

L'Annunziazione

Ilyse Kusnetz

Let's face it, this isn't the first time
a god has foisted himself upon a woman.
In Jan Prevoost's version, with one

hand outstretched, the angel Gabriel
drops his bombshell: *see this dove, yea*
he is really the son of God and will soon

be checking into your holiest of virgin
wombs. His coffee-and-cream wings coy,
furled, I imagine him requesting her

forbearance at a time like this, then
apologizing for the pun (even angels
sometimes cannot resist a good pun).

Meanwhile, Mary gazes nonplussed
at what should be a delicate
white bird, a pure symbol, except

in its impervious, amniotic
golden bubble, levering slowly down
those piercing cables of light

like a tram full of divinity,
Prevoost's dove more resembles
a chicken, stubby-winged and beaked,

awkward in its sac, as if it couldn't fly
without God's express assistance.
What can I say? You wanted

doves in their alluvial grace,
a fanfare of trumpets? Let's face it.
Sometimes it's the chicken

who brings us the news—every flawed,
graceless thing we must
take into ourselves and transform.