

Two Falling Blossoms: Merton, Meister Eckhart and Zen.

By Patrick Eastman

Preface

The title of this paper, “Two Falling Blossoms,” comes from a poem entitled “Stranger” included in Thomas Merton’s 1957 volume *The Strange Islands*.¹ In it he begins by speaking of the natural world just being exactly what it is. In other words it expresses the “isness” or “suchness” of the natural world. The poem goes on to give a description of an awareness of pure being beyond subject and object as an unmediated or direct experience of the Absolute. The reference to the two falling blossoms thus reminds me of the natural way that the “suchness” of Merton and of Meister Eckhart points us towards this contemplative experience. Let’s take a moment to listen to Merton’s poem:

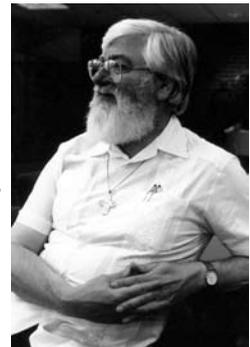
When no one listens
To the quiet trees
When no one notices
The sun in the pool

Where no one feels
The first drop of rain
Or sees the last star

Or hails the first morning
Of a giant world
Where peace begins
And rages end:

One bird sits still
Watching the work of God:
One turning leaf,
Two falling blossoms.
Ten circles upon the pond.

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Patrick Eastman

One cloud upon the hillside,
 Two shadows in the valley
 And the light strikes home.
 Now dawn commands the capture
 Of the tallest fortune,
 The surrender
 Of no less marvelous prize!

Closer and clearer
 Than any wordy master,
 Thou inward Stranger
 Whom I have never seen,

Deeper and clearer
 Than the clamorous ocean,
 Seize up my silence
 Hold me in Thy Hand!

Now act is waste
 And suffering undone
 Laws become prodigals
 Limits are torn down
 For envy has no property
 And passion is none.

Look, the vast Light stands still
 Our cleanest Light is One!

Two Lives: One Voice

Familiar as we may be with Thomas Merton, we might pause for a moment to just be reminded of the trajectory of his momentous life. Born on January 31, 1915, Merton was baptized Tom in the Church of England. After his somewhat riotous early years he became a member of the Roman Catholic Church on November 16, 1938 and entered the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky on December 10, 1941. He was ordained a priest on May 28, 1949 and left for his fatal trip to the East on October 15, 1968 where he was accidentally electrocuted by an electric fan in Bangkok on December 10, 1968.

Johannes Eckhart is thought to have been born in Hochheim, Germany around 1260, and he joined the Order of Preachers as a Dominican friar in 1275 at their house in Cologne. He later went to Paris, and studied in the intense religious milieu there, until sometime before 1298. He was then named Prior at Erfurt and Vicar General of Thuringia only to return to Paris in 1302 where he received the title of “Meister” of sacred theology. In 1303 he returned to Erfurt and was made Provincial for Saxony and in 1307 he was appointed Vicar General of Bohemia, returning to Paris for the third time in 1311. His final move was to Strasbourg in 1314 where he had many important duties including the responsibility of oversight for the Beguines, loose associations of lay communities for women whose membership included many well-known female spiritual writers and from whom Eckhart probably learned a great deal. He died in

1327 after a very influential albeit controversial career as a theologian and teacher. Meister Eckhart's influence is deeply felt today: for instance in October, 1985 Pope John Paul II quoted his wisdom, saying, "Did not Eckhart teach his disciples 'that all that God asks you most pressingly is to go out of your self—and let God be God in you?'"² Eckhart and the Eckhart Society were also commended by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, England in 2006: "Meister Eckhart is an encouragement to believers and unbelievers alike. By exploring and promoting the insights of this profound and perplexing Dominican, the Eckhart Society helps us to probe mysteries of truth beyond language."³

Those who have drunk deeply of Merton's writings will know, but others may ask, whether Merton was familiar with the writings of the fourteenth-century mystic, Meister Eckhart. Erlinda Paguio in her essay on Merton's study of Meister Eckhart⁴ points out that Merton began to read Eckhart during his time at Columbia University in 1938. This eventually led to his concentrated study of him in 1966 during his time in hospital for surgery on his back. Paguio notes that in a letter to Etta Gullick (an English spiritual writer) during 1963, Merton writes of Eckhart: "I think more and more of him. He towers over all his century."⁵ Later in 1966 from hospital he writes again to Mrs. Gullick, "In the hospital I have read a lot of Eckhart and am more and more convinced of his greatness" (*HGL* 375). Perhaps Merton's greatest accolade to Eckhart can be read in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, where he writes:

There are people one meets in books or in life whom one does not merely observe, meet, or know. A deep resonance of one's entire being is immediately set up with the entire being of the other . . . heart speaks to heart in the wholeness of the language of music; true friendship is a kind of singing. . . . [M]usic, most deep with me [includes]: Blake, Tauler, Eckhart, Ruysbroeck (Maritain gets in here, too, with Raissa doing most of the singing). Coomaraswamy sings with any of them. They sang me into the Church, these voices.⁶

Merton not only includes Eckhart as one with whom he resonates but goes on to suggest that he "sang [him] into the Church." Perhaps this musical analogy is appropriate here, with the hope that Merton, Eckhart and Zen may, like a musical trio, create an enchanting melody that will serenade every one of us into an ever-deepening commitment to a contemplative spiritual practice. These two giants of the spiritual life are obviously separated by some five hundred years so there is a marked difference in the social, philosophical and theological conditions prevailing in their lives. However Oliver Davies, a contemporary medieval scholar, states in his article "Thomas Merton and Meister Eckhart": "I view them as two of the individuals who have become paradigmatic for the age in which they lived. When we look back to the past, to the fourteenth century, we see Meister Eckhart as one of the dominant figures of that period. And in the modern world, Thomas Merton seems to be one of the representative spiritual journeyers of today."⁷

God Within

Almost twenty years ago I had the privilege of spending ten wonderful days in Merton's hermitage at Gethsemani. Each afternoon I went for a walk on a path through the woods behind the hermitage. On one occasion I noticed that there was a monk from the abbey walking towards me. Careful not to disturb his silence I moved to one side of the narrow path. As we passed he simply said, "Father, just tell them that God is not out there!" This was to become one of those disclosure moments which has continued to be at the heart of my own spiritual exploration and teaching. I am convinced that the awareness of God's indwelling presence plays an essential role in the orientation of a person's life.

Eckhart's Description of God

Before we can begin our exploration of the way Merton and Eckhart describe this indwelling presence of God, we need to uncover the distinction that Eckhart makes between “God” and “Godhead.” Oliver Davies clarifies Eckhart’s teaching very succinctly:

Eckhart’s discussion of the nature of God is from the idea of God as being, as absolute being, to an understanding of God as the transcendent cause of being, and finally as the principle of self-knowing, self-possessing intellect [*in today’s language this means consciousness*] infinitely above being. . . . This is expressed in Eckhart’s arresting concept of divine nature as a distinction between “God” and “Godhead.” God and Godhead are as far apart from each other as heaven and earth. “God” on the one hand is active, for it is he who created us and who holds us in being, whereas the “Godhead” on the other, is beyond all action and is unknowable, it is God as God is in God’s own self.⁸

Eckhart is, without doubt, a most creative, complex and provocative writer. He manages to combine the academic language of scholastic theology with the mystical language of contemplative experience. In order that we aren’t left with the impression that Eckhart is talking of two Gods we need to carefully note that when he uses the word “God” he is referring to God in his action in creation. Eckhart is careful to point out that it is in the action of God that, as creatures, we are distinguished from God. Eckhart uses the term *Gotheit*, which is usually translated as “Godhead,” to describe the very essence or “suchness” of God. He writes: “All creatures speak of ‘God.’ And why do they not speak of the Godhead? All that is in the Godhead is one, and we cannot speak of it. God is active and does things, while the Godhead does nothing, for there is no activity in it, nor has it ever sought any activity” (quoted in Davies 46).

Incarnation

For Merton, the whole monastic tradition is thoroughly Christocentric in its approach to prayer, and it is important to be aware that this is also true of Eckhart. The Incarnation, the birth of Jesus as the Son of God, is the root mystery in all Eckhart’s teaching. He writes: “Why did God become human? – I would answer, in order that God may be born in the soul, and the soul be born in God. For that reason all the Scriptures were written. God created the world and all angelic natures, so that God may be born in the soul and the soul be born in God.”⁹ Eckhart here is merely echoing the ancient tradition of “*Theosis*” which is first found in St. Irenaeus in the second century and St. Athanasius in the fourth. It can be best summarized in the words: “God became human in order that human beings may become divine.”¹⁰ This birthing Eckhart asserts is simply a participation in the one birth. It is a continual birthing by the constant fecundity of God. In other words God may be best likened to a constantly birthing mother.

A Spark as the Ground of Being

In Merton’s *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, immediately following his oft-described experience of a profound love for all the people in Louisville as he stood on the corner of Fourth and Walnut, he goes on to write: “I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality” (CGB 142). He then follows this with a reference to the expression “*le point vierge*” which he uses to explain that:



Fourth and Walnut – circa 1958

At the centre of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point of nothingness and of *absolute poverty* is the pure glory of God in us. It is so to speak His name written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our dependence, as our sonship. It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely. . . . I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere (CGB 142).

This description has much in common with Meister Eckhart's description of the Godhead who is the "Ground of our Being." In his frequent references to the ineffable divine presence in each human person Eckhart uses a number of different words or images. Sometimes he uses a word meaning "fortress" or "the ground of being" or the "spark of the soul." Sometimes he refers to it in terms very much like those used by St. Thomas Aquinas: "as an innate and inextinguishable inclination for good" (Davies 48). Sometimes he goes even further by stressing the affinity with God which the human soul possesses.

Care must be taken to not think of God as some sort of being. Eckhart reminds us that God is not just another being, albeit a "super-sized" one. God is rather the essence of all "beingness." This is something which Eckhart will surely have learned from the theology of Thomas Aquinas. In his book *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master* Robert Barron shows that Aquinas is very clear that, in creating everything out of nothing, God does not even use his own being.¹¹ Therefore, creation is simply a movement from non-being to being. In other words God is the fullness of reality and whatever exists must have received the whole of their being from God and nothing else. Barron further makes his point by saying: "First, since God truly creates, there is absolutely no aspect of finite reality that does not flow from the divine source. There is nothing in the world, in nature, in the cosmos, in us, that is not, in every detail, the result of God's creative act. There is, consequently, nothing that is finally 'secular' or 'profane'; instead, everything is, in principle, at the root of its being, sacred" (Barron 115).

We can now move on to follow the way Eckhart describes the very presence of the "suchness" of the Godhead as the "Ground of being." Remember here that words are being used to describe what is essentially indescribable. Words are, as the saying goes, just "fingers pointing to the moon." Speaking out of his own thought and experience Eckhart uses the word "spark" to indicate the divine presence. In his teaching Eckhart goes on to say: "The soul receives its being directly from God. Therefore God is close to the soul, closer than it is to itself. Therefore God is present in the ground of the soul in the whole of his divinity" (quoted in Davies 48). He goes on to point out the inadequacy of even using the word "spark." He says that the divine image is neither this nor that but entirely free and solitary just as the Divine image itself. Here are the words of Eckhart in the sermon just quoted: "It is free of all names and has no form; it is completely free and solitary, as God is free and solitary to himself. It is entirely unified and one, as God is unified and one" (quoted in Davies 48-49). Here Eckhart is echoing the thought of the fifth-century Syrian mystic Dionysius who tells us that we can talk about what God *does* but not about who God *is*. The Godhead, after all, is unnameable and utter mystery. It is this Godhead which is the Ground of our Being, or as Merton puts it, "le point vierge." The Zen tradition in turn speaks of it as "our own true nature" or charmingly as "our original face before our parents were born." The important fact to remember is that this is something which words cannot adequately describe. The "spark" is present in the soul through the process of birthing. This is graphically described

by Eckhart as like a “pot of water boiling over.” His commentary on the Book of Exodus explains it like this: “The repetition of ‘I am who I am’ shows the purity of the affirmation of God to the exclusion of all negation . . . for life means a kind of overflowing, in which something swells within itself, first pervading itself utterly, every particle, before spilling out, overflowing” (quoted in Davies 43).

Eckhart also reminds his readers and us that there is only one God who is utterly unified and it is this Oneness which is present in the soul so that the soul and God are one. The most dramatic teaching from Eckhart then is that this spark within makes the human person not simply united to, but absolutely one with God. He makes this quite clear in a sermon: “The soul is one with God and not united. . . . [T]he soul becomes one with God and not united, for where God is, there the soul is and where the soul is, there God is” (Walshe 2.225). Interestingly the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in a talk¹² delightfully translates the German word usually translated as “spark” with the words “twinkle” or “sparkle.” So he informs us that Eckhart is in fact saying that “in the depth of us all there is a twinkle or sparkle which can be likened to the sparks from a fire or as flashes of light!” In his description of “le point vierge,” Merton, like Eckhart; refers to the interior presence of God as a “spark.” The absolute unity of the soul with the Godhead is definitively affirmed as he also speaks of “flashes of light.” “It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely” (CGB 142). (This, of course, was long before George Bush senior used such a phrase!)

The Response

All this metaphysical and contemplative information may seem a bit too wordy and theoretical. More than we needed to know! But having heard it all we must now look at the practicalities of how this may be incorporated into our own lives. Zen teachers will all resolutely point us towards a physical practice that is well-tried over countless generations. In a similar fashion Merton, from his own experience, calls his hearers to a silent sitting, without words and images. In his essay “A Christian Looks at Zen” he indicates that sitting zazen is perfectly acceptable for a Christian: “Is it therefore possible to say that both Christians and Buddhists can equally well practice Zen? Yes, if by Zen we mean precisely the quest for direct and pure experience on a metaphysical level, liberated from verbal formulas and linguistic preconceptions.”¹³ Developing this further Merton makes a sharp criticism of a cerebral Christianity that is trapped in the head and devoid of an awareness of the indwelling of our living, creator God. Merton very clearly expresses the need to get beyond thinking that Christianity is merely an affirmative response to a series of dogmas. “[O]bsession with doctrinal formulas, juridical order and ritual exactitude has often made people forget that the heart of Catholicism, too, is a *living experience* of unity in Christ which far transcends all conceptual formulations. What too often has been overlooked, in consequence, is that Catholicism is the taste and experience of eternal life” (ZBA 39). Merton tells us quite forcibly that to reduce Catholic Christianity to a system of truths and moral regulations is to utterly distort the Christian message and even life itself. To do so, he suggests, is to reduce Christianity to a worldview or a religious philosophy devoid of any awareness of the intimate presence of God within. Life is not about saying or thinking the right answers. Such a “Christian experience becomes one of anxious hope – a struggle with occasional doubt of the ‘right answers,’ a painful and constant effort to meet the severe demands of morality and law, and a somewhat desperate recourse to the sacraments which are there to help the weak who must constantly fall and rise again” (ZBA 41). Now we know only too well that Christianity is a religion based on revelation, on the belief that God communicates God’s own self to us in tangible, recognizable forms: the Church, liturgy,

scripture, sacraments, dogmas, religious orders and societies, different kinds of pastoral and apostolic activity. It may be true that God is present in all these things, and is revealed in them and through them, but surely they are not the reality or essence of God. So both Eckhart and Merton like all good Zen teachers force us to let go of all conceptual thinking. Eckhart even prays that “God will rid me of God,” meaning that he may be able to let go of all his ideas or images of God in order to encounter the reality of the God who is beyond all conceptual thought. The only way to encounter this divine spark of pure love within is through silence and beyond thought. After all, God is not who we *think* God is.

Using a story about Abraham found in the Hebrew Scriptures as an example, Eckhart also speaks forcibly of the need for a self-emptying of all the concerns and images of the mind. In one of his sermons he explains to the listeners that:

God’s image, the Son of God, is in the ground of the soul like a living fountain. But if anyone throws earth, that is, earthly desire upon it, it is impeded and covered up, so that one cannot recognize anything of it or be aware of it. Yet it remains living in itself, and when the earth that has been thrown upon it from outside is taken away, it appears and one becomes aware of it. . . . [I]t is written that Abraham had dug living wells in his field, and evil-doers filled them with earth; but later when the earth was thrown out, the wells flowed again.¹⁴

Meister Eckhart would have us enter the silence then by detachment from all “creatures” (Davies 61) – namely all thought – in order to enter an apophatic silence without words or images on a “pathless path” – a “pathless path” because there is nowhere we have to travel towards but, as the twelfth-century Zen master Dogen says, “to take the backward step.”¹⁵ Meister Eckhart says “to go back where you come from.” As an illustration of this he tells the story of the young Jesus being lost; his parents, being unable to find him among family and friends, only found him when they went back to where they had come from. For ourselves we have to take the backward step to enter into the utter simplicity of silence and in the emptiness encounter the kindling of the spark.

Poetry

Robert Barron in his book *And Now I See: A Theology of Transformation* points out that the mystery of the Absolute and utter transcendence is best described by poets.¹⁶ It will be no surprise then that over recent years Merton’s poems have taken on a greater significance for me. Apart from detecting the maturing of his spiritual insight there are many poems written out of his contemplative and Zen-influenced experience that capture well the ineffable language of contemplative prayer. Sr. Thérèse Lentfoehr in her book *Words and Silence: On the Poetry of Thomas Merton*,¹⁷ and Bonnie Thurston in her essay “The Light Strikes Home: Notes on the Zen Influence in Merton’s Poetry,” included in the recently published collection *Merton and Buddhism*,¹⁸ have been particularly helpful in drawing out the rich treasures to be found in this area of Merton’s writing. From the collection of Merton’s poems first published in 1957 along with the poem “Stranger” quoted at the beginning of this essay, I am also struck by another poem that speaks profoundly of the poverty and simplicity of the silence necessary for the apprehension of the utter silence of God within:

When in the soul of the serene disciple
With no more Fathers to imitate
Poverty is a success,

It is a small thing to say the roof is gone:
He has not even a house.

Stars, as well as friends,
Are angry with the noble ruin.
Saints depart in several directions.

Be still:
There is no longer any need of comment.
It was a lucky wind
That blew away his halo with his cares,
A lucky sea that drowned his reputation.

Here you will find
Neither a proverb nor a memorandum.
There are no ways,
No methods to admire
Where poverty is no achievement.
His God lives in his emptiness like an affliction.

What choice remains?
Well, to be ordinary is not a choice:
It is the usual freedom
Of men without visions. (*SI* 86; *CP* 279)

From Contemplation to Action

In a letter to Etta Gullick in England in 1961 Merton writes, “There is more in one sermon of Eckhart than in volumes of other people. There is so much packed in between the lines” (*HGL* 343). Certainly there is so much more that could be said about Eckhart’s and Merton’s teaching on contemplative prayer and the mystical way of awakening to our total oneness with the Absolute. However it is essential that we do not avoid making reference to the other half of the story, without which the teaching would be incomplete and defective. Eckhart you will remember was part of a religious community whose lives combined both contemplation and action. It is hardly surprising then that Eckhart says that “God is born in you in order that God can act in you properly” (Williams). Eckhart was perhaps inspired by the work of the Beguines among the poor of his time and was made aware of a saying by the twelfth-century Benedictine (later Cistercian) monk William of St. Thierry who writes, “Love of truth sends us to God; and the truth of love sends us back to the world” (Williams). Here it is worth noting the very different interpretation that Eckhart puts on the Martha and Mary story of the gospels. There is no spiritual writer other than Eckhart and Teresa of Avila who states that Martha is the one to be imitated here. All others tell us that Mary is the one to follow. For Eckhart, Martha is the example of the integrated person who highlights the fact that the whole point of contemplation is to allow God to act freely within. The integration of contemplation and action is clear in Merton as suggested in his *Thoughts in Solitude*: “If you want to have a spiritual life you must unify your life. A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. . . . To unify your life unify your desires. To spiritualize your life, spiritualize your desires.”¹⁹ After the experience at Fourth and Walnut in Louisville, Merton becomes

a splendid example of one whose contemplative experience drives him to be deeply involved in questions of social justice in the life of the world. We do not have time to go into detail of how he did this but suffice it to say he heard the cries of the poor in his time and responded with solidarity and encouragement of all those who opposed racism, war, nuclear bombs, violence and poverty. In the preface to the Japanese edition of *The Seven Storey Mountain* he clarifies his position to those who would have him leave the monastery for social action:

[T]he monastery is not an “escape” from the world. On the contrary, by being in the monastery I take my true part in all the struggles and sufferings of the world. To adopt a life that is essentially non-assertive, non-violent, a life of humility and peace is in itself a statement of one’s position. . . . I make monastic silence a protest against the lies of politicians, propagandists and agitators, and when I speak it is to deny that my faith and my Church can ever seriously be aligned with these forces of injustice and destruction. But it is true, nevertheless, that the faith in which I believe is also invoked by many who believe in war, believe in racial injustices, believe in self-righteous and lying forms of tyranny. My life must, then, be a protest against these also, and perhaps against these most of all.²⁰

In conclusion then, we are surely faced full-square with the question of our own response. Is there a not an urgent message for us all in the words of Merton, Eckhart and Zen to follow the mystical way not for our own sake but for the sake of the world in which we live?

1. Thomas Merton, *The Strange Islands* (New York: New Directions, 1957) 101-102; subsequent references will be cited as “*SI*” parenthetically in the text; Thomas Merton, *Collected Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1977) 289-90; subsequent references will be cited as “*CP*” parenthetically in the text.
2. John Paul II, from a talk in a seminar on the ecclesial mission of Adrienne von Speyr (October 1985).
3. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, from a letter to the Eckhart Society (February 2006).
4. Erlinda Paguio, “Blazing in the Spark of God: Thomas Merton’s References to Meister Eckhart,” *The Merton Annual* 5 (1992) 247-62.
5. Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love: Letters on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985) 356; subsequent references will be cited as “*HGL*” parenthetically in the text.
6. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966) 170.
7. Oliver Davies, “Thomas Merton and Meister Eckhart,” *The Merton Journal* 4.2 (Advent 1997) 15.
8. Oliver Davies, *God Within: The Mystical Tradition of Northern Europe* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) 46; subsequent references will be cited as “Davies” parenthetically in the text.
9. Meister Eckhart, *Sermons & Treatises*, ed. and trans. M. O’C. Walshe, 3 vols. (Boston: Element Books, 1991) 1.215; subsequent references will be cited as “Walshe” parenthetically in the text.
10. St. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, 54.
11. Robert Barron, *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master* (New York: Crossroad, 1996) 115; subsequent references will be cited as “Barron” parenthetically in the text.
12. Archbishop Rowan Williams, quoted from a audio recording of a talk entitled “The Spiritual Writings of Meister Eckhart,” part of the series “The Bristol Lectures on Spiritual Theology” (Bristol: Adrian Jay Productions, 2002); subsequent references will be cited as “Williams” parenthetically in the text.
13. Thomas Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (New York: New Directions, 1968) 44; subsequent references will be cited as “*ZBA*” parenthetically in the text.
14. Quoted in Cyprian Smith, *The Way of Paradox: Spiritual Life as Taught by Meister Eckhart* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1987) 22.
15. *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, Book 1, trans. Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross (Woods Hole, MA: Windbell Publications, 1994) 280.

16. Robert Barron, *And Now I See: A Theology of Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1998) 93.
17. Thérèse Lentfoehr, *Words and Silence: On the Poetry of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1979).
18. Bonnie Thurston, "The Light Strikes Home: Notes on the Zen Influence in Merton's Poetry," in Bonnie Thurston, ed., *Merton & Buddhism: Wisdom, Emptiness & Everyday Mind* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2007) 199-213.
19. Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958) 56.
20. Thomas Merton, "Honorable Reader": *Reflections on My Work*, ed. Robert E. Daggy (New York: Crossroad, 1989) 65-66.