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Poetry

Jonathan Post

Poetry by Jonathan Post

PI : A Mnemonic Poem

[The length of each word, in letters, is a digit in the decimal expansion of pi=3.14159265358979323846 26433832795028841971693993751058209749445923078164062862089986280348253421170679821480 8651328230 + "O!" is zero, as well as circularity and the groaned response to pun]

NOW I know a value
    (certainly do!)
Number whose use
    gives circular functions
Purpose: numerical, too.

"Pi" its cognomen
    when verbal
    or symbol;
Uses for all,
    interest for he
    science intrigues.
Think O! to assemble
    decimals' form
    I memorized stanzas

I summed endlessly
    the character mnemonics
And finally cried I
    "O! That's harmonic!"

Pi, O! marvelous decimal
    that eternally will grow
    while computers go
    and, O! compute
Numerals I deduce flee
    0! surely
    to infinity!

Poetry, my O! pathetic
    technique retentive
conceals circle
    of geometry: O!
The fine pleasure it shall
    now give.

So I a hundred
    O! verily hundred
Multiplex decimals
    of a Math Produced
    (O!)
Fabulous number know.
A few in addition
    to end. O!

ca.1965

Pythagorean Nightmare

I was a child the first time I had this dream
so there was no horror in the windy beach, the ocean,
the salt smell in the lightning, and the storm's voice
was my father's voice, dark, but to be trusted

The Hurricane cried "Know me: I am in the zero."
and the crashing surf called "I am in the wave."
The tumbling sand-grain hovered by my eye,
a perfect crystal—"I am in geometry."

The lightning laughed, and showed me a magic life
which was my life; a line of rocks which ran
out into the foam, breakwater in the spray
and each rock was a year, each rock further from the shore

I stand on the fifth rock with a chain of jewels in my hand;
these are my counting numbers, these bright ones, I can take them
anywhere, for long days, former friends, or railroad cars—
I run them sparkling through and through my fingers

Another rock, the shore is misty, Algebra—
where numbers put on masks, the candles lit,
the presents wrapped, the cake is cut, the horns
silent for a moment, 'til the singing starts

Jump, jump, here I pursue the nightingale
through tangled woods, through rifts and booming caverns
whose shadows hold infinity; soft predicate boots
laced with quantifiers, bookmark feather in my hand

One of the last rocks—birdsong fills the night
of moonlight on strange machines building a golden cage
and finding themselves within; I too press against the bars:
can I fit between them? They are the Undecidable.

I hold my breath at the edge of the final boulder—
dull fuzzy shapes assemble in the mist—
dry books, some girl, a door—I gesture them away
and thunder speaks the message I'd forgotten.

Nightmare, Nightmare' How could I be fooled?
This dream again—the windy beach, the ocean—
moaning in sweat I grope for the light and glasses—
touch them—shiver—and am barefoot on the granite

The Hurricane cries "Know me: I am in the zero."
and salt tears at my beard, sleet trembles on my thighs,
everything else was false! This beach is my only home
and I have been leaping, dazzled, away from shore...

0600-0845
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e : Mnemonic to the Base of Natural Logarithms

$$e \sim 2.718281828459045...$$

It: natural,
I: personal,
so exponent
I appraise.
It: enabling
logs' table—
logarithm,
0 base,
amaze!

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