

REBECCA FOUST

The Bugler Responds to Mary

*after Annunciation by Upper Rhenish Master, and Congressman
Todd Akin's public remarks about "legitimate rape"*

What will He do, slut, if you refuse? He will silence your voice,
break your reed, have you stripped

and flayed. Make you my mute, my spit rag, my instrument case,
merely a vessel to swell, split, and spill fruit.

Without God what water, what soil, what salt, what sun?
I, mouthpiece, claim absolution

and absolute reign under his reign. Have you seen how a trumpet
is made? Silver stamped thin,

rolled, bent, and crimped like a thread. God does that with breath,
and absent his breath all song is scat,

broken like chaff across his long staff. We live at his sufferance,
and you, you are the pear-shaped note

he allows me to choose—or not—to blow. If it is really rape,
then you will not ripen. If you refuse,

I could teach you the blat-blat interval between bravado and fear,
but it's moot; it's already done—

He spoke, and I blared into your ear—a son.