

La bocca  
 sullo scrigno elpeto fo darpa  
 elpenel soprabuso euctania  
 melza goccando u rido pammeto  
 E lobi entrati miso nella peccia  
 e fo delcul p choerapeso groppa  
 eparsi seza gliochi muono tuano  
 D imazi misalluga lachoraccia  
 ep progarsi adietro sragroppa  
 e edomi Comarcho soriano  
 po fallact e serano  
 surgie elindicio Et lamete porten  
 Et mal si tra p Cerboctama torten  
 lammia puctura moren  
 di fe di orma giouanni e lamo onore  
 no sedo flog bo ne io puctore



*I' ho già fatto un gozzo in questo stento,  
come fa l'acqua a' gatti in Lombardia  
o ver d'altro paese che si sia,  
c'a forza 'l ventre appicca sotto 'l mento.*

*La barba al cielo, e la memoria sento  
in sullo scrigno, e 'l petto fo d'arpia,  
e 'l pennel sopra 'l viso tuttavia  
mel fa, gocciando, un ricco pavimento.*

*E' lombi entrati mi son nella peccia,  
e fo del cul per contrapeso groppa,  
e' passi senza gli occhi muovo invano.*

*Dinanzi mi s'allunga la corteccia,  
e per piegarsi adietro si ragroppa,  
e tendomi com'arco sorïano.*

*Però fallace e strano  
surge il iudizio che la mente porta,  
ché mal si tra' per cerbottana torta.*

*La mia pittura morta  
difendi orma', Giovanni, e 'l mio onore,  
non sendo in loco bon, né io pittore.*

I've already grown a goiter at this drudgery—  
as the water gives the cats in Lombardy,  
or else it may be in some other country—  
which sticks my stomach by force beneath my chin.

With my beard toward heaven, I feel my memory-box  
atop my hump; I'm getting a harpy's breast;  
and the brush that is always above my face,  
by dribbling down, makes it an ornate pavement.

My loins have entered my belly, and I make  
my ass into a crupper as counterweight;  
without my eyes, my feet move aimlessly.

In front of me my hide is stretching out  
and, to wrinkle up behind, it forms a knot,  
and I am bent like a Syrian bow.

Therefore the reasoning that my mind produces  
comes out unsound and strange,  
for one shoots badly through a crooked barrel.

Giovanni, from now on  
defend my dead painting, and my honor,  
since I'm not in a good position, nor a painter.

---

Written ca. 1509–10, while M was frescoing the Sistine Chapel (1509 autograph is a sketch illustrating the artist standing and craning his neck painting a cartoonlike figure on the ceiling (TC no. 174r). The tone is far from humorous. M wrote numerous complaints to his family about being "worn out with the work" and "enduring the utmost discomfort and weariness" (C. LXX, c, CIII, CV). Vasari reported the same experience. The *sonetto caudato*, with its additional stanza (here doubled), was employed in the sixteenth century by the burlesque poet Berni; cf. nos. 25, 71. For another example of Bernesque humor, see no. 10.

2. *cats*: *gatti* might also refer to human residents of the area; the term *Burchiello* to mean peasants or country people.

5. *memory-box*: i.e., the lower rear part of the skull. In his *Lezioni* Vasari explained that the Florentines used *memoria* to mean both "memory" and "the brain where that faculty was believed located."

6. *hump*: here, a jocular reference to the spinal column, implying it is something animal-like. *Harpies*, in Greek mythology, were hideous female creatures with a human head and the body of a bird.

10. *crupper (groppa)* refers to the rump of four-legged animals, again in the sense of distention.

12. *hide*: *corteccia*, more literally "rind" or "bark," meaning an external covering; here it refers to grain or fruit.

14. a *Syrian bow* was shaped into a single semicircular arc. The image of the bow recurs in no. 20.

17. *barrel*: *cerbottana*, originally a tubular blowpipe for bird hunting, was later used as a small firearm of similar shape.

18. *Giovanni*: the autograph is addressed "A Giovanni, a quel proprio da Pistoia," the humanist and academician Giovanni di Benedetto da Pistoia, who wrote the letter to M. For later poems sent to him, see nos. 10, 71.

20. Vasari and Condivi record M's resentment at being removed from the tomb to fresco the ceiling. When one section of the painting was attacked by a rival painter, M told the pope that painting "is not my art" (CW 57). Similarly, in 1509 he wrote to the pope that painting "is not my profession" (C. LXII; R. 45).