

The Annunciation.

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O THOU to whom the angel came
 One early dawn at Nazareth,
 His wings aglow with morning flame,
 Heaven's incense in his trembling breath.
 He found thee—so my spirit saith—
 New wakened from thy guileless sleep,
 That oft-recurring little death
 That creeps upon us when stars peep.
 And on that Resurrection morn
 He told thee of a Wondrous Birth,
 The age-long hope of man forlorn,
 God's new creation of His earth.
 "Hail, highly favoured one," he said ;
 "The Lord is with thee, do not dread !"

Mute wonder in her waking eyes,
 Pure freshness in her virgin thought,
 With tender infinite surmise
 She mused what God, her God, had wrought,
 And doubted not, but simply asked,
 "How shall it be?" and still confessed
 Omnipotence not overtaken
 In giving God to man as guest.
 But can her tender strength avail
 Such mighty purpose to fulfil?
 Empty of self, she could but hail
 The Brooding of the Heavenly will :
 "Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
 Be it according to Thy Word."