



# William Blake: The Gates of Paradise

*Michael Bedard*

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## **William Blake: The Gates of Paradise** Michael Bedard

Journey back to the 1700s to meet one of the most fascinating people in history. Dreamer, craftsman, poet, madman, and genius — William Blake. Born in 1757 in London, as a boy he apprenticed as an engraver and began a career that would include masterpieces of art.

Blake lived during times of incredible change and upheaval, including the Gordon Riots and the French Revolution. Spiritualism and the allure of magic were being replaced by a belief in rationalism. Blake celebrated the beauty of small things. His work showed, "...a world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower..." [William Blake] Yet, with the noise and dirt of mills (factories), the Industrial Revolution was drowning out a quiet, rural way of life. The value of things made carefully by hand was being lost.

At the same time, the printing press was making it possible for more and more people to read. The rise of printed books and book illustration was revolutionary and Blake was part of it.

On the 250th anniversary of Blake's birth, master storyteller Michael Bedard brings this Renaissance man and his times to vivid life in this biography that is lavishly illustrated with Blake's work.

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