

# Thomas Merton—Computer Hacker (A Cyber Fantasy)

By Greg Ryan

*In the process of relocating the Merton archives from their former home in Bonaventure Hall to the new Merton Center, a cache of hitherto unknown computer files, written by Thomas Merton to an unidentified correspondent, has been discovered. How Merton managed to produce these letters in the pre-desktop-computer era is something of a mystery, but perhaps just one more piece of evidence that he was ahead of his time. This revelation of the notoriously technophobic Merton as a cyber-master is even more of a mystery, but should be no more surprising than his expertise with a borrowed Canon F-X camera. In any event, the publication of the following notes is bound to have a revolutionary effect on all future Merton research.*

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July 5

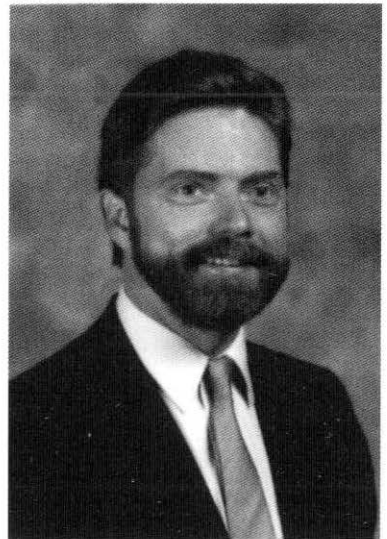
First attempt with word processor. Here goes!

I have just opened the box and found all the electronic goodies. The sleek keyboard, the RGB monitor, the printer, the CPU (or XYZ, or AT&T). ZOWIE!!!! The two disk drives should take me anywhere I want to go. This is all just fabulous. MORE LATER!

Yrs,

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Thomas Merton's computer skills may be open to question, but those of **Greg Ryan** are not. In addition to serving as editor for the *ITMS Newsletter* over the past two years, he coordinates the web page for the World Community for Christian Meditation, which can be found at <http://www.wccm.org>. This piece is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Robert E. Daggy.



GREG RYAN



Fr. M. Louis Merton O.C.S.O.



Abbey of Gethsemani  
Trappist, Kentucky

July 15

Can't believe what I've been missing out on. Now that I am squirreled away here I am more and more delighted with what this machine can do. Keyboard writes in French, Danish, Spanish, Italian, German, Swedish, French Canadian, U.K. (???), and, of course, *Amurican*. Thanks so much for the loan of all this. I will take good care of it and will make sure it is returned to you if, and whenever you would like it back. How you like this letterhead? Just today tried software. Lots of potential for Poesies, prosaics, graphos, icons, etc. Must go now. Lightning outside. No surge protector yet.

Adam A.

Adam A.

Adam A.

Adam A.

Adam A.

Adam A.

Adam A.

Adam A.

Adam A.



Fr. M. Louis Merton O.C.S.O.



Abbey of Gethsemani  
Trappist, Kentucky

August 9

The scribes will show off now. I keep legions of them in the hutch and feed them only watts. (No Alan.) Watts and watts. MEGAwatts. No need to pay bucks and doughs—just I.V. power.

You already are familiar with this ditty, but this is what it looks like with just a flip of the software switch. Man, these scribes can do it all:

HAGIA SOPHIA

There is in all things an invisible fecundity,  
a dimmed light, a meek namelessness,  
a hidden wholeness.

ἉΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ

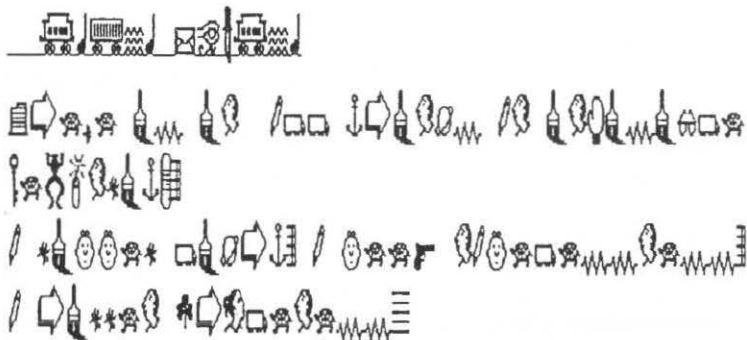
There is in all things an invisible fecundity,  
a dimmed light, a meek namelessness,  
a hidden wholeness.

HAΓIA ΣΟΦΙΑ

Τηρεῖσ ἰν ἀλλ τῆνῆσ ἀν ἰνῶσἰβλε φεχυνδἰτψ,  
α δἰμμεδ λιγητ, α μεεκ νῶμελεσσνεσσ,  
α ηἰδδεν ωηολενεσσ.

ἉΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ

There is in all things an invisible fecundity,  
a dimmed light, a meek namelessness,  
a hidden wholeness.



This last one is the “Rosetta Stone” of fonts. To crack this code you must paint the paper with liberal amounts of lemon juices. Toss it into the fire. You will hear the message crackle all through your casa. Then run outside and watch. Up your chimney—smoke signals to neighboring natives. They will come quick. On foot. Horseback. Canoe. Hang-glider. They will come from all over and say, “You got a mouse?” To which you answer, “Yes, I do. Have I got a mouse. I got a Mickey of all Mouses. Its tail is plugged right into my mathematical keyboard. This is the Magic Kingdom of Scribeland.”



# Thomas Merton

Abbey of Gethsemani  
Trappist, Kentucky



September 15

Mansion of Fonts has many rooms: Bronte, Dickenson, Fitzgerald, Hawthorne, Poe, Shakespeare, Twain, and Wilde. This comes to you through the hands of **Thoreau**. No Font of Wisdom, though. I keep looking.

Would have sent greeting long before now, but have been busy with new "little mag." Cybernetic blessings!

More later from the Apple Orchard.

The Whiz

P.S. How you like new stationery? No more ask novices to design, type, print, etc. Trained Mouse does it all. Do not even feed this mouse. Tons of CHEESE around here, but NO. He say "Fie on cheese!!" This mouse is intailigent.



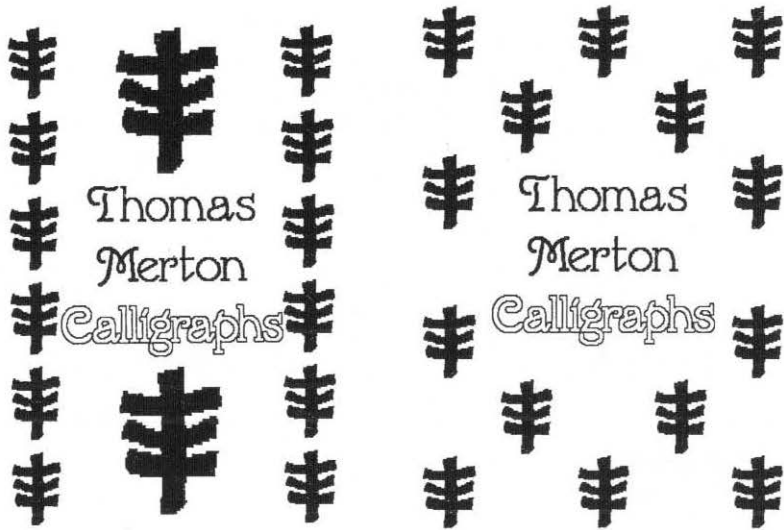
## Fr. M. Louis Merton O.C.S.O.

Abbey of Gethsemani  
Trappist, Kentucky



December

Snow is falling now and thought of you basking in the warm rays. Am sending along some proofs for new VVVISSUUAALLLL project. The trained mouse and the CPU and the silverware, that is, outeware, or overware, NUTS, *software*!! make quick work of layouts and etc. Don't like one way?? Try other way. Or other. Or other. Or..... This first has words and pix done on computer. Ink and brush still just fine.



These fun, too! First graphic (hacker lingo) solid. Very solid. Next one: same graphik but looking through venetian blind at grafik. Next one: same graphik, but this time through screen door. (Could also do these in any color.)



Now I must go shovel snow roff woof—"off roof" as you say or, rather, don't say with slanting rays and all.

HoHoHo!  
Mack N. Tosh



January 19

You think I got no colors? Man, I got colors! I got tints and shades and hues and densities and values—I got the greatest values. I got hundreds, thousands, millions of colors. ZILLIONZ. BAbillions... I can change colors in a flip and a flap. I can print in a mirror image. Or upside-down image. Or no image. I can. Icon. Icon. Icons in black and white or glorious color. Or different sizes. Giants. Gnomes. Which you want. I am the master of vari-sizes, vari-color, variegated verisimilitudes.

Anyone see this stuff and say, “WHA’???” Just tell them to go jump in the POND. Tell them GO jump in the typing pool. Tell them Go build yourself a better mousetrap. I got my own. Gotta go find megacheese for the Mick. More later.

W. Diznee



Thomas Merton

Abbey of Gethsemani  
Trappist, Kentucky



January 30

Laser printer just arrived. Modem still on bench. Should be working again any day now.

Summa on Bob Dylan finally finished. [“Something Is Happening But You Don’t Know What It Is, Do You, Abbot Jones?”] It’s safely saved on disk along with the wild graphiks. Will try and print it out on new printer tomorrow and bring it over to Brother Alexander G. Bell to fax it to you a.s.a.p.

More later.

IIGS