

A Nun in Ninh Hoa

JAN BARRY

It was quite a sight for a boy from Tennessee:
a Buddhist nun dressed in fire
sitting proudly amid a solemn, silent crowd,
flames and a smoke plume her terrible costume.

Riding shotgun on a fuel truck convoy,
“just along for the ride,”
Jimmy Sharpe saw a sight this morning
beyond any experience he can describe.

She sat smiling as though mocking the flames.
Her hands, held together in prayer,
slowly parted. Suddenly, she drooped,
sat up, then wilted in the fire.

Safe back at the base, Jimmy’s chatter
circled the nightmare he could still taste.
He grinned—shivered—then softly swore:
“Jesus! How’d we get in this crazy place?”

