

## Harold

His tank is large                      a bubbling                      coral refuge,  
a solid slice                      of the ocean                      to live in.  
One of the tests                      of sentience                      is pain:  
the ability to perceive                      it, the desire to                      avoid it,  
but sentience                      alone                      is not enough,  
there is no                      test                      for sentience  
based on                      how well we can                      produce pain,  
if there were                      sharks and men                      would be equal,  
all sharks                      some men                      some men.

Pain is                      the mouth we use                      to swallow the world  
Her work                      awarded sentience                      to decapods and cephalopods.  
Harold blanches                      when he sees her,                      softens into hiding,  
he can fit his                      tentacles into                      the tightest desperation.  
Her job was                      to poke him and                      record his flinches.  
It was hard for her                      but important                      to science.  
She feeds him                      from a tube                      he wraps around  
but always slowly                      hesitant                      he has never forgiven her.  
*The story of the world*                      *Harold*                      *is the memory of pain.*