## GETHSEMANI ABBEY

-by J. T. Ledbetter

the late sun on the leaves dapples the white crosses beside the old walls

tonight the moon will be full again and I will lie awake thinking of you my God wondering if I can go home now if a week is long enough to burn my sins out of me whether praying the hours at 3:15 in the morning in the cold church is enough watching the Brothers in the light of the candles waiting for Mass on my knees listening for God

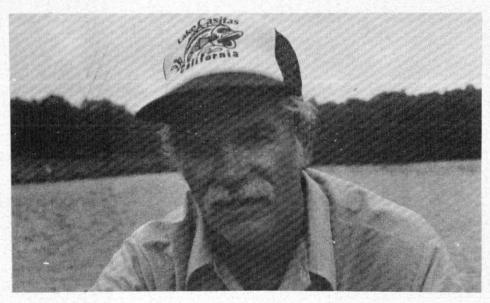
"Are there other protestants here?"

(I don't know the rosary but find the holy water cool on my forehead)

and Father Michael moves from the shadows bringing Christ to me watching me closely holding me with his eyes

J. T. Ledbetter is Professor of English at California Lutheran College in Thousand Oaks, California. He has written "Thomas Merton and my Aunt Emma: a Remembrance" (1983) and "In the Footsteps of Thomas Merton" (1984). Two poems, "Gethsemani: Trappist, Kentucky" and "In Memoriam: For Thomas Merton," appeared in the Winter-Spring 1983 Merton Seasonal.

it has started to rain tomorrow the leaves will be wet in the retreatant's garden but the old Brother will be there on his knees among the shrubs lost to his brother's world in Cincinnati touching the earth reverently like a lover gently opening the fronds and I watch from the window of the bus back to Louisville full of light and unusual prayers going back where I know the liturgy among familiar groves of thought until the trees hide the Abbey in fold upon fold of sweet Kentucky hills and the white crosses and the old Brother beautifully lost there in the damp garden of God



I. T. LEDBETTER