

ANGELICO'S NATIVITY

THEOPHANE O'BRIEN, O.P.

*Here is new beginning, second creation,
Death to sinners' sinning; life, salvation.
Angelico, Angelico tilted his palette
And bade it, lo, invent
Coloured harmonies all intent
Upon swaddling the Child Incarnate:—
Deep rich, blood red of wine,
Wheatened white, black of penitents,
Green verdure of the vine,
Leather brown of shepherd tents.*

*Angelico, Angelico, artist born,
Dipped his brush and passed it o'er
One sweet moment of earth—time shorn:
The Christ Child's birth, his stable floor.
Angelico, Angelico limned his vision,
Capturing in colour Christmas morn:—
Virgin Mother's maiden care,
Angel shadows, heaven hovering,
Foster Father kneeling in prayer,
Dominic's saint in preacher covering.*

*Angelico, Angelico, saw you no danger
Placing us within the manger,
The ox and the ass, figures rare?
Angelico, Angelico, saw you no danger
In painting us there?*