

Microglia

Beverly Greenspan, MD, PhD

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Correspondence

B. Greenspan
bevgreenspan@att.net

Insight into the pathways that regulate pruning, as well as the specific signals that guide microglia to engulf synapses, will be crucial for identifying potential therapeutic targets against cognitive decline

—Bartels et al.¹

They nibble at tributaries where thought
is a flurry of droplets. They tidy
traffic of ridge and ravine
whose sky is bone.

No sun, no moon, but a host
of starry cells, invests this fertile
and unharrowed darkness, humming
with silent exigencies

and explorations. But if, at the nexus
of voltage and vesicle, microglia—
those tiny adherents—mistake
the tastiest gulp,

the junctions where aberrantly
cleaved peptides cling like leaves
clogging a stream, or with inherited flaws
corrupt their spools of instruction,

might the mirror of memory crack, the strands
unravel in the starry weave,
the self, like a fountain whose drops no juggler
keeps tossing and catching, collapse?

Reference

1. Bartels T, De Schepper S, Hong S, et al. Microglia modulate neurodegeneration in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. *Science* 2020; 370:66–69.

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