

Two Poems

by [Laura Celise Lippman](#) (March 2021)



Man and Woman, Christian Rohlfs, 1917

The Portrait

There were rumors of affairs
at the yearly meetings.
His wife

pulled her portrait
off their wall
when she learned.

We heard
it was slashed
and concealed

in the heat
of the fight
in the night.

There were rumors
of liaisons
and evening walks.

Tempers flared:
a wrist thrust through
the window in the wee hours

a naked chase
in the middle of the night
with the naked knife;

but still much later
after his death
and her own revival—and survival

the bad juju vanished
along with
the years gone by.

In the week
before her passing

her old-country nurses noted

his wife rose from her sleep
in the dark of night
to fetch him tea.

Moods for the Mighty and the Fallen

This poem begins with the fire of the entry wound;
inside I feel the steel of the wire
breaking into my heart's chambers
to the river of my sustenance. On the screen
the anchor keeps a steady tone of outrage
trying to sell reason to chaos.

I have no wisdom for this time.

Outer calm is like a pot before the boil
in the past or the future. No one
will believe in flowers when the earth
is burnt. Will someone plant in this
arid soil? There will be no bulbs
in the garden, no bodies buried
beneath the crown. There will be
moods for the mighty and the fallen.

Hope, lit or quenched,
depends on truth.

This is how I plan to go.
Renounce the mendacious in
their end-of-days parade.

They'll die and we'll make our daughters queens.

[Table of Contents](#)

Laura Celise Lippman's work has appeared in *Crack the Spine*, *Crosswinds*, *La Presa*, *Mobius: The Journal of Social Change*, *Pontoon Poetry*, *Poydras Review*, *Journal of Family Practice*, and *Sin Fronteras/Writers Without Borders*. Lippman has attended numerous writing conferences, including the Port Townsend Writer's Conference, and Hugo House Workshops. She attended Bryn Mawr College where she studied with Kate Millett and Lila Karp in one of the nation's first women's studies programs. Lippman received her M.D. from the Medical College of Pennsylvania. She practiced medicine for thirty-seven years and raised two children in the Pacific Northwest. She enjoys the outdoors and shares her love of the natural world with her family and friends.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](https://twitter.com/NERIconoclast)