

*ÉDOUARD THOMAS*

**Amsterdam Street**

*by Jacques Roubaud*

But why do we say that numbers go up

Scaling from zero to infinity?

It's because numbers form a street of numbers

The street of integers, longer than the nights

Very long is the street, the main street of numbers,

The abstract main street that never ends

We go up, we go down, we count, we recount

In the night of the world where all numbers are gray

But perhaps our streets are just shadowy figures

Shadowy figures of numbers cast by the rains

Of very small bits from the long street of numbers

That go up and go down for the rest of our lives

*translated from the French by Édouard Thomas*

*Note:* Jacques Roubaud (1932 - 2024) was a Professor of Mathematics at Université Paris-Nanterre, an award-winning French poet, and one of the early members of Oulipo (Ouvroir de littérature potentielle). He lived in Paris on Amsterdam Street.