

\*She's an observer. She sits back and observes an object or something at its natural state.

### **A Work of Artifice**

The bonsai tree  
in the attractive pot  
could have grown eighty feet tall  
on the side of a mountain  
till split by lightning.  
But a gardener  
carefully pruned it.  
It is nine inches high.  
Every day as he  
whittles back the branches  
the gardener croons,  
It is your nature  
to be small and cozy,  
domestic and weak;  
how lucky, little tree,  
to have a pot to grow in.  
With living creatures  
one must begin very early  
to dwarf their growth:  
the bound feet,  
the crippled brain,  
the hair in curlers,  
the hands you  
love to touch.

### **The Neighbor**

Man stomping over my bed in boots  
carrying a large bronze church bell  
which you occasionally drop:  
gross man with iron heels  
who drags coffins to and fro at four in the morning,  
who hammers on scaffolding all night long,  
who entertains sumo wrestlers and fat acrobats--  
I pass you on the steps, we smile and nod.

Rage swells in me like gas.  
Now rage too keeps me awake.

### **Colors Passing Through Us**

Purple as tulips in May, mauve  
into lush velvet, purple  
as the stain blackberries leave  
on the lips, on the hands,  
the purple of ripe grapes  
sunlit and warm as flesh.  
Every day I will give you a color,  
like a new flower in a bud vase  
on your desk. Every day  
I will paint you, as women  
color each other with henna  
on hands and on feet.

Red as henna, as cinnamon,  
as coals after the fire is banked,  
the cardinal in the feeder,  
the roses tumbling on the arbor  
their weight bending the wood  
the red of the syrup I make from petals.

Orange as the perfumed fruit  
hanging their globes on the glossy tree,  
orange as pumpkins in the field,  
orange as butterflyweed and the monarchs  
who come to eat it, orange as my  
cat running lithe through the high grass.

Yellow as a goat's wise and wicked eyes,  
yellow as a hill of daffodils,  
yellow as dandelions by the highway,  
yellow as butter and egg yolks,  
yellow as a school bus stopping you,  
yellow as a slicker in a downpour.

Here is my bouquet, here is a sing  
song of all the things you make  
me think of, here is oblique  
praise for the height and depth  
of you and the width too.  
Here is my box of new crayons at your feet.

Green as mint jelly, green  
as a frog on a lily pad twanging,  
the green of cos lettuce upright  
about to bolt into opulent towers,  
green as Grand Chartreuse in a clear  
glass, green as wine bottles.

Blue as cornflowers, delphiniums,  
bachelors' buttons. Blue as Roquefort,  
blue as Saga. Blue as still water.  
Blue as the eyes of a Siamese cat.  
Blue as shadows on new snow, as a spring  
azure sipping from a puddle on the blacktop.

Cobalt as the midnight sky  
when day has gone without a trace  
and we lie in each other's arms  
eyes shut and fingers open  
and all the colors of the world  
pass through our bodies like strings of fire.

### **The Morning Half-Life Blues**

Girls buck the wind in the grooves toward work  
in fuzzy coats promised to be warm as fur.  
The shop windows snicker  
flashing them hurrying over dresses they cannot afford:  
you are not pretty enough, not pretty enough.

Blown with yesterday's papers through the boiled coffee morning  
we dream of the stop on the subway without a name,

the door in the heart of the grove of skyscrapers,  
that garden where we nestle to the teats of a furry world,  
lie in mounds of peony eating grapes,  
and need barter ourselves for nothing.  
not by the hour, not by the pound, not by the skinful,  
that party to which no one will give or sell us the key  
though we have all thought briefly we found it  
drunk or in bed.

Black girls with thin legs and high necks stalking like herons,  
plump girls with blue legs and green eyelids and  
strawberry breasts,  
swept off to be frozen in fluorescent cubes,  
the vacuum of your jobs sucks your brains dry  
and fills you with the ooze of melted comics.  
Living is later. This is your rented death.  
You grasp at hard commodities and vague lusts  
to make up, to pay for each day  
which opens like a can and is empty, and then another,  
afternoons like dinosaur eggs stuffed with glue.

Girls of the dirty morning, ticketed and spent,  
you will be less at forty than at twenty.  
Your living is a waste product of somebody's mill.  
I would fix you like buds to a city where people work  
to make and do things necessary and good,  
where work is real as bread and babies and trees in parks  
where we would all blossom slowly and ripen to sound fruit.

### **The Cat's Song**

Mine, says the cat, putting out his paw of darkness.  
My lover, my friend, my slave, my toy, says  
the cat making on your chest his gesture of drawing  
milk from his mother's forgotten breasts.

Let us walk in the woods, says the cat.  
I'll teach you to read the tabloid of scents,  
to fade into shadow, wait like a trap, to hunt.

Now I lay this plump warm mouse on your mat.

You feed me, I try to feed you, we are friends,  
says the cat, although I am more equal than you.  
Can you leap twenty times the height of your body?  
Can you run up and down trees? Jump between roofs?

Let us rub our bodies together and talk of touch.  
My emotions are pure as salt crystals and as hard.  
My lusts glow like my eyes. I sing to you in the mornings  
walking round and round your bed and into your face.

Come I will teach you to dance as naturally  
as falling asleep and waking and stretching long, long.  
I speak greed with my paws and fear with my whiskers.  
Envy lashes my tail. Love speaks me entire, a word

of fur. I will teach you to be still as an egg  
and to slip like the ghost of wind through the grass.

*"How do you define freedom?" My teacher asked our class. "Provide an explanation for your definition."*

I believe "freedom" is the ability to live by your own words and the ability to make your own decisions without being controlled physically and/or mentally by one's decisions. I also believe it is being able to express yourself freely.

This was one of my first discussions we had in our mid history class. I thought that every word had one meaning and one interpretation, but I was wrong. I always thought that I had the perfect definition and only, the right definition.

*"Yes, anyone else would like to add?"* He said. I was confused. How could one add to this definition? Doesn't every word has its own definition? Twenty minutes went by and there we had it, a chart full of definitions for the word "freedom." From that moment, I began to realize that not everything meant one thing, its what you make of it.

*Your mom is really looking out for you, and you should appreciate it because there are moms who don't even care about their kids.*

This was a quote from the Short Story Letter Assignment that we had to do for English class one time. I use to always think that I had the perfect childhood but when we were told to write a letter to someone we

truly loved about making the right the decisions. I began to realize that I didn't have a sister who was perfectly fine. She was going through an emotional time and wasn't making the right decisions. Once I created this letter, I learned that perfection doesn't exist, part of living is to understand and deal with the environment you was brought into.

One time for English class, we were given an assignment called the Detailed Study. For this assignment, we had to pick an author and analyze their writing styles. I chose to focus on Marge Piercy because she's an observer. She sits back and observes an object or something at its natural state. Here's a stanza she writes:

*The bonsai tree  
in the attractive pot  
could have grown eighty feet tall  
on the side of a mountain  
till split by lightning.*

This stanza teaches us that things don't always turn out as plan and that things aren't perfect even if we had envisioned them to be such. Marge Piercy help me to understand that even objects like the bonsai tree can't be perfect but the idea that it is living is the most important part.