

It Weighs on Me

To the hundreds of porters who passed in front of my window this morning in Santiago de Atitlán as I ate a hotel breakfast in abject comfort, I wish it to be said:

that I was once of your number;
that I would pitch in to help if I could but I can't;

that I'm seventy years old and get a union pension to ease my old age;
that I know you do not & will not, and thus are condemned to
a more painful, arduous and shorter life;

that I see your tumplines tight against your foreheads with the 100 lbs. of firewood
bending your back and making your footsteps rugged and your eyes riveted to the road;

that I know you glance at us vacationers from the North and inwardly wonder why the
distribution of comforts is so unequal ... even as you remind yourself that spirit made
all things including this imbalance and who knows if the teeter might totter in ages to
come or if those on the See might end up on the Saw someday;

that even so, nothing this morning can be done about it, by you nor by me;
that I feel for you;
that I know something about this;

that I'll do what I can even if only by witnessing in words that the Great Inequity is the
disgrace of our species and that those who enforce it and conspire to extend it by
murder, thievery, deceit, politics & religion deserve the harshest punishment a humane
society can impose;

that I hope my face in the restaurant window has not made your morning
one iota the worse.

Signed

January 9, 2013
Santiago de Atitlán,
Guatemala