ODE TO NUMBERS

Poems by Sarah Glaz

PRAISE FOR *ODE TO NUMBERS*

Because Sarah Glaz sees "a streak of mathematics in almost everything," this book of poems is a work of alchemy. Light rays in the sky, lines of gold, become *x* and *y* axes. The square root of 2 becomes a symbol of the irrationality that drove her family from Romania to Israel. Small stones stand for the calculus (in Latin) and the integral sign is a snake (in Leibnizian). The transcendental number *e* covers three pages laced with equations, first appearing as a pirate, then Euler's namesake, then a peacock's tail and finally a poetic star. Logic proves its own inability to prove with cymbals and umlauts. The precious fruit of labor is both a baby and a theorem, depending. The fabric of the universe is algebraic; lemmas are blue, corollaries orange, theorems purple. The poet's backpack is full of theorems, and commutative rings grow in her garden instead of weeds. A Ghazal utters a gazelle, water becomes wavelets, and sunshine weaves the Golden Ratio into everything it covers. Train tracks converge at infinity, defying Euclid's Fifth Postulate. Don't miss these transformations!

> Emily Grosholz, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Philosophy, Pennsylvania State University. Author of *The Stars of Earth, New and Selected Poems*.

These poems tell Sarah Glaz's story, from childhood in Bucharest to her mathematical life in Israel and the US. Surprising, rich and complex, they invite us to a journey through letters and numbers, with an ever-curious mind.

> Philip Holmes, Eugene Higgins Professor Emeritus of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and Applied and Computational Mathematics, Princeton University. Author of *Lighting the Steps: Poems 1985 – 2001*.

This eloquent collection twines the history of mathematics with the story of a woman mathematician – the patterns, travels, discoveries that shape her life. Sarah Glaz deftly explores the dance between numbers and letters, and between the joy of 'proof' and the inevitable limits to certainty. In such expert hands, the language of math and the language of life reflect each other beautifully.

> Alice Major, Recipient of Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artist Award. Author of *Standard Candles* and *Intersecting Sets: A Poet Looks at Science*.

Poetry is the most intimate voice we have and Mathematics the most transcendental. In *Ode to Numbers* these voices sing together wonderfully.

> Barry Mazur, Gerhard Gade University Professor, Harvard University. Author of *Imagining Numbers (particularly the square root of minus fifteen)*.

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