

Serpent

by [James Owens](#) in the [March 24, 2021](#) issue

The Easter cold relents by afternoon,
and spring feels nearly spring, though snow still packs
the shaded paths. I walk where lichenized rocks
have shed their ice with help from the young sun,
and here's the risk of being on my own:
I find, knotting and unknotting himself
like some old symbol meant to stand for life,
the year's first snake, disentombed from the stone.

With no companion's sense to rein me in,
the danger is I'm apt to make too much
of the meeting, broadly read my own sin
or blessing in coils where a wiser touch
might merely share brotherly pleasure, skin
released to warmth from winter's tight, chill clutch.