filed the poem as one composed by C. It might have been written in Bristol at the end of the month when C and Mrs C were staying at Cote House with the Wedgwoods, just after the three mock sonnets had been sent to the *Monthly Magazine* (poem **158**). There is no way of telling whether it is a fourth sonnet in the same vein, written just before or after the others, or whether it was intended more seriously. The balance of probabilities favours the first possibility—that it is an exercise in Della-Cruscan habits—although this does not wholly exclude C's use of his own feelings (as for Mary Evans).

Another, quite separate, possibility is that the poem was misdated by Cottle, and has something to do with RS's "Abel Shufflebottom" poems, written at Westbury in 1799. Cf **251** *To Delia*, which is similarly mysterious and appears to have arrived at HUL in the same group of mss. Finally, the poem might not be by C at all—although, if Cottle had thought of it as parodic, it seems unlikely that he would have bothered to improve line 11 by removing the artificial "if that" (as he did).

If Grief dismiss me not to them, that rest,
Till Age, thou lovely Maid! those starry* fires
Unwatched extinguish,—and the young Desires
Forget those vermil Lips, that rising Heart,
Those breathing Locks which on thy shoulders play 5
At will; and from thy Forehead Time displace
The vernal garland, withering every grace
That bade Concealment on my spirit prey—

Haply my bolder Tongue may then reveal
The prison-annals of a life of tears! 10
And if that chill Time on the softer Joys
Smile not; a broken Heart perchance may feel
Sad Solace from the unforbidden Sighs
Heaved for the fruitless lapse of vernal Years.

160. THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN

[Early Nov 1797; 1807]

The background to the composition of the fragment is described by C in the Prefatory Note: the intended collaborator was, of course, WW; the version of *The Death of Abel* they intended to imitate and excel was Gessner's (possibly to make money, since Gessner's was enormously popular); the friend who afterwards encouraged C to cast the whole into stanzas was Sir George Beaumont. The poem was planned and canto II was written in early Nov 1797; it was taken up again and the versified part written in 1807; the Prefatory Note was written in 1828 (and in that version there is an extra paragraph of apology following the verse specimen).

A rough plan for the whole composition exists, and is given in full in vol II, but its relation to what was completed is unclear. Its main interest lies in some of its phrases, e.g. that God inflicted punishment on Cain "because he neglected to make a proper use of his senses". A related fragment and a continuation, in notebooks dating from 1805 and 1807 (?) (*CN* II 2644=**370** *Lines on Hearing a Tale*; *CN* II 2780), are fragmentary. Canto II was first published by itself in 1828, and was published together with the introductory note in *PW* (1828) and thereafter. There is an earlier ms of canto II and two mss of the versified part (which was included in *AR*). The versions do not differ from each other significantly, and the present text reproduces that of *PW* (1834). The only material emendation is of the year in the second sentence of the Prefatory Note (all versions have 1798).

Hazlitt confirms that the poem's setting is the Valley of the Rocks, near Lynton (*H Works* XVII 120). The image of the serpent in the talons of the vulture is ultimately from Bartram *Travels* (Philadelphia 1791) 218–19=(2nd London ed 1794) 216–17; cf **176** *Christabel* 549–50; vol III **517.X1** *Zapolya* Prelude i 89–90). C also got his alligators and bison from Bartram, and in general the landscape owes something to Bartram's night-piece on the Altamaha. C's obligations to Gessner, Josephus, and others, as well as Bartram, are described in *RX* 237, 257–9, 513 n 76, 548 n 77.

Numerous commentators with biographical and psychoanalytic interests have connected the story of Cain and Abel with C's feelings towards his brother Frank, a particularly momentous quarrel being recalled in C's contemporaneous autobiographical letter to TP (*CL* I 352–5: [endorsed 16 Oct 1797]).

PREFATORY NOTE.

A prose composition, one not in metre at least, seems prima facie to require explanation or apology. It was written in the year 1797, near Nether Stowey, in Somersetshire, at which place (sanctum et amabile nomen! rich by so many associations and recollections) the author had taken up his residence in order I ⁻1.5 to enjoy the society and close neighbourhood of a dear and honoured friend, T. Poole, Esq. The work was to have been written in concert with another, whose name is too venerable within the precincts of genius to be unnecessarily

* Her Eyes.

I ⁻**1.4.** sanctum et amabile nomen!] Tr "holy and beloved name". C's phrase adapts Ovid's "sanctum et venerabile nomen" (*Tristia* 1.8.15).

brought into connection with such a trifle, and who was then residing at a small distance from Nether Stowey. The title and subject were suggested by myself, who likewise drew out the scheme and the contents for each of the three books or cantos, of which the work was to consist, and which, the reader is to be informed, was to have been finished in one night! My partner undertook the first canto: I the second: and which ever had done first, was to set about the third. Almost thirty years have passed by; yet at this moment I cannot without something more than a smile moot the question which of the two things was the more impracticable, for a mind so eminently original to compose another man's thoughts and fancies, or for a taste so austerely pure and simple to imitate the Death of Abel? Methinks I see his grand and noble countenance as at the moment when having despatched my own portion of the task at full finger-speed, I hastened to him with my manuscript—that look of humorous despondency fixed on his almost blank sheet of paper, and then its silent mock-piteous admission of failure struggling with the sense of the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole scheme—which broke up in a laugh: and the Ancient Mariner was written instead.

Years afterward, however, the draft of the plan and proposed incidents, and the portion executed, obtained favour in the eyes of more than one person, whose judgment on a poetic work could not but have weighed with me, even though no parental partiality had been thrown into the same scale, as a make-weight: and I determined on commencing anew, and composing the whole in stanzas, and made some progress in realizing this intention, when adverse gales drove my bark off the "Fortunate Isles" of the Muses: and then other and more momentous interests prompted a different voyage, to firmer anchorage and a securer port. I have in vain tried to recover the lines from the palimpsest tablet of my memory: and I can only offer the introductory stanza, which had been committed to writing for the purpose of procuring a friend's judgment on the metre, as a specimen.

Encinctured with a twine of leaves,
That leafy twine his only dress!
A lovely Boy was plucking fruits,
By moonlight, in a wilderness.
The moon was bright, the air was free,
And fruits and flowers together grew
On many a shrub and many a tree:
And all put on a gentle hue,
Hanging in the shadowy air

I ⁻1.32. the "Fortunate Isles"] The mythical winterless home of the happy dead (Homer *Odyssey* 4.563 et seq).

Like a picture rich and rare.
It was a climate where, they say,
The night is more belov'd than day,
But who that beauteous Boy beguil'd,
That beauteous Boy to linger here?
Alone, by night, a little child,
In place so silent and so wild—
Has he no friend, no loving mother near?

CANTO II.

"A little further, O my father, yet a little further, and we shall come into the open moonlight." Their road was through a forest of fir-trees; at its entrance the trees stood at distances from each other, and the path was broad, and the moonlight and the moonlight shadows reposed upon it, and appeared quietly to inhabit that solitude. But soon the path winded and became narrow; the sun at high noon sometimes speckled, but never illumined it, and now it was dark as a cavern.

"It is dark, O my father!" said Enos, "but the path under our feet is smooth and soft, and we shall soon come out into the open moonlight."

"Lead on, my child!" said Cain: "guide me, little child!" And the innocent little child clasped a finger of the hand which had murdered the righteous Abel, and he guided his father. "The fir branches drip upon thee, my son." "Yea, pleasantly, father, for I ran fast and eagerly to bring thee the pitcher and the cake, and my body is not yet cool. How happy the squirrels are that feed on these fir-trees! they leap from bough to bough, and the old squirrels play round their young ones in the nest. I clomb a tree yesterday at noon, O my father, that I might play with them, but they leaped away from the branches, even to the slender twigs did they leap, and in a moment I beheld them on another tree. Why, O my father, would they not play with me? I would be good to them as thou art good to me: and I groaned to them even as thou groanest when thou

II 8. Enos] The eldest son of Cain was Enoch (Gen 4.17–18). Cain named the first city after him, and he is represented in tradition as the inventor of letters, arithmetic, and astronomy, and as the first author. Enos, on the other hand, was the son of Seth (Gen 4.26, 5.6–11); he is associated with the beginnings of prayer and, by the meaning of his name, with man in his frailty and weakness.

C's change of name from the son of Cain to the son of Seth, in parallel generations, suggests a transposition of the values Cain needs in order to be redeemed—not human/material but spiritual achievement.

givest me to eat, and when thou coverest me at evening, and as often as I stand at thy knee and thine eyes look at me?" Then Cain stopped, and stifling his groans he sank to the earth, and the child Enos stood in the darkness beside him.

And Cain lifted up his voice and cried bitterly, and said, "The Mighty One that persecuteth me is on this side and on that; he pursueth my soul like the wind, like the sand-blast he passeth through me; he is around me even as the air! O that I might be utterly no more! I desire to die—yea, the things that never had life, neither move they upon the earth—behold! they seem precious to mine eyes. O that a man might live without the breath of his nostrils. So I might abide in darkness, and blackness, and an empty space! Yea, I would lie down, I would not rise, neither would I stir my limbs till I became as the rock in the den of the lion, on which the young lion resteth his head whilst he sleepeth. For the torrent that roareth far off hath a voice: and the clouds in heaven look terribly on me; the Mighty One who is against me speaketh in the wind of the cedar grove; and in silence am I dried up." Then Enos spake to his father, "Arise, my father, arise, we are but a little way from the place where I found the cake and the pitcher." And Cain said, "How knowest thou?" and the child answered—"Behold the bare rocks are a few of thy strides distant from the forest; and while even now thou wert lifting up thy voice, I heard the echo." Then the child took hold of his father, as if he would raise him: and Cain being faint and feeble rose slowly on his knees and pressed himself against the trunk of a fir, and stood upright and followed the child.

The path was dark till within three strides' length of its termination, when it turned súddenly; the thick black trees formed a low arch, and the moonlight appeared for a moment like a dazzling portal. Enos ran before and stood in the open air; and when Cain, his father, emerged from the darkness, the child was affrighted. For the mighty limbs of Cain were wasted as by fire; his hair was as the matted curls on the bison's forehead, and so glared his fierce and sullen eye beneath: and the black abundant locks on either side, a rank and tangled mass, were stained and scorched, as though the grasp of a burning iron hand had striven to rend them; and his countenance told in a strange and terrible language of agonies that had been, and were, and were still to continue to be.

The scene around was desolate; as far as the eye could reach it was desolate: the bare rocks faced each other, and left a long and wide interval of thin white sand. You might wander on and look round and round, and peep into the crevices of the rocks and discover nothing that acknowledged the influence of the seasons. There was no spring, no summer, no autumn: and the winter's snow, that would have been lovely, fell not on these hot rocks and scorching sands. Never morning lark had poised himself over this desert; but the huge serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent. The pointed and shattered summits of the ridges of the rocks made a rude mimicry of human concerns, and seemed to prophesy mutely of things that then were not; steeples, and battlements, and ships with naked masts. As far from the wood as a boy might sling a pebble of the brook, there was one rock by itself at a small distance from the main ridge. It had been precipitated there perhaps by the groan which the Earth uttered when our first father fell. Before you approached, it appeared to lie flat on the ground, but its base slanted from its point, and between its point and the sands a tall man might stand upright. It was here that Enos had found the pitcher and cake, and to this place he led his father. But ere they had reached the rock they beheld a human shape: his back was towards them, and they were advancing unperceived, when they heard him smite his breast and cry aloud, "Woe is me! woe is me! I must never die again, and yet I am perishing with thirst and hunger."

Pallid, as the reflection of the sheeted lightning on the heavy-sailing night-cloud, became the face of Cain; but the child Enos took hold of the shaggy skin, his father's robe, and raised his eyes to his father, and listening whispered, "Ere yet I could speak, I am sure, O my father, that I heard that voice. Have not I often said that I remembered a sweet voice? O my father! this is it:" and Cain trembled exceedingly. The voice was sweet indeed, but it was thin and querulous, like that of a feeble slave in misery, who despairs altogether, yet can not refrain himself from weeping and lamentation. And, behold! Enos glided forward, and creeping softly round the base of the rock, stood before the stranger, and looked up into his face. And the Shape shrieked, and turned round, and Cain beheld him, that his limbs and his face were those of his brother Abel whom he had killed! And Cain stood like one who struggles in his sleep because of the exceeding terribleness of a dream.

Thus as he stood in silence and darkness of soul, the Shape fell at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried out with a bitter outcry, "Thou eldest born of Adam, whom Eve, my mother, brought forth, cease to torment me! I was feeding my flocks in green pastures by the side of quiet rivers, and thou killedst me; and now I am in misery." Then Cain closed his eyes, and hid them with his hands; and again he opened his eyes, and looked around him, and said to Enos, "What beholdest thou? Didst

thou hear a voice, my son?" "Yes, my father, I beheld a man in unclean garments, and he uttered a sweet voice, full of lamentation." Then Cain raised up the Shape that was like Abel, and said:—"The Creator of our father, who had respect unto thee, and unto thy offering, wherefore hath he forsaken thee?" Then the Shape shrieked a second time, and rent his garment, and his naked skin was like the white sands beneath their feet; and he shrieked yet a third time, and threw himself on his face upon the sand that was black with the shadow of the rock, and Cain and Enos sate beside him; the child by his right hand, and Cain by his left. They were all three under the rock, and within the shadow. The Shape that was like Abel raised himself up, and spake to the child: "I know where the cold waters are, but I may not drink, wherefore didst thou then take away my pitcher?" But Cain said, "Didst thou not find favour in the sight of the Lord thy God?" The Shape answered, "The Lord is God of the living only, the dead have another God." Then the child Enos lifted up his eyes and prayed; but Cain rejoiced secretly in his heart. "Wretched shall they be all the days of their mortal life," exclaimed the Shape, "who sacrifice worthy and acceptable sacrifices to the God of the dead; but after death their toil ceaseth. Woe is me, for I was well beloved by the God of the living, and cruel wert thou, O my brother, who didst snatch me away from his power and his dominion." Having uttered these words, he rose suddenly, and fled over the sands: and Cain said in his heart, "The curse of the Lord is on me; but who is the God of the dead? and he ran after the Shape, and the Shape fled shrieking over the sands, and the sands rose like white mists behind the steps of Cain, but the feet of him that was like Abel disturbed not the sands. He greatly outrun Cain, and turning short, he wheeled round, and came again to the rock where they had been sitting, and where Enos still stood; and the child caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and he fell upon the ground. And Cain stopped, and beholding him not, said, "he has passed into the dark woods," and he walked slowly back to the rocks; and when he reached it the child told him that he had caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and that the man had fallen upon the ground: and Cain once more sate beside him, and said, "Abel, my brother, I would lament for thee, but that the spirit within me is withered, and burnt up with extreme agony. Now, I pray thee, by thy flocks, and by thy pastures, and by the quiet rivers which thou lovedst, that thou tell me all that thou knowest. Who is the God of the dead? where doth he make his dwelling? what sacrifices are acceptable unto him? for I have offered, but have not been received; I have prayed; and have not been heard; and how can I be afflicted more than I already am?" The Shape arose and answered, "O that thou hadst had pity on me as I will have pity on thee. Follow me, Son of Adam! and bring thy child with thee!"

And they three passed over the white sands between the rocks, silent as the shadows.

161. THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

[Nov 1797–23 Mar 1798; rev 1800–34]

The poem was begun with WW on 12 Nov (?) 1797 to defray the expenses of a walking tour they embarked upon that day (Reed I 210); that is, it began as a collaboration in the same form as *The Three Graves* (see poem **155**). A number of central themes are carried forward, and their treatment in ballad form is developed further. The attempt at collaboration soon broke down, however, and WW resigned his part to C. C told Joseph Cottle that "a ballad of about 300 lines" had been written by the time he returned to Stowey, and this was revised and slightly amplified during the following months (*CL* I 357: to J. Cottle [c 20 Nov 1797]; 387: to J. Cottle 18 Feb 1798). The poem then underwent a rapid expansion to its "finished" form of some 658 lines between mid-Feb and mid-Mar 1798 (*DWJ* I 13), and was published in *LB* in 1798.

C tinkered with the *LB* version of the poem in at least one annotated copy, but substantial revision waited until the second edition of *LB* in 1800. A different Argument was substituted, the more obvious archaisms were pruned, and a number of stanzas were deleted. Subsequent editions of *LB* make only very minor adjustments, even though C continued to occupy himself with the poem. The experiences of C's Scottish tour in 1802 and, even more, his voyage to Malta in 1804 increased his sense of identification with the Mariner.

It is possible that C considered more revisions than he actually incorporated in later editions of *LB*; and he worked to recast at least one passage for the edition of his poems he projected with Longman in 1806–7 (see *CN* II 2880). From 1815 these reworkings fused in the preparation of the *SL* version (1817). It

title. The poem was subtitled in the second and subsequent editions of *LB* "A Poet's Reverie." Though the description was at once deplored by CL (*LL—M*—I 266), it has an almost technical meaning in C's vocabulary of dreams. Perhaps it originates in Hartley, who connects reverie with his own associative version of imagination (*Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* I 383–9); cf e.g. C's later description of **178** *Kubla Khan* as having been composed "in a sort of Reverie brought on by two grains of Opium". C's subtitle represents a momentary lapse of confidence in the poem, at a time when he might almost have shared WW's belief that it was "an injury" to their joint volume (*WL—E* rev—264).