

Kubla Khan Quotes

Writer: Samuel Taylor Coleridge | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:"

Explanation:

This is the opening line of the poem. It sets the stage for the majestic and surreal description of Kubla Khan's palace. It introduces the fantastical setting.

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

Explanation:

Here, the speaker depicts the sacred river Alph. The river runs through very deep caves and falls into an underground sea. This image creates a dreamlike atmosphere.

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;

Explanation: These lines beautifully portray the natural beauty of Kubla's palace and its surroundings. Around the pleasure-dome, there were ten miles of fertile ground. It was surrounded by walls and towers. There were green gardens, sweet-smelling flower trees.

*"A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!"*

Explanation:

This line describes the chasm and gorge where the river Alph flows. This deep chasm is a wild and eerie place. The speaker imagines it as a haunted place, where a woman would wail for her demon-lover under moonlight. It gives a supernatural atmosphere to the landscape.

*"It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!"*

Explanation:

This describes the dreamlike atmosphere of Kubla's palace. It does not seem normal. Because we are seeing sunny pleasure dome and caves of ice, all side of side. Sunny and ice all mixed together, just like we see in a dream. This feature also makes the palace extraordinary.