

Three Poems

By Ronald Webster

Homeschoolers

In Memoriam:

Thomas Merton [1915-1968],

Henri Nouwen [1932-1996]

Thomas Merton
Thomas Merton
Oompah
Henri Nouwen

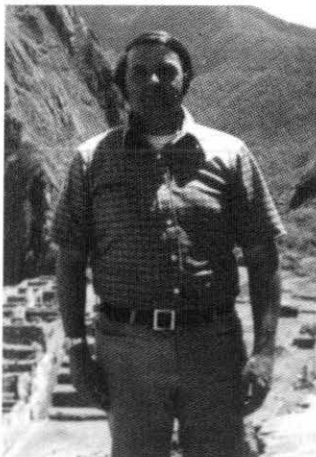
Henri Nouwen
Henri Nouwen
Oompah
Thomas Merton

Oompah-pa
Oompah-pa
A tuba for
Thomas Merton

Oompah-pa
Oompah-pa
A tuba for
Henri Nouwen

You on the tuba
You on the tuba
You oompah
Tuba schooler

Oompah-pa
Oompah-pa
Home in the
Oompah band.



RONALD WEBSTER

Ronald Webster was born in Okanogan, Washington, and grew up in the Okanogan Valley. He has lived in Peru and Canada, and currently works in the plastics industry in El Paso, Texas. His poems have appeared in *America*, *Western Poetry Quarterly*, *The Crab Creek Review*, and other small journals. He is the author of *Sunstone Choir*, a poem sequence.

The Story of a Sculptured Thinker

*“A word will never be able to comprehend
the voice that utters it.”*

—Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*

The day I sighted Auguste Rodin’s Thinker
holds a place in my memory like the zeromark
of fleeting glimpses reading *A Catch of Anti-Letters*
sign by sign alive with those ubiquitous braille handmade

chocolate mousse pies Cher Lax and Cher
Theodore de Mopsuestio lobbed low onto the Kentucky
treeline lograires through an army of buffalo thunderclouds
sailing across blue waves to those farflung Mediterranean

islands waving bye-bye blue Saint Louie
bye-bye old Kentucky home
singing bye-bye you bluebirds in Boy Blue’s
deepsea grasses with blue waves of wings sung seascapes

waving bye-bye Tennessee black bird
and bye-bye Ohio Buckeye geese honking open throttle
sonatas with those throaty tar-footed Cincinnati sparrows aviating
cables to ace over Kentucky blue grass pistachios all palatable pancake

postmarks nesting like chickadees you’ve seen sometime before you
dropped by Louisville going half way around
the world to find Chuang Tzu and his Chinese soupline gang
going just far enough away from home

to be grateful for your flutecase packing a new Chinese Bill of Rights
and three days ago in Spokane I dropped by the
Arctic Circle for one solitary milkshake
plus one solitary soda cracker for the road and a catch

of anti-letter antics with lips puckered up
on the soda straw glad I was near the rear door flyway
squatted down like the Thinker, chin on a fist full of soda cracker bliss
thinking about Auguste Rodin’s sculptured silence

after four hours watching some unrhymned flapjack pass
strategies and furious waltzmarks of WSU cougars eating Big Sky
Montana grizzlies alive on the football grid with both teams
waving bye-bye blue all you Monday morning quarterbacks

at the game’s end and the end of waffled plays
and both teams waved bye-bye blue to the stadium, referees,
spectators, players, mascots, and to the jukebox band
that jackhammered out those tar-footed sparrow

notes onto pep-squad boomwires during the game's halftime
 sounding the same old cougar squall how happy you'll be
 when you're back home sandwiched between two
 sheep skin sheets catching a long bye-bye blue siesta

waving bye-bye babes to the sleepy flock of buckwheat
 birds yodelling bobwhite songs after chukar songs with an updraft
 of quail wings flapping allegros on the radio and the whole jukebox
 jackhammer solo suddenly jerks you clean out of sight

sure as those primal jams jarred blueberry free
 in Cher Chuang Tzu's soul bro flat slapped on Fourth and Walnut easily
 pitching himself clear of that tonebare Chinese soupline hopscotch band
 before he tuned-in on the lightning streak clap of the single hand.

Ascent

(Thomas Merton
The Sign of Jonas
 22 April 1951)

Mud on his feet
 going up the
 ladder
 was mud on

his hands
 coming down, so
 up the ladder
 Father Louie

went, later
 showing how
 coming down
 you've got

verified
 signs of what feet
 can say to hands
 and other lifeline

secrets clear as Saint
 Charbel Makhoul's soul
 ascending the same
 road to heaven.