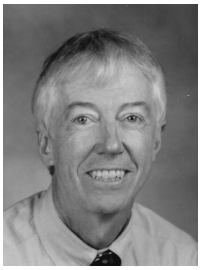
Portrait of the Writer as a Young Man: Thomas Merton's Early Publications, 1931-1941

By **Thomas T. Spencer**

Thomas Merton's early publications, prior to entering the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1941, have been generally understudied. One scholar has written in detail of Merton's early unpublished prose writings and drafts of prospective novels; and two Merton biographers have briefly assessed some of his writings as a young student at Oakham, Cambridge and Columbia.[1] But a more detailed and comprehensive look at his publications from the period 1931-1941 is lacking. Merton would no doubt say that many of his publications during this early part of his life were unremarkable, yet a closer analysis shows they reveal much about his early life and influences, his love of writing, and the skills and techniques he learned and developed that would later help make him a renowned spiritual writer. During the 1930s Merton published essays, poems, cartoons, book reviews, short stories, commentaries and letters to the editor in several school and university publications, as well as national magazines and newspapers. Collectively, they show a young man evolving and maturing as a writer, writing for different audiences in different genres, establishing an intellectual foundation that would serve him well in the future and ultimately deciding the direction his writing would take.

Merton's first known publications came at the young age of sixteen while attending Oakham School in Rutland County, England. In his third year at the school, he was named editor of the school's publication, *The Oakhamian*, after distinguishing himself in English classes.[2] These early writings, beginning in 1931, have been described by biographer Michael Mott as a "mixed lot" in both medium and quality (Mott 61), although Brother Patrick Hart, who has edited much of Merton's work, states his writing gave the magazine a more "cosmopolitan" air.[3] His editorials and poems often poked fun at Oakham culture. In one such editorial, Merton facetiously noted that Oakham societies were flourishing: "the reading society reads, the photography club photographs, and the stamp club discusses postmarks with some heat."[4] A poem entitled "A Classical Ditty" referenced the classics, an essential part of the Oakham curriculum; it begins "Sing a song of Cicero, a wordy man and vain, / He'll tell you once about himself, / And then he'll start again" (*Oakhamian* 48 [Christmas Term 1932] 26). "Lines to a Crafty Septuagenarian" was a humorous piece about an older man designated G. H. who covers a hole in his sock with boot polish rather than have it mended (*Oakhamian* 47 [Easter Term 1932] 24).

Merton's first published fiction appeared in *The Oakhamian*. A serialized story entitled "The New Boy Who Won Through" combined humor and burlesque and in the words of Michael Mott, showed promise



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(*Oakhamian* 47 [Easter Term 1932] 21-22; see Mott 61). Other writings affirmed his growing maturity and his ability to write with descriptive detail. "Strasbourg Cathedral" (*Oakhamian* 47 [Easter Term 1932] 18), for example, described the legendary French cathedral as "an army of pinnacles climbing one above the other into the sky. Around the proud doors stand saints and crowned kings in a solemn phalanx." "The City without a Soul" (*Oakhamian* 47 [Christmas Term 1931] 23-24) recounted a visit to New York and further attests to his observant eye: "Brightly colored taxis dart here and there driven by unwashed, unshaven Jews and negroes. A city of skyscrapers and cereal breakfasts. It is beautiful and terrifying. It is immense and unbelievable." This story was also Merton's first experience with censorship, as the Master overseeing *The Oakhamian* edited out passages to downplay his description of the city's "vulgarity and vitality."

One article stands out for its political commentary. In the spring of 1932, Merton traveled through Germany during the country's Presidential election that pitted incumbent President Paul Von Hindenburg against Adolf Hitler. Hindenburg won the election but Merton's account, "Wahlt Hitler," highlighted the darker side of Nazism. He described Hitlerites "working each for all and all for each," with propaganda showing "Little Adolf in swaddling clothes and later playing marbles." He reported that in some villages a Hitlerite was hit by a brick and a "Hindenburger" was "half slain with a pitchfork," and recounted his own experience of being run off the road by a speeding car of Hitler youth (*Oakhamian* 47 [Summer Term 1932] 29-30; see Mott 61). The incident had a profound effect on Merton, and he included it in the preface of a novel he later wrote, "Journey of my Escape from the Nazis," that was eventually published as *My Argument with the Gestapo*. He recalled the carload of youth heading directly toward him on the road, causing him to jump into a ditch. He added, "They vanished quickly. The road was once again silent and peaceful. But it was not the same road as before. It was now a road on which seven men had expressed their readiness to destroy me."[5]

By all accounts Merton's time at Oakham was a positive one. Twenty years later he would reply to a letter from Christopher Dixon, who was then editor of *The Oakhamian*, noting his time at Oakham and referencing his editorship of *The Oakhamian*.[6] After graduating from Oakham, Merton was accepted at Clare College, Cambridge. Personal issues made Merton's brief time at Cambridge less than pleasant, yet he continued to write. He contributed two articles to *The Granta*, Cambridge's literary magazine. One article, entitled "Paris in Chicago," described a visit to the World's Fair in Chicago in the summer of 1933. Merton recounted a version of this story in *The Seven Storey Mountain*, but *The Granta* piece is uncensored. In his autobiography, Merton states he needed money and obtained a job working as a barker for an exhibit at the fair called "The Streets of Paris." He hints at the nature of the exhibit, noting he was taken aback at the "frankness of the paganism of Chicago and of this Fair and of this particular part of the Fair."[7] His original account written in *The Granta* is more detailed and revealing. The actual exhibit in "The Streets of Paris" where he was employed was called "Galerie du Nu" ("Gallery of the Nude") where visitors paid 15 cents to view pornographic photos and a 30-second view of an undressed girl reclining and "judiciously posed." Merton received a dollar and two meals a day for yelling through the microphone in French. He ended by saying he heard the exhibit was controlled by the "Capone outfit" and he wondered "how much truth I shall tell my grandchildren in later years that I once worked for the notorious Al Capone."[8] His second contribution to *The*

Granta in April 1934 was a brief, somewhat cynical editorial comment called "A Crust for Egoists." He called it a "Moral" that "would perhaps discourage most of us to realize that the only effect our presence here will ever have on the University will in seven cases out of ten, be no more than a matter of six and eightpence in the proctorial chest" (*Granta* 43 [25 April 1934] 35).

Several months later Merton published what was by all accounts his first letter to the editor in a national magazine. "No, We Won't Print It" appeared in *Esquire*. He was critical of this men's magazine, stating "it may not strike you that your magazine is no less smug than any other on the market today," and calling it a "queer mixture of *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Woman's Home Companion*." He concluded, "you devote too much time to kidding your readers along and you don't give them anything substantial to think about. You never go below the surface."[9]

Following his short stay at Cambridge, Merton returned to New York and enrolled at Columbia University. It was here his writing matured and became more diverse. He was art editor for the university's humor magazine, *Jester*, penned articles for *The Columbia Spectator* (newspaper) and *The Columbia Review* (literary magazine), and wrote poems for *Columbia Poetry*. The paid positions helped with his university expenses, and he met fellow writers including Robert Lax, Robert Giroux and others who would become lifelong friends. By the time he left Columbia to teach at St. Bonaventure College he was writing book reviews, primarily for *The New York Herald Tribune* and *New York Times*, and publishing poetry. With aspirations to become a novelist, he began working on a novel, "The Labyrinth."

His time at Columbia was transformative in many ways, but especially for his writing. He devotes several pages in *The Seven Storey Mountain* to his work on *Jester* and *The Spectator* and notes the admiration he had for many of the editors who worked on the various publications (see *SSM* 151). He also discusses being named editor of the yearbook, a job he described as a "thankless task," a position "without any benefit to myself, or to the book, or to Columbia or to the world" (*SSM* 155-56). His future editor and publisher James Laughlin notes that when he was at Columbia, he captured "all the literary honors" and was "editing everything in sight."[10] Another friend and publisher, Bob Giroux, described Merton at this time as a "good writer with a narrative gift and vivid style."[11]

His writings were eclectic. He wrote nightclub reviews, commented on politics, society and events at Columbia, authored short travelogues and fictional short stories, drew cartoons and even covered a prize-fight. He wrote a column for the *Spectator* entitled "The Stroller" and another, "Your Night to Howl," for *Jester*. "The Stroller" featured Merton's comments on virtually anything. During the 1936 Presidential campaign, for example, Merton wrote about Republican candidate Alf Landon's claim he would balance the budget. He referred to him as "Old Man Moss" (Landon's middle name was Mossman) and ended with a critical comment: "Can it be that Landon really is a nobody and that the great American press has spent the past summer feeding the public hooey?"[12] In one "Stroller" column Merton panned the new Broadway play *May Wine*, calling it an "appalling imposition on the intelligence of the theatre-going public" (*Spectator* 59 [24 April 1935] 2), while in another he criticized the *New York Daily Mirror* for running a supposed photo of playwright Robert Sherwood who had just won a Pulitzer prize for his play *Idiot's Delight*. Merton pointed out that the photo was not actually the play's author but "Uncle

Bob Sherwood," an old-time circus clown (*Spectator* 59 [11 May 1935] 2).

"Your Night to Howl" was a review of clubs and night spots in New York which provided Merton the opportunity to pursue his love of jazz. He reviewed the uptown clubs, the Rainbow Room, Rainbow Grill and the Onyx Club, which he called "a cradle of swing in the Broadway sense of the word," noting that many musicians such as Benny Goodman used to hang out there. He concluded by highlighting El Chico on Sheridan Square, that he observed drew a "better dressed and wealthier crowd to listen to Spanish music."[13] He was less charitable to the Famous Door club that he described as both expensive and depressing. He claimed it had the "snottiest" head waiter in New York and the "ugliest and rudest people" in the city (*Jester* 39.7 [March 1938] 31).

Satire and humor were especially prevalent in his articles for *Jester*. "Students Awake" suggested all professors be driven from campus, all books burned and all academic buildings disinfected until the "taint of academic anesthesia" is wiped away. After that Columbia could be turned into the world's finest garden where each student would "spend three hours a day drinking beer" (*Jester* 26.4 [December 1935] 15, 39). Another piece, in the column "Off Hour," satirized the lobbying of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for a bonus for veterans. Merton suggested a rival organization be formed, FVWAN (Future Veterans of the War After Next) who would not demand a bonus, only the cooperation of future mothers (*Spectator* 59 [16 April 1936] 118). "Napoleon or Something" described an encounter with a "drunk" in a lunch counter (*Jester* 26.9 [May 1936] 11) while "Latins are Lousy Pornographers" satirized the *Paris Magazine*, which contained scattered photos of nude women. It was accompanied by a line drawing, presumably by Merton, of a woman taking off her blouse (*Jester* 37.3 [November 1936] 14-15).

Merton demonstrated some prowess as a sportswriter when he covered a fight at Madison Square Garden for the *Columbia Spectator*. The fight featured Columbia student Bob Burke whom he enthusiastically referred to as the "Columbia Cyclone" and "Youngstown Terror." His blow-by-blow description of the fight, lost by Burke on a TKO from a dislocated shoulder, indicated a penchant for details, and more than a passing knowledge of the sport, something that may have stemmed from his earlier days as captain of the Oakham boxing club (*Spectator* 59.104 [24 March 1936] 3; see Furlong 40).

In addition to his own columns, Merton contributed short articles and poems to Bob Lax's *Jester* column "Oasis": "Nineteen Questions for Social Blights" posed some rather facetious questions for the times, such as "Do you think astronomy is a true thing?" and "Do you wolf your porridge?" (*Jester* 39.3 [November 1937] 24); another humorous piece, "Old Glory, Old Junk" recounted a ride on the Long Island Railroad in which he decried the "dilapidated" state of the railroad and concluded by asking: "Where is the happy hunting ground for Long Island trains?" (*Jester* 39.5 [January 1938] 8, 23). Two months later Merton wrote another travelogue, "Voyage to Nyack," in which he called the Hudson River town "delightful" and discussed the art on the walls of the Hotel St. George (*Jester* 39.7 [March 1938] 12).

Not all of Merton's Columbia writings were humorous or satirical. His first submission to *The Columbia Review*, "At the Corner,"[14] which Bob Giroux edited, described a gruesome accident Merton had witnessed. Giroux noted years later that the article about a death reflected Merton's sense at the time of "the meaninglessness of existence." The article further attested to

Merton's keen sense of observation. Giroux noted: "Tom zeroed in on this open pack of cigarettes lying in a pool of blood" (Kramer 45).

By all accounts Merton at this stage in his life aspired to be a fiction writer. Paul Pearson notes that as early as age eleven he was writing stories and plays (see Pearson, "Stories" 129)[15] and by the time he left for Gethsemani in 1941 he had written drafts for four novels, one of which, *My Argument with the Gestapo*, would eventually be published.[16] While at Columbia he did author several short stories for *Jester* and the *Review*. The stories for *Jester* were in keeping with the basic premise of providing satire and humor. These included, among others, "Katabolism of an Englishman," about an Englishman trying to secure admission to Columbia (*Jester* 26.1 [September 1935] 12), "Suburban Demon," that portrayed a shallow lady Merton described as the "human embodiment of the world disorder" (*Jester* 26.3 [November 1935] 7), "The More Abundant Life," about a young man fascinated with a well-dressed woman on a bus (*Jester* 26.4 [December 1935] 14) and a farcical story, "Concerning Tennyson McGap" (*Jester* 37.3 [November 1936] 18), which Columbia Professor McKee, reviewing the *Jester* issue for the *Columbia Spectator*, found difficult to discern. He noted Merton was "lampooning something or other" (*Spectator* 60.43 [24 November 1936] 4). A more serious effort was "Mr. and Mrs. James Huttner," dealing with a couple's relationship, published in the *Columbia Review* (37 [November 1936] 18). One of Merton's more obscure contributions while at Columbia was to a little-known publication – the *Rockefeller Center Weekly*. He was employed for a time as an interpreter at Rockefeller Center, which likely provided the inspiration for the rather unusual piece. "What Goes On – An Unlikely Story on Observation Roofs" discussed the behavior of praying mantises, one of whom he named Ophelia, on the Rockefeller Center observation roof.[17]

It was while studying at Columbia that Merton first emerged as a serious, published poet. He penned lighter poems in Lax's "Oasis," including one entitled "Window," which talks of watching dogs out the window at two o'clock on March 1 and ends with a simple line, "And it will be summer soon" (*Jester* 39.7 [March 1938] 10). In 1939 six more serious poems were published in the university's *Columbia Poetry*.[18] These poems were a precursor of the more thoughtful and reflective poetry that he would continue to produce for the rest of his life. The beginning of World War II in 1939 influenced these poetic contributions. The most notable, "Fable for a War,"[19] won the Mariana Griswald van Rensselaer Poetry prize and was also published in the *New York Times*. The verses "Germany has reared / A rare ugly bird / To screech a sour song" (ll. 7-9), and "Europe is a feast / For every bloody beast" (ll. 19-20), attested to Merton's grim vision of what was to come (see Lessner 428). "Christmas as to People" (*CP* 696-97) uses a bear and wolf to represent the forces of aggression; it begins: "Christmas is as Christmas does, / And the wide world shudders now with woes. / Dance your Christmas with the bears / You stamp and sear the earth with wars" (ll. 1-4). "These Years a Winter" (*CP* 780-81) is less straightforward in its war references, but does state: "What armies ride November clouds / And white apocalypse on the sky, / Ruin the walls of glorious Rome / And in the birchwoods burn down Troy?" (ll. 1-4). "Litany" (*CP* 726) was a particularly cynical poem with anti-war verses: "Sing miserere / For the men who must die / . . . And drums for death knell / March millions into Hell" (ll. 1-2, 18-19). Two other poems were less grim: "Aubade: Bermuda" (*CP* 691-92) was influenced by a visit to Bermuda with his father years earlier, a trip Merton describes at length in *The Seven*

Storey Mountain (17-20). It would be one of six poems Merton would write over the years that included the word "Aubade" in the title. "Bermuda" was spiritual in its celebration of nature, the closing verse stating, "These flowers your wise subjects are / For theirs is only borrowed grace / And the small, glad birds are a queen's choir / Who hymn your beauty, not the day's" (ll. 13-16). "Bureaucrats: Diggers" (*CP* 694) is more cynical, depicting money-pursuing bureaucrats as "diggers" whom he portrays as moles and pismires (ants): "These drizzling years / Make laughing moles, and prosperous pismires. / Each careful digger lays his money by" (ll. 14-16).

Merton's most scholarly writing at Columbia appeared in the book reviews he wrote for the *New York Times*, *The New York Herald Tribune*, *The Nation*, *The Catholic World* and *The Columbia Review*. Between 1938 and 1940 he published fifteen such reviews that demonstrated his breadth of knowledge on a wide variety of authors and subjects. Robert Giroux notes that Merton "was a very capable reviewer of any book he picked up, knowledgeable and articulate always" (Kramer 46-47). His reviews focused primarily on books about literature, literary figures, poetry and art. His first review for the *Herald Tribune* critiqued John Crowe Ransom's book of essays on poetry, *The World's Body*. Perceptive and critical, the review succinctly detailed Ransom's views and thoughts on poetry as well as Merton's.[20] Subsequent reviews considered works by Vladimir Nabokov and D. H. Lawrence, among others. Merton found Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark* a "strange, exciting, and unusual book" whose vitality simply resolves itself in a "crazy hectic movement . . . like oil burning on the face of a pond" (*LE* 464). He called William York Tindall's book *D. H. Lawrence and Susan and His Cow* "interesting and important" but he chided Tindall for failing to see Lawrence as a writer of "exceptional power and brilliance" and for not discussing his poetry (*LE* 489).

One writer Merton found particularly significant was Aldous Huxley. In his autobiography Merton states he was first attracted to Huxley's novels when he was sixteen or seventeen (see *SSM* 91). Sometime in 1937 Bob Lax recommended he read Huxley's latest book of essays, *Ends and Means*, which he liked and found personally illuminating, especially on matters of ethics, religion and war. Merton was so moved by the book that he wrote Huxley, initiating a correspondence that would continue until Huxley's death in 1963. He also reviewed *Ends and Means* for *The Columbia Review* (see *SSM* 184-87). Merton's review of *Ends and Means* (*LE* 457-61) affirmed the depth of his familiarity with Huxley's writings. He found the book praiseworthy and noted the special importance of Huxley's discussion of love and intelligence and his message of non-violence. He was taken with Huxley's premise that "to practice violence is to train for more violence," and "we should love wisdom enough to behave like wise men" (*LE* 460-61). Two years later Merton reviewed Huxley's latest novel, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, for *The Catholic World* (*LE* 490-94). He noted in his journal how uncomfortable he was with the book because "it is so bad."[21] His disappointment showed in his review entitled "Huxley's Pantheon," in which he called one of the characters in the book, Mr. Propter, "the dullest character in the whole history of the English novel," and further characterized Huxley as an undistinguished philosopher who should "work in the medium in which he is really good: the essay" (*LE* 492, 494). Huxley took no offense at the review. Following its appearance, he sent Merton a cordial letter and a contribution to Friendship House, Catherine de Hueck's ministry in Harlem where Merton spent some time as a volunteer (see *RM* 453). Merton later expressed regrets about the

review, believing he had been patronizing. Writing in his journal in late November 1941, he noted that "the part he [Huxley] played in my conversion, by that book [*Ends and Means*], was quite great." He added, "who am I to be telling this guy about mysticism," and admitted that he should have been asking Huxley questions, rather than trying to tell him something (*RM* 454-55). When Huxley died in 1963 Merton wrote to Dom Aelred Graham that he felt "his loss very deeply." He told Graham that Huxley "was a deeply spiritual man and I am myself very much indebted to him."[22]

In March, 1941, Merton wrote his second letter to the editor: his short letter to *Time* began "Ordinarily I hate *Time*" but went on to say that he appreciated and enjoyed a recent article on James Joyce and was happy someone at *Time* had the "sense and charity to recognize the best writer of the century and one of the unhappiest men." He signed the letter, Thomas James Merton.[23]

Merton continued to write poetry, most of it unpublished at the time,[24] after leaving Columbia and joining the faculty of St. Bonaventure College in western New York in fall 1940. It was during this period that he first visited the Abbey of Gethsemani for a Holy Week 1941 retreat. Gethsemani had immediately become a special place for him. Robert Giroux recalls meeting Merton at Scribner's bookstore in May or June 1941. Merton told him that *The New Yorker* magazine wanted him to do an article about Gethsemani, but that he "would never think of writing about it."[25] By the time Merton made his decision to enter Gethsemani in December 1941, he was questioning his writing and what kind of writer he should be. In one lengthy reflection in his journal on September 3, 1941 he debated whether he should pray that his poems and stories should be published or if they should not be published. He later added that he was not "here to think about being a writer . . . . [but] to learn humility and how to do God's will and serve Him the best way I can, and writing has something to do with all these things . . . because it happens that I like to write, and try to know how" (*RM* 396-97). In another entry he reflected on the "triviality" of two short stories he had written and asked himself, "When are you going to stop writing exercises and write something real?" (*RM* 302). It would be spiritual writing that would ultimately provide him the reality he was seeking.

Thomas Merton's early years prior to entering Gethsemani were an evolutionary phase in his development as a writer. It was during this transformative time that he not only learned how to write, but ultimately what to write. Although he continued to publish essays and articles drawing upon his interest and knowledge of literature, art and current affairs, his desire to write about deeper, more spiritual ideas would be the fulfillment of his desire "to do God's will the best way." Yet these early formative years were significant in helping him further develop his talents and skills. They provided him a background and context he would use to become one of the more prolific and most influential spiritual writers of the twentieth century.

1. See Paul M. Pearson, "Thomas Merton: The Earliest Stories," *Your Heart Is My Hermitage: Thomas Merton's Vision of Solitude and Community*, ed. Danny Sullivan and Ian Thomson (London: Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1996) 129-36 (subsequent references will be cited as "Pearson, 'Stories'" parenthetically in the text); and Paul M. Pearson, "Thomas Merton in Search of His Heart: The Autobiographical Impulse of Merton's Bonaventure Novels," *The Merton Annual* 9 (1996) 74-89 (subsequent references will be cited as

"Pearson, 'Search'" parenthetically in the text). Michael Mott has assessed his writings at Oakham, as has Monica Furlong: see Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984) 61-62 (subsequent references will be cited as "Mott" parenthetically in the text); and Monica Furlong, *Merton: A Biography* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) 42 (subsequent references will be cited as "Furlong" parenthetically in the text).

2. See Thomas Merton, "A Very Early Essay," *The Merton Seasonal* 21.3 (Autumn 1996) 3-9, a piece of literary criticism written by Merton in July 1931 and subsequently awarded the Bailey English Prize for 1931 at Oakham.
3. Thomas Merton, *The Literary Essays of Thomas Merton*, ed. Patrick Hart, OCSO (New York: New Directions, 1981) xi (subsequent references will be cited as "*LE*" parenthetically in the text).
4. Editorial, *The Oakhamian* 47 (Christmas Term 1931) 18-19 (subsequent references will be cited as "*Oakhamian*" parenthetically in the text).
5. Thomas Merton, *My Argument with the Gestapo: A Macaronic Journal* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969) 5.
6. See William H. Shannon, "An Unusual Discovery in a Second-Hand Bookstore in England," *The Merton Seasonal* 17.3 (Summer 1992) 4-6.
7. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948) 117 (subsequent references will be cited as "*SSM*" parenthetically in the text).
8. Thomas Merton, "Paris in Chicago," *The Granta* 42 (29 November 1933) 144 (subsequent references will be cited as "*Granta*" parenthetically in the text).
9. Thomas Merton, "No We Won't Print It" (letter to editor), *Esquire* 2 (November 1934) 14.
10. See Will Lissner, "Toast of the Avant-Garde: A Trappist Poet," *The Catholic World* 69 (February 1948) 427-28 (subsequent references will be cited as "Lissner" parenthetically in the text).
11. See Victor A. Kramer, "Robert Giroux Speaks about Thomas Merton: An Interview from the Thomas Merton Oral History," *The Kentucky Review* 7.4 (Summer 1987) 45 (subsequent references will be cited as "Kramer" parenthetically in the text).
12. See *Columbia Spectator* 60 (16 October 1936) 2 (subsequent references will be cited as "*Spectator*" parenthetically in the text).
13. See *Columbia Jester* 38.4 (December 1936) 32-33 (subsequent references will be cited as "*Jester*" parenthetically in the text).
14. Thomas Merton, "At the Corner," *The Columbia Review* 17.1 (November 1935) 8 (subsequent references will be cited as "*Review*" parenthetically in the text).
15. Three of these early stories have now been published: Thomas Merton, "The Haunted Castle," *The Merton Seasonal* 19.1 (Winter 1994) 7-10; Thomas Merton, "The Black Sheep" *The Merton Annual* 11 (1998) 13-32; Thomas Merton, "A Great Voyage" *The Merton Seasonal* 24.4 (Winter 1999) 3-6.
16. On Merton's early fiction, see William H. Shannon, "Novels, Unpublished," in William H. Shannon, Christine M. Bochen and Patrick F. O'Connell, *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002) 333-36 (subsequent references will be cited as "*Encyclopedia*" parenthetically in the text) and Pearson, "Search" 75; for the surviving text of one of these efforts, see Thomas Merton, "The Man in the Sycamore Tree: A Fragment of an Early Novel" *The Merton Annual* 5 (1992) 7-38. On *My Argument with the Gestapo* see Patrick F. O'Connell, "Merton's Earlier Commedia: Dante and *My Argument with the Gestapo*," *The Merton Journal* 21.1 (Easter 2014) 28-38 and his entry on the novel in *Encyclopedia* 311-14.
17. Thomas Merton, "What Goes On – An Unlikely Story on Observation Roofs," *Rockefeller Center Weekly* (4 September 1936) 13; on Merton's employment at Rockefeller Center see Furlong 69.
18. Thomas Merton, "Six Poems," *Columbia Poetry* (June 1939) 60-65.
19. Thomas Merton, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1977) 712-13 (subsequent references will be cited as "*CP*" parenthetically in the text).
20. For Merton's reviews during this period see *LE* 457-94; one additional review, of *William Blake: Circle of Destiny by Milton O. Percival*, appeared in *The Nation* 147.3 (July 1938) 73 and is reprinted as "Guide to Blake: An Uncollected Early Review" in *The Merton Seasonal* 26.2 (Summer 2001) 3.
21. Thomas Merton, *Run to the Mountain: The Story of a Vocation. Journals, vol. 1: 1939-1941*, ed. Patrick Hart (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995) 149; subsequent references will be cited as "*RM*" parenthetically in the text.
22. Thomas Merton, *The School of Charity: Letters on Religious Renewal and Spiritual Direction*, ed. Patrick Hart (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1990) 187 [12/16/1963 letter to Dom Aelred Graham].

23. *Time* 37.11(17 March 1941).
24. "Song (From Crossportion's Pastoral)" (*CP* 61) appeared in *Experimental Review* 2 (November 1940) 38; "An Argument: Of the Passion of Christ" (*CP* 51-54) in *Spirit* 8 (May 1941) 44-45; "Lent in a Year of War" (*CP* 27) in *View* 1 (June 1941); "The Sponge Full of Vinegar" (*CP* 57) in *Spirit* 8 (July 1941) 80; "The Trappist Abbey: Matins" (*CP* 45-46) in *Spirit* 8 (September 1941) 111; "The Flight into Egypt" (*CP* 27-28) in *Spirit* 8 (November 1941) 148. For dating of the contents of Merton's early volumes of verse, see Ross Labrie, "The Ordering of Thomas Merton's Early Poems," *Resources for American Literary Study* 8 (1979) 115-17; for overviews of the contents of *Thirty Poems* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1944), twenty-four of which are pre-monastic (*CP* 25-57); *A Man in the Divided Sea* (New York: New Directions, 1946), half of which are pre-monastic (*CP* 59-131); and the posthumously published *Early Poems: 1940-1942* (Lexington, KY: Anvil Press, 1971), all but two of which are pre-monastic (*CP* 1-24), see the entries by Patrick F. O'Connell on these volumes in *Encyclopedia* 471-74, 276-80, 123-25.
25. Robert Giroux, "Bookends: Thomas Merton's Durable Mountain," *New York Times* (11 October 1998); available at: www.nytimes.com/1998/10/11/books/bookends-thomas-mertons-durable-mountain.html.