

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 curtailed.
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)