Samuel Taylor Coleridge

(1772 – 1834)

-- 10th and last child of a preacher and his 2nd wife

-- considered a genius, learned to read at age 3 (*Bible*), age 6 read *The Arabian Nights*, impacted his life (dad threw book in fire, worried about C getting too absorbed in it)

-- Dad died when he was 9 (had a supernatural experience)

-- as a youth, he got sick, given laudanum and got addicted and later opium

-- ran away as a teen to London, enlisted in army, served 6 weeks, got kicked out, terrible soldier and too young

-- Cambridge University – considered a radical, a bit wild while there, left without a degree

-- careless with $$, blew it freely on friends, drugs, etc. Played Irish lottery, contemplated suicide when he lost

-- wanted to settle a UTOPIAN colony in America, never happened, married Sara, met while planning this society with Southey; unhappily married, divorced her after 13 yrs & 4 kids

-- published some poetry, but no career

-- friends w/Wordsworth and W’s sister, Dorothy; he considered D. of a “like mind.”

-- published *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in *Lyrical Ballads* w/W, but when book not successful, W blamed C’s poems for being too weird and wanted C’s 2 poems out of the next edition (didn’t happen)

-- W’s criticism DEVASTATED C as he almost worshiped W as a poet (felt W’s poetry WAY better than his own). QUIT writing poetry because of this criticism. Never got over it.

-- Became a lecturer, journalist, and non-fiction writer

-- friendship w/W died, in part due to C’s opium addiction; last years of life spent living w/dr. who brought C’s opium addiction under control, but never stopped taking it

-- LOW SELF-ESTEEM, overall isolated and lonely life, died at 61