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

part iv

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 dead 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 the 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 charmèd 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 v

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 with its sound it shook the sails

that were so thin and sere.

the upper air burst into life

and a hundred fire flags sheen

to and fro they were hurried about

and to and fro and in and out

the wan stars danced between.

and the coming wind did roar more loud

and the sails did sigh like sedge

and the rain poured down from one black cloud

the moon was at its edge.

the thick black cloud was cleft and still

the moon was at its side

like waters shot from some high crag

the lightning fell with never a jag

a river steep and wide.

the loud wind never reached the ship

yet now the ship moved on

beneath the lightning and the moon

the dead men gave a groan.

they groaned they stirred they all uprose

nor spake nor moved their eyes

it had been strange even in a dream

to have seen those dead men rise.

the helmsman steered the ship moved on

yet never a breeze up blew

the mariners all gan work the ropes

where they were wont to do

they raised their limbs like lifeless tools

we were a ghastly crew.

the body of my brother s son

stood by me knee to knee

the body and i pulled at one rope

but he said nought to me.

i fear thee ancient mariner

be calm thou wedding guest

twas not those souls that fled in pain

which to their corses came again

but a troop of spirits blest

for when it dawned they dropped their arms

and clustered round the mast

sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths

and from their bodies passed.

around around flew each sweet sound

then darted to the sun

slowly the sounds came back again

now mixed now one by one.

sometimes a dropping from the sky

i heard the sky lark sing

sometimes all little birds that are

how they seemed to fill the sea and air

with their sweet jargoning

and now twas like all instruments

now like a lonely flute

and now it is an angel s song

that makes the heavens be mute.

it ceased yet still the sails made on

a pleasant noise till noon

a noise like of a hidden brook

in the leafy month of june

that to the sleeping woods all night

singeth a quiet tune.

till noon we quietly sailed on

yet never a breeze did breathe

slowly and smoothly went the ship

moved onward from beneath.

under the keel nine fathom deep

from the land of mist and snow

the spirit slid and it was he

that made the ship to go.

the sails at noon left off their tune

and the ship stood still also.

the sun right up above the mast

had fixed her to the ocean

but in a minute she gan stir

with a short uneasy motion

backwards and forwards half her length

with a short uneasy motion.

then like a pawing horse let go

she made a sudden bound

it flung the blood into my head

and i fell down in a swound.

how long in that same fit i lay

i have not to declare

but ere my living life returned

i heard and in my soul discerned

two voices in the air.

is it he quoth one is this the man

by him who died on cross

with his cruel bow he laid full low

the harmless albatross.

the spirit who bideth by himself

in the land of mist and snow

he loved the bird that loved the man

who shot him with his bow.

the other was a softer voice

as soft as honey dew

quoth he the man hath penance done

and penance more will do.

part vi

first voice

but tell me tell me speak again

thy soft response renewing

what makes that ship drive on so fast

what is the ocean doing

second voice

still as a slave before his lord

the ocean hath no blast

his great bright eye most silently

up to the moon is cast

if he may know which way to go

for she guides him smooth or grim.

see brother see how graciously

she looketh down on him.

first voice

but why drives on that ship so fast

without or wave or wind

second voice

the air is cut away before

and closes from behind.

fly brother fly more high more high

or we shall be belated

for slow and slow that ship will go

when the mariner s trance is abated.

i woke and we were sailing on

as in a gentle weather

twas night calm night the moon was high

the dead men stood together.

all stood together on the deck

for a charnel dungeon fitter

all fixed on me their stony eyes

that in the moon did glitter.

the pang the curse with which they died

had never passed away

i could not draw my eyes from theirs

nor turn them up to pray.

and now this spell was snapt once more

i viewed the ocean green

and looked far forth yet little saw

of what had else been seen

like one that on a lonesome road

doth walk in fear and dread

and having once turned round walks on

and turns no more his head

because he knows a frightful fiend

doth close behind him tread.

but soon there breathed a wind on me

nor sound nor motion made

its path was not upon the sea

in ripple or in shade.

it raised my hair it fanned my cheek

like a meadow gale of spring

it mingled strangely with my fears

yet it felt like a welcoming.

swiftly swiftly flew the ship

yet she sailed softly too

sweetly sweetly blew the breeze

on me alone it blew.

oh dream of joy is this indeed

the light house top i see

is this the hill is this the kirk

is this mine own countree

we drifted o er the harbour bar

and i with sobs did pray

o let me be awake my god

or let me sleep alway.

the harbour bay was clear as glass

so smoothly it was strewn

and on the bay the moonlight lay

and the shadow of the moon.

the rock shone bright the kirk no less

that stands above the rock

the moonlight steeped in silentness

the steady weathercock.

and the bay was white with silent light

till rising from the same

full many shapes that shadows were

in crimson colours came.

a little distance from the prow

those crimson shadows were

i turned my eyes upon the deck

oh christ what saw i there

each corse lay flat lifeless and flat

and by the holy rood

a man all light a seraph man

on every corse there stood.

this seraph band each waved his hand

it was a heavenly sight

they stood as signals to the land

each one a lovely light

this seraph band each waved his hand

no voice did they impart

no voice but oh the silence sank

like music on my heart.

but soon i heard the dash of oars

i heard the pilot s cheer

my head was turned perforce away

and i saw a boat appear.

the pilot and the pilot s boy

i heard them coming fast

dear lord in heaven it was a joy

the dead men could not blast.

i saw a third i heard his voice

it is the hermit good

he singeth loud his godly hymns

that he makes in the wood.

he ll shrieve my soul he ll wash away

the albatross s blood.

part vii

this hermit good lives in that wood

which slopes down to the sea.

how loudly his sweet voice he rears

he loves to talk with marineres

that come from a far countree.

he kneels at morn and noon and eve

he hath a cushion plump

it is the moss that wholly hides

the rotted old oak stump.

the skiff boat neared i heard them talk

why this is strange i trow

where are those lights so many and fair

that signal made but now

strange by my faith the hermit said

and they answered not our cheer

the planks looked warped and see those sails

how thin they are and sere

i never saw aught like to them

unless perchance it were

brown skeletons of leaves that lag

my forest brook along

when the ivy tod is heavy with snow

and the owlet whoops to the wolf below

that eats the she wolf s young.

dear lord it hath a fiendish look

the pilot made reply

i am a feared push on push on

said the hermit cheerily.

the boat came closer to the ship

but i nor spake nor stirred

the boat came close beneath the ship

and straight a sound was heard.

under the water it rumbled on

still louder and more dread

it reached the ship it split the bay

the ship went down like lead.

stunned by that loud and dreadful sound

which sky and ocean smote

like one that hath been seven days drowned

my body lay afloat

but swift as dreams myself i found

within the pilot s boat.

upon the whirl where sank the ship

the boat spun round and round

and all was still save that the hill

was telling of the sound.

i moved my lips the pilot shrieked

and fell down in a fit

the holy hermit raised his eyes

and prayed where he did sit.

i took the oars the pilot s boy

who now doth crazy go

laughed loud and long and all the while

his eyes went to and fro.

ha ha quoth he full plain i see

the devil knows how to row.

and now all in my own countree

i stood on the firm land

the hermit stepped forth from the boat

and scarcely he could stand.

o shrieve me shrieve me holy man

the hermit crossed his brow.

say quick quoth he i bid thee say

what manner of man art thou

forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched

with a woful agony

which forced me to begin my tale

and then it left me free.

since then at an uncertain hour

that agony returns

and till my ghastly tale is told

this heart within me burns.

i pass like night from land to land

i have strange power of speech

that moment that his face i see

i know the man that must hear me

to him my tale i teach.

what loud uproar bursts from that door

the wedding guests are there

but in the garden bower the bride

and bride maids singing are

and hark the little vesper bell

which biddeth me to prayer

o wedding guest this soul hath been

alone on a wide wide sea

so lonely twas that god himself

scarce seemed there to be.

o sweeter than the marriage feast

tis sweeter far to me

to walk together to the kirk

with a goodly company

to walk together to the kirk

and all together pray

while each to his great father bends

old men and babes and loving friends

and youths and maidens gay

farewell farewell but this i tell

to thee thou wedding guest

he prayeth well who loveth well

both man and bird and beast.

he prayeth best who loveth best

all things both great and small

for the dear god who loveth us

he made and loveth all.

the mariner whose eye is bright

whose beard with age is hoar

is gone and now the wedding guest

turned from the bridegroom s door.

he went like one that hath been stunned

and is of sense forlorn

a sadder and a wiser man

he rose the morrow morn.