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Reconstructing a Dress

Epistle to Mary Todd Lincoln

Lace is a noose,
a lifetime of woven
threads with

stitching plucked
to make a delicate pattern
out of loss.

Did you wear black lace
that veiled your hair
the night you felt
the trembling breath
of a nation
go out,

the pearls
loosen and drip
from their string?

Did you clip tufts of
his hair, wrap them
in yellow-point
lace and singe them
over flame,

watch each curl
and dance, alight,
like a fall leaf snared
in the catch of coming
winter?

Please, tell me
I am not the only
mother, only wife
setting the night table
for my dead.



Eyespots

Epistle to Margaretha Geertruida Zelle (Mata Hari)

You should know that not every man pointing his rifle
that day was a dutiful stone; a few had pale, pumice-hearts
and blamed the rising sun for the bullets that shredded
your silk and crepe wings.



Art Information

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Megan Merchant is the author of four poetry chapbooks: *Translucent, sealed* (Dancing Girl Press, 2015), *In the Rooms of a Tiny House* (ELJ Publications, 2016), *Unspeakable Light* (Throwback Books, 2016), and *A Thousand Paper Cranes* (Finishing Line Press, forthcoming). Her debut full-length poetry collection, *Gravel Ghosts*, was recently released from Glass Lyre Press. Her second full-length collection, *The Dark's Humming*, won the 2015 Lyrebird Prize through Glass Lyre Press and will be published in 2017. She also has a forthcoming children's book through Philomel Books.

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