Rime of the Ancient Mariner

By Samuel Coleridge

**PART I**

**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 choose 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 lighthouse 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 minstrelsy.**

**The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,**

**Yet he cannot choose 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 us 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 mariner's hollo!**

**In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,**

**It perched for vespers nine;**

**Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,**

**Glimmered 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.**

**Rime of the Ancient Mariner**

**Part two**

**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 mariner's hollo!**

**And I had done a 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 assurèd 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.**

**Rime of the Ancient Mariner**

**Part 3**

**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 nor 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 thicks 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 clomb above the eastern bar**

**The hornèd 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 I**

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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 choose 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 lighthouse 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—'

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The bride hath paced into the hall,

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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 mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,

It perched for vespers nine;

Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,

Glimmered 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.

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