

Fr Gerard Garrigan Suburban Monk Cycling, 1 AM

I used to do a lot of bicycling, sometimes at night. I have lights on my bike. Our monastery is in an affluent suburban area and on occasion, I would set off on a long nocturnal ride from suburbia into the city of St. Louis and back. One such ride inspired the poem below. I love St. Francis of Assisi's quote which I have paraphrased in the final line. I think Thomas Merton would have agreed.

Round and round
Wheels whirring city-bound
White lights strobing
Into the quiet night
Occasional click of changing gears
Rabbit startled bounds away
Mansions all dark
Inhabitants and BMWs
Fast, fast asleep
Cicadas and crickets
Chanting antiphonally
Side against side
My cloister is the world

Gerard Garrigan OSB, a native St. Louisan, is a monk of Saint Louis Abbey, a monastery of the English Benedictine Congregation in St. Louis, Missouri USA. He enjoys writing poetry and listening to music of various genres. His essay on the healing effects of poetry and jazz was published in the October 2023 issue of *The Way*, the journal of contemporary spirituality, published by the British Jesuits. More free poetry of his may be obtained by emailing him at: frgerard@priory.org