

## 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**

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**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.