

# SAN MATEO COUNTY POET LAUREATE



Poetry Reading *by*

**San Mateo County Poet Laureate Lisa Rosenberg**

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**About this poem:**

The occasion of this poem was a startling photograph taken by a friend, showing a tiny, golden pet frog on her statistics homework. The picture held many odd contrasts and combinations, from the bold colors to the fact of a small wet creature crouched on printed mathematics. It was a work of art in itself. And it hinted at timeless fundamentals that do not, on their own, distinguish between art and science.

As I explored the strangeness of the frog on the graph, I wanted to address other differences and divisions, such as the conflicts between people of my own ethnic background and that of my friend. Yet whenever I find myself drawn to a strong theme, as with this poem, I am reminded to let the writing process help keep me in a mode of discovery. In that way, both writer and reader might arrive at more possibilities of meaning, which often include and move beyond the initial intent.

# Golden Ratios

The graph and its axes. The frog  
on the graph. Just landed  
on the soft

pads of its golden  
toes. Its golden back  
a mottled

diagonal, far less than  
the gap  
from terrarium

to table; smooth  
as the boxed blue  
legend and the swell

of red beneath  
the graph's lone curve:  
an area left for you,

for you  
to compute. It's all  
stitched up: thread-thin

and notched  
along X, along Y—  
those scars

of truth, those vines  
toward a first  
hard fruit. Toward

spirals and scrolls  
of ancient ratios.  
Unwritten.

Indifferent to acts  
of measurement.  
To arts of definition

and the gifts  
of statistics, my friend.  
Those infinite

distances of our making.