

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834), born in Devonshire, is some respects the architect of the British Romantic Movement. Gifted with a keen philosophic intellect as well as a vivid poetic imagination, he might have developed into the principle romantic writer but for his debilitating opium addiction that sapped his poetic powers. The son of a vicar, he was educated at Christ's Hospital School in London (with friend Charles Lamb) and later at Cambridge. Upon graduation he and classmate Robert Southey attempted to set up a utopian community in the Lake District; however, Coleridge succeeded only in marrying Southey's fiancée from whom he became estranged. In 1797 he began an intense working relationship with William Wordsworth which culminated in the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), which included Coleridge's most famous work "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Coleridge and Wordsworth continued to serve as sounding-boards for each other's work through the early 1800s, but the two became disaffected as Coleridge fell in love with Sara Hutchinson, sister of Wordsworth's wife Mary, and Coleridge became dependent upon opium. As opium addiction took its toll on his creative work, Coleridge eventually sustained himself on lecturing and prose criticism (particularly on philosophical and theological issues). Admired by the "second generation" Romantic writers such as Byron and Shelley, Coleridge's reputation as poet and critic continued to grow in the 1810s and 1820s.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
 Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
 Came loud--and hark, again! loud as before.
 The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
 Have left me to that solitude, which suits
 Abstruser musings: save that at my side
 My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
 'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
 And vexes meditation with its strange
 And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
 This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
 With all the numberless goings-on of life,
 Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
 Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
 Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
 Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
 Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
 Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
 Making it a companionable form,
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
 By its own moods interprets, every where
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
 And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
 How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
 Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
 To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft
 With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
 Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
 Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
 From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,

So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
 With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
 Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
 So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
 Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
 And so I brooded all the following morn,
 Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
 Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
 Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
 A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
 For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
 Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
 My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
 Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
 Fill up the intersperséd vacancies
 And momentary pauses of the thought!
 My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
 With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
 And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
 And in far other scenes! For I was reared
 In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
 And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
 But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
 By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
 Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
 Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
 And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
 The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
 Of that eternal language, which thy God
 Utters, who from eternity doth teach
 Himself in all, and all things in himself.
 Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
 Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
 Whether the summer clothe the general earth
 With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
 Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
 Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
 Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
 Heard only in the trances of the blast,
 Or if the secret ministry of frost
 Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
 Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON ADDRESSED TO CHARLES LAMB, OF THE INDIA HOUSE, LONDON

In the June of 1797 some long-expected friends paid a visit to the author's cottage; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden-bower.

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
 This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
 Beauties and feelings, such as would have been

Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
 Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
 Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
 On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
 Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
 To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
 The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
 And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
 Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
 Flings arching like a bridge--that branchless ash,
 Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow-leaves
 Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
 Fanned by the water-fall! and there my friends
 Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
 That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
 Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
 Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friends emerge
 Beneath the wide wide Heaven--and view again
 The many-steepled tract magnificent
 Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
 With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
 The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
 Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
 In gladness all; but thou, me thinks, most glad,
 My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
 And hungered after Nature, many a year,
 In the great City pent, winning thy way
 With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
 And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
 Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
 Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
 Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds
 Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
 And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
 Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
 Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
 On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
 Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
 As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
 Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight
 Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
 As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
 This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked
 Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the blaze
 Hung the transparent foliage; and I watched
 Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see
 The shadow of the leaf and stem above,
 Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
 Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay
 Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
 Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass--
 Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
 Through the late twilight: and though now the bat
 Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
 Yet still the solitary humble-bee
 Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
 That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;

No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
 No waste so vacant, but, may well employ
 Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart.
 Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
 'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,
 That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
 With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
 My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook
 Beat its straight path along the dusky air
 Homewards, I blest it! deeming, its black wing
 (Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
 Had cross'd the mighty orb's dilated glory,
 While thou stood'st gazing; or when all was still,
 Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm
 For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
 No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
 A stately pleasure-dome decree:
 Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
 Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
 So twice five miles of fertile ground
 With walls and towers were girdled round:
 And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
 Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
 And here were forests ancient as the hills,
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
 A savage place! as holy and enchanted
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
 And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
 As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
 A mighty fountain momently was forced:
 Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
 Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
 And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
 It flung up momently the sacred river.
 Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
 Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
 And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
 And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
 Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
 Floated midway on the waves;
 Where was heard the mingled measure
 From the fountain and the caves.
 It was a miracle of rare device,
 A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
 In a vision once I saw:

It was an Abyssinian maid,
 And on her dulcimer she played,
 Singing of Mount Abora.
 Could I revive within me.
 Her symphony and song,
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
 That with music loud and long,
 I would build that dome in air,
 That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
 And all who heard should see them there,
 And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
 Weave a circle round him thrice,
 And close your eyes with holy dread,
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,
 And drunk the milk of Paradise.

THE ANCIENT MARINER,
 A POET'S REVERIE.

ARGUMENT.

How a Ship, having first sailed to the Equator, was driven by Storms, to the cold Country towards the South Pole; how the Ancient Mariner cruelly, and in contempt of the laws of hospitality, killed a Sea-bird; and how he was followed by many and strange Judgements; and in what manner he came back to his own Country.

I.

It is an ancient Mariner,
 And he stoppeth one of three:
 "By thy long grey beard and thy glittering eye
 Now wherefore stoppest me?"

"The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide
 And I am next of kin;
 The Guests are met, the Feast is set,--
 May'st hear the merry din."

But still he holds the wedding guest--
 "There was a Ship, quoth he--"
 "Nay, if thou'st got a laughsome tale,
 Mariner! come with me."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
 Quoth he, there was a Ship--
 "Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon
 Or my Staff shall make thee skip."

He holds him with his glittering eye--
 The wedding guest stood still
 And listens like a three year's child;
 The Mariner hath his will.

The wedding-guest sate on a stone,
 He cannot chuse but hear:
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

The Ship was cheer'd, the Harbour clear'd--
 Merrily did we drop
 Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
 Below the Light-house top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
 Out of the Sea came he:
 And he shone bright, and on the right
 Went down into the Sea.

Higher and higher every day,
 Till over the mast at noon--
 The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Bride hath pac'd into the Hall,
 Red as a rose is she;
 Nodding their heads before her goes
 The merry Minstralsy.

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot chuse but hear:
 And thus spake on that ancient Man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

But now the Northwind came more fierce,
 There came a Tempest strong!
 And Southward still for days and weeks
 Like Chaff we drove along.

And now there came both Mist and Snow,
 And it grew wond'rous cold;
 And Ice mast-high came floating by
 As green as Emerald.

And thro' the drifts the snowy clifts
 Did send a dismal sheen;
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken--
 The Ice was all between.

The Ice was here, the Ice was there,
 The Ice was all around:
 It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd--
 A wild and ceaseless sound.

At length did cross an Albatross,
 Thorough the Fog it came;
 As if it had been a Christian Soul,
 We hail'd it in God's name.

The Mariners gave it biscuit-worms,
 And round and round it flew:
 The Ice did split with a Thunder-fit;
 The Helmsman steer'd us thro'.

And a good south wind sprung up behind.
 The Albatross did follow;
 And every day for food or play
 Came to the Mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud on mast or shroud

It perch'd for vespers nine,
Whiles all the night thro' fog-smoke white
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends that plague thee thus--"
"Why look'st thou so?--with my cross bow
I shot the Albatross."

II:

The Sun now rose upon the right,
Out of the Sea came he;
Still hid in mist; and on the left
Went down into the Sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet Bird did follow
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the Mariner's hollo!

And I had done an hellish thing
And it would work e'm woe:
For all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird
That made the Breeze to blow.

Nor dim nor red, like an Angel's head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird
That brought the fog and mist.

'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay
That bring the fog and mist.

The breezes blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent Sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the Sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the Sea.

All in a hot and copper sky
The bloody sun at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion,
As idle as a painted Ship
Upon a painted Ocean.

Water, water, every where
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deeps did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs

Upon the slimy Sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The Death-fires danc'd at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us
From the Land of Mist and Snow.

And every tongue thro' utter drouth
Was wither'd at the root;
We could not speak no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah wel-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young;
Instead of the Cross the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

III.

So past a weary time; each throat
Was parch'd, and glaz'd each eye,
When, looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seem'd a little speck
And then it seem'd a mist:
It mov'd and mov'd, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it near'd and near'd;
And, as if it dodg'd a water-sprite,
It plung'd and tack'd and veer'd.

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Thro' utter drouth all dumb we stood
Till I bit my arm and suck'd the blood,
And cry'd, A sail! a sail!

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin
And all at once their breath drew in
As they were drinking all.

See! See! (I cry'd) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal
Without a breeze, without a tide
She steddies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a flame,
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And strait the Sun was fleck'd with bars
(Heaven's mother send us grace)
As if thro' a dungeon grate he peer'd
With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her Sails that glance in the Sun
Like restless gossameres?

Are those her Ribs, thro' which the Sun
Did peer, as thro' a grate?
And are those two all, all her crew.
That Woman, and her Mate?

His bones were black with many a crack,
All black and bare, I ween;
Jet-black and bare, save where with rust
Of mouldy damp and charnel crust
They were patch'd with purple and green.

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
And she was far liker Death than he;
Her flesh made the still air cold.

The naked Hulk alongside came
And the Twain were playing dice;
"The Game is done! I've won, I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistled thrice.

A gust of wind sterte up behind
And whistled thro' his bones;
Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth
Half-whistles and half-groans.

With never a whisper in the Sea
Off darts the Spectre-ship;
While clombe above the Eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright Star
Almost between the tips.

One after one by the horned Moon
(Listen, O Stranger! to me)
Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang
And curs'd me with his ee.

Four times fifty living men,
With never a sigh or groan,
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump
They dropp'd down one by one.

Their souls did from their bodies fly,--
They fled to bliss or woe;
And every soul it pass'd me by,
Like, the whiz of my Cross-bow.

IV.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!

I fear thy skinny hand;
And thou art long and lank and brown
As is the ribb'd Sea-sand."

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye
And thy skinny hand so brown--"
"Fear not, fear not, thou wedding guest!
This body dropt not down."

Alone, alone, all all alone
Alone on the wide wide Sea;
And Christ would take no pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men so beautiful,
And they all dead did lie!
And a million million slimy things
Liv'd on--and so did I.

I look'd upon the rotting Sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I look'd upon the ghastly deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I look'd to Heaven, and try'd to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I clos'd my lids and kept them close,
Till the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot, nor reek did they;
The look with which they look'd on me,
Had never pass'd away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high:
But O! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up
And a star or two beside--

Her beams bemock'd the sultry main
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watch'd the water-snakes:
They mov'd in tracks of shining white;

And when they rear'd, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coil'd and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

V.

O sleep, it is a gentle thing
Belov'd from pole to pole!
To Mary-queen the praise be given
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck
That had so long remain'd,
I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew
And when I awoke it rain'd.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams
And still my body drank.

I mov'd and could not feel my limbs,
I was so light, almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed Ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind,
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life
And a hundred fire-flags sheen
To and fro they were hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out
The wan stars danc'd between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud;
And the sails did sigh like sedge:
And the rain pour'd down from one black cloud
The moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:

Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell, with never a jag
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reach'd the Ship,
Yet now the Ship mov'd on!
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groan'd; they stirr'd, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor mov'd their eyes:
It had been strange, even in a dream
To have seen those dead men rise,

The helmsman steer'd, the ship mov'd on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The Mariners all gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They rais'd their limbs like lifeless tools--
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me knee to knee:
The body and I pull'd at one rope,
But he said nought to me.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou wedding guest!
'Twas not those souls, that fled in pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of Spirits blest."

"For when it dawn'd--they dropp'd their arms,
And cluster'd round the mast:
Sweet sounds rose slowly thro' their mouths
And from their bodies pass'd."

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the sun:
Slowly the sounds came back again
Now mix'd, now one by one.

Sometimes a dropping from the sky
I heard the Sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are
How they seem'd to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargon.

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceas'd: yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night,
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we silently sail'd on

Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the Ship
Mov'd onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep
From the land of mist and snow
The spirit slid: and it was He
That made the Ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune
And the Ship stood still also.

The sun right up above the mast
Had fix'd her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir
With a short uneasy motion--
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell into a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life return'd,
I heard and in my soul discern'd
Two voices in the air.

"Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he lay'd full low
The harmless Albatross."

"The spirit who 'bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He lov'd the bird that lov'd the man
Who shot him with his bow."

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he the man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.

VI.

FIRST VOICE.

"But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing--
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the Ocean doing?"

SECOND VOICE.

"Still as a Slave before his Lord,
The Ocean hath no blast:
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the moon is cast--"

"If he may know which way to go,
For she guides him smooth or grim,

See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him."

FIRST VOICE.

"But why drives on that ship so fast
Without or wave or wind?"

SECOND VOICE.

"The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind."

"Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high,
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated."

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fix'd on me their stony eyes
That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never pass'd away;
I could not draw my eyes from theirs
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I view'd the ocean green,
And look'd far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen.

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round, walks on
And turns no more his head:
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breath'd a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea
In ripple or in shade.

It rais'd my hair, it fann'd my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring--
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship
Yet she sail'd softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze--
On me alone it blew.

O dream of joy! is this indeed

The light-house top I see?
Is this the Hill? Is this the Kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the Harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray--
"O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep away!"

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less:
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steep'd in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turn'd my eyes upon the deck--
O Christ! what saw I there?

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat;
And by the Holy rood
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand:
It was a heavenly sight:
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light:

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand,
No voice did they impart--
No voice; but O! the silence sank,
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the pilot's cheer:
My head was turn'd perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.

The pilot, and the pilot's boy
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy,
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third--I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

VII.

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the Sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with Mariners
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn and noon and eve--
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss, that wholly hides
The rotted old Oak-stump.

The Skiff-boat ner'd: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair
That signal made but now?"

"Strange, by my faith!" the Hermit said--
"And they answer'd not our cheer.
The planks look warp'd, and see those sails
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them
Unless perchance it were"

"The skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest brook along:
When the Ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the Owlet whoops to the wolf below
That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it has a fiendish look--"
(The Pilot made reply)
"I am a-fear'd."--"Push on, push on!"
"Said the Hermit cheerily."

The Boat came closer to the Ship,
But I nor spake nor stirr'd!
The Boat came close beneath the Ship,
And strait a sound was heard!

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reach'd the Ship, it split the bay;
The Ship went down like lead.

Stunn'd by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote:
Like one that hath been seven days drown'd
My body lay afloat:
But, swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the Ship,
The boat spun round and round:
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I mov'd my lips: the Pilot shriek'd
And fell down in a fit.
The Holy Hermit rais'd his eyes
And pray'd where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro,
"Ha! ha!" quoth he--"full plain I see,
The devil knows how to row."

And now all in mine own Countree
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy Man!"
The Hermit cross'd his brow--
"Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say
What manner man art thou?"

Forthwith this frame of mind was wrench'd
With a woeful agony,
Which forc'd me to begin my tale
And then it left me free.

Since then at an uncertain hour,
That agency returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
The moment that his face I see
I know the man that must hear me;
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The Wedding-guests are there;
But in the Garden-bower the Bride
And Bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little Vesper-bell
Which biddeth me to prayer.

O Wedding-guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seem'd there to be.

O sweeter than the Marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me
To walk together to the Kirk
With a goodly company.

To walk together to the Kirk
And all together pray,
While each to his great father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And Youths, and Maidens gay.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man, and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small:
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the wedding-guest
Turn'd from the bridegroom's door.

He went, like one that hath been stunn'd
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn,

DEJECTION: AN ODE
WRITTEN APRIL 4, 1802

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.
Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.

I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unrous'd by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Aeolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move so and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear--
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle wooed,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze--and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,

Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah, from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth--
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud--
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud--
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms our ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man--
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
Turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds--
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!

But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings--all is over--
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,
'Tis of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

TO A GENTLEMAN [WILLIAM WORDSWORTH]
COMPOSED ON THE NIGHT AFTER HIS RECITATION
OF A POEM ON THE GROWTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL
MIND.

Friend of the wise! and Teacher of the Good!
Into my heart have I received that Lay
More than historic, that prophetic Lay
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words!--

Theme hard as high!
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
(The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),
Of tides obedient to external force,
And currents self-determined, as might seem,
Or by some inner Power; of moments awful,
Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
The light reflected, as a light bestowed--
Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens
Native or outland, lakes and famous hills!
Or on the lonely high-road, when the stars
Were rising; or by secret mountain-streams,
The guides and the companions of thy way!

Of more than Fancy, of the Social Sense
Distending wide, and man beloved as man,
Where France in all her towns lay vibrating
Like some becalmed bark beneath the burst
Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
Is visible, or shadow on the main.
For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,
Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
Amid a mighty nation jubilant,
When from the general heart of human kind
Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity!
--Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,
So summoned homeward, thenceforth calm and sure
From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute self,
With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
Far on-herself a glory to behold,
The Angel of the vision! Then (last strain)
Of Duty, chosen Laws controlling choice,
Action and joy!--An orphic song indeed,
A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
To their own music chaunted!

O great Bard!
Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
With steadfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. The truly great
Have all one age, and from one visible space

Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
Are permanent, and Time is not with them,
Save as it worketh for them, they in it.
Nor less a sacred Roll, than those of old,
And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
Among the archives of mankind, thy work
Makes audible a linked lay of Truth,
Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes
Ah! as I listen'd with a heart forlorn,
The pulses of my being beat anew:
And even as life retains upon the drowned,
Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains--
Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart;
And fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of hope;
And hope that scarce would know itself from fear;
Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain,
And all which I had culled in wood-walks wild,
And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
Commune with thee had opened out--but flowers
Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!

That way no more! and ill beseems it me,
Who came a welcomer in herald's guise,
Singing of glory, and futurity,
To wander back on such unhealthful road,
Plucking the poisons of self-harm! And ill
Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths
Strew'd before thy advancing!

Nor do thou,
Sage Bard! impair the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By pity or grief, already felt too long!
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased: for Peace is nigh
Where wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,
The halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours
Already on the wing.

Even following eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest! moments for their own sake hailed
And more desired, more precious, for thy song,
In silence listening like a devout child,
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain
Driven as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary stars of my own birth,
Fair constellated foam, still darting off
Into the darkness; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

And when--O Friend! my comforter and guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!--
Thy long sustained Song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased--yet thou thyself
Wert still before my eyes, and round us both

That happy vision of beloved faces--
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close
I sate, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound--
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

LIMBO

Tis a strange place, this Limbo!--not a Place,
Yet name it so;--where Time and weary Space
Fettered from flight, with night-mare sense of fleeing,
Strive for their last crepuscular half-being;--
Lank Space, and scytheless Time with branny hands
Barren and soundless as the measuring sands,
Not mark'd by flit of Shades,--unmeaning they
As moonlight on the dial of the day!
But that is lovely--looks like human Time,--
An old man with a steady look sublime,
That stops his earthly task to watch the skies;
But he is blind--a statue hath such eyes;--
Yet having moonward turn'd his face by chance,
Gazes the orb with moon-like countenance,
With scant white hairs, with fore top bald and high,
He gazes still,--his eyeless face all eye;--
As 'twere an organ full of silent sight,
His whole face seemeth to rejoice in light!
Lip touching lip, all moveless, bust and limb--
He seems to gaze at that which seems to gaze on him!
No such sweet sights doth Limbo den immune,
Wall'd round, and made a spirit-jail secure,
By the mere horror of blank Naught-at-all,
Whose circumambience doth these ghosts enthral.
A lurid thought is growthless, dull Privation,
Yet that is but a Purgatory curse;
Hell knows a fear far worse,
A fear--a future state;--'tis positive Negation!

HUMAN LIFE

ON THE DENIAL OF IMMORTALITY

If dead, we cease to be; if total gloom
Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare
As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom,
Whose sound and motion not alone declare,
But are their whole of being! If the breath
Be Life itself, and not its task and tent,
If even a soul like Milton's can know death;
O Man! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes!
Surplus of Nature's dread activity,
Which, as she gazed on some nigh-finished vase,
Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
She formed with restless hands unconsciously.
Blank accident! nothing's anomaly!
If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,
Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy hopes, thy fears,
The counter-weights!--Thy laughter and thy tears
Mean but themselves, each fittest to create

And to repay each other! Why rejoices
Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good?
Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood,
Why waste thy sighs, and thy lamenting voices,
Image of Image, Ghost of Ghostly Elf,
That such a thing as thou feel'st warm or cold?
Yet what and whence thy gain, if thou withhold
These costless shadows of thy shadowy self?
Be sad! be glad! be neither! seek, or shun!
Thou hast no reason why! Thou canst have none;
Thy being's being is contradiction.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRUARY 1827

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair--
The bees are stirring--birds are on the wing--
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

EPITAPH

Stop, Christian passer-by!--Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he.--
O, lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C.;
That he who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death!
Mercy for praise--to be forgiven for fame
He ask'd, and hoped, through Christ.
Do thou the same!

BIGRAPHIA LITERARIA

From CHAPTER IV

The Lyrical Ballads with the Preface--Mr. Wordsworth's earlier poems--On fancy and imagination--The investigation of the distinction important to the Fine Arts.

During the last year of my residence at Cambridge, 1794, I became acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth's first publication entitled Descriptive Sketches; and seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced. In the form, style, and manner of the whole poem, and in the structure of the particular lines and periods, there is a harshness and acerbity connected

and combined with words and images all a-glow, which might recall those products of the vegetable world, where gorgeous blossoms rise out of a hard and thorny rind and shell, within which the rich fruit is elaborating. The language is not only peculiar and strong, but at times knotty and contorted, as by its own impatient strength; while the novelty and struggling crowd of images, acting in conjunction with the difficulties of the style, demands always a greater closeness of attention, than poetry,--at all events, than descriptive poetry--has a right to claim. It not seldom therefore justified the complaint of obscurity. In the following extract I have sometimes fancied, that I saw an emblem of the poem itself, and of the author's genius as it was then displayed.--

'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour,
 All day the floods a deepening murmur pour;
 The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight
 Dark is the region as with coming night;
 Yet what a sudden burst of overpowering light!
 Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
 Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form;
 Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
 The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake recline;
 Those Eastern cliffs a hundred streams unfold,
 At once to pillars turned that flame with gold;
 Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
 The west, that burns like one dilated sun,
 Where in a mighty crucible expire
 The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.

The poetic Psyche, in its process to full development, undergoes as many changes as its Greek namesake, the butterfly [20]. And it is remarkable how soon genius clears and purifies itself from the faults and errors of its earliest products; faults which, in its earliest compositions, are the more obtrusive and confluent, because as heterogeneous elements, which had only a temporary use, they constitute the very ferment, by which themselves are carried off. Or we may compare them to some diseases, which must work on the humours, and be thrown out on the surface, in order to secure the patient from their future recurrence. I was in my twenty-fourth year, when I had the happiness of knowing Mr. Wordsworth personally, and while memory lasts, I shall hardly forget the sudden effect produced on my mind, by his recitation of a manuscript poem, which still remains unpublished, but of which the stanza and tone of style were the same as those of *The Female Vagrant*, as originally printed in the first volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*. There was here no mark of strained thought, or forced diction, no crowd or turbulence of imagery; and, as the poet hath himself well described in his *Lines on revisiting the Wye*, manly reflection and human associations had given both variety, and an additional interest to natural objects, which, in the passion and appetite of the first love, they had seemed to him neither to need nor permit. The occasional obscurities, which had risen from an imperfect control over the resources of his native language, had almost wholly disappeared, together with that worse defect of arbitrary and illogical phrases, at once hackneyed and fantastic, which hold so distinguished a place in the technique of ordinary poetry, and will, more or less, alloy the earlier poems of the truest genius, unless the attention has been specially directed to their worthlessness and incongruity [21]. I did not perceive

anything particular in the mere style of the poem alluded to during its recitation, except indeed such difference as was not separable from the thought and manner; and the Spenserian stanza, which always, more or less, recalls to the reader's mind Spenser's own style, would doubtless have authorized, in my then opinion, a more frequent descent to the phrases of ordinary life, than could without an ill effect have been hazarded in the heroic couplet. It was not however the freedom from false taste, whether as to common defects, or to those more properly his own, which made so unusual an impression on my feelings immediately, and subsequently on my judgment. It was the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying, the objects observed; and above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops.

This excellence, which in all Mr. Wordsworth's writings is more or less predominant, and which constitutes the character of his mind, I no sooner felt, than I sought to understand. Repeated meditations led me first to suspect,--(and a more intimate analysis of the human faculties, their appropriate marks, functions, and effects matured my conjecture into full conviction.)--that Fancy and Imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power. It is not, I own, easy to conceive a more apposite translation of the Greek *phantasia* than the Latin *imaginatio*; but it is equally true that in all societies there exists an instinct of growth, a certain collective, unconscious good sense working progressively to desynonymize [22] those words originally of the same meaning, which the conflux of dialects supplied to the more homogeneous languages, as the Greek and German: and which the same cause, joined with accidents of translation from original works of different countries, occasion in mixed languages like our own. The first and most important point to be proved is, that two conceptions perfectly distinct are confused under one and the same word, and--this done--to appropriate that word exclusively to the one meaning, and the synonyme, should there be one, to the other. But if,--(as will be often the case in the arts and sciences,)--no synonyme exists, we must either invent or borrow a word. In the present instance the appropriation has already begun, and been legitimated in the derivative adjective: Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind. If therefore I should succeed in establishing the actual existence of two faculties generally different, the nomenclature would be at once determined. To the faculty by which I had characterized Milton, we should confine the term 'imagination;' while the other would be contra-distinguished as 'fancy.' Now were it once fully ascertained, that this division is no less grounded in nature than that of delirium from mania, or Otway's

Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber,
 from Shakespeare's

What! have his daughters brought him to this pass?

or from the preceding apostrophe to the elements; the theory of the fine arts, and of poetry in particular, could not but derive some additional and important light. It would in its immediate effects furnish a torch of guidance to the philosophical critic; and ultimately to the poet himself. In energetic minds, truth soon changes by domestication into power; and from directing in the discrimination and appraisal of the product, becomes influence in the production. To admire on principle, is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.

From CHAPTER XIII

The Imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.

From CHAPTER XIV

My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in some of the remarks on the Fancy and Imagination in the early part of this work. What is poetry?--is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet?--that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind.

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control, *laxis effertur habenis*, reveals "itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant" qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to

nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry.

Study Questions

1. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was originally included in *Lyrical Ballads*. How is it like and unlike Wordsworth's "ballads"?
2. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" has both explicit and implicit Christian symbolism. Can you identify examples of such symbolism? How would you summarize Coleridge's Christianity and how does it differ from beliefs articulated by Wordsworth?
3. How do Coleridge's "occasional" poems (such as "Frost at Midnight" and "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison") illustrate the notion of literary organic form?
4. "Kubla Khan" was published at the instigation of Lord Byron. Coleridge called it a "fragment." Is the poem truly "unfinished" or does it achieve some kind of closure? Is the message about the power of the imagination ultimately positive or negative?
5. How is "Dejection: An Ode" a companion to Wordsworth's Ode ("Intimations of Immortality")?
6. How does Coleridge's "To a Gentleman (William Wordsworth)" differ from his comments in *Biographia Literaria* regarding Wordsworth's *The Prelude*?
7. How does Coleridge distinguish "Imagination" from "Fancy"? What does the distinction suggest about the Romantic view of the structure of the human mind?
8. What themes or attitudes dominate Coleridge's late poems ("Limbo," "Human Life," "Work Without Hope" and his "Epitaph")?