COUNCILS, by Marge Piercy

We must sit down
and reason together.
We must sit down.
Men standing want to hold forth.
They rain down upon faces lifted.

We must sit down on the floor
on the earth
on stones and mats and blankets.
There must be no front to the speaking
no platform, no rostrum,
no stage or table.
We will not crane
to see who is speaking.

Perhaps we should sit in the dark.
In the dark we could utter our feelings.
In the dark we could propose
and describe and suggest.

In the dark we could not see who speaks
and only the words
would say what they say.

Thus saying what we feel and what we want,
what we fear for ourselves and each other
into the dark, perhaps we could begin
to begin to listen.

Perhaps we should talk in groups
small enough for everyone to speak.

Perhaps we should start by speaking softly.
The women must learn to dare to speak.

The men must bother to listen.

The women must learn to say, I think this is so.

The men must learn to stop dancing solos on
the ceiling.
After each speaks, she or he
will repeat a ritual phrase:

It is not I who speaks but the wind.
Wind blows through me.
Long after me, is the wind.

- from CIRCLES ON THE WATER