

1990

Virgin Mary

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VIRGIN MARY

Mary charges
25 cents
to walk
half a block
to Payless.
People a block
away
stand on
their porches
and yell
her name
when they
need something.
Some days
she earns
three dollars.

She used the money
to buy
statues of
The Virgin Mary.
"They're all Mary,"
she says.
"I had
two daughters
I had to
put up for
adoption-
they'd be 28
and 30 years old
and they probably
have children
by now.
Me,
I've got
my statues."

Her boyfriend
Ray Markel
is in the swing
on the porch.
She gives
him cigarettes
and goes inside
to deliver
potato chips.
She comes out
cradling
six statues.

She stands them
in a row,
tall and short,
brunette and blonde,
smiling and sad.

"That's nothing,"
Markel says,
"You know
that statue
The Spirit of Detroit,
the guy holding
up the sun?
That's me."

Jackie Mummaugh

Taken from Greg Lopez's "Another World,"
The Detroit News, Sunday, September 24, 1989.