

With Lorenzo Lotto awake in the early hours

Anne Elvey

Feast of the Annunciation 2021

after Lorenzo Lotto, Altarpiece of the Annunciation to the Virgin [L'Annunciazione], c. 1535, Comune di Recanati, Recanati, viewed in 'The Italians: Three Centuries of Italian Art' exhibition, Melbourne Museum, 16 August 2002.

The way the cat takes fright at
Gabriel—twitch of sympathy across
species for a kneeling girl. Or

the worry that a predatory thing—
its winged co-relation between climate-
shifting hominid and eagle's

plumes—arrives in a glory of fleet
traverse, from cloud's eyrie towards
this portico where nothing can be

believed of deity—and everything.
In the mode of: *I wouldn't put it*
past you, so to speak. Mary's fiat

then is a kind of puzzlement that
yields to the impossible insistence—
god multiple in the singular. Could

they know what would come of it?
The torn flesh. The necessary
business of a commission. All those

canonical lies for keeping secrets
from themselves. Lotto paints
the overshadowing man she will break

with, her body singing fierce resistance—

Do not let it be done unto...

Upend, remake it all

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