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Madonna of Monterchi

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Madonna of Monterchi
Malina Infante

Catholic school girl, I know
their Madonna all too well.
Perfect virginal blue, eyes
ever downcast and standing
humble left-crucifix on
my childhood altar -- she's
a vessel. Hardly woman.
But here in the image of
Piero's Madonna, her
fresco lapis grown spotty,
I see a hint of the girl
Myriam, captured veil-sheer.
Third trimester, a slim slit
in her dress, and of course two
angels tug at that curtain,
ready to drop. How many
women have knelt before her?
Icon of fertility,
a girl rightly celibate,
then made into a house for
a man's God. Those men, they don't
want to see the split, the tear
of her perineum skin,
the hair-matted hint of crown
not yet circled by thorns, so
they close those curtains, disguise
her as some untarnished thing
of myth. But Myriam, she
is not for those men to own,
for their God, and nor is she
for me. For we will never
see the well of blood that stained
her untouched thighs, that seeped thick
through the fabric of her skirt,
once like a child's-sky blue.