

Thomas Merton

18 October, 1965

Dear Father Louis,

Thomas Merton on William Blake would be wonderfully wild for all concerned. The problem of proving Blake a Christian might cause some difficulty though...

Anyway, we who are concerned with the series thank you very much for agreeing to contribute. I am looking forward to seeing what you like and what you personally have to say about your author.

Speaking of your author, who? Of the list you gave, I think it would be best for our purposes to ask you to do Flannery O'c. For one thing, she isn't being done by anybody else, and that is a little extraneous in our contribution. As soon as the college xerox machine is repaired (see, the Jesuits aren't infallible--though the library is run by a layman) I'll be hustling O'Connoraria to you.

I am not a draft card burning paint slinging pacifist. There is violence and violence, and I would like to refrain from all sorts. It is hard, of course. I rationalize a little in saying I will defend myself if you attack me because I have five children to care for... but don't get me wrong. The babies are no excuse to shirk. I have asked them to somehow share in my civil rights work (which has landed me in jail in Birmingham) and not to be an excuse for what is rapidly becoming the greatest of Catholic scandals, "prudence". But I will not train to kill. I will not wear a uniform to indicate that I somehow favor war. I refuse to be taught again to hate as I once was. I have a letter of commendation for battle bravery in my files which, incidentally, isn't even true, just a reward for being a good guy to my commanding officer. But those days are gone. We were all taught to hate--never taught to un hate when it was over. In many instances, you don't just turn that sort of thing off.

Anyway, if I'm so much of a pacifist, how come I've done such violence to this typewriter.

Peace in deed.