

“Witches, and Other Night Fears”, *Essays of Elia*, 1823

Is it that we naturally conceive ten-or from such objects, considered in their capacity of being able to inflict upon us bodily injury? – O, least of all! These terrors are of older standing. They date beyond body – or, without the body, they would have been the same. All the cruel, tormenting, defined devils in Dante – tearing, mangling, choking, stifling, scorching demons – are they one half so fearful to the spirit of a man, as the simple idea of a spirit unembodied following him –

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round, walks on,
And turn no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.