

Madonna on her countless portraits

by [Mimi Jennings](#) in the [March 24, 2021](#) issue

I love ordinary piety,  
rosaries, hausmadonnas in their niches,  
anonymous shrines alongside ditches,  
*Mary* visions, cults, sobriety  
ancient, feral, rude. Motherly,  
I bless, cradle, grieve. I'm shown wearing  
lilies, roses, thorns . . . angels bearing  
me on clouds, on a snake—otherly  
real, not upheld by scholarship, but fresh,  
gut. Michelangelo and Fra  
Lippo Lippi *believed*. Their art is raw  
with it. I bleed. I'm a thing of flesh.  
I wear all costumes, every deathbed wake.  
You get the best gods you can make.