



# How Long We Wait



by Thomas Merton


How long we wait, with minds as quiet as time,  
Like sentries on a tower.  
How long we watch, by night, like the astronomers.

Heaven, when will we hear you sing,  
Arising from our grassy hills,  
And say: "The dark is done, and Day  
Laughs like a Bridegroom in His tent, the lovely sun,  
His tent the sun, His tent the smiling sky!"

How long we wait with minds as dim as ponds  
While stars swim slowly homeward in the water of  
our west!  
Heaven, when will we hear you sing?

How long we listened to the silence of our vineyards  
And heard no bird stir in our rising barley.  
The stars go home behind the shaggy trees.  
Our minds are grey as rivers.

O earth, when will you wake in the green wheat,  
And all our Trappists cedars sing:  
"Bright land, lift up your leafy gates!  
You abbey steeple, sing with bells!  
For look, our Sun rejoices like a dancer  
On the rim of our hills."



In the blue west the moon is uttered like the word:  
"Farewell."

