

Brother Harold

By Michael Henson

My cousin the monk
 sits in a garden chair
 and stares out to the hills.
 He watches the cars out on Monks Road
 and the pilgrim who sets out for a hike to the Statues.
 He watches the shadows stalk the hillside
 and watches the sunlight
 pick its way
 among the dogwoods
 leaf by leaf
 twig by twig.
 But he cannot tell you what he sees.
 He has lost the words.
 The lovely white walls,
 the white crosses in the graveyard
 the white petals that sometimes drift in the wind,
 the green radiance that enfolds him at dusk
 – they have all lost their names.
 He cannot find the words
 that would bring them to you.
 This is a great sorrow,
 for he once could tell you things
 that could open your heart
 like an orchid.
 No matter –
 We can talk.
 We can talk.
 But I think that
 at the end of all talk
 there is only one word.
 And only One can speak it.



Michael Henson

Michael Henson lives in Cincinnati and is the author of two books of fiction, *Ransack* (West End Press, 1987) and *A Small Room with Trouble on My Mind* (West End Press, 1983), and of two books of verse, *The Tao of Longing* (Dos Madres Press, 2006) and *Crow Call* (West End Press, 2007). His work has appeared in *The Cincinnati Review*, the *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Red Crow Poetry Journal*, *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*, *Wind*, and other publications. His poem “A Blessing” was an honorable mention selection for the 2000 Thomas Merton Prize for Poetry of the Sacred.