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Abstract

One of the reasons I'm loathe in general to crack
the bedroom door and scurry many-legged out
is hearing praying mantises were never endangered...

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Go On Take Another Little Piece of My Heart

by Christopher Citro

One of the reasons I'm loathe in general to crack
the bedroom door and scurry many-legged out
is hearing praying mantises were never endangered.
That's a lie and mythy. Clunk there goes another
long drawer of my youth. If you can't believe
what a kid down the road two years older
than you tells you then who can you believe?
Next they'll say swallowing a watermelon seed
won't get you pregnant. I'll stay rather in bed.
One foot in eight years old and the other outside
the covers for heat regulation. In my dream
I'll have built a mansion with well-lit staircases
so never at the top will I step where there's no step—
slapping a Frankenstein foot too hard on nothing
and feeling an animal shame. You can go to jail
for eating an owl. Stick a hand out a car window
and it'll get cut off. An ancient Greek was the last
person to have known all there was to know. Or
maybe it was someone medieval in a cold monastery
surrounded by the dark hoards with their drinking
and folk songs and rumpy-pumpy. How would he
know he knew everything? And if it's just something

we made up why do we need so to build our monster
in our image? The monks named their arguments
the names of women because they were monks
and men without women. Three A propositions
(Every X is Y) in a row was Barbara. Hello Barbara!
In a hard cell on a night lasting several hundred years,
a monk hunkers down on a straw mat. No one knocks
at the door but the wind with everything behind it.

Christopher Citro is the author of *The Maintenance of the Shimmy-Shammy* (Steel Toe Books, 2015). He is the winner of *Columbia Magazine's* 2015 Poetry Writing Competition, and his recent and upcoming publications include poetry in *Best New Poets 2014*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Ninth Letter*, *Witness*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The Greensboro Review*, and *Verse Daily*, and creative nonfiction in *Boulevard* and *Colorado Review*. He received his MFA in poetry from Indiana University and lives in Syracuse, NY.