

“My Heroines”

By [Marge Piercy](#) (2010)

When I think of women heroes,
it's not Joan of Arch or Molly Pitcher
but mothers who quietly say
to their daughters, *you can*.
Who stand behind attempts
to open doors long bolted shut
to teams or clubs or professions.

I think of women who dress
'respectably' and march and march
and march again, for the ability
to choose, for peace, for rights
their own or others. Who form
phone banks, who stuff envelopes
who do the invisible political work.

They do not get their faces on
magazine covers. They don't get fan
mail or receive awards. But without
them, no woman or liberal man
would ever be elected, no law
would be passed or changed. We
would be stuck in sexist mud.

It's the receptionist in the clinic,
the escorts to frightened women,
the volunteers at no kill shelters,
women sorting bottles at the dump,
women holding signs in the rain,
women who take calls of the abused
of rape victims, night after night.

It's the woman at her computer
or desk when the family's asleep
writing letters, organizing friends.
Big change turns on small pushes.
heroes and heroines climb into
history books, but it's such women
who actually write our future.