

Marge Piercy

Right now, come on

The buds on the crab apple are swelling
and forsythia all along the highway
flaunts its slightly dirty yellow
or oilskin slicker glaring neon.

The gobbler in the cul-de-sac
turns this way, that, his tail burst
into a wide fan for the hens who
peck on, barely noticing.

A doe is followed into rhododendrons
by two yearlings and a fawn who stares.
The doe has been here before. She knows
there's no danger from us.

The cats split their time between dozing
in the sun till their fur almost smokes
and chattering at the squirrels robbing
the feeders and chipmunks darting by.

The winter was far too long and violent
disappearing the car into a snow bank
battering the house with wolf winds
that threatened to blow it all down.

Now everything is in a hurry to sprout,
to grow, to mate. We need a nest now
the birds shout. Worms eat their way
through garden soil, fertilizing.

All the pleasures of winter--reading,
films, giving and going to parties--all
dim to the little lights of shut off
appliances and only the sun draws us.

My computer can sleep. Every tulip,
each nodding daffodil is far more
compelling than any poem or story.
Goodbye. I'm going outside to plant.

How it is now

This is how it is: we click
off a light and it's dark
but the light in the familiar
eyes won't switch back on.

One moment the shallow
breathing, the next
silence. You will not
ever be here again.

i imagine my own death
and hope it will be pain-
less, like going to sleep.
We hope. Magic wished for.

This one is dear to me
years of loving, years
of touching. Now I touch
but flesh cannot respond.

Eyes cloud over, heart
ceases its constant tick-
tock. How can a long
love blink out so fast?

One small light gone out
snuffed. How long will
memory ghostlike stay?
Only as long as my brain.

Praise this tree

The sugar maple looks fuzzy today
buds just partly open on the wood.
Soon it will be a hanging city
of green. Already I see someone

too fast for me to identify
building a nest in its crotch.
Turkeys roost at night on nearly
horizontal branches, like clocks

huge in a row. Its lush foliage
will hide a multitude, grey squirrels
six or seven kinds of bird. A feral
cat we tamed used to sit up there,

a short life but latterly happy and
loved. The maple is a true village
we admire as its shade protects us
in the scorching heat of the day.

It gives so much to many lives;
all it asks is that we forget
the ax, some sunshine to make
sugar and occasional rain.

Shouldn't we try to give as much
and ask as little as Saint Maple.

Knopf brought out **Marge Piercy**'s 18th poetry book *The Hunger Moon: New & Selected Poems 1980-2010* in paperback. Her new collection *Made In Detroit* came out in March 2015. Piercy has published 17 novels, most recently *Sex Wars*. PM Press recently published her first collection of short stories *The Cost Of Lunch, Etc.* They republished *Dance The Eagle To Sleep, Vida* and *Braided Lives* with new introductions by Piercy. Her memoir is *Sleeping With Cats* (Harper Perennial). Her work has been translated into 19 languages and she's given readings, workshops or lectures at over 450 venues in the U.S. and abroad. www.margepiercy.com

