

Rembrandt, “The Woman Taken in Adultery,” National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London

by [Peter Cooley](#) in the [July 26, 2011](#) issue

Just as I came out of the Gallery,
I saw a gull among hoards of tourists
encircling the statue of Lord Nelson,
crazed while I prayed he'd make it out, resume
flight I attribute to all birds, boundless.

But my dying: I try to keep it lined
around the edges of the ordinary
so I can—shall I say—appreciate?

Drawn to that picture by the glowing dark
around the woman, kneeling, Christ standing,
the Scribes and Pharisees shrouded in black,
I saw she, too, has just discovered light,
knowing, moments ago, she escaped stoning.

She just this instant came to where I'm going.