

# Mansplaining

By Jennifer Militello

Dear sir, your air of authority  
leaves me lost. Eases me from  
a place of ease. Contracts with  
my contradictions to take from me  
a place. Autopilots my autobiography.  
Frightens my fright. Sighs with  
my breath. Wins at my race.  
Your certainty has me curtained.  
Your nerve has me nervous. Your  
childhood has me childlike and  
your nastiness nests in my belfry  
like a hawk. You are beyond  
and above my slice of sky, peach  
as a pie, bourbon as its pit. You are  
spit and vinegar while I sour  
in my bowl. You bowl me over  
while I tread lightly on  
my feet. You walk on water  
while I sink. You witness me,  
fisherman, boat on the lake,  
while I struggle and burble and brittle  
and drop. You wink at me and  
I must relate. I close my eyes  
to erase you and you are written  
in my lids. A litmus test. A form  
of lair. God with three days  
of facial growth and an old bouquet  
for a face. Soap and water for  
a brain. I have no handsome  
answer. I have no pillar of salt  
or shoulder to look over. I have  
no feather to weigh. I have no  
bubble to burst. I am less  
to myself, a character in a drama,  
a drumbeat, a benevolence, a  
blight. All parts of me say shoot  
on sight. Aim for an artery  
or organ. Good night.

Source: *Poetry* (July 2018)