



IKON OF THE ANNUNCIATION
First half of the fourteenth Century

“Not I, please, not I...” she says, speaks it quite clearly
& with such determination, holding up her
right, long-fingered hand as in self-defence.

Why not

the Rabbi's wife? She'd seem more deserving of the
honour,” giving Gabriel the glad eye (oh watch that
left, wide-open eye, the poet's divining rod:
she'll pass on to the child a fierce poetic virus...)

Is this a virgin's face, I ask myself; so much
worldly wisdom imprinted on the brow, the tight
corner of the mouth resentful in its strong
declination, her womanly energy thus
fully evident; she might be counted among
early feminists: this proud bearing!

But then — was

it not she who, at the Cana wedding'd say to
her son “They have no wine,” he taking it for a
reproach...angered, but hastening to make amends.
Whatever.

The gold halo's bent on defending
the divine design, so's Gabriel in his earthly
guise; thus we still expect her humble

handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according
to thy Word.”

The dark servant-girl placed beside a
temple column in the architectural scene,
with her muscular arm around its shaft, has faith
in her, so the resplendent throne of gold with its
red velvet cushion, keen to receive her, while high
the vermilion winds of Time blow – relentlessly.

Stefanie Bennett

THE CROSSING

And now that you have reclaimed me, Fiumfreddo,
I climb to the ancestral vantage-point
Overlooking my wild peasantness and accredit
The grand wash of mediterranean fever.