

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