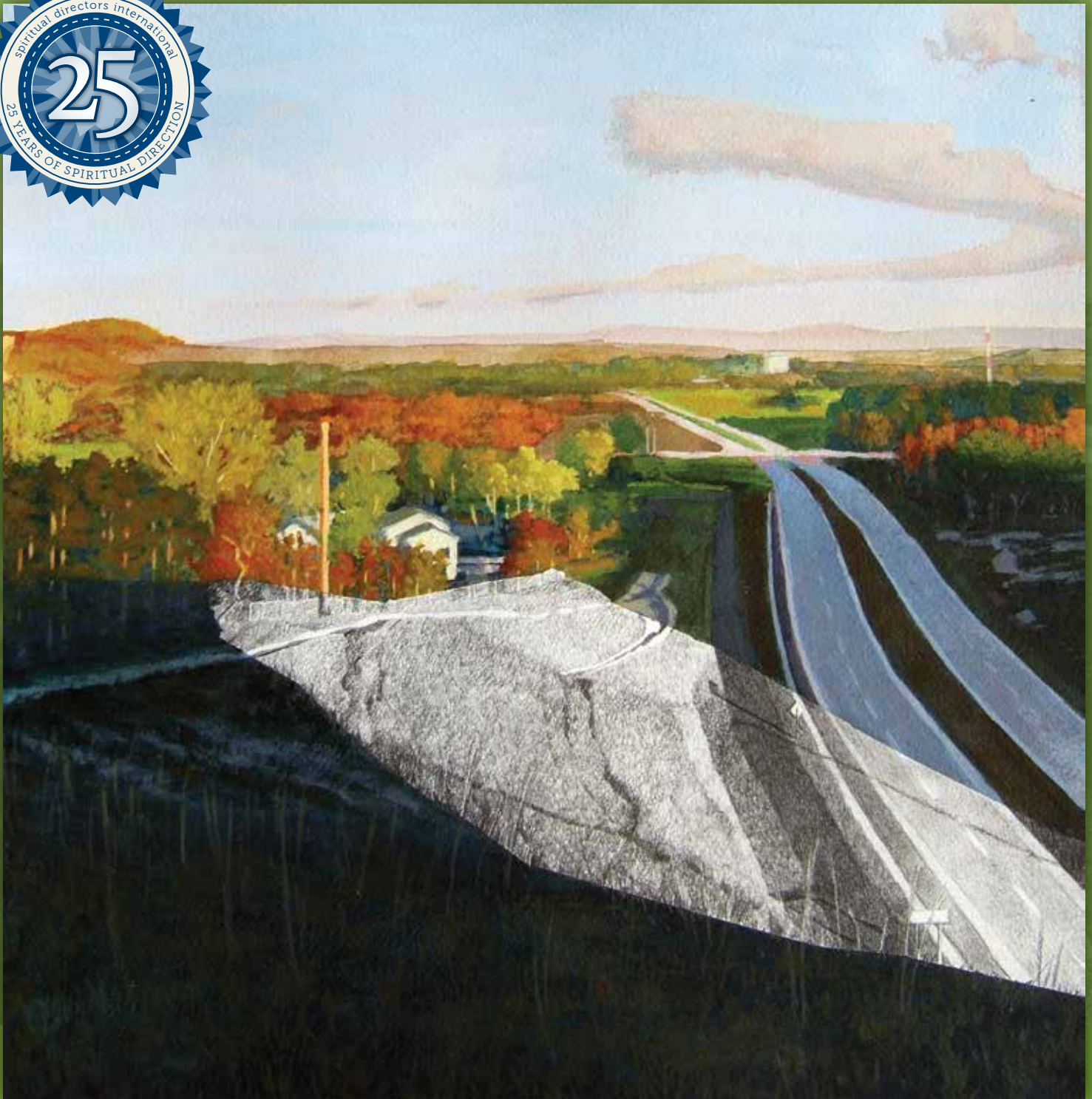


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An Interview with Krista Tippett • The Contemplative Scientist

Ten Trends in Global Spiritual Direction • Who Knows?: On Non-Dualism and Spiritual Direction

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We Are Already One: Thomas Merton's Message of Hope: Reflections to Honor His Centenary (1915–2015)

edited by Gray Henry and Jonathan Montaldo

Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2014

384 pages, CAD\$31.95, GBP£23.99, USD\$26.95

Reviewed by Ellie Stratton

A compilation of one hundred essays, *We Are Already One: Thomas Merton's Message of Hope: Reflections to Honor His Centenary (1915–2015)* celebrates the man whose life and writings have influenced women and men across faith traditions and around the globe since his autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain* was first published in 1948. This book overflows with heartfelt contributions from a diverse group of artists, biographers, monks, musicians, poets, teachers, and theologians, most of whom met Merton after his death through his books and journals. They share a love affair with Merton's searching spirit and reminisce about when they were first introduced to him and how he changed their lives.

The "many faces of Thomas Merton" (41) are portrayed through stories and quotes about Merton the contemplative monk of Gethsemani Abbey, but also about Merton the poet, the prophet, the priest, the artist, the correspondent, the photographer, and the friend. Those who knew Merton as a spiritual director lift up the qualities of humility, availability, and common sense—and especially the spiritual director as a guide who knows by experience the transformative process of learning from God how to find one's way in the intimate matters of the heart's awakening to the cosmic dance (157). The enduring truth of Merton's life is that a person can search, evolve, transform, and deepen, and can find one's true self in the precise circumstances in which one finds himself or herself. This is the profound message of hope illustrated throughout this compelling volume.

Merton said of himself, "I stand among you as one who offers a small message of hope." His hope was

grounded in a place of love beyond words, where his deepest self and God's Spirit were One Spirit. The book poignantly expresses a man who shares his struggles and breakthroughs, who said at one time "my vocation is prayer," whose ever-increasing inclusivity and steady evolution out of parochial religion into universal inter-spirituality are daring examples to each reader. The invitation is to set a course for the truth behind the veils of

label, mask, and role, and to embrace the contemplative path with renewed enthusiasm. The contemplative path did not take Merton away from the world. It increased his connection with people of every culture and creed, a conviction expressed among his final words, "My dear brothers and sisters, we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. So what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are."

We Are Already One is best savored by reading it in a contemplative *lectio divina* manner to let the insights and cadences of Merton's life and words sink in. It is inspirational for everyone

already acquainted with the twentieth-century mystic and replete with biographical information. For individuals newly encountering Merton, this book will get you well on your way to saying what so many others have said: "Merton changed my life." ■

Ellie Stratton, MDiv, lives in Pennsylvania, USA, and offers spiritual direction at the Wayne Presbyterian Church. She serves on the faculty of the Kairos School of Spiritual Formation in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Her e-mail address is estratton54@gmail.com.

Fly While You Still Have Wings: And Other Lessons My Resilient Mother Taught Me

by Joyce Rupp

Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2015

189 pages, CAD\$21.38, GBP£11.99, USD\$16.95

Reviewed by Kathryn Madden

Fly While You Still Have Wings is a soaring memoir that can bring our listening presence as spiritual guides to new

