

WHEN THE ICONS ARE IRATE

by **Linell Roccaforte**

For Thomas Merton, who went beyond
& Jim Forest, who tells the stories

We are but pilgrims
 who cold in stone cathedrals
 look to hope in holy water.
 We claim the search for wisdom.
 We hoard despair and crisis
 as the proverb of all peace.
 Enough of this.
 Enough of depleting God
 to acquire what we have but do not touch
 for fear of following consecrated space
 where people are invited, to pray—
 and find what we have burned in anger,
 knowing sanity when we cannot speak.
 The tumors bulge, inside us—
 do we admit there is nothing there?
 That we could cut out, and bleed,
 and none remember what was there,
 what we do not use
 and how to recover what has been lost?
 But to find our need.
 To go further, and meet in the going
 a sweetness.
 To catch the sheets of blue notepaper, falling
 from the dying as they draw with fervor,
 pictures of byzantine saints who take us beyond
 this isolation.

Linelle Roccaforte lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and is a graduate student in creative writing at the University of New Mexico. She works at Salt of the Earth Bookstore. Her essay, "The Rain Speaks On: Contradictions in Thomas Merton's Peace Writings," was published in *The Merton Annual* 4 (1991). She writes that her interest in Merton began when her mother told her of *The Seven Storey Mountain*.



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