

## **THE ANGEL OF THOUGHT**

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**THE  
ANGEL OF THOUGHT**  
and Other Poems

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*Impressions from Old Masters*

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**ETHEL ALLEN MURPHY**



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**TO MY FRIEND AND TEACHER  
ANNA J. HAMILTON**

THE WRITER WISHES TO EXPRESS HER  
GRATITUDE TO THE ART DEPARTMENT OF  
THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY, WHOSE KIND-  
NESS IN LENDING THE PICTURES WHICH SUG-  
GESTED THE VERSES, AND WHOSE MISSION IN  
OPENING SOME OF THEIR MEANINGS TO HER  
SPIRIT, HAVE HELPED TO MAKE POSSIBLE  
THIS LITTLE BOOK.

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*Te Deum Laudamus*  
*by Fra Angelico*

## THE ANGEL OF THOUGHT

(*Suggested by a Fra Angelico Angel*)

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**A**NGEL of Thought, meseems God winged  
    *thee so,*  
    And crowned thine head with passion fine  
    as flame,  
And made thy lifted face too pure for shame,  
With eyes and brow a mirror to His glow;—  
And gave thy lips a golden trump, that, though  
Long years have passed since other angels came  
To work the mighty wonders of His name,—  
In God's own name and man's, thyself shalt go  
Forever on strong pinions to and fro,  
And round the earth reverberating blow  
The mute, world-shaking music of the mind;  
That thou might'st make as naught all space  
    and time,  
And thrill in mystic oneness through mankind,  
Yet dwell in each, inviolate, sublime.



*The Annunciation*  
by Botticelli

## ANNUNCIATION

*(From the picture by Botticelli)*

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### I

**K**NEELING in prayer, her spirit rapt  
above,  
She meets with God, Who bendeth, brood-  
ing low,  
In vast compassion humanward, and so,  
There comes upon her life the power of Love:  
Rising — behold! with pinions like a dove,  
An angel with a rod where row on row  
Of chaliced lilies spill supernal glow,—  
Which all her thought to wonder mute doth move.  
Then falls upon the rapture of her soul,  
Dimly some vision of Gethsemane,  
Athwart the Resurrection's shining goal,  
And with uplifted hand she pleads as One  
Shall pray in night of darkest agony,  
“This cup remove,—yet, Lord, Thy Will be  
done.”

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## ANNUNCIATION

*(From a picture by Botticelli)*

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### II

**I**MMORTAL eloquence of mystic Art!  
How strangely o'er oblivion and gray time,  
That hand doth speak, as in the painter's  
prime  
It uttered thus his own and Mary's heart.  
At sight of it, what rich conjectures start,  
Adown the years, what wistful Aves chime,  
That wake the soul to rapture how sublime,  
Wherewith we, too, must bear in Him our part!  
For unto each to bring redemption's share,  
Whereby adown the ages Christ is borne,  
There comes the angel of the liliated rod;  
And though our souls with anguish sore are torn,  
We pray once more the world-o'ercoming prayer,  
And then is born in us the Word of God.



*The Visitation*  
*by Dürer*



## THE VISITATION

*(From the picture in Dürer's series on "The Life of the Virgin")*

**T**HE mountains wonder from their cloudy  
height,  
The skies look on and grow more deep  
with awe;  
From these two women, earthly loves  
withdraw,  
And leave them shrined in some ensphering  
light,—  
More fine than that which greets the earthly  
sight,  
More glorious than that Creation saw,  
When, from abeyance to primeval law,  
There burst the dawn from out the womb of  
night;  
Yet are all things unchanged around them,—  
these,  
The ancient hills, the town, the quiet trees,  
The household presences through which they  
grope  
Blind to all else but to each other's eyes,  
Wherein, transforming heaven and earth, there  
lies  
Sublime effulgence of immortal Hope.



*The Madonna of the  
Magnificat, by Botticelli*

# A BOTTICELLI MADONNA

## I

### THE WONDERING ANGELS

**B**EHOLD! the Tabernacle of God's Will  
This woman's form enshrineth. What  
is this,

More glorious than all our age-long bliss,  
Which shines within the shadow of her sill?  
How shall we lift this strangeness which doth fill  
Her human heart to breaking,— we who miss  
In our immortal joy, the enlight'ning kiss  
Of sorrow's bitter lips whence comforts thrill?  
How shall we sing to her of joys to come,  
To her who bears upon her breast the sum  
Of death's dread gloom and heaven's undying  
light?

Lean close, ah, close, about her from above,—  
Behold upon the mildness of her love  
Enthroned the terrors of His Holy Might!



*The Madonna of the Pomegranate*  
by Botticelli

## A BOTTICELLI MADONNA

### II

#### THE MOURNFUL MOTHER

**O** CHILD of mine, my little Son, alas!  
    Beneath the sunlight of Thy gentle eyes,  
    Too soon, too soon, what fateful shadows  
        rise,  
Like night foretold in some sweet woodland  
    glass?  
On tender feet that scarcely bow the grass,  
What stains are those of ripe pomegranate  
    dyes? —  
When on my breast Thy head in slumber lies,  
What thorns are those that through my heart  
    do pass?  
And round about these crowds of haunting forms  
That burn their splendor through my dimmest  
    dreams!  
O little Child, Thou Wonder too divine,  
Thy precious body all my bosom warms  
With mine own blood, but oftentimes it seems,  
Too dearly loved,—that yet Thou art not mine.



*The Madonna of the Rose  
Garden, by Botticelli*

# A BOTTICELLI MADONNA

## III

### THE LOVING CHRIST

**T**HE little hands returning wistfully  
From birdlike wand'rings, ever come to  
rest,

On fostering hand on tender cheek or breast;  
The upturned eyes, with loving certainty  
Seek ever the grave face where broodingly,  
The mother-soul by yearning love opprest,  
With wings down-drooped, seems folded o'er  
the nest

Where lies the Hope of all humanity.  
And she His World, and He her Calvary,—  
He wraps her round with all the mystery  
Of love predestined for earth's needy ones;  
“Be comforted,” it seems He fain would say,  
“O mother mine, there dawns an Easter day,  
And thou in me hast mothered many sons.”



*Angel Crowned with Jasmine  
Wreath, by Botticelli*



## THE ANGEL OF THE JASMINE WREATH

*(From a picture by Botticelli, of the Madonna and Child with Angels,— in the Borghese Gallery)*

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**I**NEFFABLE angel, with the jasmine  
wreathed,

Wherefrom the sweetness over brow and lips,  
And luminous white eyelids tremulously slips,  
A visible essence from thy beauty breathed,—  
The pure and pensive marvel of thy face is  
sheathed

In tresses softer than the bloom of night,  
Wherefrom the dampness on thy forehead drips  
With dew from out God's meadows infinite,—  
Thy face, itself, a lily filled with light:—  
Thyself the youngest of God's angels and most  
fair,

Bearing His latest breath and blessing on thine  
hair,

Thou comest fresh from looking on thy Lord;  
And all is well, and all is filled for thee  
With eloquent, mute wonder of His Word.

Oh, lean a little forth thy lips to me,  
For I am fain of peace amid this earthly strife,  
And I would drink, a spent soul, thirstily,  
From out thy never-failing cup of life.



*Angel, from a pencil sketch, by Botticelli*

## A PRAYER FOR THE FOLLOWERS OF IDEAL BEAUTY

*(With a pencil sketch of an Angel by Botticelli)*

**T**HOU in whose All no work imperfect  
stands,  
Thou who dost gaze on Beauty's unveiled  
face,  
Grant to Thy children Thy sustaining grace,  
When low at length have run the daylight sands,—  
When, though their day was set to Thy com-  
mands,  
They bow contritely in prayer's holy place,  
Because through strivings beauty-wards they  
trace  
The sad misshapings of their earthly hands:  
Grant them at eve a soul devoutly still,  
Grant them in dreams a vision of Thy light,  
Grant them at morn a sorrow purged away  
Into the peace of all-absolving night,  
Star in the dawnlight of a fairer day,  
Nearer the blossom of Thy perfect Will.