

Last Testament

By **Thomas Alan Orr**

“The Christian liberty of the gospel should bring us all at last to that full and transcendent liberty which is beyond mere cultural differences and mere externals – and mere this or that.”

Thomas Merton, December 10, 1968

That day in Bangkok, where the monks and nuns
of East and West had joined, you spoke,
as always, truth – that worldly claims at best
are fraudulent. The forward path, you said,
turns Marx toward Christ, away from *avidya*,
and seeks a gospel liberty beyond
vicissitudes of culture – strong alembic
for troubled times, as even now we plod
so stolidly through fogs of doubt and fear.
And surely you’d have frowned to know
your closing words that day would rise
to hagiography, just like the ash
of martyrs: “So I disappear.” How strange!
And, no, you haven’t left completely, since
the conversation carries on, as if
you had invited us for tea, where talk
of hesychasm, bright with laughter, sings,
and does not leave the world behind.



Thomas Alan Orr

Thomas Alan Orr raises rabbits and writes on a farm in Indiana. He is a two-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize. His newest collection is *Tongue to the Anvil: New and Selected Poems* (Restoration Press). He has recent work appearing in *Last Stanza Poetry Journal* and *Tipton Poetry Journal*.