

Urge to Travel A Found Poem*

By **Scott Dalgarno**

Fr. George came bursting in. Made signs of
“Thank you” three or four times, and departed.
Last night he came down and wandered around

the monastery. Reverend Father, who used to be
the infirmarian, says that sometimes, when
they are near death, they get the urge to travel.

There was a Brother Mary up there who used to be
the gatekeeper. He was dying. He had a wooden leg
and cane. He used to take his cane and go clumping

around instead of staying in bed. They hid his wooden
leg. He found it behind the door, and put it on
and got going. They hid it again, in a closet

where he couldn’t find it. He lay in bed waving
his hands and making signs, “The cane! The cane!”
There was another Brother who was dying. It was summer,

and very hot. He was in bed with very few clothes on.
They found him walking out of the infirmary with nothing
on but a shirt. “Where are you going?” they asked him.

“Nebraska!” he said.

*From a March 15, 1949 journal entry of Thomas Merton (*Entering the Silence* 292).



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