

Silence

By **Frederick Smock**

“Silence has many dimensions”
– Thomas Merton

Silence is another country,
a place apart. Hospitable
and green, where you will be

taken in, bathed and fed,
and your name – your true name –
spoken by the flowers.

Like illness, silence has its own
rules, which are nowhere
written down, yet must be obeyed.

Silence is about character,
not intelligence – the fat-faced
peony will not show itself

to just anyone. The poet’s job
is not to speak, but to listen,
so things will speak through him.

Sho-tetsu wrote thirty thousand
poems! Hurrah,
we say – he listened well.

Frederick Smock is poet-in-residence at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. He is currently at work on a new book entitled *Pax Intransitibus: A Meditation on the Poetry of Thomas Merton*.



Frederick Smock