

Changer: A Prayer Poem for Ash Wednesday
A 21st-Century Worship Resource

Cover me with ashes,
the thick-smoke soot of the earth.
Make my breathing like the journey
from death into life – second by second,
prayer by prayer.

Cover me with a cloak – bring me low to the earth,
your justice whispering to me like the gleam of red rocks,
the colors dancing in the darkness.
Let me know the power of sage and cedar in my bones,
not that I may trap them there,
but bring them forth in words.

Cover me with darkness –
with the presence of my elders, their tears falling around me,
reminding me of why we are here –
sighing, groaning with our singing, longing to hear us into being,
stretching us beyond breathing and praying and weeping.

Cover me with mercy –
let the bones you have crushed rejoice,
like the woman who channeled every ounce of courage and dignity
to touch your cloak and find new life.
Breathe unto me life anew,
of possibility,
of beauty,
of balance,
of grace.

Cover me with mud –
bring me to my lowest state, so that in my weaknesses
I see your strength –
the reflection of your eyes in the brokenness around me,
the fullness of your love in the depths of our hearts.

Cover me with ashes –
the ashes of my grandmother,
who in living her days knew no strangers,
worked tirelessly with worn hands
and lifted grandchildren high into the air.

Cover me with mercy –
let my cheek come to rest on the cold earth,

its faithful presence a call to walk humbly
beyond myself
beyond my fears
and ever on to the red road that leads to your love.

ḫáyəs – Changer
Cover me.
Cover me with ashes.
Change me.

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