

The Visitation

by Marge Piercy

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The yearling doe stands by the pile of salt
hay, nibbling and then strolls up the path.
Among the forsythia she stands amazed,
hundreds of spring bulbs: daffodils,
the bright Kiddush cups of tulips, crimson,
golden, orange streaked with green, the wild
tulips opening like stars fallen on the ground.
She leans gracefully to taste a tarda,
yellow and white sunburst, sees us, stops,
uncertain. Stares at us with her head cocked.
What are you? She is not frightened
but bemused. Do I know you?
The landscaping dazzles her, impresses her
far more than the two of us on the driveway
speaking to her in the same tone we use
with the cats as if she had become our pet,
as she sidles among the peach trees,
a pink blossom clinging to her dun flank.

Graceful among the rhododendron, I know
what her skittish courage represents: she
is beautiful as those sub-Saharan children
with huge luminous brown eyes of star-
vation. A hard winter following a hurricane,
tangles of downed trees even the deer
cannot penetrate, a long slow spring
with buds obdurate as pebbles,
too much building, so she comes to stand
in our garden, eyes flowering with wonder
under the incandescent buffet of the fruit
trees, this garden cafeteria she has walked
into to graze, from the lean late woods.