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ANNUNCIATION

Oskar Panizza, a man learned in music, philosophy, medicine, and psychiatry, and whose deranged mind forced him into the Herrogshöhe mental asylum where he died, imagined the scene of the Annunciation in *The Inn of the Trinity* (1899): “In her sleep, Mary heard what seemed like a storm hit her house. One of the shutters opened and suddenly she saw a huge white shape with luminous hair standing on its feet in front of her. This shape hovered over her and whispered something into her ear.” The Angel who utters the inaudible words into the Virgin’s ear announces itself as a meteorological disturbance. This is so because the Angel is “disturbing” the invisible line that separates the perceivable from the unperceivable. Any transmutation that involves the visible and the invisible necessarily disturbs humans living in a sensorial-centric world. When we say that someone is “disturbed” with reference to their mental health, what we are actually saying is that they receive messages and announcements that pay no heed to the distinction between what is real and what is unreal, what is visible and what is invisible. But although humans have no wings, as Paul Claudel writes in *Positions and Propositions*, there is enough strength to fall. That is, they have the weight (PENSUM) of thinking (PENSARE). Instead, the Angel possesses only the lightness of unrepeatable and unthought knowledge. The closest that humans come to such a state of being is through the unbearable empty truth of the poetic sign. Alberto Moravia had a similar idea in mind when, in commenting on the violent (indeed sacrificial) death of Pier Paolo Pasolini in 1975, he announced that “il poeta dovrebbe essere sacro” (the poet should be sacred). The “lyric sacredness” conjured up here would ultimately become the new name of signification.