

Thomas, Not Saying

Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to something and Tell me what I am like." ...
Thomas said to him, "Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like."
- Gospel of Thomas 13.

The finger must have seen something.
Say. The skeptical finger
sees more than the eye of faith.
Nothing invasive or military. The hole
invites the finger. So. A probationary
touch, tentative in intention then electric
in performance. Say. Only Caravaggio
not Thomas, sees, through Thomas'
finger, red corpuscles flushing the white
capillary walls. An angioblast
performed by Caravaggio by means
of the finger of Thomas. Not so.
There is incredulity to reckon with.
Six eyes and one finger focus intently
on the thoracic fault that rhymes
with the folds of the man's robes
(robes once folded straight and flat
and put away).

The man with the finger looks
away – to enhance, say, the finger's encounter.
He seems intent on listening, though,
for a word the others have no need of.
Two of the three fix a clinical gaze
on the folly of flesh, so, as if
professing faith yet awaiting the full report.
The pierced one keeps gentle hold
of the wrist of the guided finger,
letting it draw, say, its own conclusions
(the Now of the whole matter);
and it is this touch, not the Braille wound
his finger cannot read, but the hand
on his wrist that tells, that knits breath back
to bone and says it is so and so and not so.

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