

# The Sistine Chapel

by [Kathleen L. Housley](#) in the [July 11, 2006](#) issue

On the scaffold twenty meters up  
tracing her head in the damp plaster,  
Michelangelo knows it's going to take  
more than a breath to make Adam drop  
his can't-be-bothered pose, too bored  
to stand even at God's charged arrival,  
held aloft by a crew of hard-working cherubs  
who struggle to maintain lift long enough  
for contact to occur: a critical maneuver  
of the right hand complicated by the added  
weight of Eve on whom His left arm rests.  
Drops of paint freckle his face as he wonders  
how many priests will take offense  
but concludes that only skin to skin will do.  
Without it, Adam's forever grounded.  
God's touch is first. Hers is next.