

Junior Research Paper Convention: Abstract Form
CCIII/Spring 2025

Sun_Amy_Abstract_Section_A_RP-Spring2025

**Sun, Amy. Section A. “I’ll Save All My Romanticism for My Inner Life”:
Reading Mary Shelley, Emily Dickinson, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge
in Taylor Swift’s *The Tortured Poets Department***

Abstract

This paper analyzes how Taylor Swift draws on Romantic literature in her album *The Tortured Poets Department*. Through close readings of “Fortnight,” “My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys,” and “The Albatross,” I explore Swift’s intertextual dialogue with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Emily Dickinson’s “Wild Nights – Wild Nights!”, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. In “Fortnight,” Swift uses Gothic imagery to portray emotional ruin and internal isolation. In “My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys,” she critiques gendered emotional labor through the metaphor of broken childhood toys. In “The Albatross,” she reclaims Coleridge’s symbol of guilt and scapegoating to reflect media narratives around women. These readings show how Swift engages Romantic motifs to express contemporary struggles with identity, memory, and emotional survival. Rather than simply alluding to literature, Swift transforms Romantic traditions into tools for telling modern stories of loss, love, and resilience.

Notes:

1. My RP belongs to the category of: ✓ Literary Studies
2. Related websites:

Nicolaou, Elena, and Ariana Brockington. ““Fortnight’s Lyrics Meaning: Taylor Swift Just Explained What It’s About.” TODAY.Com, TODAY, 25 Apr. 2024,
www.today.com/popculture/music/fortnight-lyrics-meaning-taylor-swift-song-rcna148510