

About This Edition

The Editor:

N. Santilli is the author of *Such Rare Citings: The Prose Poem in English Literature* (Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2002). She is an independent scholar working in London.

The Text:

This edition brings together the various fragments in prose and verse that Coleridge wrote towards his unfinished project, *The Wanderings of Cain*. It seeks to correct standard presentations of the work, which consist solely of Canto II. Contributing texts are taken from a letter to Lord Byron, a notebook, *The Bijou* literary annual, a footnote in *Aids to Reflection* and a folio manuscript. Canto II is traditionally regarded as a curiosity that was abandoned in favor of the similar, yet more successful, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." However, the 30-year span of work in progress between initial composition and part-publication, as well as developments in genre and ideological perspective, show that Coleridge invested *The Wanderings of Cain* with more importance than his commentators have since attributed to it.

The source texts are considered to be in the public domain. Please refer to the [bibliography](#) for a complete list. The texts of the notebook and the folios are the editor's own transcriptions of the original manuscripts held at the British Library (Notebook 22; Egerton 2800 f1 & f1v) and appear here by permission. Photographs of the Canto II manuscripts and a full account of the work in relation to the development of the prose poem genre in England are included in *Such Rare Citings*.

The editor would like to record her personal gratitude to Steven Whalen, John Woolford, Robert Renton and Danielle Eubank for their assistance at various stages of this project.

The Image:

The cover image for this edition is a detail from William Blake's "The Voice of Abel's Blood" and is a depiction of Cain lying over the body of his brother (cf. *Jerusalem* 94.). The engraving illustrates the only known drama in Blake's mature writings, *The Ghost of Abel* (1822), which was composed in response to Lord Byron's play, *Cain: a mystery* (1821) and dedicated to him.* The image is used courtesy of [The Blake Archive](#).

The Design: This hypertext edition was designed and marked up at the University of Maryland by [Joseph Byrne](#), Site Manager at Romantic Circles. Making extensive use of tables and style sheets for layout and presentation, it will work best when viewed with Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator versions 5.0 and 4.7, respectively, and higher. The HTML markup is HTML 4.01/Transitional compliant, as set out by the [World Wide Web Consortium](#).