

Marge Piercy – Three Poems

After the operation

In hospital, my body was just pain.
Pain filled me to overflowing. Walls,
the bed itself were made of pain.

I came home a solipsist. Only me
and my pain were real. Others, only
helpers or not. My sex had been

discontinued along with feelings
for anyone else, curiosity burnt out
appetite squashed under the weight

of days on painkillers that didn't.
Slowly I emerged from primordial
grey slime. Remembered first

my love, turned into home aide,
then my cats who hovered near
trying to lick my limbs to life.

The world began to color itself.
Nights were no longer dim hall
ways endless till morning light.

I crawled back into my clothes,
my life, my work, my loves. Now
I was almost a person again.

Fooled again, she said

It's been a hard and scary winter
so far, frozen chickadee on the porch,
wild turkeys mobbing us as they skid
on the ice, demanding food. Parsnips

under mulch frozen solid. Pitch pines
splintered by gale force winds. Then
comes a January thaw two, three days.
Snow softens to puddles. Icicles drip

to vanishment. We can see bare ground
again. The air feels gentle as a warm
bath. We're let out like kids at recess
to walk our own land again, assessing.

It's false spring. Like in a bad marriage
or a dangerous affair, the partner
is kind suddenly, maybe brings flowers
or a necklace, belts out arias of love.

You think that's how it's going to be
again, like it was at the beginning.
Tomorrow a blizzard. Tomorrow his
fist'll be just as quick and hard.

O frabjous joy, the turkeys

Wind has torn at the pines,
ripping off branches. Ice seals
the ground. Can't dig parsnips.
But the wild turkeys have come back.

My mother-in-law is driving me
to madness, my agent wants changes
I can't fathom in my new novel.
But the wild turkeys have come back.

Some people are afraid of them. Some
people find them aggressive, noisy.
Some don't think birds should be so big.
But the wild turkeys have come back.

You can see ancestral dinosaur
in them. Dramas abound. Some call
hens the gobbler's harem. But females
choose their winter mate; if another

stronger, handsomer comes strutting
they abandon one gobbler for another.
Single file up the drive and steps:
the wild turkeys have come back.

They left us for several years.
Construction drove them off and away.
We'd see them by a country road
but they were gone from our land.

It's been a hard winter here, a hard
scrabble year ahead, bills piled, I'm
buying my dentist a new Mercedes.
But shout out: wild turkeys are back.

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