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***LYRICAL  
BALLADS,  
WITH A FEW  
OTHER  
POEMS  
(1798)***

**William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor  
Coleridge**

# **Lyrical Ballads, With a Few Other Poems (1798)**

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# I.

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It is an ancyent Marinere,  
And he stoppeth one of three:  
"By thy long grey beard and thy glittering eye  
"Now wherefore stoppest me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide  
"And I am next of kin;  
"The Guests are met, the Feast is set,—  
"May'st hear the merry din.—

But still he holds the wedding-guest—  
There was a Ship, quoth he—  
"Nay, if thou'st got a laughsome tale,  
"Marinere! come with me."

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
Quoth he, there was a Ship—  
"Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon!  
"Or my Staff shall make thee skip."

He holds him with his glittering eye—  
The wedding guest stood still  
And listens like a three year's child;  
The Marinere hath his will.

The wedding-guest sate on a stone,  
He cannot chuse but hear:  
And thus spake on that ancyent man,  
The bright-eyed Marinere.

The Ship was cheer'd, the Harbour clear'd—

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 pac'd into the Hall,  
Red as a rose is she;  
Nodding their heads before her goes  
The merry Minstralsy.

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,  
Yet he cannot chuse but hear:  
And thus spake on that ancyent Man,  
The bright-eyed Marinere.

Listen, Stranger! Storm and Wind,  
A Wind and Tempest strong!  
For days and weeks it play'd us freaks—  
Like Chaff we drove along.

Listen, Stranger! Mist and Snow,  
And it grew wond'rous cauld:  
And Ice mast-high came floating by  
As green as Emerald.

And thro' the drifts the snowy clifts  
Did send a dismal sheen;

Ne shapes of men ne beasts we ken—  
The Ice was all between.

The Ice was here, the Ice was there,  
The Ice was all around:  
It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd—  
Like noises of a swound.

At length did cross an Albatross,  
Thorough the Fog it came;  
And an it were a Christian Soul,  
We hail'd it in God's name.

The Mariners gave it biscuit-worms,  
And round and round it flew:  
The Ice did split with a Thunder-fit;  
The Helmsman steer'd us thro'.

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

In mist or cloud on mast or shroud  
It perch'd for vespers nine,  
Whiles all the night thro' fog-smoke white  
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

"God save thee, ancyent Marinere!  
"From the fiends that plague thee thus—  
"Why look'st thou so?"—with my cross bow  
I shot the Albatross.





The Sun came up upon the right,  
Out of the Sea came he;  
And broad as a weft upon the left  
Went down into the Sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
But no sweet Bird did follow  
Ne any day for food or play  
Came to the Marinere's hollo!

And I had done an hellish thing  
And it would work 'em woe:  
For all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird  
That made the Breeze to blow.

Ne dim ne red, like God's own head,  
The glorious Sun uprist:  
Then all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird  
That brought the fog and mist.  
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay  
That bring the fog and mist.

The breezes blew, the white foam flew,  
The furrow follow'd 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, ne breath ne 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,  
Ne any drop to drink.

The very deeps 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 danc'd 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 follow'd us  
From the Land of Mist and Snow.

And every tongue thro' utter drouth  
Was wither'd at the root;  
We could not speak no more than if  
We had been choked with soot.

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

### III.

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I saw a something in the Sky  
No bigger than my fist;  
At first it seem'd a little speck  
And then it seem'd a mist:  
It mov'd and mov'd, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!  
And still it ner'd and ner'd;  
And, an it dodg'd a water-sprite,  
It plung'd and tack'd and veer'd.

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd  
Ne could we laugh, ne wail:  
Then while thro' drouth all dumb they stood  
I bit my arm and suck'd the blood  
And cry'd, A sail! a sail!

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd  
Agape they hear'd me call:  
Gramercy! they for joy did grin  
And all at once their breath drew in  
As they were drinking all.

She doth not tack from side to side—  
Hither to work us weal  
Withouten wind, withouten tide  
She steddies with upright keel.

The western wave was all a flame,  
The day was well nigh done!  
Almost upon the western wave