

Preface:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in 1797, supposedly after taking a long walk through the English countryside with his buddy William Wordsworth. At 625 lines, it's one of the longest poems in the English language, and I always marveled at how he had the time and patience to craft stanza after stanza of perfect, rhyming prose. But then again, these guys basically had nothing to do except think, write, drink tea, ride horses and try not to catch scarlet fever. So of course they wrote long, complex, allegorical poems – and of course people spent entire days reading and appreciating this delicate craft.

I'm not afraid to say that this poem tormented me a bit in school. I struggled to find meaning in Coleridge's strange tale of an old sailor who stops a wedding guest en route to a wedding to ramble on and on about his harrowing experience at sea. And I admit that I had little patience for Olde English (the language, not the malt liquor; the latter I had plenty of time for, as most college students do). But, a decade later, with g-think Oceans on my mind, it somehow spoke to me, peeking its little Romantic Literature head out from the pages of my mental bookshelf. So, I thought I'd attempt to turn the Ancient Mariner into an Awakening Mariner. Nerdy? Probably. I'll let you be the judge.

***The Rime of the Awakening Mariner***

There is an Awakening Mariner,  
Who sees a fading blue.  
And dreams of a day when it will be  
A brighter, richer hue.

Each shrinking wave with salty foam  
Reflects a grayish cloud  
But how it came to be this way,  
(S)he wonders now aloud:

“Where is my sea? Where is my boat?  
I'm lost up here on land.

My legs, though sturdy and secure,  
Are feeling more like sand.

I've sailed the world 'round in my mind  
And slept on every shore.  
On one I met my would-be muse  
Who spoke of local lore.

It was a myth like none I'd heard,  
A story both new and old.  
Where creatures glided gracefully  
In a place that's deep and cold.

With shining speed and intentions pure  
They danced and circled the earth,  
Following human currents blind  
And inspiring bottomless mirth.

I know this place from another life.  
Its memories haunt and charm,  
Leading me with no other choice  
But to sound the ocean alarm.”

And so the Awakening Mariner  
Is rising to the cause.  
For consciousness (s)he would rather wear  
Than the corpse of an albatross.