

# Burying Blues for Janis

Marge Piercy

1971

Your voice always whacked me right on the funny bone  
of the great-hearted suffering bitch fantasy  
that ruled me like a huge copper moon with its phases  
until I could partially break free.  
How could I help but cherish you for my bad dreams?  
Your voice would grate right on the marrow filled bone  
that cooks up that rich stew of masochism where we swim.  
Woman is born to suffer, mistreated and cheated.  
We are trained to that hothouse of exploitation.  
Never do we feel so alive, so in character  
as when were walking the floor with the all night blues.  
When some man not being there who's better gone  
becomes a lack that swells up to a gaseous balloon  
and flattens from us all thinking and sensing and purpose.  
Oh, the downtrodden juicy long-drawn female blues:  
you throbbed up there with your face slightly swollen  
and your barbed hair flying energized and poured it out,  
the blast of a furnace of which the whole life is the fuel.  
You embodied that good done-in mama who gives and gives  
like a fountain of boozy chicken soup to a ratrace Of men.

You embodied the pain hugged to the breasts like a baby.

You embodied the beautiful blowsy gum of passivity,  
woman on her back to the world endlessly, hopelessly, raggedly  
offering a brave front to be screwed.

That willingness to hang on the meathook and call it love,  
that need for loving like a screaming hollow in the soul,  
that's the drug that hangs us and drags us down  
deadly as the icy sleet of skag that froze your blood,

# **fifth Estate**

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Fifth Estate #126, March 4-17, 1971

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