

LISA MB SIMMONS

The Clawed Brain

—after Beckian Fritz Goldberg

When I go to heaven, they weight my lies.
The clouds are glazed with the clear
remnant of forgiveness. I know why I'm here.

St. Peter comes, saintly and soft like angel food.
He reads his paperback.
Its title is *Knock, Knock Jokes for Eternity*.
We relax in the garden where tear

dew on the roses. A dove
settles on his arm, leaving its down
on his flowing sleeve like hail in the winter
months of record year,

the one just after the baby is buried with his mother.
When he recites, he draws a crowd.
He looks at me and asks if I remember
the earth with unicorns. He

misses them the most. My brain,
he confides, has claws. I think of
my husband who told me the worst
liars, the worst humans on earth,

go to hell. I remember
when. We were crushed in the car, red
phantoms of blood cursing on
the glass, and I waited for

a breath. Not religion. And not
the saint's riddles.