

## GETHSEMANI ABBEY

—by J. T. Ledbetter

the late sun on the leaves  
 dapples the white crosses  
 beside the old walls

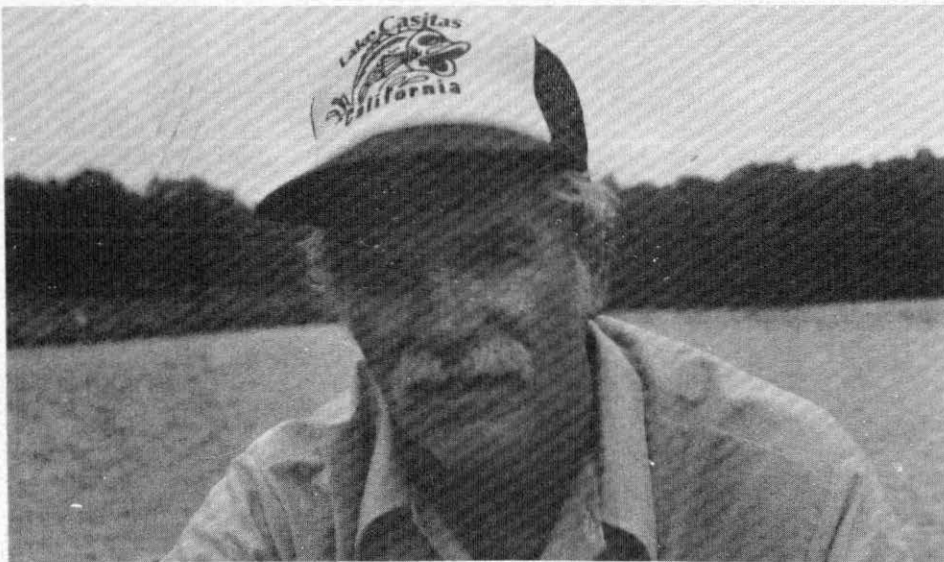
tonight the moon will be full  
 again and I will lie awake  
 thinking of you my God  
 wondering if I can go home now  
 if a week is long enough  
 to burn my sins out of me  
 whether praying the hours  
 at 3:15 in the morning  
 in the cold church  
 is enough  
 watching the Brothers in the light  
 of the candles  
 waiting for Mass  
 on my knees  
 listening for God

“Are there other protestants here?”

(I don't know the rosary  
 but find the holy water cool  
 on my forehead)

and Father Michael moves  
 from the shadows  
 bringing Christ to me  
 watching me closely  
 holding me with his eyes

it has started to rain  
tomorrow the leaves will be wet  
in the retreatant's garden  
but the old Brother will be there  
on his knees among  
the shrubs  
lost to his brother's world in Cincinnati  
touching the earth reverently  
like a lover  
gently opening the fronds  
and I watch from the window  
of the bus back to Louisville  
full of light  
and unusual prayers  
going back where I know the liturgy  
among familiar groves of thought  
until the trees hide the Abbey  
in fold upon fold of sweet Kentucky hills  
and the white crosses  
and the old Brother beautifully lost  
there in the damp garden  
of God



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