

## My Novices: Late 1950s

By Paul Quenon, OCSO

Young men came  
 looking for  
 – don't know what –  
 Left the place  
 looking for  
 – don't know what –  
 Of these I had no regrets.

Some came, seemed like  
 looking –  
 heard some talk about  
 – what –  
 stayed awhile  
 and left  
 talking like – Well, –  
 like somewhat.

Serious young men came looking.  
 took up talk about,  
 – don't know what –  
 stayed long and left  
 talking  
 about everything what-not.

Some came completely  
 clear and sure about  
 what –  
 Those I sent away.



**Paul Quenon**

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**Paul Quenon, OCSO**, a monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani, was a novice under Thomas Merton in the 1950s. He is a photographer and the author of three books of poetry, *Terrors of Paradise* (1996), *Laughter, My Purgatory* (2002) and *Monkswear* (2008). He coordinates the local chapter of the ITMS that meets at the abbey.

Silent young men, a few,  
came looking for –  
don't know what –  
stayed  
and kept on looking  
stayed and never got to  
what –  
wore out,  
died,  
had never stopped looking for  
what –  
For these I have no regrets.

All of these I loved, but  
seems the part I loved about them best  
was –  
don't know what –