

Lenctening days

By [Rachel Marie Stone](#)

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No, that's not a typo.

Recently I learned that the word [“Lent”](#) comes from the Old English ‘lencten,’ which sounds a lot like “lengthen” and, not incidentally, was the Old English word for Spring--that time when the days, well, *lengthen*.

Despite the [admiration](#)

I've always had for traditional Lenten disciplines, this time of year--when I forget to start dinner on time because the growing evening light tricks me, when I'm drawn from sleep by the unexpected brightness of the morning sun--this time of year tends to make me a bit giddy.

Meditating on [dust returning to dust](#) seems opposite to how I feel when spring is, well, *lenctening*. Springing.

But maybe that's reasonable. Lent is the season where deadness springs to life: snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodils cautiously raise their green and brilliant heads, stoic strawberry leaves unfold and tentatively sent out runners, tired, swollen goats bend to release their burdens in bringing forth light-footed young.

At this time everything in nature seems to be stretching and yawning awake after a long sleep, lively after months of sluggish drowsing.

Maybe Lent serves as a counterpoint to all this; a reminder that even as the grass [“flourishes and is renewed”](#) in the morning, [“in the evening it fades and withers.”](#) That God alone is everlasting.

It's a sobering thought, but somehow, a joyful one. And so I hope this Lent not to curtail or cut back but to *lencten*: to take joy and satisfaction in God and in God's gift of each lengthening, springing, light-filled moment.

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