

The Ethiopian donkey

A poem by Elisabeth D Svendsen

The mornings are dark and it's so very cold
When my master appears at the door
My bones are all aching, I'm getting quite old
And it's hard to get up from the floor.

He helps me to rise, puts a cloth on my back
Then it's out in the cold morning air
My load is enormous, heavy grain in the sack
But I wait while he kneels in prayer.

Then the journey begins and we walk to the track
To the market, so many miles away
Where the price for the grain, and amount in the sack
Will either make, or ruin, his day.

The dawn has arisen as we reach the mill
And we take up our place in the queue
Surrounded by donkeys, so many are ill
And the humans are thin and sick too

The pain and the suffering are all plain to see
The donkeys exhausted and starved
As the sacks are unloaded they drop to one knee
So grateful the load has been halved.

But into the yard that is full of despair
Come a small group of people with aid
Their mission to soothe, to treat and repair
Give the donkeys new life – all unpaid.

I feel soothing hands on the galls on my back
And have medicine to make me live longer
And they treat my feet, give me food that I lack
And suddenly I feel a lot stronger.

My master is happy, has had a good day
The grain brought good money at last
And I feel so good as I go on my way
The pain I had felt now all passed.

His family wait as we come down the road
They see food and fuel on my back
They are shouting with joy as they start to unload
Thanking God for the goods that they lack

And then together they kneel and pray
To give thanks to their Lord up above
And I listen and know that what happened today
Was truly the result of His love.

