

personal, and concrete. He maintains an even analysis while remaining deeply attached to each of his subjects. Even if Merton is not a touchstone, Healey is a prism.

While serving as a fine survey of personalities, this study has a meditative quality that would serve a novice, a retreatant, or a passenger on a crowded bus. Sentences of aphoristic quality permit the reader to pause, to reflect, and to consider the unique movement of grace through each of the figures so effectively presented by Charles J. Healey in *Modern Spiritual Writers: Their Legacies of Prayer*.

Our relationship with God must be practiced, otherwise we shall not find the right note, the right word, the right language when He comes upon us unawares. We have to learn the language of God, learn it with effort, we must work at it, if we too would learn to converse with Him; prayer too must be practiced as part of our work.

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

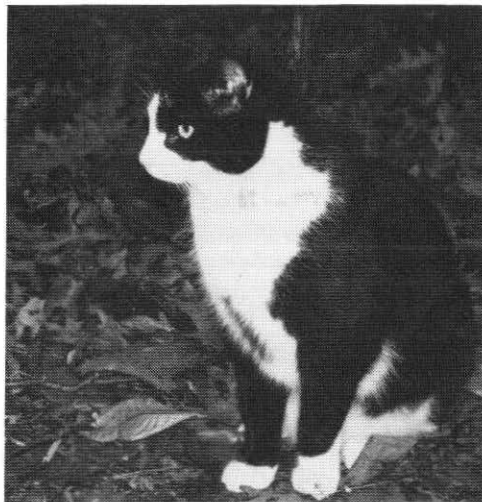
## TO THOMAS MERTON

by **Wilda Dockery**

In the stream of ordinary life  
I found a kitten,  
black and white,  
full of amber-eyed innocence,  
and called him Thomas Merton.

By day he goes on solitary journeys  
in the woods, contemplating  
chipmunks, birds, and squirrels.  
At night he shares community with me,  
curled and centered on my bed.

Whenever his feline rule of life  
requires him to arise  
at the monastic hour of three,  
he strokes my face and purrs,  
ready to greet the dark silence.



THOMAS MERTON  
“Greeting the Dark Silence”

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□ **Wilda Dockery** lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She is currently at work on a thesis about Thomas Merton’s journal writing and is interested in the connections between Merton and Ety Hillesum. She writes: “I have a cat named Thomas Merton. I don’t think he’d mind, do you?”