

turning to the East. Reza Arasteh explains how the process of self-liberation in Sufism represents a turning from the phenomenal self toward the cosmic self, the unconscious image of the universe: "The phenomenal self has separated us from our origin, that of union of all life." But it was in Zen Buddhism that Merton found the greatest promise for his own development. Early in 1968 he wrote an introduction to a translation of the work of the Buddhist patriarch Shen Hui (see *The Merton Annual 1*); in *Monks Pond* he published ten of Shen Hui's dialogues in a translation by Wei-wu-wei. As he was planning his trip to Asia in the fall of that year, he also accepted an article treating Zen master Pai-Chang and a translations of a discourse by the Master of Nan-ch'uan.

Of Merton's own work there's quite a variety, although he hardly dominates. Not surprisingly, he includes excerpts from his major poem-in-progress, *The Geography of Lograire*. The Spring issue contains the material that is titled "North. IV. Kane Relief Expedition" in *The Collected Poems*. Fall has the Prologue, while most of the material in Winter was to be embedded in "North. I. Queens Tunnel." Then there is a prose piece entitled "The Conquest of France: Speech and Testimonials, 1941," a hilarious macaronic satire of a German propaganda broadcast in occupied France. The novel from which this was taken, *My Argument with the Gestapo*, was rejected by publishers in 1941. Although Doubleday offered a contract early in 1968, the novel didn't appear until the summer after his death. Merton's photographs appear throughout; especially striking is a sequence of trees alive and dead that shows his fascination with form and texture.

Of course there's lots more — 350 pages in all — some of it eminently forgettable. Biographer Michael Mott complains that Merton included "the work of poets who were friends and of friends who claimed to be poets" (*The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, p. 503). Robert Daggy suggests it be viewed as "a literary forum rather than a formal literary magazine." Finally, though, what makes *Monks Pond* worth reading today is that it is a bit like a time capsule — open to discover the incredible range of Merton's interests in the last year of his life.

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## FOR MERTON

by **Marc Irish**

Prophetic pilgrim  
twenty years departed,  
but not forgotten.

Your guiding light  
still illumines the path  
of fellow wayfarers.

Too familiar headlines  
would not surprise  
but only sadden.

Solace can be found  
only by seeking  
oneness with Christ.