an entity that is both big and powerful yet remains mysterious. As a result, the poet starts off with poetic allusions, entirely open-ended for the reader to perceive as he pleases. He slowly arrives at the question as to what kind of God is if he created such a scary creature.

Stanza Two

In what distant deep or skies

Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

On what wings dare he aspire?

What the hand dare seize the fire?

The poet’s fascination with the “Tyger” increases as he seems mesmerized by his fiery eyes. He feels that the fire in his eyes came from a distant heavenly body such as hell/heaven. The poet adds to the fiery image of the tiger by using the metaphor of burning in the first verse. The third line throws the reader off track. William Blake is slowly coming to the point of his argument—God. The poet presents the main point that the creature reflects its creator. The poet furthermore creates a more supernatural image using the words ‘hand,’ ‘wings,’ and fire, relating to the divine being. These words have been

reiterated from above. The term 'daring' is introduced, which is repeated in the latter stanza.

Stanza Three

And what shoulder, and what art

Could twist the sinews of thy heart?

And when they heart began to beat,

What dead hand? And what dread feet?

The poet in this stanza, discusses the physical characteristics of the almighty creator, contemplating his various physical features. The lines are lost in translation as the poet wonders in-depth about God's physical attributes, which could also be an allegory to the tiger's characteristics.

Stanza Four

What the hammer? What's the chain?

In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? What dead grasp

Dare its deadly terrors clasp

This stanza questions the steps involved in the creation of the all-mighty jungle creature, the tiger. An allegorical reference to a blacksmith is included in these lines. The hypothesis is that some intelligent creator was developing his creation as a blacksmith hammers and forms metal with considerable toil. The stanza is steeped in rhythmic poetry, adding flair and color. As is made apparent, the poet grows more impatient and begins questioning faith overall.