A block of marble caught the glance
Of Buonarotti's eyes,
Which brightened in their solemn deeps,
Like meteor-lighted skies.

And one who stood beside him listened,
Smiling as he heard;
For, "I will make an angel of it!"
Was the sculptor's word.

And soon mallet and chisel sharp
The stubborn block assailed,
And blow by blow and pang by pang,
The prisoner unveiled.

A brow was lifted, high and pure;
The wakening eyes outshone;
And as the master sharply wrought,
A smile broke through the stone!

Beneath the chisel's edge, the hair
Escaped in floating rings;
And, plume by plume, was slowly freed
The sweep of half-furled wings.

The stately bust and graceful limbs
Their marble fetters shed,
And where the shapeless block had been,
An angel stood instead.

0 blows that smite! 0 hurts that pierce
This shrinking heart of mine!
What are ye but the Master's tools
Forming a work divine?

0 hope that crumbles to my feet!
0 joy that mocks and flies!
What are ye but the clogs that bind
My spirit from the skies?

Sculptor of souls! I lift to thee
Encumbered heart and hands:
Spare not the chisel! set me free,
However dear the bands.

How blest, if all these seeming ills
Which draw my thoughts to thee
Should only prove that thou wilt make
An angel out of me!

- Anonymous.

John F. O'Hara, C.S.C.,
Prefect of Religion.