

## Nostalgia for quieter times

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### Recommended Citation

Pedro Poitevin, "Nostalgia for quieter times," *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*, Volume 7 Issue 2 (July 2017), pages 417-417. DOI: 10.5642/jhummath.201702.26. Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/vol7/iss2/26>

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# Nostalgia for quieter times

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Clean desk. First day of new semester.

I'm reading Epictetus.

My office mate and students pester  
my focus on the treatise.

Through Red Sox banter I've been learning

it's hard to keep my poise—

I never took that course concerning  
the signal and the noise.

Those days I didn't think imprudent

to make a minor riot,

but then I was a graduate student:  
my office was too quiet.

Whispers unraveled in Urbana

like one continued fraction:

that was the Pax Americana  
I lost to this distraction.

Instead of "let  $n$  be a number,"

these voices rattle "Papi."

I may look stoic in my slumber  
but I'm not very happy.

Perhaps there's wisdom on these pages

on how to tune out chatter.

I miss your silence as mine rages,  
beloved Alma Mater.