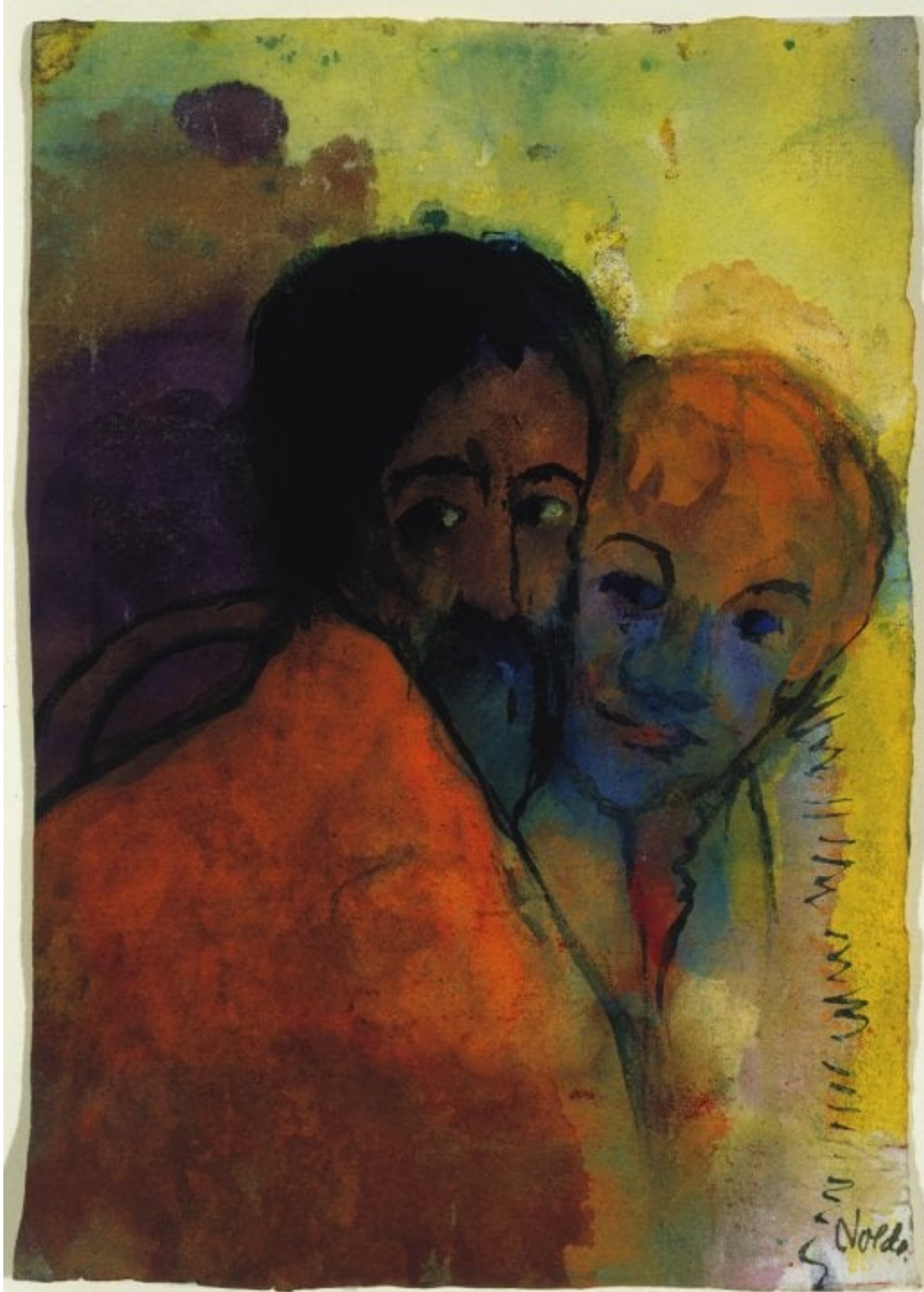


# Hopeless Romantic

by Kelli Lage (May 2024)



Man and Woman –Emil Nolde, 1938-45

## **End**

Blue of my sin and red of your winter coated end.  
I learn to traipse through purple of God's end.

Body of a lampstand.  
Hair of split ends.

Back throated prayer bathed in wine.  
Townspople watching, backbend.

Blood dyed hands.  
She's seen it before, speed dialing the reverend.

Split open every tree fallen nut.  
See if their wombs of limbs extend.

Each sidewalk crack unveils realities—  
if you see me in one, call me a friend.

## **Hopeless Romantic**

My husband is a hopeless romantic.  
I let him believe reality television couples never break up.  
That life is something that can be full of  
grass clippings, and wings, as much as people he'd never  
know how to talk with, sift through forests with,  
cultivate fields with,  
finding love, despite not knowing  
the harvest of it all.

My husband sees the sunrise, believes my fingers are magic,  
and begs me to take a photograph,

with a camera who scores lucky shots.

My husband believes love lives in each stranger,  
even if it doesn't.

I tell him what he sees is beautiful.

Ask if I can try on his glass,  
but I am all that is but blurred  
and uneven and cynical.

My husband is a hopeless romantic.

I never tell him of broken chords,  
only song, no matter how distant.

## **Right Now**

As if vanilla stinging my cheeks could ever lose its charm.

My body, still mine / still the skin and flesh that grew  
through scuffed knees, placing the six on the birthday  
calendar,  
and hot salsa induced vomit.

The sun is playing with the trees as if  
for the picturesque of the fleeting,  
always giving us something to pine  
After.

I'm grate for unidentifiable bodies of scents  
that shock my system  
into another time.

Trucks slow down on our road,  
or speed up,  
I'll never understand the rev and fall  
of an engine.

Their pace skips as if to see, as if to know.  
It's always him  
Coming home.

## **Always Here**

What is it that keeps driving me to look at the water?  
To hope I see something in my grandma's window?  
All is still. But I wait for the rustle, the shadow, the  
spark.  
Nothing but a dusty old attic.  
Who do I want to hear me when I can't say, "I grew up here?"  
I see a small girl on a trike.  
She's heading back up the driveway.  
So her expression is free for me to fill in.  
My instinct is to cry.  
But I want to live in the cry, the inward hunch of my chest,  
not the moment after a cry.  
We can all believe the light in the leaves is just for us,  
can't we?  
I'm the only one with my head looking North.

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**Kelli Lage** is an assistant poetry editor at *Bracken Magazine* and is a Best of the Net and Pushcart nominated poet. She is the author of *Early Cuts*, *I'm Glad We Did This*, and *Harvest is a Chapel*. Lage's work has appeared in *Stanchion Zine*, *Maudlin House*, *The Lumiere Review*, *Welter Journal*, and elsewhere. Her website is [here](#).

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