

THE ANCIENT MARINER

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At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist; 150  
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:  
And as if it dodged a water-sprite, 155  
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer  
approach, it  
seemeth him  
to be a ship;  
and at a dear  
ransom he  
freeth his  
speech from  
the bonds of  
thirst.

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, 160  
And cried, A sail! a sail!

A flash of joy!

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, 165  
As they were drinking all.

And horror  
follows. For  
can it be a  
ship that  
comes onward  
without wind  
or tide?

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!  
Hither to work us weal;  
Without a breeze, without a tide,  
She steadies with upright keel! 170

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 sud- 175  
Betwixt us and the sun. [denly