

A word and a calling

by [Jill Alexander Essbaum](#) in the [April 4, 2006](#) issue

He rose again. His face was black and bruised.

The underground famine had gnawed its gloss.

Where I have been, you could not live to tell.

First, his women returned, and then his friends.

They reached to press their fingers to his scar.

Do not touch me, he scolded crossly, cold

as Christ. Instead, they stroked the air, feeling

by degree for what had changed. But new moods

bloomed from his skin and from his bristle.

He spit upon the ground and then he cursed.

He did not walk towards the light, he walked

away. And the lock-jaw mouth of the grave

stayed agape, misgiving. As if it did

not know: *Dead does not mean dead forever.*