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This post will examine and describe the significance of the rare items, *Wordsworth [and Coleridge], Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems (1798), First edition (second issue)* and *Wordsworth [and Coleridge], Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems, in two volumes (1800)*. These items are held in the Armstrong Browning Rare Books collection.

These editions provide insight into Wordsworth's intentional placement of poems. It additionally gives a framework for the circumstances in which the volumes were published. It is essential to keep in mind that *Lyrical Ballads* was published as an experiment of composition. This indicates that the composition and placement is, in a sense, ingrained in the very essence of the poems. Poets (especially Wordsworth and Coleridge) are chiefly concerned with the affects of the poetry on the reader. They intended to reform perspectives in society, not just be praised for flowery words. Therefore examination and understanding of the order and reorder of this collection will highlight their purposes and intentions.

These items are a good comparative tool as they demonstrate the nuanced differences in volumes published within two years of each other. The first point of interest is the names on each of the volumes. The first volume, published in 1798 was published anonymously. This reflects that the two authors, Wordsworth and Coleridge, didn't believe their names held any weight in the literary sphere. When the sales of *Lyrical Ballads* proved they deserved some merit, Wordsworth printed his name on the 1800 edition. He gives Coleridge credit for some of the poems, however, but not by name.

*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, an allusive and disturbing poem of Coleridge's, provides an intense example of the detriments of collaborative work. *The Ancient Mariner*, which was originally published as *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* undergoes major revisions, cuts and a new place in the collection. There are three aspects of this change that are pertinent to understanding the circumstances in which it was published: the change in location, the revised name and the revisions within the poem. The poem initially engulfed the first 53 pages of the collection. In the second edition the poem is buried in the end of the first volume and only retains 46 pages. This alludes to the overwhelming criticism of the poem. First, the poem is moved. Believing that its placement was harming the collection Wordsworth said, "I would put in its place some little things which would be more likely to suit the common taste." *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is drenched in metaphor, imagination and outrageous implications. It was often criticized for its strangeness and archaic language. Wordsworth found value in its strangeness, however, saying that the "passion is everywhere true to nature." This is a chief concern of Wordsworth as in the preface of the 1800 edition he writes that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." The primary issue for Wordsworth, then, was the old and arbitrary words. This revision is clearly depicted in the title change as it retains its strangeness but not its convoluted spelling. It shifts from *The*

*Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* to *The Ancient Mariner*. Many changes in the actual poem lend to clarity and understanding.

Another essential change is the placement of *Lines Written in Early Spring* and *Simon Lee, the old Huntsman*. The two poems are initially separated by a few smaller poems, then in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* they are intentionally moved next to each other. Much of Wordsworth's poetry centers on similar ideas and it would seem almost arbitrary to read into the connections of many of his poems assuming that much of them would connect on some level. However, the interconnectedness of these two poems is inexhaustible. They divert in narrative but converge in message. After harping on the deeply wounded and uselessness of the character Simon Lee, it's impossible to not hear the echo of the last two lines of *Lines Written in Early Spring*, "Have I not reason to lament / What man has made of man?" Moving these poems side by side lends to comparison and deeper reflection of essential questions raised in both poems.

These subtle but crucial changes affect the way the volumes are interpreted and further the reader's understanding of the context in which they were published.