

Sacred Stones: Ruminations on Rubble

By Tim McHargue

1.

Bone white stones
 Chaos of a twelfth-century
 Gothic Trappist Chapter House
 Strewn across the earth
 Like rubble
 Each stone worn and rounded
 By elements of nature
 And man's avarice
 Rubbled remains
 Of an ancient arched structure
 Woven with the faint echo
 Of Gregorian
 Song lines.

2.

Jagged steel and toxic dust
 Final sustained note of anguish
 Flawed, fatal symphony of violence
 Orchestrated terror in New York
 Spew of rubble
 Of a different kind
 From an edifice
 Devoted to worldly rituals
 Of a different kind
 Commerce, microchips and money-changing
 The fiber-optic music of money
 Rendered unto technical dust
 And a somber coda
 Of tormented steel.



Tim McHargue

Tim McHargue is a counselor, school psychologist and currently director of disability services at Folsom Lake College. He has worked as a free-lance journalist, produced three collections of prose-poems and published a book on counseling in an international school. He has written articles for *The Merton Seasonal* on his visit to the site of Merton's death in Thailand and his intended stop at the Trappist monastery of Rawa Seneng in Indonesia; he is a member of the Northern California chapter of the ITMS.

3.

Monks of the Abbey of New Clairvaux
Propose in the Sacramento Valley
A seemingly preposterous project
Reconstructing the twelfth-century
Gothic monastery chapter house
Stone by carved stone
For an extravagant amount of money
For a purpose that is difficult to fathom
For the world of ordinary time
For the world of ordinary song

4.

Towers of Babel
And multi-lingua franca
Reduced to industrial debris
Emits a smoldering dirge
Crescendo of hatred and horror
Echoes from a gaping hole
Absent the soothing melody
Of monastic chant

Meanwhile, the monks tend
Humble orchards of plum and walnuts
Imagining a monument
To peace, solitude and prayerful
Twelfth-century monastic hymns
In harmony
In communion

5.

This arched edifying structure
This Gothic stone artifact
In a world rent by war
May be the very building
That demands to be rebuilt.
Stone by sacred stone.