

An angel critiques Caravaggio's *Saint Matthew and the Angel*

by [D. S. Martin](#) in the [April 21, 2021](#) issue

*The Church of San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome*

As rich as it is his painting's  
misconceived  
depicting what humanity's not able  
to perceive

Overlook  
the anachronisms of  
latter-day bench & table  
& replacing Matthew's parchment  
with a book

Ignore  
the appealing bedsheet draping the angel  
who seems perplexingly suspended  
from a ceiling hook & even the twisted angle  
at which the writer must look

The inspiration that was given  
isn't something he'd heard as if recited to him  
word for word but what the altar piece alters  
what troubles me most is would Heaven  
merely send an angel  
to do the work of the Holy Ghost?