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.

part ii

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.

part iii

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