Little Tom the Sailor (footer), with 'the Widow Spicer'

William Blake

£150

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REF: 1198

Height: 12 cm (4.7")

Width: 17 cm (6.7")

Framed Height: 38.5 cm (15.2")

Framed Width: 46 cm (18.1")

Description

On arriving in Felpham, on the Sussex coast, at the behest of his new patron, William Hayley, Blake's first commission was to produce two etchings to illustrate his new patron's ballad 'Little Tom the Sailor', to be published as an act of charity on behalf of Widow Spicer, a "poor Woman on the Kentish coast". The resulting broadside sheet became exceptionally rare, and in 1880, William Muir produced the present, fine facsimile for Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo's Century Guild, and it was also issued in 1886, becoming a key work of the late 19th century Blake craze. This one and its pair almost certainly belonged to William Bell Scott, who also played a major role in popularising Blake's work.Although this print has been separated from the ballad, it too is now very scarce and was often in the past mistaken for the original.

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