

MELISSA BARRETT

The Brain Names Itself

The brain named Leif Erikson and Verizon.
Named our dog After after “after,” my favorite
preposition. The brain named looners, nooners,
and euphemisms. Brought an al dente noodle
to the spaghetti house. The brain invented paint by numbers
with Bob Ross and painted numbers on wooden cubes
and a wood of painted bark. It invented acronyms
and contractions. DTF at two o’clock. The brain
invented measurements for precise timekeeping
and the idea that time is a social construct.
The brain thinks a thought and thinks about thinking.
You don’t get much more meta than a fruit salad
served from a watermelon basket. The brain wrote
the heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit.
The brain traced lines from stars and starred the best lines
from books. The brain wrote books and turned some
into props, like the hollowed-out Bible that held alcohol
in *The Simpsons*. The other Homer spoke his books
and hollowed out a horse. The brain named Zima, Zafiro
Añejo, Helen, and the hippocampus, which comes
in the shape of a seahorse. The brain invented comparison.
The brain invented cramming. The brain invented irony.
Imagine all the med students trying to commit
the functions of the hippocampus to memory.