

Terce: February

by [Kathleen O'Toole](#) in the [February 5, 2014](#) issue

There must be a sutra that fits
this mess: lumps of melting snow
—markers of impermanence.
Once the unspoiled beauty
of fields of cotton, ski slope,
starlit sky—now shoveled and
ploughed, siphoned inward
by sun and gravity. Old snow
with all the elegance of gun-metal
helicopter blades churning overhead.
Soot-smudge tattoos on berms of it,
foot-stomped reminders
of imperfection, dirty laundry.

Only listen for hymn-licks
in the slap of slush from tires,
birdsong layered in like a gospel round.
Then join in, scanning twigs
of gray-barked trees for bud sprits—
that first portent of spring.