

RETHINKING HIROSHIMA WITH THOMAS MERTON (VARIATIONS ON *ORIGINAL CHILD BOMB*)

by **Elsie F. Mayer**

While Enola Gay, his mother-to-be, waited elsewhere — dumb, hollow,
wise men argued the fate of Little Boy, a prodigy biding in the desert.

The breeders: “Hide him in the reeds, or our foes will kidnap him.”

The timid: “Drown him. Like a jealous monster he may crush his maker.”

The flaunters: “Display him on the midway before the spectators, tiring of the current show, stop the flow of
coins.”

Where were the peacemakers, debating *Satyagraha* with lips pursed?

Victorious, the flaunters ordered a dress rehearsal: “Film it
for the sacred archives, christen it *Trinity*.”

Little boy fell, a fireball one mile wide; his shirt, white-light swirling,
rising, swelling until it towered a titan over an earth scorched to stillness.

The taste of victory hastened the spectacle: “Stuff him in his mother’s womb,
study *Trinity*, pray before entering the delivery room.”

As if knowing this his big performance, Little Boy seared streets to ash,
from his cloud rained flames on morning mist, scented air with stench
of charred flesh, darkened the city with light.

The holy ones — were they blinded by his radiance?

“Little Boy dropped by Enola on cue,” the message read.

Wise men applauded: “Our boy wodner! Had not the Prophet foretold
miracles greater than his own?”

And the women, should not they, versed in nursery ways, have sensed him
an abomination? A babe’s first cradle lies in water, not fire.

T0o late, too late, too late

blessed the disemboweled without memory
blessed the lame with arms spared
blessed the lone bird chanting a night song at noon
blessed the babe sucking curdled milk
blessed the grass singed to silence.