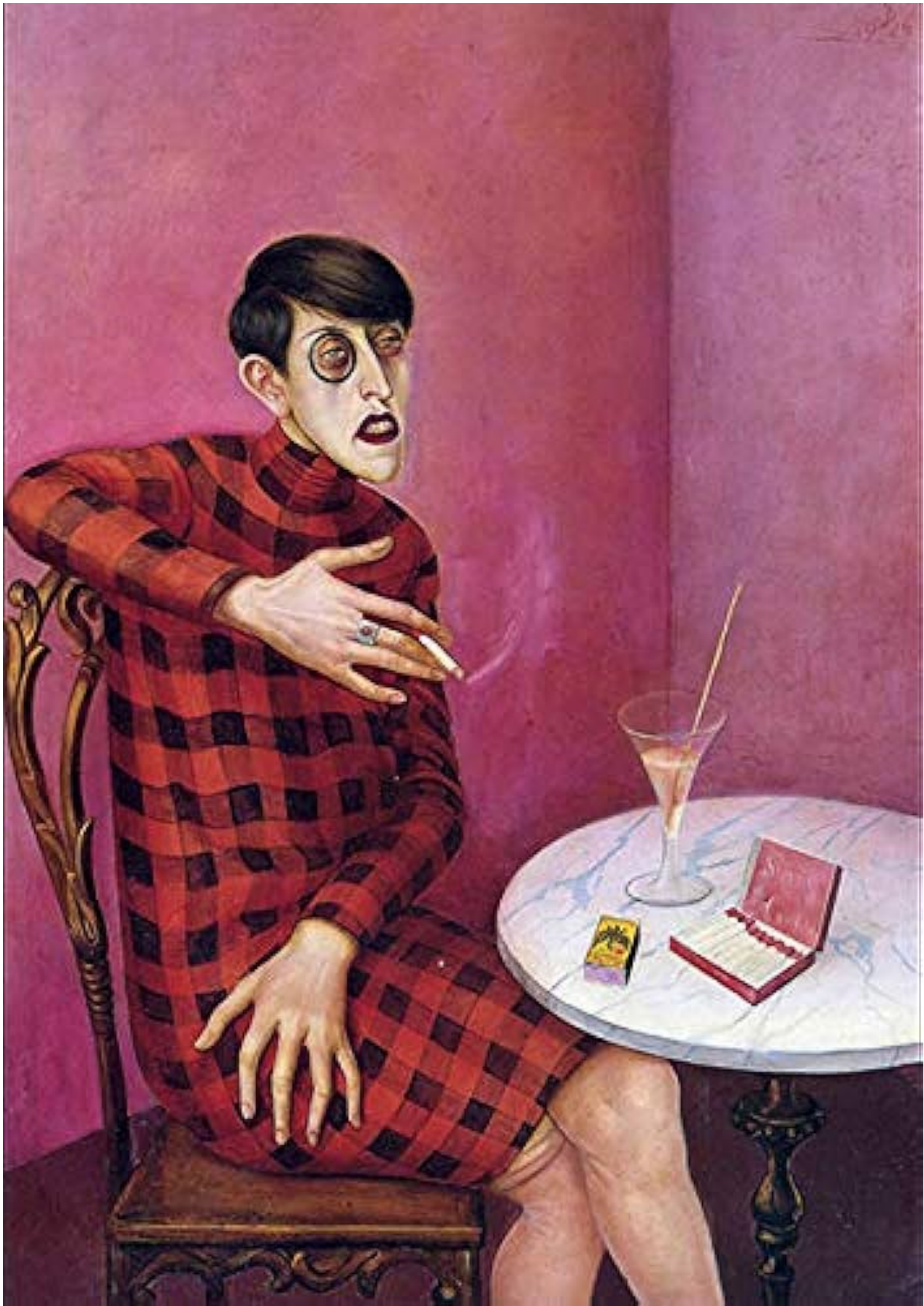


Dear News Editor

by [Carolyn Martin](#) (June 2024)



Portrait of Sylvia von Harden– Otto Dix, 1926

Dear News Editor,

Please cease and desist all brazen attempts
to aggravate our compassion fatigue.

We're tempted to turn off our screens
rather than stare into children's fly-infested eyes
or scan landscapes of buildings rubble in despair.
Not to mention, the waste clogging waterways,
seasons out of sync, and rituals of words
that get no one anywhere.

It's scientifically clear, 99% of everything
that ever lived is already extinct
and eight billion humanoids are next in line.
Until we're called, offer us something more
than exposés about the pyrocene, moonquakes,
kilonovas, and the privileged absurdity
that pulses through our every day. Of course,
we're cognizant we're the only ones
on this wobbly earth who will kill for an idea,
so the joke's on us. Weary of our suspect history,
we concede seeing demands looking away.
Since we're sprinting toward the Great Unknown
where a millennium is a second's thought,
give us a reprieve. Dim the lights and recalibrate.

—Concerned

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Carolyn Martin, blissfully retired in Clackamas Oregon, is a lover of gardening and snorkeling, feral cats and backyard birds, writing and photography. Since the only poem she wrote in high school was red penciled "extremely maudlin," she is amazed she has continued to write. Her poems have appeared in

more than 200 journals throughout North America, Australia, and the UK. See more at www.carolynmartinpoet.com.

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