

Two Poems

By Jeanne Doriot, SP

Walking to Terce with Matthew

"I must go do my Terce," murmurs Matthew on his way
to glide into his choir stall past accommodating monks
who move aside to let him in and smile as he parks the cane
across his psalter ledge and theirs.
Thus pied piper-led, we scurry after Matthew to church to pray
with monks our psalms before the day's work begins.
Better to pray Terce than to crawl directly back
into our retreatants' beds for early siesta
while it's the monks who go off to work.
But, as the poet sings, "he gives to his beloved in sleep."

Cemetery, Abbey of Gethsemani

(For Brother Thomas Arthon, 1932-2004)

Once with midnight nearing,
I saw a monk rise up in front of me,
the white moon shining on his face
so that his eyes could see through night
as a new fire rising from the slumbering
earth on which he walked failed to scorch
his feet, and he strode swiftly by and up,
up the trembling knobs toward stars
that lowered to let him catch hold,
and he swung higher, higher, disappearing
from my view. Stooping, I retrieved his sandals
that had fallen from the sky.
Now I too walk without fear of burning,
and the tower bells proclaim his name.

Jeanne Doriot, a Sister of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN, is presently administrative assistant for the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters in Los Angeles. She received a MA degree in creative writing from Indiana University for her collection of poetry titled, in honor of Thomas Merton, "Diving after Flame." She has published poetry and reviews in several periodicals, including *The Merton Seasonal* and *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*.

