

## The Pang More Sharp Than All. An Allegory - Poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

I.

He too has flitted from his secret nest,  
Hope's last and dearest child without a name!--  
Has flitted from me, like the warmthless flame,  
That makes false promise of a place of rest  
To the tired Pilgrim's still believing mind;--  
Or like some Elfin Knight in kingly court,  
Who having won all guerdons in his sport,  
Glides out of view, and whither none can find!

II.

Yes! he hath flitted from me--with what aim,  
Or why, I know not! 'Twas a home of bliss,  
And he was innocent, as the pretty shame  
Of babe, that tempts and shuns the menaced kiss,  
From its twy-cluster'd hiding place of snow!  
Pure as the babe, I ween, and all aglow  
As the dear hopes, that swell the mother's breast--  
Her eyes down gazing o'er her clasped charge;--  
Yet gay as that twice happy father's kiss,  
That well might glance aside, yet never miss,  
Where the sweet mark emboss'd so sweet a targe--  
Twice wretched he who hath been doubly blest!

III.

Like a loose blossom on a gusty night  
He flitted from me--and has left behind  
(As if to them his faith he ne'er did plight)  
Of either sex and answerable mind  
Two playmates, twin-births of his foster-dame:--  
The one a steady lad (Esteem he hight)  
And Kindness is the gentler sister's name.  
Dim likeness now, though fair she be and good,  
Of that bright boy who hath us all forsook;--

But in his full-eyed aspect when she stood,  
And while her face reflected every look,  
And in reflection kindled--she became  
So like him, that almost she seem'd the same!

IV.

Ah! he is gone, and yet will not depart!--  
Is with me still, yet I from him exiled!  
For still there lives within my secret heart  
The magic image of the magic Child,  
Which there he made up-grow by his strong art,  
As in that crystal orb--wise Merlin's feat,--  
The wondrous 'World of Glass,' wherein inisled  
All long'd for things their beings did repeat;--  
And there he left it, like a Sylph beguiled,  
To live and yearn and languish incomplete!

V.

Can wit of man a heavier grief reveal?  
Can sharper pang from hate or scorn arise?--  
Yes! one more sharp there is that deeper lies,  
Which fond Esteem but mocks when he would heal.  
Yet neither scorn nor hate did it devise,  
But sad compassion and atoning zeal!  
One pang more blighting-keen than hope betray'd!  
And this it is my woeful hap to feel,  
When, at her Brother's hest, the twin-born Maid  
With face averted and unsteady eyes,  
Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on;  
And inly shrinking from her own disguise  
Enacts the faery Boy that's lost and gone.  
O worse than all! O pang all pangs above  
Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love.