

In Xanadu did KUBLA KHAN  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where ALPH,<sup>36</sup> 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 here were gardens bright with sinuous rills  
Where blossom'd 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 momentarily 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!

<sup>36</sup> [ALPH] The possible implications of the name include the Nile, the Alpheus (which after various disappearances underground was said to cross the Adriatic and emerge as the fountain Arethusa), and the initial letter of the Greek alphabet, with its suggestion of the origin of language. Such implications do not exclude one another or others.\*

A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw:  
It was an Abyssinian maid  
And on her dulcimer she play'd, 40  
Singing of Mount Abora.<sup>37</sup>  
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 drank the milk of Paradise.

*Source:* J. C. C. Mays, ed., *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge; Poetical Works, Vol. I*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2001, pp. 511–14.