

SAN MATEO COUNTY POET LAUREATE



Poetry Reading *by*

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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.