

## Two Poems from "Pieces of a Broken Jar"

By Chris McDonnell

### Proverb Place

*This is everything that a September day ought to be.  
Brilliant blue sky, kind sun, cool wind in the pines.*

*Thomas Merton: A Vow of Conversation*

Christ of woods  
of trees  
and forest

Christ of leaves  
of darkness  
and damp

Christ of sunrise  
of dawn  
and mist morning

Christ of brightness  
of noontime  
and warmth

Christ of evening  
of sunset  
and stillness

Christ of space  
between solitude  
and silence

Christ of emptiness  
of clearing  
beyond Other

Christ of inner peace  
our Being  
and end.



**Chris McDonnell**

---

**Chris McDonnell**, head teacher of a primary school in Staffordshire, England, has published six volumes of poetry. The poems included here are part of a sequence on Thomas Merton; other poems in the series appeared in *The Merton Seasonal* 22.4 (Winter 1997).

## The No-Time of Sleep

*One can pretend in the solitude of an afternoon walk,  
But the night alone destroys all pretences.*

*Thomas Merton: A Vow of Conversation*

Turning	to a single room
	when the work of day
is	finished
	when wood is cut
and	prayer time done
	when words are written
or	letters read
then	it is time to sleep

Outside	stillness settles
beyond	these night trees
a	full white moon
	rises over the hill

here	in this scant space
	is the no-time of sleep

*no more*

*the muffled sounds of medical concern  
the gentle hum of lights  
and the caring machines*

*the movement down corridors  
and the urgent night call bleep seeking help*

here	the aloneness
	that is a matter of personal discretion
confirms	your singular choice
and	wires that carried voices
over	distance
are	silent in the sea of night