

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.