

Terce: February

by [Kathleen O'Toole](#) in the [February 5, 2014](#) issue

There must be a sutra that fits  
this mess: lumps of melting snow  
—markers of impermanence.  
Once the unspoiled beauty  
of fields of cotton, ski slope,  
starlit sky—now shoveled and  
ploughed, siphoned inward  
by sun and gravity. Old snow  
with all the elegance of gun-metal  
helicopter blades churning overhead.  
Soot-smudge tattoos on berms of it,  
foot-stomped reminders  
of imperfection, dirty laundry.

Only listen for hymn-licks  
in the slap of slush from tires,  
birdsong layered in like a gospel round.  
Then join in, scanning twigs  
of gray-barked trees for bud sprits—  
that first portent of spring.