

# Ash Wednesday

by [Angela Alaimo O'Donnell](#) in the [February 20, 2007](#) issue

Now forty winters have besieged this brow  
that bears the mark of ashes once again,  
its shallow furrows yielding to time's plow  
as, on command, I turn and turn again.  
With every year the mark goes deeper still  
and stays there longer than the year before,  
reminding me, despite my flesh's will,  
there comes a spring when I'll be marked no more.

Yet still I bow and part my graying hair  
to make way for the dust that makes us all,  
the mortal touch, the cross traced in the air,  
the voice that tells me to regard the fall  
    that each of us must know before we rise  
    and raise unwrinkled brows to greet God's eyes.