IGGY McGOVERN

On the Determination of the Golden Ratio (φ) by a Series of Theatrical Approximations

     for The Golden Gang

The Golden What? [φ = ∞] *nonsense!*

Stairs, calipers, geometry & tea [φ = 1.000] *Wrong!*

Pyramids, flagellation of Christ,
Yeats, Blue Tack, a plan, a list [φ = 2.000] *Poor!*

Barabbalab, Bridge, Spike
red nose sphere, some tyke
whips the director's bike [φ = 1.500] *Average!*

The set of all possible sets;
stage lights, strings and frets;
the Eye of God
getting the nod;
a touch of your Swami Beck-etts [φ = 1.666] *Improving!*

This vanishing trope
of Indian rope,
a luminous spiral,
right-handed chiral
held with the aid
of stiff metal braid:
O make it your stop,
the local Pound Shop [φ = 1.600] *Better!*

Dazzling bright
Vitruvian kit
Of LED light;
poet's keep-fit
barefoot in park;
camera-shy
need not apply;
leap in the dark,
finding his mark;
—Wheel, Cather*ine*
—Sire, depend on it;
just the one line
short of a sonnet [φ = 1.625] *Close!*

'Pythagoras planned it,' as the poet said.
'Ulster says Noh'—the masked sage.
Simon & Garf: 'Is the theatre really dead?'
        Cube: love's dearth.
        Colour it blue.
        Melancholic—Earth
            Icosohedron: splutter.
            Colour it green.
            Phlegmatic—Water
                Octahedron: wondrous fair.
                Colour it yellow.
                Sanguine—Air
                    Tetrahedron: desire.
                    Colour it red.
                    Choleric—Fire
                        Dodecahedron: either/either.
                        Colour it black or white,
                        to be determined—Aether
While I stand here like some 'apprentice mage',
upon my soul, you'll see a Golden Dawn
before I take this 'free play' off the stage [φ = 1.615] *Enough?*

— *f*rom *Safe House* (Dedalus Press 2010)

Author's Note: This poem is a record of events during a weeklong workshop organized by a Dublin theatre group called Barabbalab; the theme was the use of the Golden Ratio and the Classical Forms in theatre. I was never quite sure why I was invited to take part, but I chose to write it up as a Fibonacci poem, bearing in mind that the ratio of successive pairs in the Fibonacci series approaches the Golden Ratio.