

SARAH GLAZ

**Plimpton 322**

I dreamed of being a Babylonian  
clay tablet, brittle with age and broken  
in fragments, the lovely patina of  
time rubbed away by foreign hands in a  
harsh climate. Who will illuminate the  
ancient script imprinted in my core,  
decode the pain ingrained in every atom  
of disintegrating clay, make use of  
my four columns of numbers again?



*Note:* The most famous Babylonian clay tablet, Plimpton 322 (circa 1800 BCE) was decoded by Neugebauer and Sachs in 1945. The text involves a table with four columns of numbers, which after careful scrutiny turned out to yield fifteen Pythagorean triples, the largest being: 12709, 13500, 18541. The original tablet is housed at Columbia University in New York City.

First appeared in the *Bridges 2023 Poetry Anthology*, 2023