

## THE ART OF BLESSING THE DAY

This is the blessing for rain after drought:  
Come down, wash the air so it shimmers,  
a perfumed shawl of lavender chiffon.  
Let the parched leaves suckle and swell.  
Enter my skin, wash me for the little  
chrysalis of sleep rocked in your plashing.  
In the morning the world is peeled to shining.

This is the blessing for sun after long rain:  
Now everything shakes itself free and rises.  
The trees are bright as pushcart ices.  
Every last lily opens its satin thighs.  
The bees dance and roll in pollen  
and the cardinal at the top of the pine  
sings at full throttle, fountaining.

This is the blessing for a ripe peach:  
This is luck made round. Frost can nip  
the blossom, kill the bee. It can drop,  
a hard green useless nut. Brown fungus,  
the burrowing worm that coils in rot can  
blemish it and wind crush it on the ground.  
Yet this peach fills my mouth with juicy sun.

This is the blessing for the first garden tomato:  
Those green boxes of tasteless acid the store  
sells in January, those red things with the savor  
of wet chalk, they mock your fragrant name.  
How fat and sweet you are weighing down my palm,  
warm as the flank of a cow in the sun.  
You are the savor of summer in a thin red skin.

This is the blessing for a political victory:  
Although I shall not forget that things  
work in increments and epicycles and sometime  
leaps that half the time fall back down,  
let's not relinquish dancing while the music  
fits into our hips and bounces our heels.  
We must never forget, pleasure is real as pain.

The blessing for the return of a favorite cat,  
the blessing for love returned, for friends'  
return, for money received unexpected,  
the blessing for the rising of the bread,  
the sun, the oppressed. I am not sentimental  
about old men mumbling the Hebrew by rote  
with no more feeling than one says gesundheit.

But the discipline of blessings is to taste  
each moment, the bitter, the sour, the sweet  
and the salty, and be glad for what does not  
hurt. The art is in compressing attention  
to each little and big blossom of the tree  
of life, to let the tongue sing each fruit,  
its savor, its aroma and its use.

Attention is love, what we must give  
children, mothers, fathers, pets,  
our friends, the news, the woes of others.  
What we want to change we curse and then  
pick up a tool. Bless whatever you can  
with eyes and hands and tongue. If you  
can't bless it, get ready to make it new.

Marge Piercy

From: What Are Big Girls Made Of?

(New York, Alfred Knopf: 1999, pp.157-59)