

Lent opens

by [J. Barrie Shepherd](#) in the [March 8, 2011](#) issue

and we're off again
with forehead freshly smeared
and spirit seared anew by
memories of dust, rumors of all
or nothing up ahead.
These frigid days and weeks lean
inward, huddling for warmth, and
disciplines attempt in vain
to shape them toward value, meaning,
promise. Warmth will, of course,
return bearing its customary,
temporary, blossoming.
But all remains a stay of execution
till the stone is rolled, those sentries flee,
and startled women run with aching news.