

CRYSTAL HURDLE

Fever Dream: Brainwave

Seahorses in the foam of the cortex
"Come, come to me"
Pair of curved fingers
at the base of the brain
Beckoning
Or TaTa fingers, a demure wave

One hippocampus removed and
epileptic rats no longer jerk and contort
They are tranquil, tepid, lulled
by the gentling waves

A carapaced surgeon, eager to increase success,
snaps on his gloves over patient H.M.
Hippocampi twice removed
The seahorses become sullen slugs in the metal pan
A scalpel drips with brain blood,
pooling softly

H.M. patient still
He exists only in the present
Long-term memory is
a thing of the past

He eats lox for lunch
Ten minutes later he asks when lunch is
Something fishy maybe
He forgets his mother is dead and
has been dead for ten years
until he is told
and he weeps for ten minutes
his briny face is more contorted
his heart is more engorged
his body is more spastic than
when epileptic and
and for ten minutes

Seahorses cannot croon to him from
their pools of formaldehyde and
and H.M. cannot remember to
forget the sea