

## Hexagons

Barbara Quick

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# Hexagons

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Sitting across a café table from my grown-up son,  
sipping lattes, I see the flame inside him brighten  
as he points out the little hexagons  
etched in the milky residue of foam on his glass.

Ever since observing these, my son confides,  
he sees hexagons everywhere,  
from rafts of bubbles to the six-sided cells of honeycomb.  
They're the building blocks for a fly's many eyes  
and the tiny rooms of the paper wasps'  
multi-faceted nests.

Privately I agonize that he so rarely rests,  
that he's always studying, thinking, striving.  
Noting how handsome he's become,  
how kind he is and how good inside,  
I hold out hope of love arriving  
to rescue that part of him  
that seems to fear  
he'll always feel alone.

When he was newly born,  
I touched my son's long-fingered hand  
and felt confused about where I ended  
and he began.

Even in outer space, he tells me, there's a hexagon  
at Saturn's North Pole, a six-sided towering vortex of air.

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara Quick is a poet and novelist based in the Wine Country of Northern California. One of her novels, *Vivaldi's Virgins*, has been translated into over a dozen languages. Her poems have appeared in various journals, including the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Her 27-year-old son is being sponsored in his PhD program in Mechanical Engineering by the National Renewable Energy Lab in Boulder, Colorado. Barbara and her son are each privy to a secret language: she seems to have been wired for the music of poetry and prose; he is born aloft by the poetry of mathematics.

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Infinity defines how much I care  
about this person who grew inside me  
and thrives outside me now.

He shows me what he's working on,  
composing a series of equations I don't understand,  
though I wonder at their beauty as he writes them  
in a magic language made of numbers, Greek letters  
and logic.

After flying home, sipping my latte,  
I inspect the rime left behind by the steamed milk  
and find one perfect hexagon,  
there among the broken shapes that rim my glass.

I know that now I'll also see them  
everywhere.