

CHRISTOPHER SALERNO

Ahead of Schedule

I couldn't exhale so I held it in a tavern all afternoon. The tavern in the dream runs like a real tavern (proper elocution, anonymous love).
Death and the beautifully painted door open at once.
A few men drift in.

Caravaggio made a painting called *The Seven Works of Mercy*.
Of a post-apocalyptic shoving match.
In it, an angel squats with a cake of soap.
In our mouths and palms, death and
the dream of death are one,
thanks to time.