

## Brotherhood

by [Lawrence N. DiCostanzo](#) in the [June 21, 2017](#) issue

Late March and a cold Good Friday in Parma.  
A crowd in coats and scarves fills the Duomo.  
The painted cross is lifted. The line shuffles  
forward toward the broken skin and blood of Jesus.  
I imagine what the cross does not show—  
the bones of hands and feet,  
the twined nets of arteries and nerves—  
the housing for the nails.

In early June I visit the museum in Bolzano,  
where they keep the man buried  
by mountain ice five thousand years ago.  
There are room after room of his things.  
Lengths of string  
in a little fur bag,  
a short flint dagger,  
a hat,  
his shoes.  
And there are his wounds.  
The slash down the web  
between finger and thumb.  
And inside him,  
the stone arrowhead  
that slit his back when the arrow  
entered like a hammered nail.

There is a brotherhood of bodies.  
It has not heard of calendars.  
In it, we are compressed  
like fossils in the same stratum,  
our bones merging  
with the ice, with the cross,

twined into one anatomy.