

David Starkey

THE INCREDULITY OF THOMAS

Reckless Thomas drinks wine in a tavern
while the rest of the disciples huddle
in a safe house—the unbelievers outside
ravenous for their renunciation.

Jesus appears
with a *Peace be unto you.*

He shows them his palms, the holes crusted
with dried blood, his mangled feet, the gash
in his side from the lance of Longinus.

He breathes into each of their mouths,
remitting a portion of the Holy Ghost,
then vanishes like a ferry
in the fog.

Thomas arrives minutes later
with a blustery *Hallo!*
Nothing his friends say can convince him
what he's missed.

A week later, Christ is back.
He beckons Thomas, like a schoolmaster
intent on whipping an unruly pupil.

Thomas slinks to him, touches his hands,
his feet.

He bends over the lance wound like a boy
at a tide pool poking his finger into a sea anemone—
its mouth soft, sensitive,
alive.