

Ritual

by [Sarah Klassen](#) in the [April 1, 2015](#) issue

Holy Week and three buffleheads on the cold river
practice the rite of baptism. Their preference:
complete immersion. Again and again they duck
and disappear into ice-cold darkness, then emerge, shaking
a zillion stars from their feathers.

As if there is never enough
purification, they plunge down deep and rise and dive
and rise again.

The week winds down, down
down toward Friday. Temple draperies are torn.
Darkness enfolds the earth. The dead in their stone tombs
have begun stirring as if, like the sun in the morning,
they will rise.