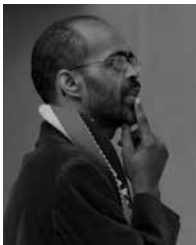


On the Death of Thomas Merton, December 10, 1968

By **Malcolm Cash**

At 2 a.m.
the call came.
He would not be returning.
A faulty fan was in the room,
tired from lecturing,
He did not notice it.
A climactic flash, the monk gone forever.
He is not coming back,
the voice in Thailand
whispers through the telephone line.
Thomas Merton, he says,
is dead.
His balding head of graying hair,
His white cuculla, black tunic, belt of leather at the waist,
Black rimmed glasses, and strong writing hand,
all were lying
on a cottage floor, on a body claimed Father Louis,
gone up in a bright flash, from an unseen circuit.
And he is not coming back.



Malcolm Cash

Malcolm Cash is a writer and professor. He is the author of "Sweet Home: A Memoir," and forthcoming creative nonfiction, poetry and essays on Lorraine Hansberry, Thomas Merton, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and the Black experience in America.