



**Advent Daily Reflections**  
**December 9, 2024**

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**Today's reading is from Thomas Merton:**

The altar of the novitiate chapel. The light and dark, the darkness of the fresh crinkled flower, light, warm and red all around the darkness. The flower is the same color as blood, but it is in no sense whatever as 'red as blood,' not at all. It is as red as a carnation, only that. This flower, this light, this moment, this silence = Dominus est. God is eternity. He passes. He remains. We pass in and out. He passes. We remain. We are nothing. We are everything. He is in us. He has gone from us. We are here in him. He is gone from us. He is gone from us. He is not here. We are here in Him. All these things can be said, but why say them? All these things can be said, but why say them?

**Today's Reflection is by Tom Rigney:**

I find myself pitching forward into a space of pure darkness and silence and floating to the edge of my known existence. Thomas Merton moved in me since adolescence, the first spiritualist to point my way beyond the end of the road, guiding me toward the airless edge. I quickly become lost (or is it found?) in this constellation of tumbling and pressing dualities.

These perceptions of Merton's words here remind me of a time when my fear of and antipathy toward feelings bordered on the complete.. I had no trust that I could survive actual feeling, and recollect cold fear that I would freefall into a bottomless void if I felt anything.

Familiarity with countless artists' contrasting of dark and light in their efforts to find and make meaning isn't sufficient here. I'm surrounded and bathed by a starshower of meaning that seems to race between dualities that all lead to darkest singularity. "Dominus est" appears with a suddenness that I don't expect, but guides me through the plunge into Oneness. If Dominus est is that Belief we talk and pray to, then we are already familiar with the jubilation and agony we experience at its coming and going. I realize that, imaginatively, the darkness is challenged by the light, wishing (but unable) to overthrow it. Precisely as the light lacks the ability to surmount the darkness. I'm lost in wonderment that the dualities can't survive the coming and the going. I deflect the words "We are here in Him,"

because my understanding (the part that often doesn't take risks) won't embrace this essential confusion. Yet it may be that I'm not being offered that choice: "All these things can be said, but why say them?" Indeed.

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Tom Rigney has lived a lifetime of exile in Brooklyn, currently residing in the small village of Kensington, where he lives his best life with his wife the storyteller Robin Bady and their colony of cats, and often the grandkids. He is a poet and memoirist.