

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH BENELLI M4

PETER
LABERGE

I do not know how I am to love inside
this world, inside this sun-struck body
of forest. I do not know what to think

about hunting, about Father: new maple
shotgun cradled in his lap. I would like
a small pistol with bullets that absolve

each sky of its secrets, each father's tree-
gutting responsibility. Perhaps I am
cared for the way the post-fire gun cares

for its sun-warmed victim. I confess—
I cannot name myself anything other
than *riverless ditch*. For today, no water

has come. For today, I do not know
how I am to love what is not here.