

Veronica wipes Jesus' face

by [Joseph Bathanti](#) in the [April 19, 2011](#) issue

Veronica. Her name rolled off my tongue.
Like water. For one moment my thirst ceased,
her lovely apron over my eyes flung
in the manner a disquieted beast
is comforted in a floodtide or blaze.
Shy, she led me as though asleep in dray,
whispering and shushing me into place.
In the buckram my face had come away.
Not young and virile, the eyes Nordic blue
as in all the portraits I countenance
where I am a mask of flaxen virtue
and even my wounds are diaphanous;
but swart, bloody, scourged, half-mad, spike-nimbus—
Yeats' clairvoyant beast, slouched, androgynous.