

Rest on the flight into Egypt

by [Charles P.R. Tisdale](#) in the [December 29, 2009](#) issue

One day thought's Gethsemane
Like some personal handicap
Or guilt, will venerate the image
Of its last nativity, will fold
Its wings away and say,
"The bird of doubt has gone today."

And all the "how could I be
So stupid" habit of the soul
Will harden to a pigment
Like raven's feathers, painted
And set on an ancient canvas,
Giving up its foreground
To a moment's peace in that journey
Of escape from Bethlehem of birth.

Just as in David's "Rest on the Flight
Into Egypt," an angel having whispered
Of slaughter, "You must leave, Joseph,"
He, knocking walnuts from the tree,
The donkey munching quietly some hay,
His son reaching up for grapes,
A young child's suffering at play,
Not thinking yet, "I must, they say."

And Mary, seated on a rock,
After long labor, serene as
Nazareth, building her pyramid.