An Exercise on Limits

Manya Raman-Sundström
Umeå University

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An Exercise on Limits

Manya Raman Sundström

A man sits alone in his barn, thinking, not about the complexities of politics, but about the real numbers, in their densities, begging to be understood.

A woman sits alone at her desk, the peace and time to return to mind, return to other people’s stories, this one Bolzano’s, with his clarity, his insight, his precision.

A child sits alone on the floor, the blocks stacked high, the largest one causing the tower to topple, and she, laughing now, realizing that some tasks are impossible.

We all have our limits, though some of us have not reached them, passed over them, nor had the strength to come back.

My daughter, still unaware, can still enjoy the thrill of the slide, and can protest, not understanding that to be bound, in certain ways, is to be safe.

And Bolzano, on the other side, must take some comfort in the fact that his life was not in vain, that someday even a girl like me might marvel.

To approach is not to attain, at least I know that, sitting on the edge of my own limits, my own end of possibilities.

But to approach a limit is not to be in fear of one, nor to risk thinking that convergence, by itself, is the enemy.