

Breastmilk and Theorems

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Breastmilk and Theorems

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2 AM

Four days old

Tiny nostrils

Skin-to-skin and open mouth wide

Latched on now

Sharp pain, toes curl

Easing now, fish lips, sucking and swallowing

If G is a graph

Make all neighbors distance two

Make all distance two distance one

What happens? What is it?

Amazing little creature, fluttery sucking now

Ease her down

Will it be one hour? Two? Four or six?

Lay down

Blissfully asleep

10 PM

Four weeks old

So frantic, clawing

Latching on, one hand in the air, then a cry

Switch sides

Again and again

Six-pack of formula on the dining room table, just in case

Still hungry? Too full? Too tired? Gas? Diaper dirty?

Latching and unlatching

Switching sides again and again

Bouncing, rocking, walking, singing, crying and screaming

No room for theorems, just what to do next, and what to do then,

Latch on again

Switch sides again and again

12 midnight and exhaustion sneaks up

Floppy arms and legs

Flop into bed, so tired, asleep

3:30 AM
Nine weeks old
Eyes firmly shut, mouth searching
“Does she sleep through the night yet?” they ask so innocently
Suppressing a laugh, stay quiet and soothing
Placed just right
Tiny little back
Tiny little head near my breast,
Mouth opens wide, can’t see in the dark
A gentle tug
Rhythmic sucking
I close my eyes
Try to rest but don’t fall asleep
Baby still sucking, still breathing
Blankets far away
 C_5 works, it gives back itself
If a graph works, does it always give back itself?
Stay relaxed, go to sleep graphs, get out of my head
Sleep baby, sleep me

9 AM
5 months old
Time for nap already
Flop in the chair,
Unhook
Head’s so fast, and she’s latched
Rhythmic sucking
Sleepy now
Other side
Fluttering eyes, fluttering mouth
Paley graphs
Self-complementary graphs of diameter two
Oh, for a paper and pencil
 $G^2 \setminus E(G)$
Do it again and again
Does it converge?
Paths to isolated vertices
Trees too? No, wait, that’s wrong
Gently lay her down, hand on her tiny tummy
Her head to side, arms stretched out wide
Ease my hand off
Can’t help but gaze just for a moment
Then creep away

8 PM
18 months
Little head relaxes against me
Don't try to bite, silly girl
For once she sleeps, still latched, still sucking
Eyelids heavy, then closed
Trees do not work
G must be diameter two or three
G always gives back itself?
Try this when there's time and pencil and paper
Ease baby down
But dishes to do
Emails to send
Papers to grade
Arms flopped out wide
Blanket on now
No song tonight, already asleep