

Tanner's *Annunciation*

Gabriel disembodied,
pure column of light.

Humble Mary, receiving the word
that the baby she carries is God's.

Not good news, not news, even,
but rather the rightly enormous word,

Annunciation. She knew
they were chosen. She knew

he would suffer, as the chosen child
always suffers. Perhaps she knew

the dearest wish, mercy,
would be ever-inchoate,

like Gabriel: light that carries
possibility, illuminates,

but that can promise nothing but itself.