

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (21  
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**Kubla Khan**  
*Or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment.*

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 there 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 momentarily 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 momentarily 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.

### Frost at Midnight

The Frost performs its secret ministry,  
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet'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,  
Townsmen, 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 night-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.