

Rest Easy, Tom Merton

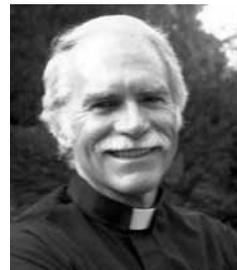
By **J. T. Ledbetter**

Tom Merton, liver of life and lover of God,
 where did you sleep on wintry nights when flesh and bone ached
 more than the good angels singing in your breast,
 rising and falling in diaphanous folds like sweet lake water?

Who would want some days remembered?
 Better locked away in attic albums where the old ones stare out,
 their eyes red and fierce in the dark, their words a banked fire
 against small sins and great graces stored up. A life's work of saving.

It is God, alone who remembers and forgets in the same heaven and earth-
 creating breath. So you, Tom Merton, shuffling along
 with your notebook tucked in your robe and meter on your tongue,
 rest easy. If not, try writing. Better yet, singing.
 Rest easy, Tom. The attics are gone with their whispers,
 and the rings from the secrets you threw into Monk's Pond – circling you
 like moons as you swam through the echo of sun left on the water – run
 down your naked back as you wade out heaven's healing pond into the
 sweet Kentucky night with Aves on your lips,
 the Angelus calling you home.

J. T. Ledbetter, winner the 2011 Idaho Prize for Poetry, has retired after many years teaching at California Lutheran University. His most recent collection of poems is *Underlying Premises* (2010) and a new collection, *Old and Lost Rivers*, will be published by Lost Horse Press in spring, 2012.



J. T. Ledbetter