

## 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.margepiercy.com)

