

PRADES

(Merton's Birthplace)

by **Kenneth M. Voiles**

Strong streets of sapphire,
 Songs from dumb stones:
 Primordial place of a passion's fire-catching
 Hearth to a heaven's voice.
 Full of French-Spanish soliloquy and saber.
 Full of flood of vine and hollow rapture.

Narrow paths of stark direction,
 Myriad sounds saying "doctrine":
 Ancient place of a faith's secret dwelling,
 Tomb to a rising wind.
 Full of old bells keeping an imperious time.
 Full of wood of Cross and poor waiting.

Tom's house of lost structure,
 Merton's borough of lost youth:
 Artistic place of a father's water-coloring,
 Mother to a life in books.
 Full of future memories and phantoms faded.
 Full of breath of Spirit and hope of meeting.



PLAQUE on MERTON's BIRTHPLACE

Kenneth M. Voiles lives in Englewood, Colorado. A member of The International Thomas Merton Society, he served on the Program Committee for the Third General Meeting held in Colorado in 1993. He is the author of articles and poems on Merton, including "The Colorization of Merton" (*Merton Seasonal*, 1990) and "The Importance of Mary in the Spirituality of Thomas Merton" (*Spiritual Life*, 1990). He presented a paper, "'Certain Proverbs Arise Out of Dreams': Merton on Sexuality and Sexual Ethics" at the ITMS Third General Meeting and participated in the Response Sessions to Lawrence S. Cunningham's "Springboard Address" at the Fourth General Meeting.