

#### 4. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*

Manchester: Manchester Etching Workshop, 1983

This edition of sixteen prints from Blake's *Songs* is as close to an original as is possible. The prints were made from a set of relief etchings taken from the nineteenth-century electrotypes of the original plates, and were printed on a rolling press with hand-made intaglio ink on dampened pure rag wove paper. The handmade paper resembles very closely in quality and texture the paper Blake used. It is even watermarked *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, as well as embellished with Blake's monogram. The prints were individually hand-colored with watercolors that were prepared using guidelines from eighteenth-century recipes. With careful observation, one can note the outlining, shaping, and contouring by pen and ink to define details.

This watercolor version of "The Lamb" is an excellent example of the precise reproductive methods followed for this limited edition of only 40 copies. The print is symmetrically aligned on paper a tiny bit wider than Blake's. The use of softly washed pastels expresses a sense of innocence, which coincides with the image of the responsive lamb in the foreground. The lamb symbolizes Jesus and accentuates the Christian values of kindness, modesty, and tranquility. The child speaking the poem is also associated with Jesus; in the Gospel, Jesus displays a sincere concern for children, and the bible's depiction of him in his childhood shows him to be inquisitive, forthright, and strong. This poem, like many of the *Songs of Innocence*, expresses what Blake saw as the more positive aspects of Christian belief. However, it does not provide a completely ample doctrine because it fails to account for the presence of suffering and evil in the world.

--- Liza Jimenez '03