

AFTER READING MERTON

— THREE POEMS

by **M. Clarita Felhoelter**, O.S.U.

I

Martha

Martha, Martha, don't envy Mary at
Her favorite place. You chose the hurly
Burly, hurdy gurdy, calliope,
Roller coaster way. But if you roast the
Lamb with love, spice the wine and bread
With awe, you may find at journey's end, He's
Laughing with you in the car or at
The switch and you quite quiet at His feet.



M. CLARITA FELHOELTER

□ **M. Clarita Felhoelter**, a native of Louisville, entered the Ursulines in that city in 1934. She received her degrees at Ursuline College (B.A., 1947) and Catholic University, Washington, D. C. (M.A., 1951 and Ph.D., 1956) in English and has taught in the parochial schools of Louisville, at Ursuline College and Bellarmine College in Louisville, and (during summer sessions) at Catholic University and at its branch in San Antonio, Texas. She retired from Bellarmine in 1987. Among her present activities are tutoring and writing poetry. She has had poems published in *Epsilon*, *Kentucky Poetry Review*, *Sisters Today*, *Review for Religious*, and *Desert Call*.

II

Contemplation

There was a great explosion: shards of memory,
Charred prayings, musty sayings, broken pillars.
Window glasses crashed, cacophonated into dust,
And then a soothing vapor settled all around,
And there was peace.

I rested and had time for order in my household,
To tend the plants, demistify the pains.
Is the being pure enough? Is non-being far away?
Are there bush fires at the desert's edge? Creeping
Creatures in the sand again.

LEAPING LIZARDS! HOLY SMOKE!
LET FLOW THE DANCING DESERT BREEZE!
LAUGH UNTIL THE TUMOR BURSTS
AND ALL THE DETRITUS EXPLODES
AND DIES AGAIN.

Yes, of course, but first I have to clean the air
And try to blunt the cactus points and . . .

III

Salome et. al.

Her dance was like a snake of steel,
Her limbs a stony waterfall.
Her crystal eyes gleamed messages
Of clanking chains and bliss.
The tray was bright and golden,
Inlaid with scarlet ice.
Now, wasn't that a dainty dish?

Still, still the starving throats of flesh
Call out for food and joy.
Still, still the nations flash their strength.
They sup with metal hands perfumed
And sip the seas incarnadine,
A dainty cup indeed.

At evening, like precious iron, I marvel
At the massacres and savage play
For bowls of cheers and coin. The dust to Jericho
Is thick with broken lives of neighbor folk.
My pity is polite and limp. I buff
My rusty heart.

We banquet daily on the bread
And blood of life, but first
We sweetly say, "Accept these gifts
We offer you."

Now, isn't that a dainty dish, a dainty dish, a dainty dish,
Now, isn't that a dainty dish
To set before a king?