

# My mother in Venice

by [Jean Janzen](#) in the [March 8, 2005](#) issue

She had another life,  
not only the vast expanse  
of prairie, but this island  
adrift and shimmering.

here she is, in the Frari Church  
holding the Child.  
Centuries ago Bellini  
saw her at the fish market

shivering in the rain,  
brought her to the small  
fire of his studio  
and began brushing her round

face into glow, dressing her  
in blue silk—my mother  
in this city of mirrors  
where the centuries swirl

together, where she still holds  
the Child, my Brother,  
where she doesn't hold me.