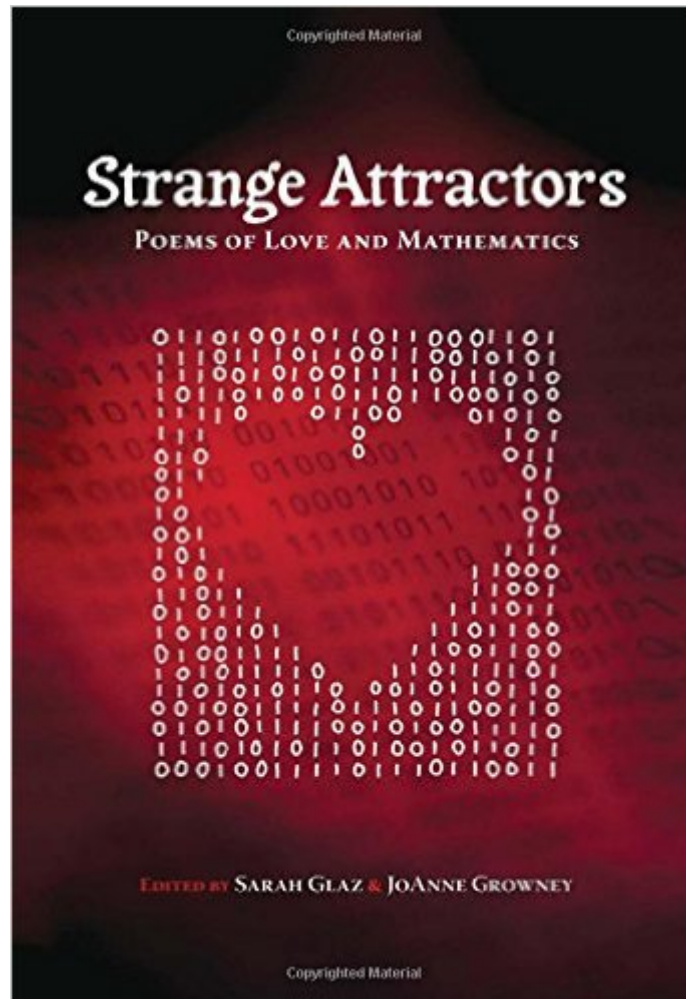


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Strange Attractors: Poems Of Love And Mathematics



Synopsis

Strange Attractors is a collection of approximately 150 poems with strong links to mathematics in content, form, or imagery. The common theme is love, and the editors draw from its various manifestations—romantic love, spiritual love, humorous love, love between parents and children, mathematicians in love, love of mathematics. The poets include literary masters as well as celebrated mathematicians and scientists. "What, after all, is mathematics but the poetry of the mind, and what is poetry but the mathematics of the heart?" So wrote the American mathematician and educator David Eugene Smith. In a similar vein, the German mathematician Karl Weierstrass declared, "A mathematician who is not at the same time something of a poet will never be a full mathematician." Most mathematicians will know what they meant. But what do professional poets think of mathematics? In this delightful collection, the editors present the view of the same terrain—the connections between mathematics and poetry—from the other side of the equation: the poets. Now is your chance to see if the equation balances. —Keith Devlin, mathematician, Stanford University, and author of *The Math Gene*, *The Math Instinct*, and *The Language of Mathematics*

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A friend of mine, with similar interests, wrote this review--worthy of sharing: A new book, edited by a pair of college math professors, offers "poems of love and mathematics" that provide enjoyable reading to those of us more familiar with verse than with Venn diagrams. Even though the kind nuns made me memorize the multiplication tables, I later became gagged by geometry, confused by chaos theory, and flummoxed by Fibonacci sums. Higher math, and its lesser cousins, never made

sense, so I found an easy chair and a pile of poetry books that I used to fend off calculus, statistics, and other mysterious studies. To my surprise, this anthology demonstrates that fans of math can also have fun with words. John McClellan wrote: "A lady of 80 named Gertie/ Had a boyfriend of 60 named Bertie./ She told him emphatically/ That viewed mathematically/ By modulo 50 she's 30." The poet was a lithographer with an interest in "recreational math," according to the useful Contributor's Notes. Poems can also offer music to the ears. Sarah Glaz, co-editor, reports on "Late Afternoon in the Workshop on Commutative Rings" about being "Inebriated in Pienza and Montepulciano/Cortona Firenze and San Gimignano." Read it aloud and hear for yourself! Other poems in this varied collection treat more serious subjects. In "My Dance is Mathematics," JoAnne Growney, co-editor, observes that "If a woman's dance is mathematics,/ She dances alone." Rather than reading alone, owners of this book are likely to share discoveries ranging from King Solomon to Shel Silverstein, from Catullus to Lewis Carroll, and from Dante to Rita Dove. Curious students will also find short biographical sketches of the mathematicians mentioned in the poems. Many readers might dance alone, delighted at the variety, and grateful to the thoughtful and thorough editors. Thanks, Denny!

I am not a mathematician nor a poet but I loved this book. It combines whimsy, funny poems with others that are more 'serious' or romantic. I enjoyed comparing poems written centuries ago with contemporary ones. My favorite poems are 'God Loves a Curve' by Edward Chipman, 'Love Story' by Sarah Glaz and 'A Lady of 80' by John McClellan. The anthology is well organized by love categories and the index is easy to use. The Contributors' Notes also provide useful information on each of the poet included. I recommend this book to all lovers of poetry with a mathematical bent for the sensitivity and humor of the work chosen by the editors.

It is rare to have two highly trained, professional mathematicians follow their passion for poetry so skilfully. Glaz & Growney challenge the line between profession and avocation by weaving together some of the finest poems you will ever read that also play with mathematics, educate you to see numbers, lines, infinities in fresh light. Here you have Andrew Marvell paint lovers into a cramped "planisphere" and let them loose again as parallel lines never to meet... And Jakob Bernoulli (well translated from Latin) making a concise argument for how "the finite encloses an infinite series" allowing readers to see also how the soul dwells in minutia... And Ray Bobo's utterly playful "Give Me an Epsilon and I will Treat it Well." Assembled with professional knowledge and seasoned passion, this volume is a must for all lovers of poetry and math.

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