

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER IN SEVEN PARTS

BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

PART THE FIRST.

It is an ancient Mariner, And he stoppeth one of three."By
thy long grey beard and glittering eye, Now wherefore
stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, And I am next
of kin; The guests are met, the feast is set: May'st hear the
merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand, "There was a ship,"
quoth he. "Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard
loon!" Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—The Wedding-Guest
stood still, And listens like a three years child: The Mariner
hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone: He cannot chuse but

hear;And thus spake on that ancient man,The bright-eyed
Mariner.

The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,Merrily did we
drop Below the kirk, below the hill,Below the light-house
top.

The Sun came up upon the left,Out of the sea came
he!And he shone bright, and on the right Went down into
the sea.

Higher and higher every day,Till over the mast at noon-
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,For he heard the
loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,Red as a rose is
she;Nodding their heads before her goes The merry
mintrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,Yet he cannot

chuse but hear; And thus spake on that ancient man, The
bright-eyed Mariner.

And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he Was
tyrannous and strong: He struck with his o'ertaking
wings, And chased south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, As who pursued
with yell and blow Still treads the shadow of his foe And
forward bends his head, The ship drove fast, loud roared
the blast, And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow, And it grew
wondrous cold: And ice, mast-high, came floating by, As
green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts Did send a dismal
sheen: Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken- The ice was
all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there, The ice was all
around: It cracked and growled, and roared and
howled, Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross: Thorough the fog it
came; As if it had been a Christian soul, We hailed it in
God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat, And round and round it
flew. The ice did split with a thunder-fit; The helmsman
steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind; The Albatross
did follow, And every day, for food or play, Came to the
mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, It perched for vespers
nine; Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke
white, Glimmred the white Moon-shine.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner! From the fiends, that plague thee thus!-Why look'st thou so?"--With my cross-bow I shot the ALBATROSS.

PART THE SECOND.

The Sun now rose upon the right: Out of the sea came
he, Still hid in mist, and on the left Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind But no sweet
bird did follow, Nor any day for food or play Came to the
mariners' hollo!

And I had done an hellish thing, And it would work 'em
woe: For all averred, I had killed the bird That made the
breeze to blow. Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay That
made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head, The glorious Sun
uprist: Then all averred, I had killed the bird That brought
the fog and mist. 'Twas right, said they, such birds to
slay, That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, The furrow followed free: We were the first that ever burst Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down, 'Twas sad as sad could be; And we did speak only to break The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky, The bloody Sun, at noon, Right up above the mast did stand, No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion; As idle as a painted ship Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where, And all the boards did shrink; Water, water, every where, Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ! That ever this should be! Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils, Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross About my neck was hung.

PART THE THIRD.

There passed a weary time. Each throat Was parched,
and glazed each eye. A weary time! a weary time! How
glazed each weary eye, When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck, And then it seemed a
mist: It moved and moved, and took at last A certain shape,
I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist! And still it neared and
neared: As if it dodged a water-sprite, It plunged and tacked
and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, We could not
laugh nor wail; Through utter drought all dumb we stood! I
bit my arm, I sucked the blood, And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, Agape they
heard me call: Gramercy! they for joy did grin, And all at
once their breath drew in, As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more! Hither to work us
weal; Without a breeze, without a tide, She steadies with
upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame The day was well nigh
done! Almost upon the western wave Rested the broad
bright Sun; When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars, (Heaven's
Mother send us grace!) As if through a dungeon-grate he
peered, With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud) How fast she
nears and nears! Are those her sails that glance in the
Sun, Like restless gossameres!

Are those her ribs through which the Sun Did peer, as
through a grate? And is that Woman all her crew? Is that a
DEATH? and are there two? Is DEATH that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free, Her locks were
yellow as gold: Her skin was as white as leprosy, The
Night-Mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she, Who thickens man's
blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came, And the twain were
casting dice; "The game is done! I've won! I've
won!" Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out: At one stride comes
the dark; With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea. Off shot the
spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up! Fear at my heart, as
at a cup, My life-blood seemed to sip!

The stars were dim, and thick the night,The steersman's
face by his lamp gleamed white;From the sails the dew
did drip-Till clombe above the eastern bar The horned
Moon, with one bright star Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon Too quick for
groan or sigh,Each turned his face with a ghastly
pang,And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men,(And I heard nor sigh nor
groan)With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,They dropped
down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,-They fled to bliss or
woe!And every soul, it passed me by,Like the whizz of
my CROSS-BOW!

PART THE FOURTH.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner! I fear thy skinny hand! And
thou art long, and lank, and brown, As is the ribbed sea-
sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye, And thy skinny hand, so
brown." - Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest! This
body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone, Alone on a wide wide sea! And
never a saint took pity on My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful! And they all dead did lie: And
a thousand thousand slimy things Lived on; and so did I

I looked upon the rotting sea, And drew my eyes away; I
looked upon the rotting deck, And there the dead men lay.

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray:But or ever a prayer
had gusht,A wicked whisper came, and made my heart as
dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,And the balls like
pulses beat;For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the
sky Lay like a load on my weary eye,And the dead were at
my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,Nor rot nor reek
did they:The look with which they looked on me Had
never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell A spirit from on
high;But oh! more horrible than that Is a curse in a dead
man's eye!Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,And
yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky,And no where did
abide:Softly she was going up,And a star or two beside.

Her beams bemocked the sultry main, Like April hoar-frost spread; But where the ship's huge shadow lay, The charmed water burnt alway A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship, I watched the water-snakes: They moved in tracks of shining white, And when they reared, the elfish light Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship I watched their rich attire: Blue, glossy green, and velvet black, They coiled and swam; and every track Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue Their beauty might declare: A spring of love gushed from my heart, And I blessed them unaware: Sure my kind saint took pity on me, And I blessed them unaware.

The self same moment I could pray; And from my neck so free The Albatross fell off, and sank Like lead into the sea.

PART THE FIFTH.

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,Beloved from pole to pole!To
Mary Queen the praise be given!She sent the gentle sleep
from Heaven,That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,That had so long remained,I
dreamt that they were filled with dew;And when I awoke,
it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,My garments all
were dank;Sure I had drunken in my dreams,And still my
body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:I was so light--
almost I thought that I had died in sleep,And was a
blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:It did not come anear;But