

**COLERIDGE**

**SAMUEL**

**TAYLOR**

THE RIME OF THE  
ANCIENT MARINER

Samuel Coleridge

**The Rime of the Ancient Mariner**

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## Содержание

PART THE FIRST	5
PART THE SECOND	8
PART THE THIRD	10
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	12

# Samuel Taylor Coleridge

## The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

### 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 minstrelsy.

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,  
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.

## 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  
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?

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