

On first seeing Rembrandt's self-portrait as St. Paul

by [Charlotte F. Otten](#) in the [June 11, 2014](#) issue

Was it Rembrandt
or was it Saint Paul
who raised his brows
in doubt
about that time
when ecstasy
embraced him
in a Third Heaven?

Can anybody made of clay
penetrate the barriers
that keep human eyes
from seeing into habitations
fit only for wanderers
who've been there before?

Words like "epiphany"
escape Rembrandt's brush,
he contemplates in oil,
mixes paints in angst,
Paul's tears glaze his eyes,
the weight of glory
sags
on the tilt of Paul's shoulder.