

# 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.

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**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.

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