

A February thaw

Today the ground is bare. Naked.
I can see dirt, dead grass, one tiny
shoot of crocus beside the house.
It's like I've been given back

the world, or lent it for a time.
Chickadees, tree sparrows, finches
juncos rejoice, even tiny kinglets
who bear red and golden crowns.

Grey squirrels wake to leap
from branch to branch. Skunks
are abroad for the first time
in months, males driven by lust

search out females in their snug
burrows. My brain has wakened
too. The land has emerged alive
from its white shroud. Earth

suggests it's something to plunge
my hands into like bread dough
I knead. Looks almost edible.
Far underneath worms are thawing.

My spine begins to glow like a sea
creature of the deep, but a weight
instead is lifted from me. Seeds
arrive in the mail, packets of hope.

Marge Piercy

Atlanta Review Fall/ Winter 2018