

Carissimo/a,

quello che vedrai è un lavoro a quattro mani che ho realizzato con l'aiuto di mio figlio Joshua, assai più esperto di me in fatto di musica!!!

*E' un viaggio nel mondo incantato di una delle più belle poesie del Romanticismo inglese attraverso le incantevoli immagini del pittore francese **Gustave Dorè** (1832 – 1888), illustratore di straordinario valore di opere memorabili come la Divina Commedia, per approdare alla versione musicale degli **Iron Maiden** che, con la loro musica travolgente, contribuiscono a far conoscere e apprezzare opere letterarie immortali.*

Buon divertimento!

Silvia Mazzau



The Rime of the Ancient Mariner: from poetry to music.

Silvia Mazzau &
Joshua Giardini



Which elements characterise a ballad?

- Four-line stanzas
- An archaic language
- The use of alliterations, onomatopoeias and repetitions
- The combination of dialogue and narration
- The theme of travel
- The presence of supernatural elements

What does a Romantic ballad add to them?

- The presence of a moral at the end.

... and a modern-day ballad sung by a Heavy Metal band???

PART I

*«It is an ancient Mariner,
and he stoppeth one of three»*

An ancient Mariner
meets three wedding
guests.

He stops one of the three:
his choice is not a casual
one.

He starts telling him a
story.



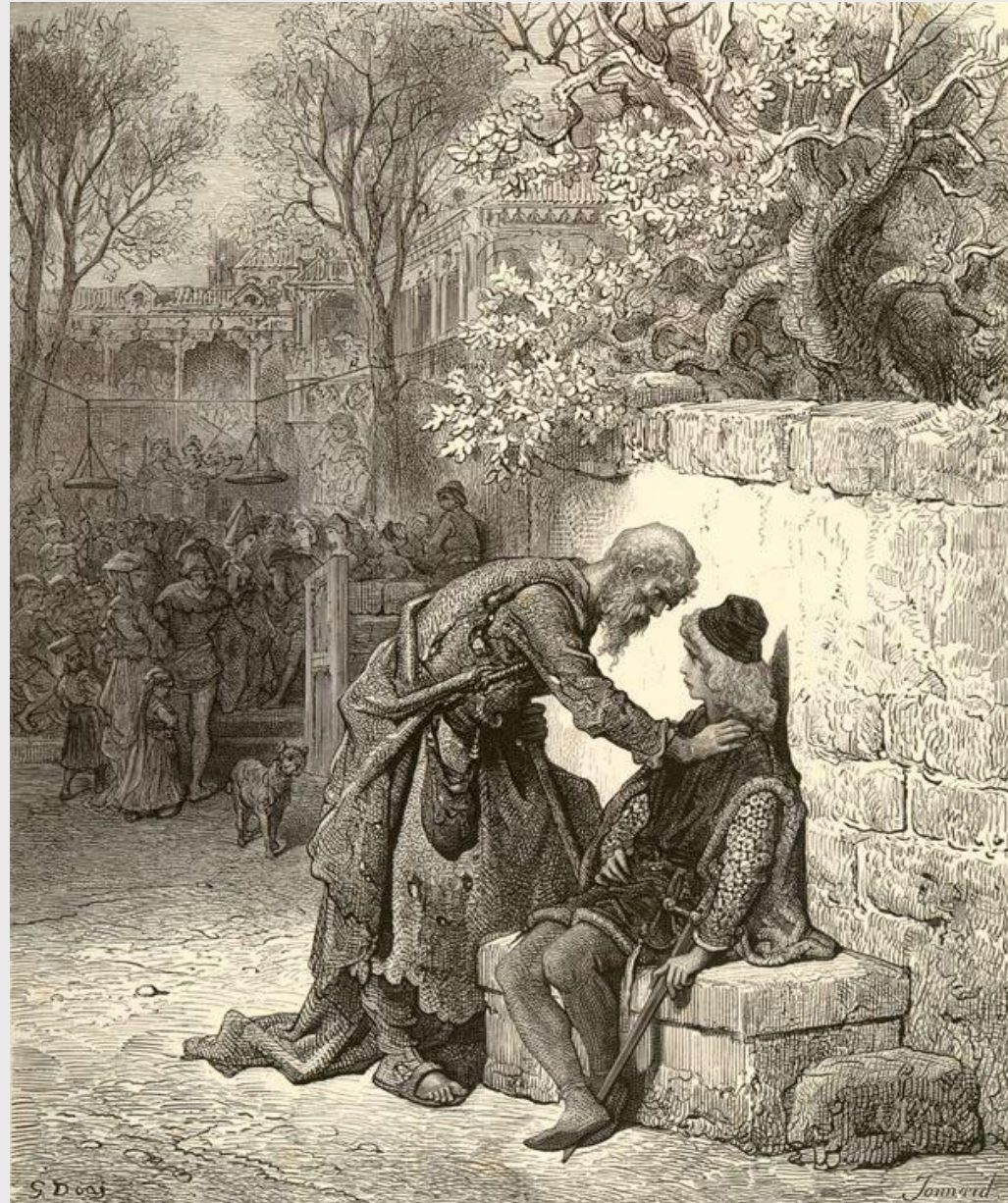
Illustrations by Gustave Dore (1877)

«*The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
he cannot choose but hear*»

The wedding guest is annoyed: he has to hurry to the wedding party.

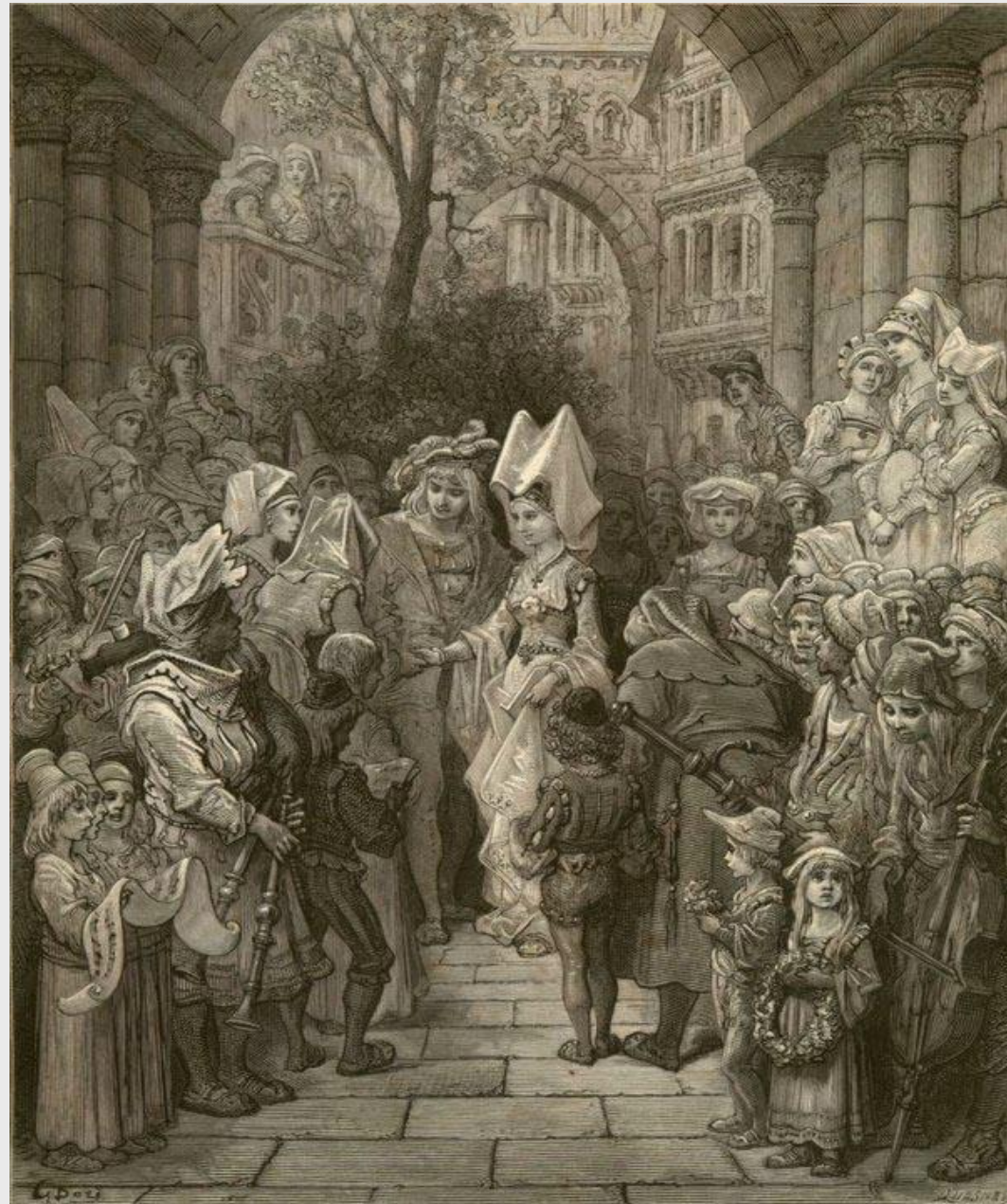
The Ancient Mariner holds him with his hand and with his *glittering* eye: the man is spellbound and cannot move.

The Mariner begins to tell his story.



*«The bride hath paced into the
hall,
red as a rose is she»*

In the meantime the
wedding party is going
on: the bride and the
bridegroom are there,
and the musicians are
playing.



*«And now the storm blast came,
and he was tyrannous and strong»*

The mariner tells the young man of how at first he sailed southwards to the equator with a good wind and fair weather.

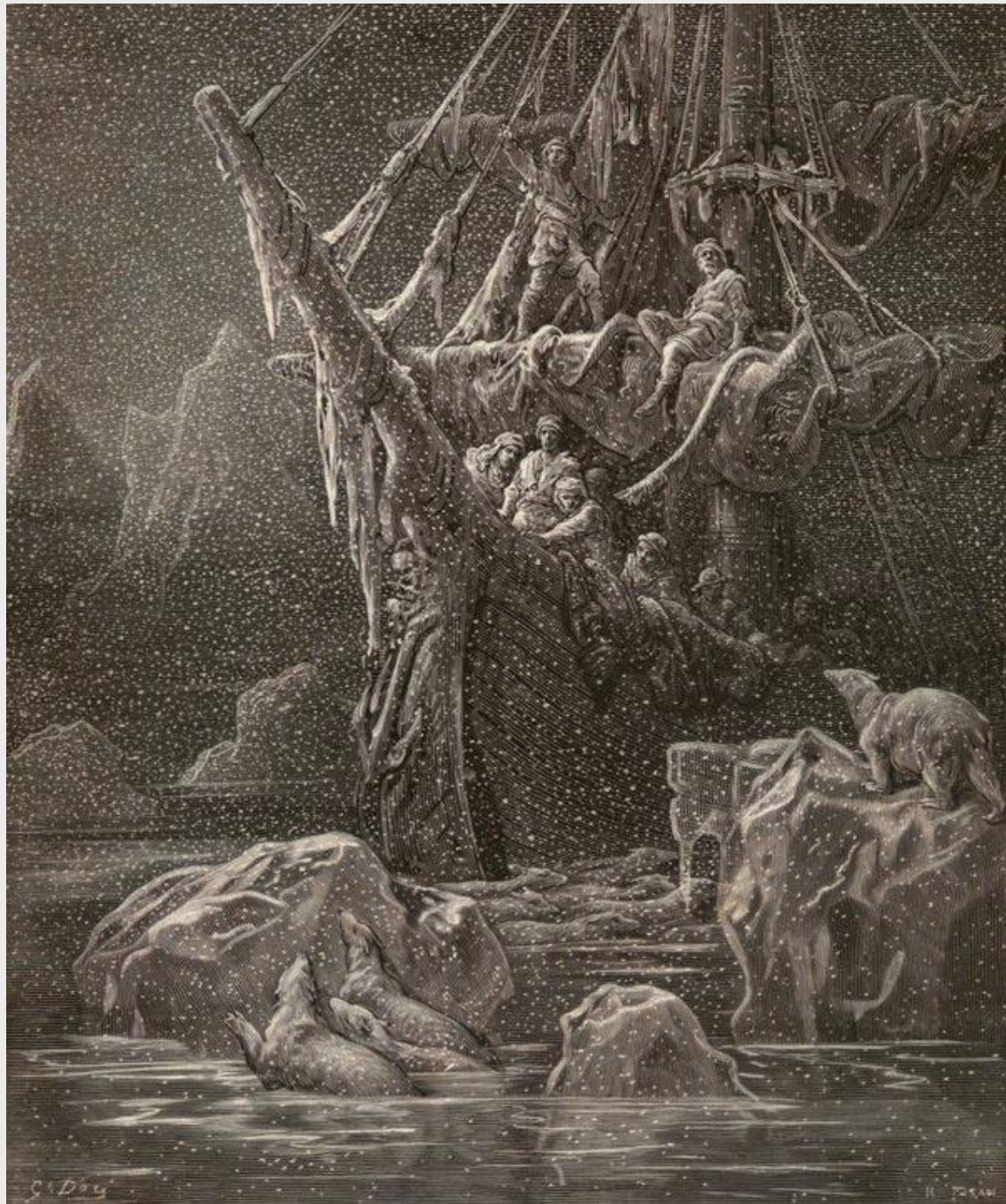
But a storm soon led the ship to the South Pole.



*«The ice was here,
the ice was there,
the ice was all around»*

The ship was soon
surrounded by ice.

It was extremely cold,
no sound was heard,
only the cracking of
the ice.



*«At length did cross an Albatross,
thorough the fog it came»*

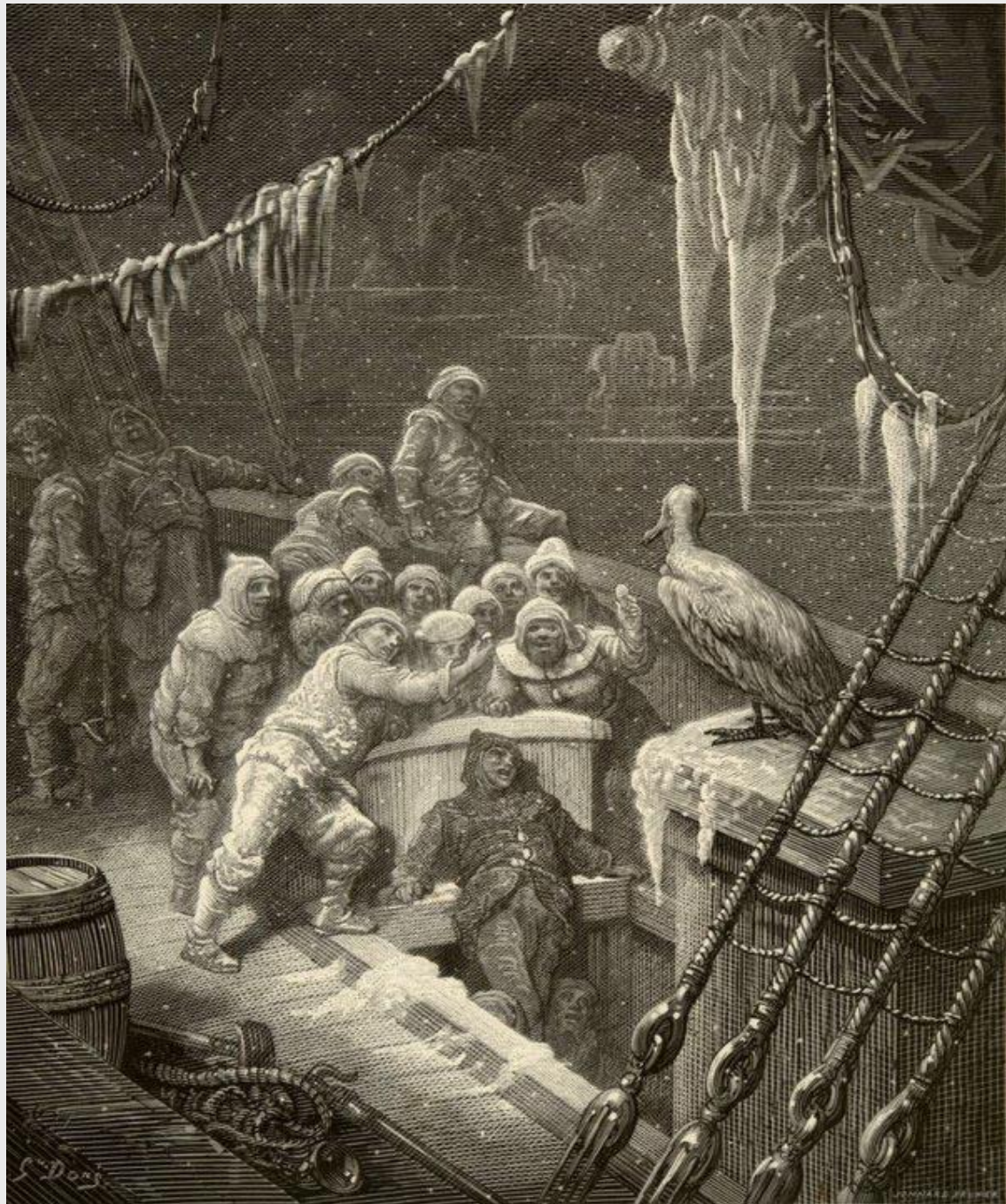
One day, unexpectedly, an albatross came through the fog, as if it had been sent by God.

At that point, a good wind started blowing and the ship was driven towards the North.



*«In mist or cloud,
on mast or shroud,
it perched for vespers nine»*

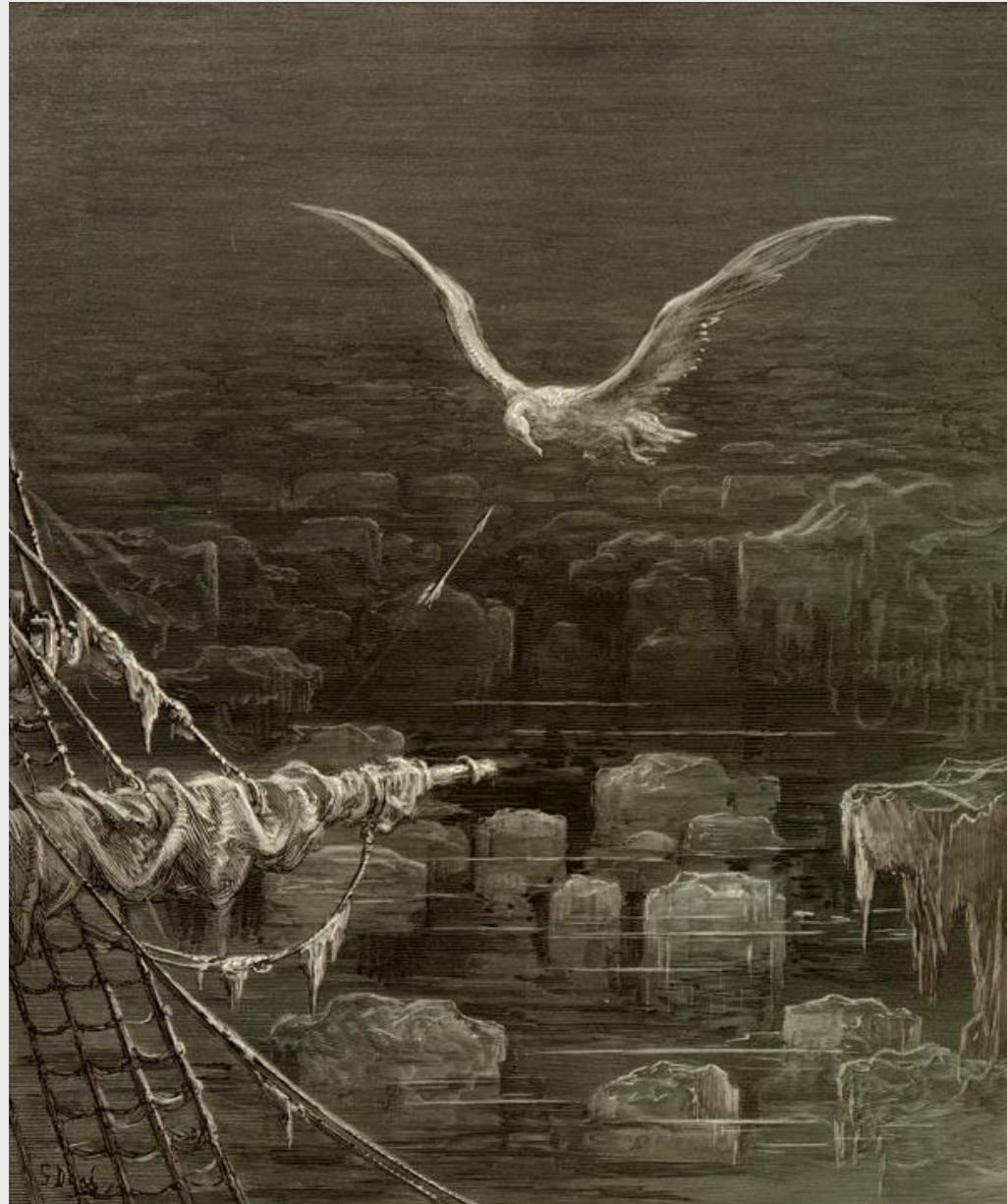
The albatross would often come and perch on the ship, to play and get food from the mariners.



*«“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.»*

Suddenly the ancient Mariner
killed the albatross with his
cross-bow.

Why?



*The irrationality and the senselessness
of the crime are at the core of the poem,
charging it with an atmosphere of
irresistible mystery: what led the
mariner to break the pact of love with
God by killing an innocent creature?*

PART II

*«And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe».*

The Ancient Mariner realizes he has killed a bird of good omen.

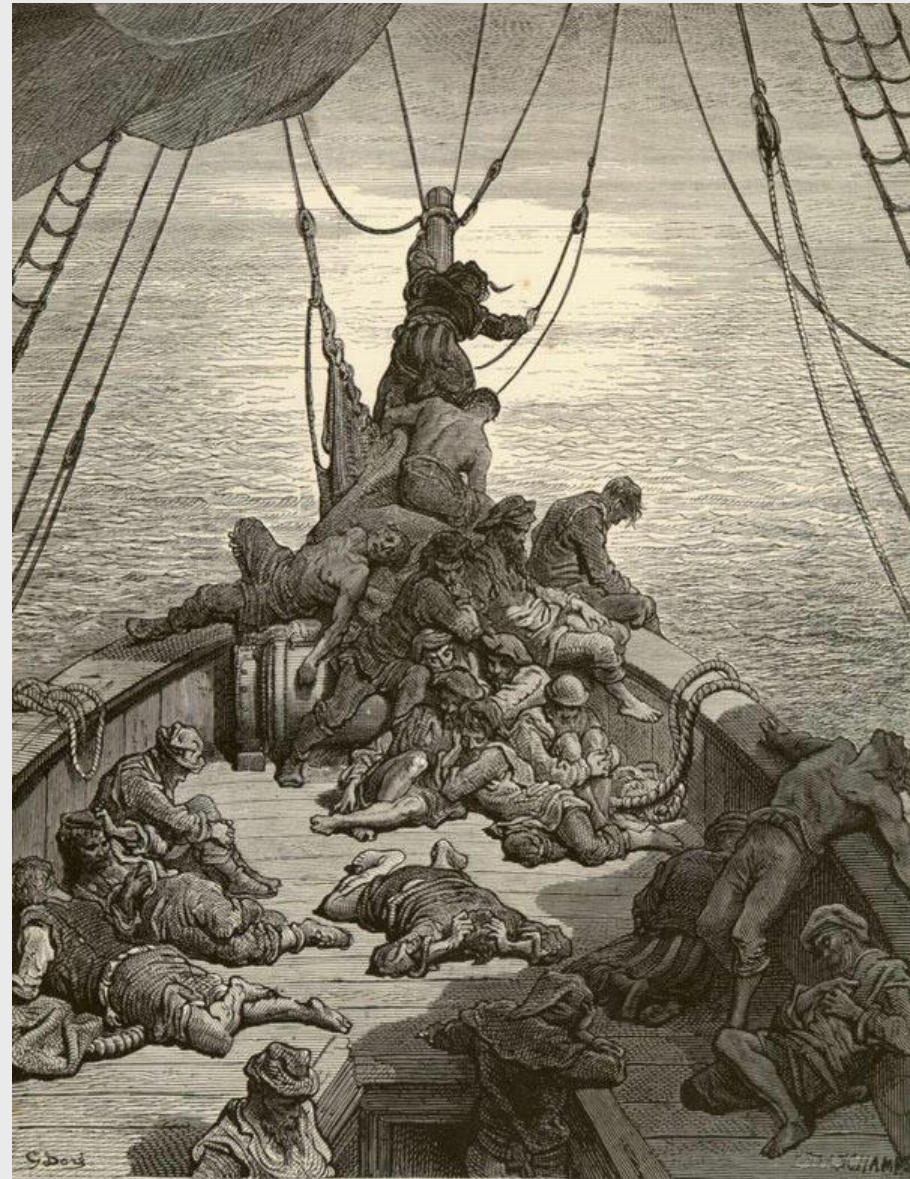
At first the crew blame the mariner for killing the albatross, then they justify him, because they have a favourable wind: this attitude will make them co-responsible for the crime.



*«And water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink»*

Suddenly, the ship stops moving:
no more wind nor breeze.

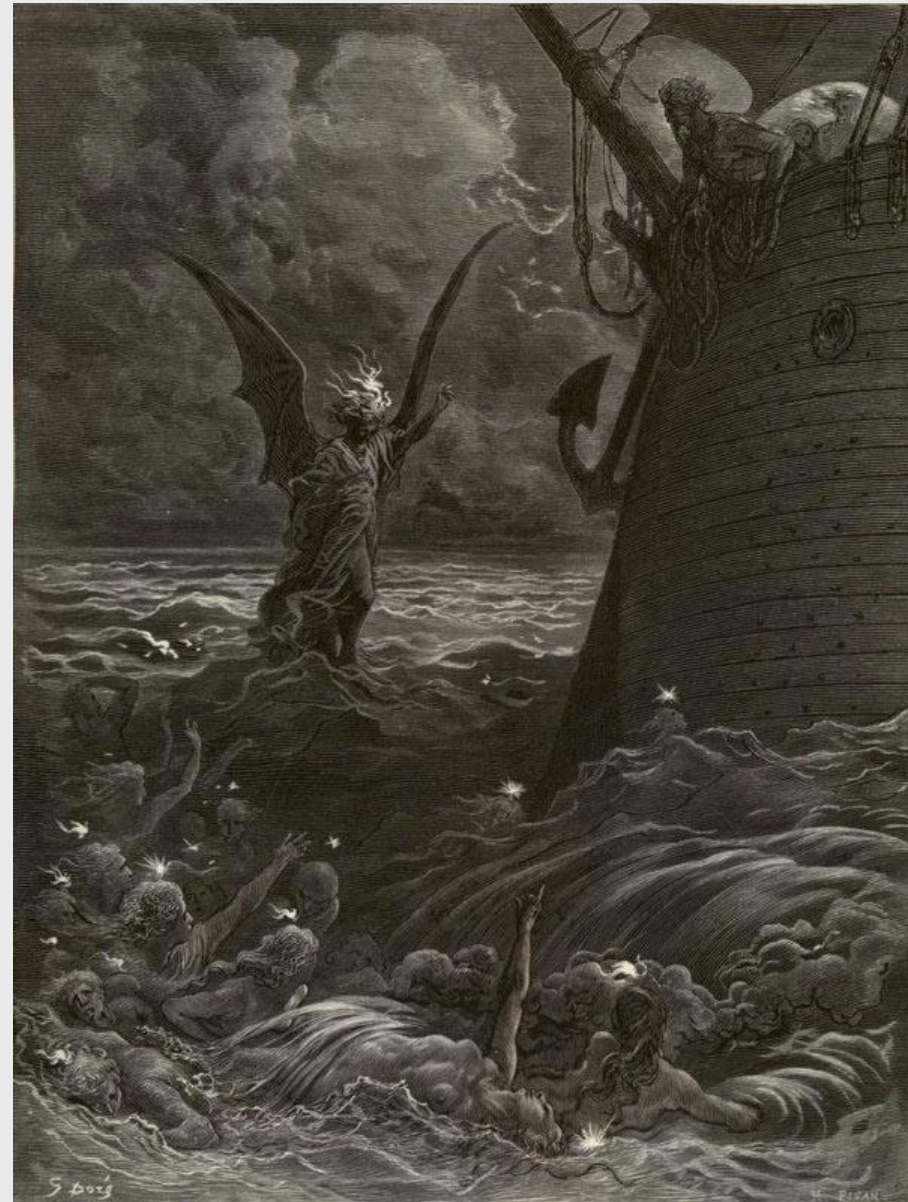
Everything around the ship is
sad and silent. The sun is hot
and the mariners are thirsty:
they are surrounded by water
but they have none to drink.



*«About, about, in reel and rout,
The death-fires danced at night»*

The crew can see slimy beings in the water as well as death-fires all around.

The atmosphere is hellish and frightening.



*«Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.»*

The shipmates are convinced
that an Evil spirit is following them.

It is a sort of curse after the killing
of the albatross.

The ancient mariner is
punished by his crew: they hang
the albatross around his neck.



PART III

*«A spect, a mist, a shape, I wish!
And still it neared and neared.»*

After many days of drought and thirst the crew can see a ship in the distance.

They have a flash of joy, but soon realize that a phantom ship is approaching.

It is the skeleton of a ship and her sails look like cobwebs



«"The game is done! I've won, I've won!"
quoth she, and whistles thrice.»

On the phantom ship there are
two horrible female figures:
Death and *Life-in Death*.

They throw dice to win the lives of
the mariners:

Death gets the crew.

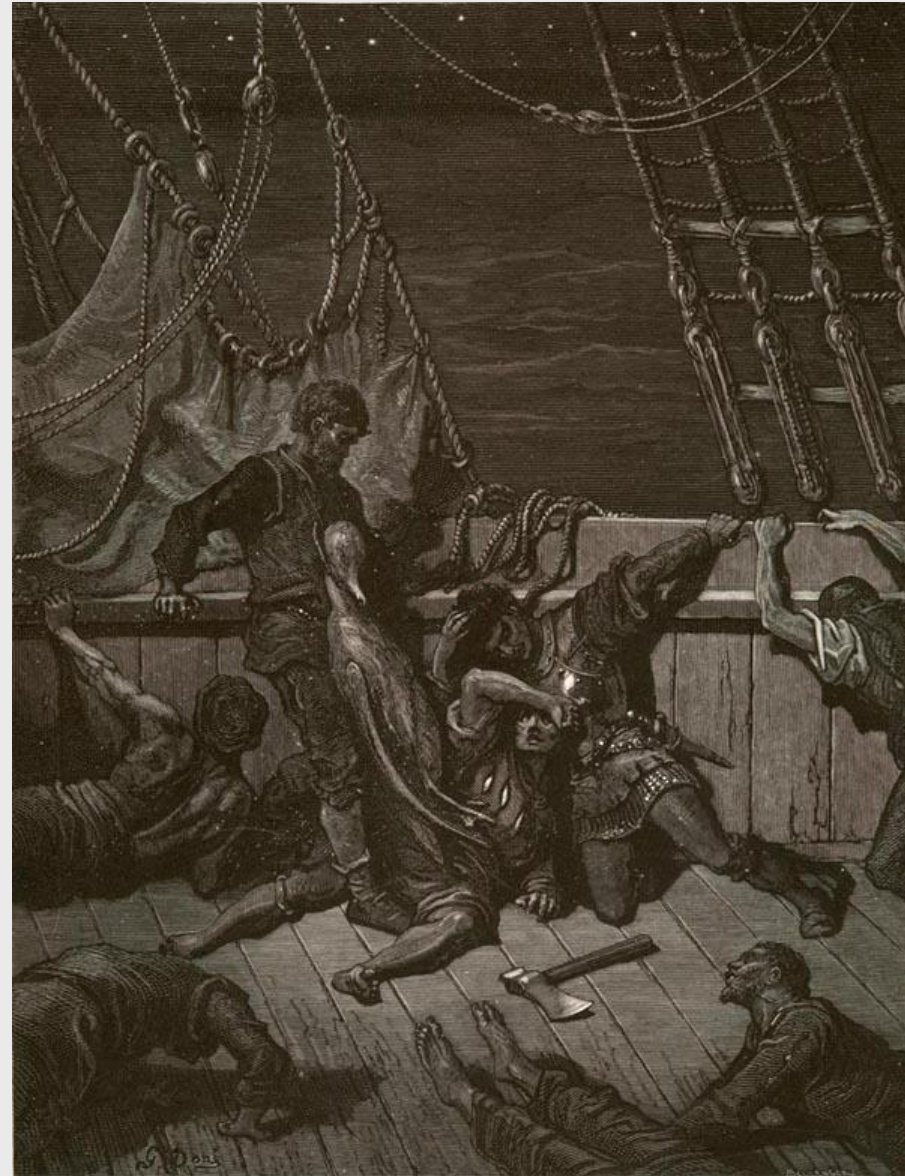
Life-in Death wins the Ancient
Mariner...

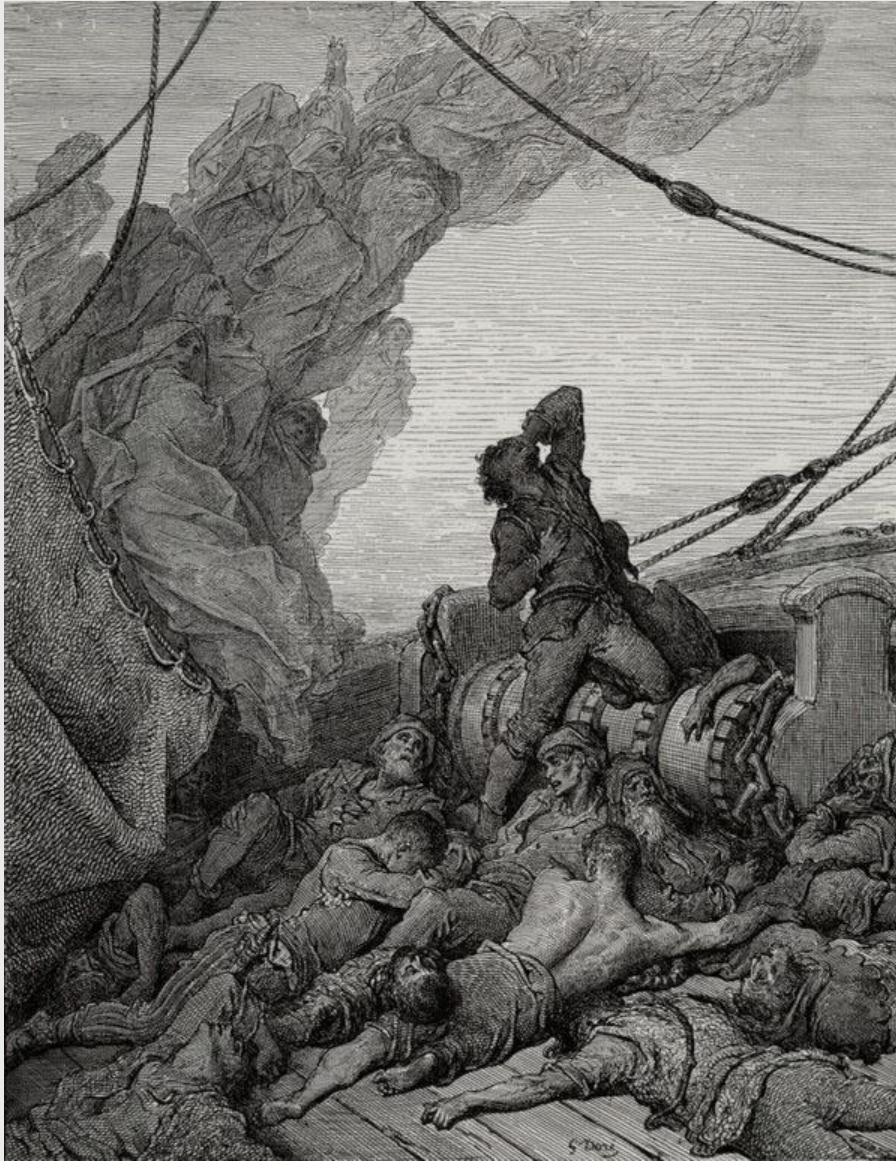


*«Each turned his face
with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.»*

One by one all the mariners die,
except for the Ancient Mariner.

No sighs nor groans are heard:
the Ancient Mariner can only see
a curse on their faces.





PART IV

*«And never a saint took pity on
my soul in agony.»*

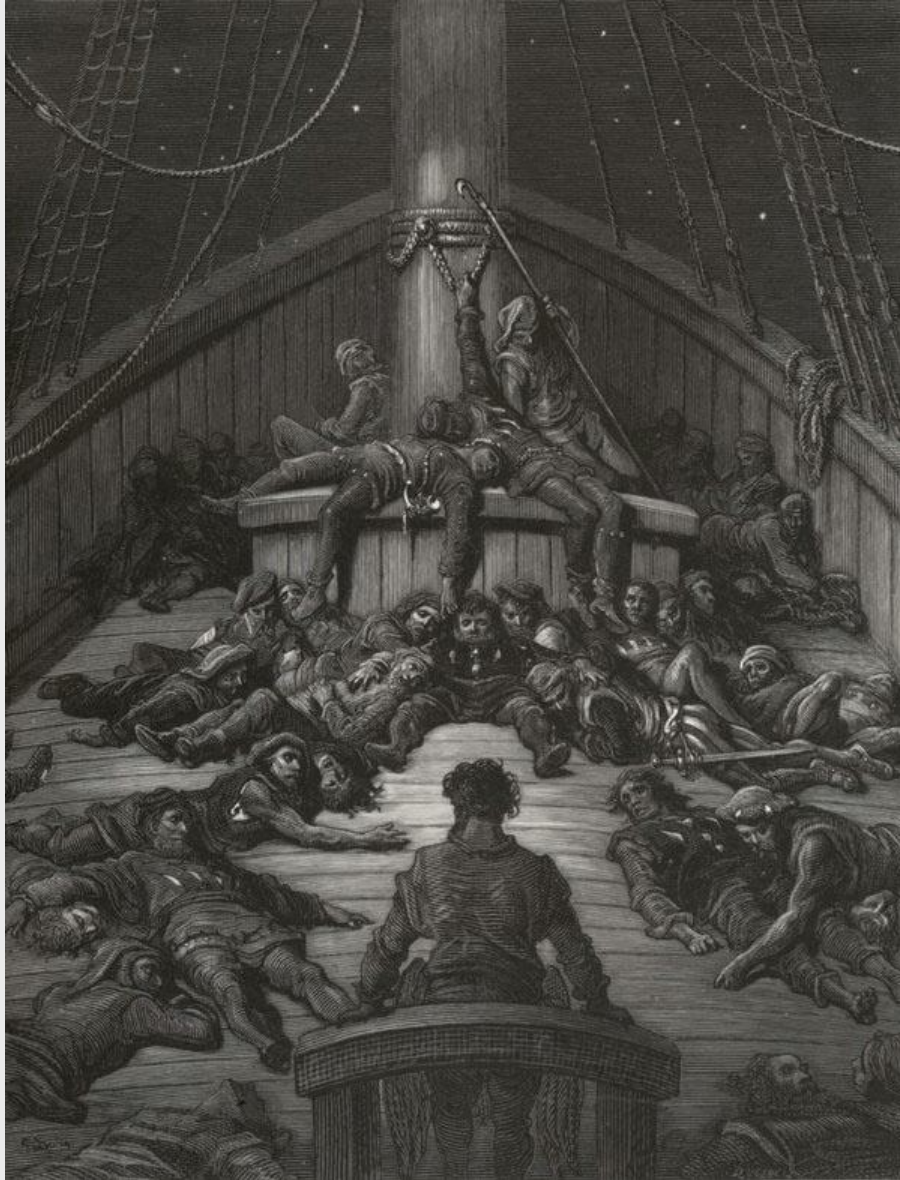
The Ancient Mariner tells
the Wedding Guest about
his horrible punishment:
he was alone and desperate
in the open sea, his men
lying dead around him.

*«And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.
I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away.»*

Everything around him looks rotten: the sea and the dead men.

He dislikes the creatures of the sea and cannot even pray: he feels an outcast, isolated from mankind, from God, from Nature.





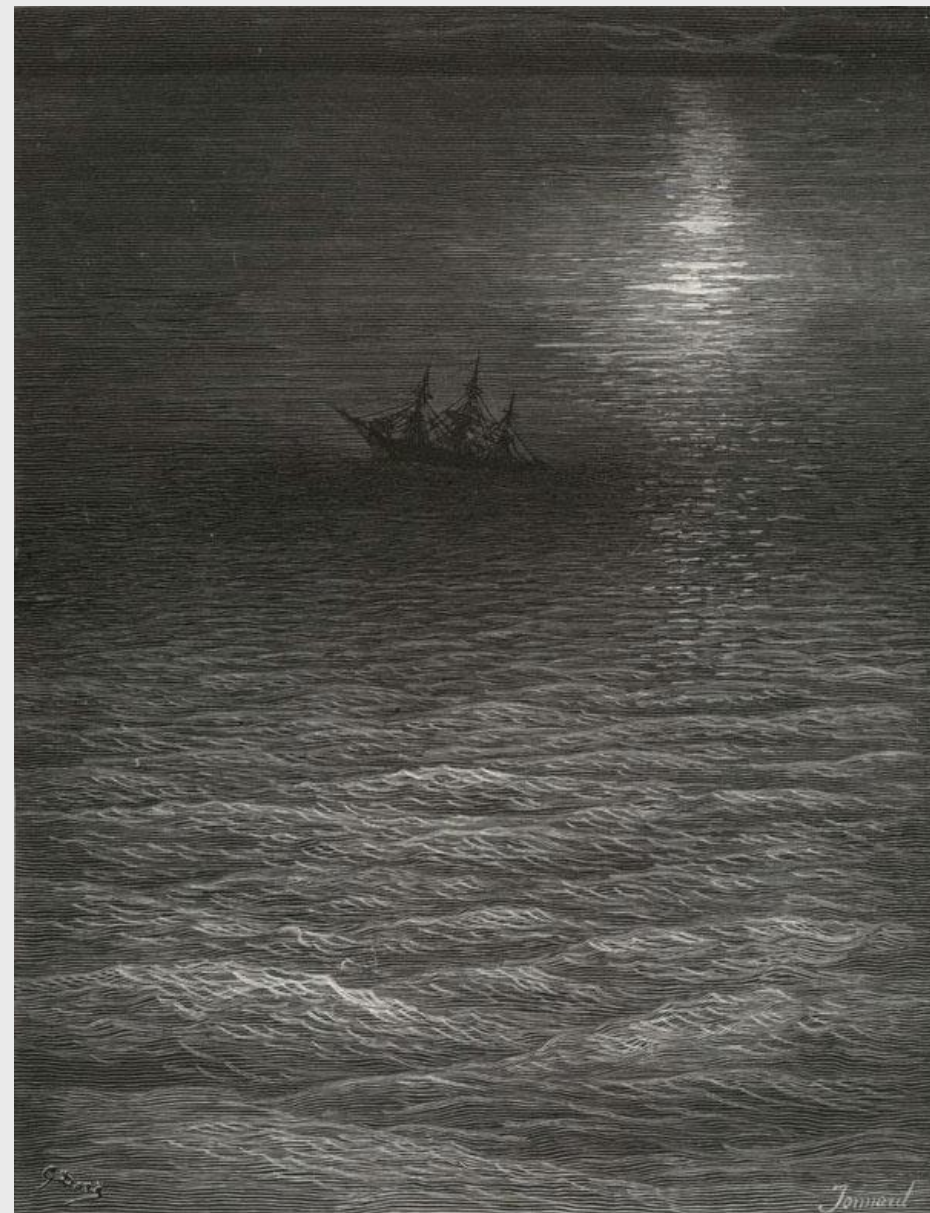
*«Seven days, seven nights,
I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.»*

Although his men are dead,
the expression on their
faces, their open eyes cursing
him haunt him.

He wishes he were dead.

«The moving Moon went up the sky.»

The Ancient Mariner gazes at the moon and the stars: under their consolatory light a change begins to take place.





*«Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes»*

The mariner starts seeing the sea creatures in a different way: he admires their shining colours and a feeling of love enters his soul.

He blesses the sea creatures and the spell begins to break: the Albatross falls into the sea and sinks.

PART V

The process of the soul's revival continues: the Mariner is allowed to sleep and awakes to the sound of the falling rain so he can drink at last.

All the dead men suddenly stand and go about their jobs as a mute, ghostly crew. The ship starts sailing again.

PART VI

The process of healing seems to slow down: the penance has to continue.

Suddenly, the shore appears on the horizon: crimson shapes begin to rise from the water in front of the ship and the Mariner sees an angel standing over each dead man's corpse.

The angels wave their hands silently, serving as beacons to guide the ship into port.

PART VII



«“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?”»

The mariner is picked up by a sailor, his son, and a hermit, and the mariner's ship sinks.

The hermit saves the mariner from his sins, but as a consequence for killing the albatross, he must spread the message of love for all God's creatures.

The last lines.



*«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.»*

hoar = white

stunned = shocked, surprised

forlorn = sad, unhappy

*The Ancient Mariner essentially preaches
respect for all of God's creatures:
without it imprisonment and its inherent
loneliness and torment
are inevitable.*

*His punishment for killing the albatross
is allowed to end
when he recognizes the error of his ways:
his task is now to go around the world
teaching what he has learnt
on and on and on ...*



IRON MAIDEN

Rime of the Ancient Mariner is a song by **Iron Maiden**, an English heavy metal band from Leyton in east London, formed in 1975 by bassist and primary songwriter Steve Harris.

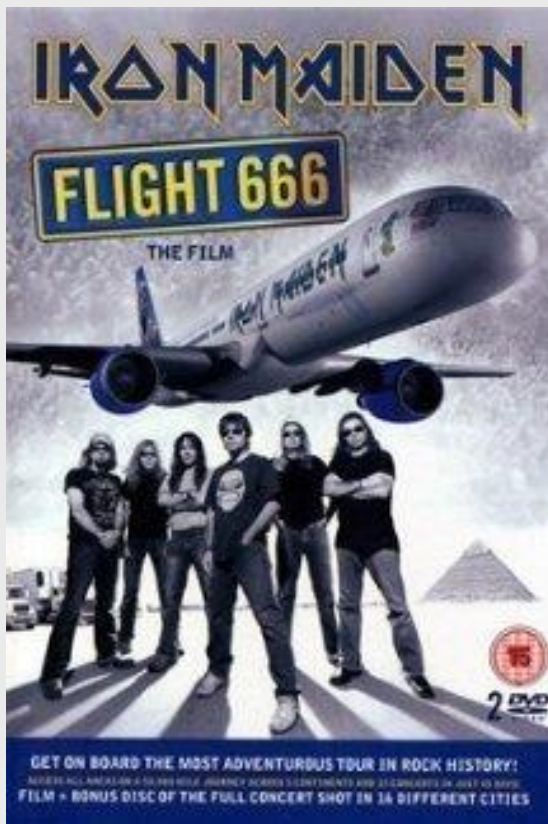
It is a musical re-telling of S.T. Coleridge's lyrical ballad which uses pieces of the original poem as lyrics.

Furthermore, it is Iron Maiden's longest song to date, at **13 minutes and 34 seconds in length!!!**.

IRON MAIDEN

It belongs to the album *Powerslave* (1984), their fifth studio album: once it was finished, the band began the ***World Slavery Tour***.

The tour started in Warsaw, Poland on **9th August 1984** and ended in Irvine, California on **5th July 1985**, lasting **331 days** and touching **26 different countries**.



A video entitled ***Behind the Iron Curtain*** documented the band's first shows in **Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia** since they were regarded as ***the first rock act*** to take a full stage show ***into the Eastern Bloc***, a landmark achievement at the time.

IRON MAIDEN



The choice of the songs was not casual:

it was based on their content and their message, namely that it is necessary for humanity to recognize and respect every living thing, *both great and small*, every living creature wherever they may live.

How can there be freedom without respect?



IRON MAIDEN

The faithfulness of the adaptation is striking:

- the lyrics are basically grouped into **four-line stanzas** while **six-line stanzas** are reserved for the most salient moments.

*Hear the rime of the ancient mariner
See his eye as he stops one of three
Mesmerises one of the wedding guests.
Stay here and listen to the nightmares of the sea. [...]*

*"Day after day, day after day,
we stuck nor breath nor motion
as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean
Water, water everywhere and
all the boards did shrink
Water, water everywhere nor any drop to drink."*

- **quotations** alternate with **synoptic parts** in absolute coherence.

*"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 curse it lives on in their eyes
The mariner he wished he'd die
Along with the sea creatures
But they lived on, so did he.*

IRON MAIDEN

□ *the rhythm* is consistent with the content:

- one is for the narrative parts at the beginning and at the end of the song;
- one is for the most dramatic parts;
- a long musical solo
 - introduces the reading of the most tragic passage, i.e. the death of the mariners one by one;
 - accompanies the passage itself which is both spooky and blood-curdling, with the noises made by the creaking woodplanks of a ship in the background.



IRON MAIDEN



The Rime is only one of the many texts which have become a source of inspiration for their songs:

- ***Lord of the Flies*** by William Golding;
- ***The Phantom of the Opera*** by Gaston Leroux;
- ***The Murders in the Rue Morgue*** by Edgar Allan Poe;
- ***Heart of Darkness*** by Joseph Conrad;
- ***Il nome della rosa*** by Umberto Eco.

They draw from historical events, mythology, the Bible in order to put into music themes which are immortal.