

THERE ONCE WAS A YOUNG LAD
NEITHER BRAVE NOR EVEN BOLD
THERE ONCE WAS A YOUNG LAD
BRAVE HE WAS NOT LET IT BE TOLD!

*Perched high on top of the world
Should I be born he's wondering
Into the dark sea he is hurled
struck by double bolts of lightning
The Lad is now a castaway
on a coco-tree filled island
a castaway and now a prey
for any mean beast that walks on land*



THERE ONCE WAS A YOUNG LAD
NEITHER BRAVE NOR EVEN BOLD
THERE ONCE WAS A YOUNG LAD
BRAVE HE WAS NOT LET IT BE TOLD!

*Squeaks and screeches are heard suddenly
and a great ape jumps into action
friendly but conceited mostly
from proud Manchurian extraction
Once introduced he says
their main challenge is surviving
safe shelter hunting and eating
Monkey orders and Lad obeys*



THERE ONCE WAS A PROUD MONKEY
WHO CAME FROM A LAND FARAWAY
THERE ONCE WAS A PROUD MONKEY
AND A YOUNG LAD IN DISMAY

*The proud ape shares his plan or so
"A very mean Witch I must slay
She pursues me and means today
to swallow me whole head to toe!"
And the apprehensive young boy
listens to the Monkey who asks:
would you please act as a decoy
when the Witch carries out her task?*



THERE ONCE WAS A PROUD MONKEY
WHO CAME FROM A LAND FARAWAY
THERE ONCE WAS A PROUD MONKEY
AND A YOUNG LAD IN DISMAY

*And the eager Monkey goes on
"She slaughtered the King of Monkey
and all his noble ancestry
Of the proud line I am the last one!
I would be unable alone
to turn this creature into stone!"
So he asks for a helping hand
to ensure victory as planned!*



THERE ONCE WAS TELL ME HOWEVER
THE PROUD MONKEY AND THE YOUNG LAD
THERE ONCE WAS AND THE BRIGHT YOUNG LAD
WAS QUICK, SMART AND MOSTLY CLEVER

*Mystery looms everywhere
Coco trees turn into bamboos
The Monkey first sets up the ruse
then the hungry Witch out of nowhere
steps in the trap and then is caught
The young Lad now... makes her talk and talk*

*"Never will you rob me of life
You must first find my heart so dear
and remove it with a long knife"
The Witch roars with laughter and sneers
"Never will you find my dear heart
It is so far away from here
in a small chest I hold so dear
in a pit that is deep and dark!"*

*The Monkey strikes her with his spear
The Witch takes off and disappears!*



THERE ONCE WAS ONCE TWICE THRICE THERE WAS
THE YOUNG LAD MORE DARING BY NOW
THERE ONCE WAS ONCE TWICE THRICE THERE WAS
AND MORE COURAGE THAN A MACAU

*The perceptive young Lad finds out
where the chest is hidden away
He outsmarted the Witch beyond doubt
and very proudly shows the way
for one not as overbearing
What amazing magic is this?
"Bamboo now becomes a cactus!"
Adds the Lad who was so caring*



THERE ONCE WAS ONCE AND TWICE AND THRICE
THE YOUNG LAD THE MONKEY... MISTER
THERE ONCE WAS ONCE AND TWICE AND THRICE
WHY NOT STOP AND TAKE A BREATHER.

*They come across a mystery
a lament so very lonely
Hear the Lonely Girl the keeper
forced to guard a chest forever
It holds the Witch's evil heart
beneath the Earth so deep and dark
If not, the Witch won't hesitate
to change her into shark bait!*

❧

THERE ONCE WAS ONCE AND TWICE AND THRICE
THE GIRL, THE LAD AND THE MONKEY
THREE OF THEM ONCE AND TWICE AND THRICE
ON THIS STRANGE ISLE NOT AS LONELY

*The Lonely Girl recounts a tale
of two children so young and frail
akin to that of young Hänsel
and his baby sister Gretel
"My brother was not as lucky"
The Witch ate him up she explained
"With the Witch I was and remained
terrorized under lock and key!"*

❧

NOT ONCE THERE WAS BUT RATHER THRICE!
FOR THREE THEY ARE AND ROLL THE DICE
WITH COURAGE ENOUGH FOR MANY
WITH COURAGE ENOUGH FOR ALL THREE!
SO MORE THAN ONCE THERE WAS YES THRICE!

*Monkey explains that in a while
they must destroy a heart so vile
Lonely Girl must help them indeed
It's the only way to succeed
else they shall all perish and die
Lonely Girl accepts - is she mad?
Only two choices apply
"Till death or freedom come good-bye"*

❧

NOT ONCE THERE WAS BUT RATHER THRICE!
FOR THREE THEY ARE AND ROLL THE DICE
WITH COURAGE ENOUGH FOR MANY
WITH COURAGE ENOUGH FOR ALL THREE!
SO MORE THAN ONCE THERE WAS YES THRICE

*The three venture down the crevice
The eager young Lad leads the way
He digs the chest out of the clay
passes it to his accomplice
but he loses his hold and falls
disappearing down the abyss
Monkey crushes the veins and all
this heart so mean and selfish.*

*Die you Witch, die you evil one!
The mean Witch now gone forever
In any form whatsoever!*

*For the Lad bitter tears were shed
by Monkey not as conceited
and Lonely Girl not as lonely
Here ends the story for the three
on futile efforts ... at what cost!
So many lives wasted and lost
including that of a young man
for whom courage was the game plan.*

*And the young Lad now all alone
on the edge of a world unknown
dreams and hopes... maybe... maybe then...
of returning to Earth again
with more courage than many men.*

*And throughout... he wonders...
"If a drop of courage and nerve
can grow and multiply threefold
can it not at some point in time
tell a tale exceedingly bold
for instance "Thrice upon a time..."*

∞ Jacqueline Gosselin
translated by Maurice Roy