Painting the Sistine Chapel Ceiling

_A Poetic Account by Michelangelo Buonarroti_

I've already grown a goiter from this torture, hunched up here like a cat in Lombardy (or anywhere else where the stagnant water's poison). My stomach's squashed under my chin, my beard's pointing at heaven, my brain's crushed in a casket, my chest twists like a harpy's. My brush, above me all the time, dribbles paint so my face makes a fine floor for droppings!

My haunches are grinding into my guts, my poor bottom strains to work as a counterweight, every gesture I make is blind and aimless. My skin hangs loose below me, my spine's all knotted from folding over itself. I'm bent taut as a Syrian bow.

Because I'm stuck like this, my thoughts are crazy, perfidious tripe: anyone shoots badly through a crooked blowpipe.

My painting is dead. Defend it for me, Giovanni, protect my honor. I am not in the right place—I am not a painter.