Segue
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BRIAN
DIAMOND
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**Number Theory**

Gauss watching a pair of foxes slip across the winter ice, imagines an equation for which there is no answer. He pores a pint of brandy into a glass, then dreams integers as shadows crawling up his fireplace. The winter is brutal. Field mice freeze to water spigots and those foxes gnaw at their frozen fur. Gauss, who believes in a perfect math, distrusts images. Now he draws a two-dimensional grid upon which infinite points. Who cares if numbers exist, so long as they are predictable?

In any case, the world is real.

The foxes follow a line of trees off into an implied horizon. Gauss drags his fingers across a pinewood table, then scribbles notes for *Disquisitiones Arithmeticae* in broken Latin. Outside, it has not rained and the earth—hard and unmoving.
Honeymoon

Bees are fucking bees
in Carmel. Gorgeous
mansions on cliffs crowd the ocean while
in restaurants men talk
sports. I envy the rich
for their houses mostly. One
bottle of wine drunk and my wife
points out dolphins past the breakers.
Norman Dubie calls me
to ask about his dream—a vision of Sinai.
We talk about the Tennis Court Oaths
& Nachman. I miss poetry.
The clouds hang on thick through afternoon,
but by night the sky is stunned with clarity.
Technology is Invisible

Internet gleams.
We trust the future will be different
or at least less boring—
Radio outlasted the music video.
The sea cow is extinct. Difficult
is beauty, the rest
a fad. Done with simple arithmetic.
Done with politics.
Done with enlightenment I am
my own appetites struggling
to be clear. River or no river the valley
crowds with houses, street lamps
watch traffic filling and then
un-filling the same freeway.
Author Notes

Brian Diamond’s poetry has previously appeared in such literary journals as Sycamore Review, Hotel Amerika, Los Angeles Review, 42 Opus, 14 Hills, and the Drunken Boat. He has an MA in Creative Writing from California State Northridge and an MFA from Arizona State University. Currently he lives in Los Angeles with his wife and dog, where he teaches writing and literature at American Jewish University.

About the Work

These poems are the result of my ongoing interest with the sonnet form. Or perhaps, I should say, a bastardized version of the sonnet form, owing probably more Berrigan and Lowell and Berryman than anything else. What interests me is the contrast between expansive subject matter (ranging here from mathematics to philosophy to daily ruminations) and the restrictions of a 14-line form. In this way, these poems serve as filters for a more expansive poetic language, employing sonnet-like turns on the external world as experienced through language.

All of these poems began with some larger idea, anchored in a particular image. The challenge in writing them, for me, is primarily the desire of the form for coherence, with the impulse of the subject matter to resist this coherence. I’ve tried to find, as best I could, the balance between a tolerance for ambiguity with an impulse for concrete images. I’ve looked to poet’s like Rae Armantrout, Laura Riding Jackson, and Norman Dubie (thus his appearance in one of these poems) as a model for how to accomplish this.

For me, poetry is a framework for understanding the world. I turn to poetry for the particular form of clarity that comes out of complicating what we might otherwise mistake as simple.