

Buried with him in his death

by [Tania Runyan](#) in the [March 23, 2010](#) issue

We fought for one more sputter
of the old life. Even though a breeze passing
over your sieve of skin could send you
screaming, you muscled up your diaphragm
to whisk more air into the fire.

I held my own terrors to my chest:
failures and brush-offs, cancers and crashes,
all the anxieties I had grown to love
heaving and cracking like your ribcage
until we both gave out.

Then there was the mess of prying us loose:
wailing women and splintered lumber,
flesh stubbornly sticking to the nails.
But what swift hands, that Joseph of Arimathea,
what purposeful footsteps crunching the ground!

He wrapped us in linen and spices.
Only the hapless world could think of packing
fifty pounds of aloe around a dead man's wounds.
But we drank it in like deserts
until finally even the lizards scurried home.

I lay in the cave and wanted to touch you,
but my hands were no longer mine.
They closed in on themselves like daylilies.
The stone rumbled over the window of light,
and then our difficult rising began.