

Marge piercy essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Grover Cleveland High School Kristen Ferrara Mrs. Lakas Period 3 June 8, 2008 Marge Piercy A lot of authors express their emotions, thoughts and feelings through works of literature. Things they hear and see, as well as own life experiences influence some authors.

Marge Piercy, a well-known author, was inspired by the stories her grandmother and mother would tell her throughout her childhood. Piercy was also encouraged by her mother to be observant and to remember what she would observe. Born on March 31, 1936, in Detroit, Piercy's family was like many other families in that time, affected by the great depression. Her mother, Bert Bernice Bunnin, born in Philadelphia, had lived also in Pittsburgh and Cleveland; her father Robert Douglas Piercy grew up in a small town in the soft coal mining region of Pennsylvania. They had not been living in Detroit long.

Her father, out of work for some time, got a job installing and repairing heavy machinery at Westinghouse. When Piercy was little, they moved into a small house in a working-class neighborhood in Detroit. Piercy credits her mother and grandmother for making her a poet. They would both tell the same stories over and over, but each time they would sound a little different. She also credits her mother's imagination and encouragement to become a poet. Piercy also read a lot of books when she was younger.

When Marge Piercy grew older and independent she supported herself by having several part time jobs. She was also a part of the civil rights movement and describes that period time as the hardest of her adult life. She felt invisible to the world because society labeled women who were

divorced at twenty-three, poor and living off a part time job, a failure. As a writer, she was invisible as well.

She would write novels, but nothing would ever be published. Realizing that one of the problems with the novel she was trying to sell was its feminist viewpoint; she consciously decided to take on a male viewpoint character in *Going Down Fast*. After moving to Cape Cod, Piercy felt her poetry come together. She now had a sense of herself as part of the landscape and part of the web of living beings. The Cape is her home although she travels a great deal here and abroad, giving readings, workshops and lectures.

One of Marge Piercy's poems is called " Barbie Doll. " In this poem, Piercy describes how the baby girl was given, " dolls that did pee-pee and miniature GE stoves and irons. By giving the baby girl a miniature stove and an iron, we are already giving the baby an idea of what is expected of her as an adult. Girls are given Barbie dolls, baby dolls, kitchen sets and make up sets, while boys are given toy cars, video games and toy guns. It's upsetting to see that at a young age gender roles play a big part.

It makes it seem that a man shouldn't help out his wife with the dinner or laundry, and that a woman shouldn't be able to handle a gun. Men and women should be able to share chores and duties around the house, from a woman washing a car, to a man changing a diaper. In the third stanza of " Barbie Doll" it says, " So she cut off her nose and her legs and offered them up. " As she was growing up, this girl never satisfied any one. She exercised to stay in shape, was friendly to everyone and smart, but all that anyone saw was her fat nose and thick legs.

Sexuality is an important theme in this poem. Throughout the poem, the woman tries to maintain an image of what society expects her to be. She does this by exercising and dieting. After doing all that she could, the woman was fed up, so she decided to cut off her nose and legs. The last stanza of the poem is very ironic. The woman who did all that she could was laid in her casket, “ with the undertaker’s cosmetics painted on, a turned-up putty nose, dressed in a pink and white nightie.

Doesn’t she look pretty everyone said. ” Finally, the woman satisfied everyone who stood above her dead body. Another theme for this poem would be social issues. Women are popular amongst others because of the way they dress, the cars they drive, how they look and how thin they are. In “ Barbie Doll,” Piercy shows that people are pleased and more attracted by women who wear a lot of make up and get plastic surgery to look younger. The natural beauty of the woman who cut off her nose and legs wasn’t good enough for society, but with her “ new nose” and make up, the people accept her “ beauty.

” In “ The Friend” by Marge Piercy, the narrator and her husband are eating dinner at the table together. The husband tells the woman to cut off her hands because they are always poking at things, and they may poke at him. The woman agreed and as the food grew colder, the husband demanded she burn her body because it wasn’t clean and smelled like sex. Once again the woman agreed and told her husband that she loved him. He replied not by saying I love you, but by telling her how he liked to be loved. In the last line of the poem the husband says, “ Have you cut off your hands yet? ” This

poem is just another example of how men expect women to fulfill every demand they spit out, especially ridiculous ones like this.

The men always want to feel dominant and superior to women. Marge Piercy has written many meaningful poems throughout her life. Inspired and influenced by her grandmother and mother, Piercy became a successful writer, motivating and changing the point of views for many. As a poet and an active women's feminist, Piercy has voiced her views and opinions allowing the world to get a better look at what she believes in. THE FRIEND
Marge Piercy We sat across the table. he said, cut off your hands.

They are always poking at things. They might touch me. I said yes. Food grew cold on the table. he said, burn your body.

It is not clean and smells like sex. It rubs my mind sore. I said yes. I love you, I said.

That's very nice, he said I like to be loved, that makes me happy. Have you cut off your hands yet?