

## 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

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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

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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