

Merton is voicing a central theme of today's supposedly new thinking. For him, an anthropocentric or egocentric position is no longer tenable. No longer can we humans see ourselves and our selfish desires as the center of living and the sole criterion for decision making. Our vocation is not to dominate the earth. Our vocation is to discover community with it. Understanding our true position as one living species on this living planet is, as he says in *Conjectures*, an act of humility — *humus*, earth, a recognition of ourselves as made of the very stuff of the planet. Merton's awareness of the uniqueness, sacredness, and interdependence of each living being makes him one more prophetic voice calling us to reflective, responsible living. His voice joins those of St. Brigid and the fourth century Celtic communities who celebrated the spirits of the forest; the fifth century Benedictines who taught us about seeds and working with the rhythms of the land; the medieval mystics like Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen who wrote of the "juiciness" of our nurturing God who is both father and mother; with Francis of Assisi who celebrated all creation in his famous *Canticle*; and Teilhard de Chardin who shocked us into realizing that we are part of the original burst of energy of God's love still unfolding these fifteen billion years later.

Merton joins also with Mary Austin, Rachel Carson and contemporary nature writers such as Loren Eiseley, Gretel Ehrlich, Annie Dillard, Barry Lopez and Wendell Berry. This huge chorus of beings call us to transform our thinking and living from an egocentric to an ecocentric stance, and to make decisions about our planet based on nature not as commodity, but as community, a community of which we are but one part. Such radical transformation would allow us to pray with Thomas Merton: "It was a good morning. A return in spirit to the first morning of the world."

HAIKU FROM GETHSEMANI ABBEY

by **Elsie F. Mayer**

I
Knobs ring moss-clad walls
that ring bells poised for ringing
canonical time.

II
Roused surface of pond
splinters lustrous image
of distorted self.

III
Silence reigns humbly
over dissonance of sound
beyond the choir stalls.

IV
Buried in dawn's mist
white oaks hide from human eye
'til coaxed out by sun

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