

# Longing, Lenten

by [Brett Foster](#) in the [March 6, 2007](#) issue

The walk back, more loss. When I open the door  
it's over, so I set to piddling: tidy  
end tables, check the mail, draw a bath.  
The restless energy finally settles  
as I pass the mirror. I peer into it.  
My nose touches glass. Not much left,  
already effaced, not even a cross  
to speak of. A smudge. A few black soot stains  
like pinpoints on the forehead. The rest  
of the blessed ash has vanished to a grey  
amorphousness, to symbolize . . . not much.  
Except a wish for those hallowed moments  
to be followed by sustaining confidence.  
Except spirit, which means to shun its listless  
weight for yearning, awkward if not more earnest  
prayer and fasting in the clear face of dust.