Inside an Angel

Matthew Zapruder
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Angels are clever, and do not exist,
sitting on branches
when the birches are bare,

contending an entrance
that burns in clouds
has nothing to do with God.

Drawn by a blue thread
attached to a sleeve
into cities whose nights are lit,

through false doors of churches and fields
and out of the paths of runaway taxis,
they keep walking down into the world.

Did one just pass in a dress?
Soon others will come to tie its wings,
and paint its mouth shut with a crooked white X.

I say angel over and over.
Each time I say it, one more disappears.
They tell us we live on one side of the veil.

They tell us to dance and throw sparks.
When we pause, so do the clouds:
out of the sky each follows another.

A blue and white shawl covers their shoulders.
They believe we remember,
and ride down on breezes to keep us
moving from room to room. 
In one, the girl I saw slapped on the bus 
sleeps on a wooden chair.

Inside an angel the walls are grey. 
It seems only those who feel nothing 
say angel.