

Poetry Porch: Poetry

War of my childhood

By Marge Piercy

Men always liked my father,
a man's man. He was chosen
block warden. First he'd check
every window in the house,

blackout curtains drawn tight,
lights out. Then every house
on our block, sternly warning
violators. Lucy and Lon we'd

shared a flat in Jewtown, now
tenant farmers out by the River
Rouge factory, killed a chicken
for us every Sunday that Mom

and I plucked. Meat was very
occasional. Mom and I mixed
dye into lardy white margarine.
Candy was rare as sugar.

Mother kept our ration cards
in a kitchen drawer. Even my
brother and the wife he was
divorcing (a forced marriage)

grew a Victory Garden. We
took tomatoes, beans to Lucy
with fruit Mother canned.
The Jewish newspaper Bubbah

got was filled with horrors aimed
at Mom and me. The radio poured
out the godlike voice of Roosevelt.
Marines drafted my brother.

I collected cans, newspapers,
scrap metal, winning the prize
at school for most patriotic:
a childhood walled by war.