

ONE DAY THE LIGHT FLASHED ABOVE MICHELANGELO'S HEAD AND HE EXCLAIMED, "BIBLICAL THEMES -- WHAT A GREAT IDEA FOR A CHAPEL!"

I had an insight today.
I also had one yesterday,
which means I am now five years ahead
of my lifetime batting average.

I had written down an idea for a poem
and I came across it and started to work on it
and then I stopped and said to myself,
"You've already written this poem."
I thought, "I bet I wrote it when I was half-cocked
and then I took it to my drawer in my office
and I forgot to cross out the note to write it."
But then I thought, "No, I bet I didn't write it;
I bet I just worked it all out in my head
and then never got around to writing it down,
but I had it so polished in advance
that it seems as if I've already written it."

Or maybe I wrote it two years ago
and when I jotted this most recent note
I had already forgotten the version
that is probably languishing on some editor's bidet.

Anyway, the insight was not that my mind is a muddle,
I've known that since kindergarten,
the point is that this probably accounts for all
of Rubens' nudes and Degas' dancers and Goya's
atrocities.

It wasn't that they were trying to create a
characteristic style,
a theme, a mood, a subject, a trademark --
it was just that they forgot they'd already
painted the same goddamn picture three hundred times.

Honest-to-God, I can just see ol' Rembrandt,
a little in his cups of Bols gin, muttering,
"I think I'll wander back to the studio
and see if I can't whip up a chiaroscuro for a
change."

BURN

"I'll never be like that!" he vowed.
"It should be easy not to be so typical."

He didn't realize how typically young he was.