

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.