

M. After '68

By **Daniel P. Horan, OFM**

If mutual was the choice
to separate that Fall,
how to it did each give voice?
And what was felt about that call?

He stayed around a little while,
on earth a year or more.
When they parted, did they smile?
Or know what each had in store?

What did she feel when she got the news,
when their friends called her that day?
How did she handle all the views
and disparate things others would say?

She was so much younger than he was
would have much more time than him.
Did she return to his letters, as one does,
or get lost in old thoughts on a whim?

Was time so fast or painfully slow
in the years that followed suit?
Did someone or something provide her anchor?
In what did she, if ever, take root?

A new job, new city, new life
would follow, a family and perhaps still more.
Did that loss ever heal like a cut from a knife?
Or more like a wound sustained from war?



Daniel P. Horan, OFM

Daniel P. Horan, OFM is the Duns Scotus Professor of Spirituality at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, author of numerous books including *The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton*, and a current member of the ITMS Board of Directors.

Perhaps his legacy she tuned out
avoided his face, name, and all.
Whenever he was quoted or talked about
she erected her own private wall.

Maybe she smiled, politely nodding,
giving the other hardly a clue
that he about whom they were lauding
was someone she once more than knew.
What was it like to carry the past
in a manner so private, yet true?
Did it affect how relationships would last?
How the hell did she know what to do?

Love once found, and now long lost
stays with us all the same.
For some too high is the cost,
too painful to say their name.

I've often wondered what she thought
or how she felt each day.
Was it gratitude, love, or bitterness fought?
I still wonder what she'd say.

She knew him then, and still now
like none other had before.
It's hard not to think: what if, somehow
in another life, it could have been still more.