Hey T. S. Elliot, Mix This

Aaron Bodhyl

I'll make you famous, Emilio
At least, I would have
But the Sheens were eclipsed that day
Outside the Viper Room
Edward Scissorhands mourns the loss
Of one of his own
Winona forever,
We sure had you fooled
Ben Stiller, what's your glitch
Ethan Hawke goes Gen X
Violent Femmes, calling card of cool
The search for street cred continues
Fifty eggs in an hour
I knew Paul Newman
And you're no Cool Hand Luke
Get your own apple sauce
(I got the Motts)
But the secret is out,
The news is in
Soylent Green is Reeses Pieces
ET, your line has been disconnected
Where have you gone. Charlton Heston
John Hughes loves you more than you will know
Don't you forget about me...
Ferris Bueller, a hero for us all
Hold on a minute, there
What about The Breakfast Club,
Sixteen Candles and Less than Zero
Once upon a time,
Anthony Michael Hall was such a little guy
But whatever Danny Elfman might have to say about it,
Don't hate me because I'm beautiful
Won't work this time (Kelly LeBrock, you have been warned)
We all know that weird science, teen wolf
And the multifarious manifestations of Christopher Lloyd
(Or is it Walken)
Are the scourge of the 20th century
Along with Molly Ringwald, Robert Downey Jr.,
And generational coincidences.
Sign of the times. (Let's go crazy)
Microwaving memory and desire
(Here's to you, TV Dinners)
The Brat Pack and the Rat Pack
Sammy, Mr. Bojangles, of the glass eye
Succumbs to cancer of the throat
But Cameron is alive and kicking
(Ohh, yeah)

15 June 1599, Rome
Wendy Withrow

It is damp and dark in the corner where I sit. I inhale deeply the smells of working class sweat mingled with the pipe smoke that rises to hover above my head in a gray cloud. The light from lanterns casts deep shadows around the room and creates a welcomed niche of anonymity into which I settle. The noise from other anonymous patrons filters to me in waves. As I methodically pull from the bottle in front of me, the warmth spreads through my body and soothes me.

I have just come from the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi, having been summoned there by the priests to discuss the commissioned painting I made for them. They brought me there to inform me they would not accept my painting. You see they are blinded by details and they miss the truth behind the scenes I paint. They are outraged at my depiction of Saint Matthew with dirty feet. It is unsuitable and sacrilegious for a saint to appear earthy, they say. Dirty feet imply work upon the land, a human activity, and therefore it casts Saint Matthew in a human manner. But it is nothing I haven’t heard before. Most of my paintings have been objects of criticism at some point. Both the private patrons and the church have been strong opponents of me. They cannot even see the name Caravaggio without anger.

When I was younger I was driven by my desire for realism. The world around me was stimulating and I was intoxicated by even the simplest elements of nature. The beggar outside my apartment was my favorite model and a basket kept me painting for months. I thought the chubby little boy next door was the most angelic image in all of Rome. So I happily painted what I saw and was content. But I realized I was the only one to see it this way. My patrons began rejecting my paintings one by one. My images were too honest for their tastes. Their idea of beauty is not what they see around them, but an idealization of reality.

This constant battle I fight frustrates me to the point of madness. It angers me that they cannot see past these petty grievances to the real issues behind my work. I am angered by the aristocratic patrons in their cozy villas and smug lifestyles. I am angered by their scorn of me when I refuse to idealize them, to mask their wrinkles and scars. I am angered by the church for only accepting the wealthy as ideal images of Biblical devotion. I blatantly lay the emotional truth out on the canvas as my eyes see it. I bare myself, naked before Rome. and all I receive in return are meaningless criticisms of dirty feet and beardless Christs.

The truth is where my vision lies. The church speaks flippantly of truth in all its hypocritical splendor, while I struggle alone in my studio for the same truth through the reality around me. But their truths are only words and my truth an honest vision. All I want, all I have ever wanted, is to be real. The simple workingman, wearing his worn clothing and tired eyes is the image I desire. The common folk I see in the fields at noon and in the taverns at night are the subjects