

the Moslem fast which could also be seen as a poem for a Christmas Carol Service; "Midnight! Kissed with flame! See! See! My love is darkness".

In 'Songs of Contemplation' how could we not read 'Grace's House', and in *History's Voices* the utterly committed 'Original Time Bomb' about the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, and 'Chant to Be Used in Processions Around a Site with Furnaces'?

The Geography of Lograire (1969) which Paul Pearson has done so much helpful work on, can seem a closed book to many. As a way in perhaps we can get glimpses of familiar meaning from the fragments that resonate particularly with us, and then work outwards into more unfamiliar territory. This poem and *Cables to the Ace* were a brave new direction for Merton and they need to keep their place within any selection of his work.

The section *On Being Human* contains several poems to 'M', the nurse he fell in love with. Some years ago we wondered if we would ever see these poems in print, and now here they are as part of the poetic furniture. They show us Merton as a sixties teenager living on the thin edge of raw emotion. Communications were difficult as we read in 'Every Long Distance Call', and 'Never Call a Baby in a Thunderstorm'. In the end Merton felt that things had to be called to a halt, and yet "We are nearer than we know/Love has another place of its own".

In *Merton and Other Languages* read Raissa Maritain's poem on Chagall in Merton's translation, and see if you

don't get swept up into the dance "in the air on clouds". And if you are looking for self-fulfilling prophecies you will find them:

*All the authorities
In silence anywhere
Swear you only love your mind
If you marry a hot wire.*

(Antipoem 1)

Whatever new selection of poems comes out I shall always treasure my copy of the *Selected Poems* (1962) with the soup splashes on the page containing the poem *For My Brother: Reported Missing in Action, 1943*. I took the book to a monastery on retreat, and was obviously not concentrating on eating, but only had a mind for that remarkable poem: "Sweet brother, if I do not sleep/ My eyes are flowers for your tomb". The soup edition has an introduction from Mark Van Doren, which concludes, "For Merton there is another world beyond this one where his brother died, and where he himself writes poetry. But the poetry is a way to that world. Indeed, given his endowment, it may well be *the way*, so that mystic and poet, seer and singer, in his case are one." I recommend this new selection.

David Scott

Cassian and the Fathers: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition, Thomas Merton, edited by Patrick F. O'Connell (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 2005), pp. lxxvi + 305, ISBN: 0879070013. \$29.95

Following on from the five volumes of Merton's letters, under the general editorship of William Shannon,

and the seven volumes of Merton's personal journals under the general editorship of Brother Patrick Hart, this volume, *Cassian and the Fathers*, marks the publication of the first of a number of volumes which are set to appear in coming years published from the volumes of Merton's "Monastic Orientation Notes." These notes were the teaching notes that Merton prepared as Master of Scholastics and later as Master of Novices. Frequently these notes were mimeographed and distributed to other houses of the order and further afield, emphasizing the uniqueness of Merton's groundbreaking approach to monastic formation.

The reader of *Cassian and the Fathers* will discover in this volume a side of Thomas Merton's life and work that has been largely overlooked – his contribution to monastic life and reform. The Second Vatican Council encouraged religious orders to return to their sources as they looked to reform and this is just what Merton had been doing at the Abbey of Gethsemani through much of his time as Master of Scholastics and Master of Novices from the early fifties onwards. As O'Connell points out in his extensive introduction the "public" Merton is available in the books he published, the "interpersonal" Merton in his volumes of correspondence and the "intimate" (xlvi) Merton in the pages of his private journals. However Merton's monastic orientation notes make available for the first time in print Merton the "teacher, novice master and monk" and show us Merton "functioning as an integral and important member of his monastic community." (xxiii) These conferences

are an essential part of the whole Merton which should not be forgotten.

Merton's qualities as a teacher have often been recalled by the monks whom he taught. Many of those conferences, which from April 1962 onwards were recorded, are available to the general public and give us a valuable insight into the style and content of his classes. The notes in *Cassian and the Fathers* were never followed slavishly by Merton in his classes. The stories that Merton frequently incorporated into his talks are not included in his written text but, throughout the book, the voice of his experience can plainly be heard as, for example, when he writes about *acedia* and the discernment of a vocation when *acedia* persists without any consolation. (187) Or again, it is hard not to read his comments about monks who wish to transfer to other monasteries without recalling his own frequent desire to move elsewhere, as he writes "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" – imagining all the perfections and advantages of other communities, seeing the drawbacks and deficiencies of our own vocation." (189) It sounds as if he could well be writing for himself.

As readers who have read O'Connell's meticulous studies of Merton's poetry will expect the attention to detail in this book, most noticeably in full and excellent footnotes, is first-rate. Every reference Merton makes to other texts is noted, (O'Connell notes there are over seventy-five major and minor sources used by Merton in this one set of lectures), along with relevant textual variations, occasional errors, and each

Latin word, phrase or sentence used by Merton in the text is translated.

This volume will provide the non-monastic reader with a wonderful insight into one of the major texts that has shaped Western Monasticism and is, in more recent years, being regularly taught and studied in monasteries. For monastic readers more familiar with the work of Cassian it is also a refreshing look at Cassian as Merton, with natural ease, articulates the essence of his writings.

Paul M Pearson

Thomas Merton: I Have Seen What I Was Looking For: Selected Spiritual Writings, edited by M. Basil Pennington (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2005), pp. 260 ISBN: 1565482255. \$19.95

Basil Pennington's anthology *Thomas Merton: I Have Seen What I Was Looking For: Selected Spiritual Writings* was published posthumously after Father Basil's death in early June resulting from injuries sustained in a car accident in late March 2005. Unlike the previous anthologies by Lawrence Cunningham and Christine Bochen this one takes a chronological approach to Merton's writing, rather than a thematic one.

In his short introduction Pennington gives a brief overview of Merton's life and thought, concentrating on his literary output. He situates Merton's writing within the Cistercian tradition comparing Merton's prose to that of St. Bernard, William of St. Thierry, Adam of Perseigne and Gueric of Igny. The first chapter of the anthology consists