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Annunciation in Lyon

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ANNUNCIATION IN LYON

Larry Turner

A bureaucratic angel with gilded curls
emphasizes with missing finger
his message. His ivory tunic, olive cloak
are decorated with golden flowers
like celestial paw prints.
He has mislaid his wings,
but the hooks on his shoulders remain.

Mary's right arm, hinged at elbow and shoulder,
is raised to guard her virgin womb.
The left, in her bewilderment, has fallen off.
She leans away from the news
as when she was a tree
she would curve from unexpected wind.
Then she wore bark;
now her brown dress is covered
with white four-petalled flowers.
Her hair, close bobbed against her head,
suggests more years
than her budding breasts reveal,
but fewer than the five hundred
she has stood listening. Her face
is wary, mouth straight, eyes turned askance.
She doesn't understand all this,
but it sounds a lot
like things she's been warned against.