

Maggid

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Source: MARGE Piercy

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The courage to let go of the door, the handle.

The courage to shed the familiar walls whose very

Stains and leaks are comfortable as the little moles

Of the upper arm; stains that recall a feast,

A child's naughtiness, a loud battering storm

That slapped the roof hard, pouring through.

The courage to abandon the graves dug into the hill,

The small bones of children and the brittle bones

Of the old whose marrow hunger had stolen;

The courage to desert the tree planted and only

begun to bear; the riverside where promises were

shaped; the street where the empty pots were broken.

The courage to leave the place whose language you learned

as early as your own, whose customs however dangerous

or demeaning, bind you like a halter

you have learned to pull inside, to move your load;

the land fertile with the blood spilled upon it; the roads

mapped and annotated for survival.

The courage to walk out of the pain that is known

into the pain that cannot be imagined,

mapless, walking into the wilderness, going

barefoot with a canteen into the desert;

stuffed in the stinking hold of a rotting ship
sailing off the map into dragon's mouths,

Cathay, India, Siberia, goldeneh medina,
leaving bodies by the way like abandoned treasure.
So they walked out of Egypt. So they bribed their way
Out of Russia under loads of straw; so they steamed
out of the bloody smoking charnelhouse of Europe
on overlooked freighters forbidden all ports-

out of pain, into death or freedom or a different
painful dignity, into squalor or politics.

We Jews are all born of wanderers, with shoes
under our pillows and a memory of blood that is ours
raining down. We only honor those Jews who changed
tonight, who chose the desert over bondage,
who walked into the strange and became strangers
and gave birth to children who could look down
on them standing on their shoulders for having
been slaves. We honor those who let go of everything
but freedom, who ran, who revolted, who fought,
who became other by saving themselves.