

## Merton's Choir

By Catherine Racine

He calls today from the tall shadows of Gethsemani  
 Where Jesus cried before he said goodbye;  
 Humming through the cool earth  
 Deep beneath the hermitage  
 Where the pilgrims come in busloads to quench  
 Their thirst for silence and look at his chair.

Spinning like atoms all the way from Kentucky,  
 To sing this bright morning in my tiny garden,  
 He sounds like a Russian choir  
 Through the fading lavender and unkempt chives  
 Through the lace leaves of the high pink cosmos  
 Through the succulent stems of the apricot dahlias  
 Bent to the ground but still,  
 It is a miracle, unbroken.

His voice is clear as spring water  
 On the parched surface of my desert heart  
 That flinches even while it drinks and drinks.  
 I am cowed by his urgency and  
 All the words  
 He sowed and tilled  
 With his draft-horse strength  
 To the very last day  
 Though he always doubted the harvest.  
 He would laugh to see it now.

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**Catherine Racine** is a Canadian from Vancouver now living in England and pursuing doctoral studies in Spirituality, Theology and Mental Health at Durham University. Her current focus is on mysticism, and clinicians' experience of love within the therapeutic process. A feminist counsellor and writer, she has published on mystical experience in *Women and Therapy*, and in 2008 was published in the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*. Research interests include the intersection of mystical experience and clinical practice, Buddhism, storytelling, and grief and loss. She is currently working on a volume of poetry about her mother.



**Catherine Racine**

But today he sings and I listen,  
Rooted and rioting like  
A poplar tree thrashing in the wind.

Rise up and do your work  
For God's sake  
Learn to cast your beauty thus  
Banish the timidity  
Share your fire like these unstinting  
Creatures made for love and insurrection,  
From the first budding moment  
Until the petals fall like snow around.  
Heed them and go free.