

# Ne'ilah

By [Marge Piercy](#)

The hinge of the year  
the great gates opening  
and then slowly slowly  
closing on us.

I always imagine those gates  
hanging over the ocean  
fiery over the stone grey  
waters of evening.

We cast what we must  
change about ourselves  
onto the waters flowing  
to the sea. The sins,

errors, bad habits, whatever  
you call them, dissolve.

When I was little I cried  
out *I! I! I! I want, I want.*

Older, I feel less important,  
a worker bee in the hive  
of history, miles of hard  
labor to make my sweetness.

The gates are closing

The light is failing

I kneel before what I love

imploring that it may live.

So much breaks, wears

down, fails in us. We must

forgive our broken promises—

their sharp shards in our hands.