

Phineas Gage

Hank Green

Oh, Phineas Gage was 25 years old in 1848.
And he liked his job, working at the railroad, but he had another fate.
He was blasting rock when something distracted him.
And he forgot to put the tamping sand in.
He shoved the tamping rod into that little hole onto the blasting powder.
And suddenly his entire left frontal lobe had been turned into clam chowder.

Oh this is the story of Phineas Gage, who was stabbed in the brain.
And once your frontal lobe has been destroyed, you can never go home again.

A little while later Phineas Gage was sitting on his bed.
He told the doctor the tamping rod had shot straight through his head.
But the doctor could not believe what Phineas said.
For if that were the case he surely would be dead.

But then Phineas had a coughing fit.
And a teacup full of brains fell out of his head.
And that was more than the doctor could explain.

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And once your frontal lobe has been destroyed, you can never go home again.

Well the doctor told the family to prepare for Gage's death.
'Cause the one you take before your head gets stabbed is usually your last breath.
And Phineas spent the next few months in bed.
In and out of consciousness, with a swelling in his head.
But mere months after the accident, he walked right down his stairs,
as if having lost a quarter of his brain left him no worse for wear.

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And once your frontal lobe has been destroyed, you can never go home again.

But unfortunately for Phineas, our story won't end there.
The reason we still know his name is the strangest part of this affair.
After his brain was scrambled his friends and family said,
"Oh, this is no longer Phineas. There's a new man here instead."

And thus we know that operating on the brain needn't not cause death.
And that what makes a person who he is, is not the heart but the head.

Oh this is the story of Phineas Gage, who was stabbed in the brain.
And once your frontal lobe has been destroyed, you can never go home

again.

Oh Phineas Gage was 37 years old when he finally made his way.
Back to his home and family, for he could tell the day of his death was
as fin'ly creeping up on him.
'Cause he forgot to put the tamping sand in.

And as common in these cases, of severe head trauma, seizures took their
toll and put an end to this drama.