

In Silence

by Thomas Merton

Be still.
Listen to the stones of the wall.
5 Be silent, they try
to speak your

name.
Listen
10 to the living walls.

Who are you?
Who
are you? Whose
15 silence are you?

Who (be quiet)
are you (as these stones
are quiet). Do not
20 think of what you are
still less of
what you may one day be.

Rather
25 be what you are (but who?)
be the unthinkable one
you do not know.

O be still, while
30 you are still alive,
and all things live around you

speaking (I do not hear)
to your own being,
35 speaking by the unknown
that is in you and in themselves.

5

“I will try, like them
to be my own silence:
and this is difficult. The whole
world is secretly on fire. The stones
burn, even the stones they burn me.
How can a man be still or
listen to all things burning?
How can he dare to sit with them
when all their silence is on fire?”