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Coleridge's Curse

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Coleridge's Curse

I cannot tell you what is lost.
I watched the castle of Kubla Khan
Fall before my eyes.
The doors opened out to me,
Inviting me in, and the dome
Came crashing down
On all it struggled to contain.
Through the torrents of the sea
I heard a muffled cry
As the damsel, robed in white,
Choked on her song.

The dome fallen, the earth set free,
I was whirled into a dream.
My eyes have never ached in my head
As they did then. I saw him,
Still as a corpse, but his eyes
Met mine, and his lips strained
To whisper the word "Xanadu."
The poet's voice echoed in that chasm.
I could not find the words to ask
If he alone had built his castle,
or to tell him it no longer stood.

I awoke to find countless pages
With a hundred lines scrawled
In a stranger's hand. I could not think
Clearly. I searched all that day
For broken remains of a lost castle,
But found nothing. The sea had dried,
The damsel's body disappeared.
That night with the door locked
I burned the lines, page by page.
I have not slept since the last page
Curled to ash in the flames.

It is best this way.

– Allison Lemieux '95