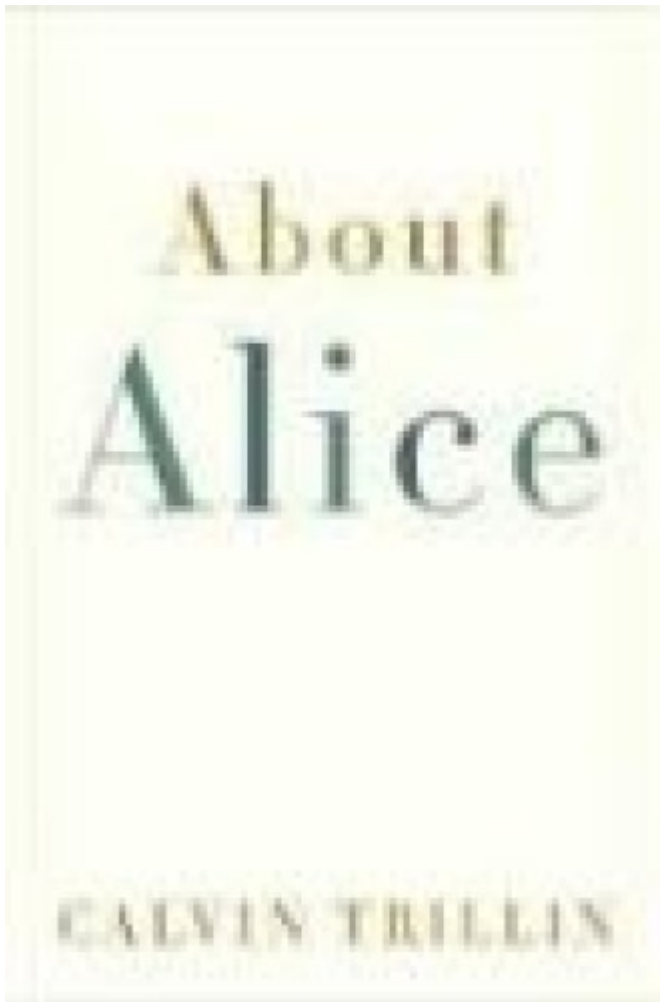


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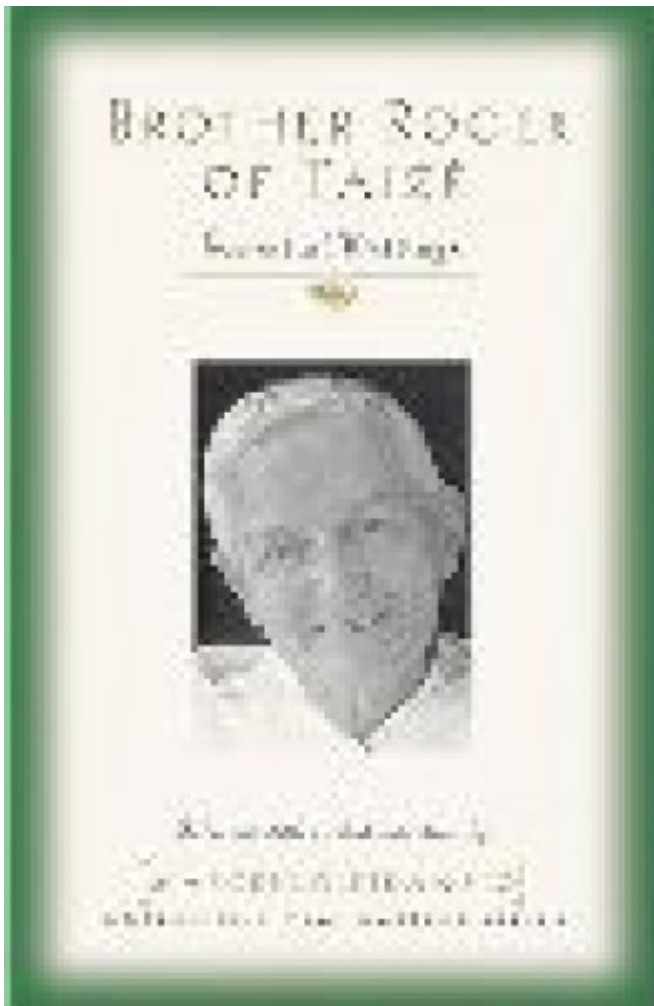
Books in the [February 20, 2007](#) issue

In Review



About Alice

Calvin Trillin
Random House



Brother Roger of Taizé;: Essential Writings

Brother Roger; Marcello Fidanzio, ed.
Orbis

This is a slightly longer version of the tribute Trillin wrote to his wife that appeared in the *New Yorker* (March 27, 2006). It is a wonderfully written love story about their romance and married life of 36 years and Alice's 25-year bout with lung cancer (which she may have gotten from secondhand smoke). The book says little about her disease, since Alice apparently didn't let it dominate her life or overcome her indomitable spirit. Alice died on September 11, 2001. It wasn't her cancer that killed her, but cardiac arrest. Her doctors said that the radiation she received was probably what destroyed her heart. *About Alice* is less reflective about life and loss than Joan Didion's tribute to her late husband in *The Year of Magical Thinking*, but Trillin is a better storyteller and less quirky than Didion.

Brother Roger, who helped found the ecumenical Christian community in Taizé, France, devoted himself to a life of hospitality, reconciliation and prayer. His writings, excerpted here in Orbis's Modern Spiritual Masters Series, are very simple, yet they cut to the core of Christian spirituality. There is no speculation or pontificating in these short segments. One is left with the sense that Brother Roger didn't write about anything that he had not personally experienced.