

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**  
**Kubla Khan**  
 Or, a Vision in a Dream. A Fragment

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was an English Romantic poet, essayist, and critic best known for his early poems written during his association with William Wordsworth. He collaborated with Wordsworth on the volume *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), which included his most famous single poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Coleridge called "Kubla Khan" (1816) a fragment, saying that the poem came to him in a dream (earlier in 1797), but that he was interrupted by a visitor while writing it down and so could not recover the rest of it.

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. 5  
 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, 10  
 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 15  
 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 20  
 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 25  
 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! 30

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, 35  
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, 40  
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, 45  
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! 50  
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.

