

The Burden

(based on a Buddhist parable - two monks and a woman)

Two monks on the road to the monastery walked,
Sometimes in silence, at others they talked,
Happened upon a dame in distress
Who feared she might ruin her brand new white dress.

The stream by the road had swelled past its banks
And for some support, she would surely give thanks.
She needed to cross with her packages too,
while keeping her dress looking shiny and new.

“My dear”, said the elder monk, “Please do not fret!”
“We’ll be of assistance, if you’ll kindly let,
My young brother carry your goods over there,
and you, in my arms, through the water I’ll bear”

She looked at the monk and saw trust in his eyes.
Quite a large man, she trusted his size,
Handed her packs to the slight younger brother
and soon was raised high in the arms of the other.

All three crossed the flood with the greatest of ease,
though the water was far above either monk’s knees.
Dry, safe and sound, with joy in her eyes,
She thanked them sincerely, they said their goodbyes.

The monks carried on, as they were, with their walk
but now strode in silence, for there was no talk.
The journey was long, and the hours whiled away
Though it seemed like the young monk had something to say.

In due course the elder monk asked with a sigh,
“What’s going on, between you and I?”
“Nothing, well something, but surely you know!”
He looked as though he was quite ready to blow!

“How could you take that sweet girl in your arms?
Swayed by her beauty, her voice and her charms?
What of our vows? We solemnly swore!
They’re far too important to simply ignore!”

“Young brother, I see now why you are weighed down,
Your heart is quite heavy, your face wears a frown.
My vow was to help, and that is my thrill
But I let her go... you carry her still...”

