

Ash mark

by [J. Barrie Shepherd](#) in the [February 27, 2019](#) issue

Thumb-born across the temples,  
Earth's smear, in all the surface brush  
and shove, wipes speedily away.  
But to those who bear the season,  
who wear the stark and somber mark within,  
a depth plumbs deeper  
than the tomb, a path leads  
beyond the dust toward a garden,  
a light that shines beyond mortality's  
dark warning.