Megan Merchant: Two Epistles **[1]**

September 12, 2016 Featured Poetry [2]
Open Letters [3]

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.

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

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.

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Art Information

- "April, Chappaquiddick," "Out Her Parents' Window" (detail), and "Landscape with Crow" (paper and glue on window glass) © Kim Triedman [4]; used by permission.

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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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