

William Blake

A True Visionary



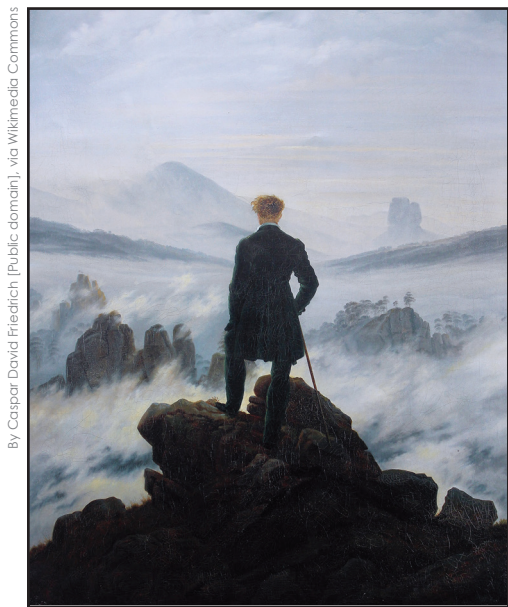
By Thomas Phillips [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

William Blake in 1807

Generally speaking, a visionary is a person who sees possibilities where others do not. Usually, visionaries are leaders in some way. William Blake, the artist and poet, is considered a visionary of the Romantic era for a number of reasons.

Throughout history, there have been many different eras. An era is a period of time. The era we now live in is often referred to as the Information Age. That is because it is popular to use technology and science to find out how things work. People who are considered visionaries in the Information Age include Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. Steve Jobs helped start Apple Computers and had the idea for the iPad and iPhone. Bill Gates started the giant software company called Microsoft.

William Blake



By Caspar David Friedrich [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

**“Wanderer Above the Sea” by
Caspar David Friedrich**

The Romantic era started in the late 1700s and lasted until around the 1850s. During the Romantic era, many artists and writers created work about feelings and nature. They wrote about romance and love. They wrote about things that couldn't be real, like fairies or monsters.

William Blake was one of the first people to write and paint in the Romantic style. He is called a visionary

for this reason. But he was also quite literally a visionary! A visionary can also be a person who sees visions. William Blake claimed to see visions many times over the course of his life. This is probably the reason no one really appreciated Blake's work until after he died. People who knew him while he was alive seemed to think that he was a bit crazy.



By Autopilot [Own work] via Wikimedia Commons

**This shows an engraving (left) and
a print from the engraving (right)**

William Blake was born in 1757. He began to show artistic talent from a very young age. When he was 10, he began to go to art school. He became a talented painter and artist. He also became an

engraver. He carved images onto a flat piece of copper, and then he put ink on them and printed the images onto paper with a press. Engraved images can be reproduced over and over.

Blake was also a printer and inventor. He invented new ways to print books, including a way to print books in color. Using his inventions, Blake printed many of his own stories and poems.

William Blake

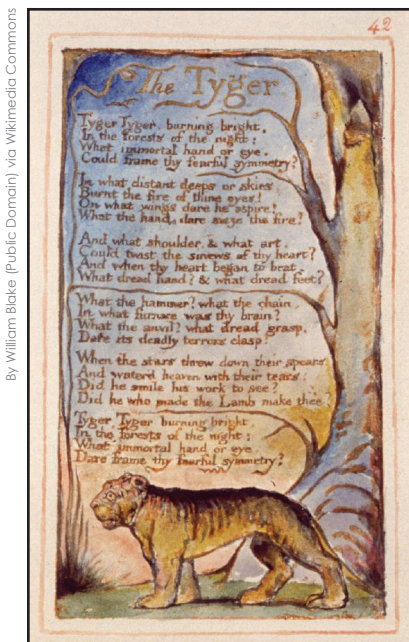


By William Blake (Public Domain) via Wikimedia Commons

"Ghost of a Flea" by William Blake

When it comes to his visions, Blake claimed to have had a lot of them. He said that he had his first vision when he was four years old. At age 10, Blake claimed to have seen a tree full of angels. When his brother died, Blake claims to have seen his brother's spirit rising from his body. Later, he created many paintings of people long dead or of unreal creatures. He claimed that

they appeared to him in his visions. He said they posed for him while he painted the pictures. Some of them were really weird. Like this one, which he said was a painting of the ghost of a flea.



By William Blake (Public Domain) via Wikimedia Commons

"The Tyger" by William Blake

Over the course of his life, Blake wrote and illustrated a number of books. He also wrote a lot of poetry. Many people consider his poem *The Tyger* to be his best-known poem.

William Blake did not become famous during his lifetime. He became famous after his death. It was only after his death that he began to become famous. His art and writing inspired many other artists and writers of the Romantic era. Only then did people begin to see William Blake as a true visionary.