

The Platypus Letters



PLATONIC SOLID POETRY

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM IS

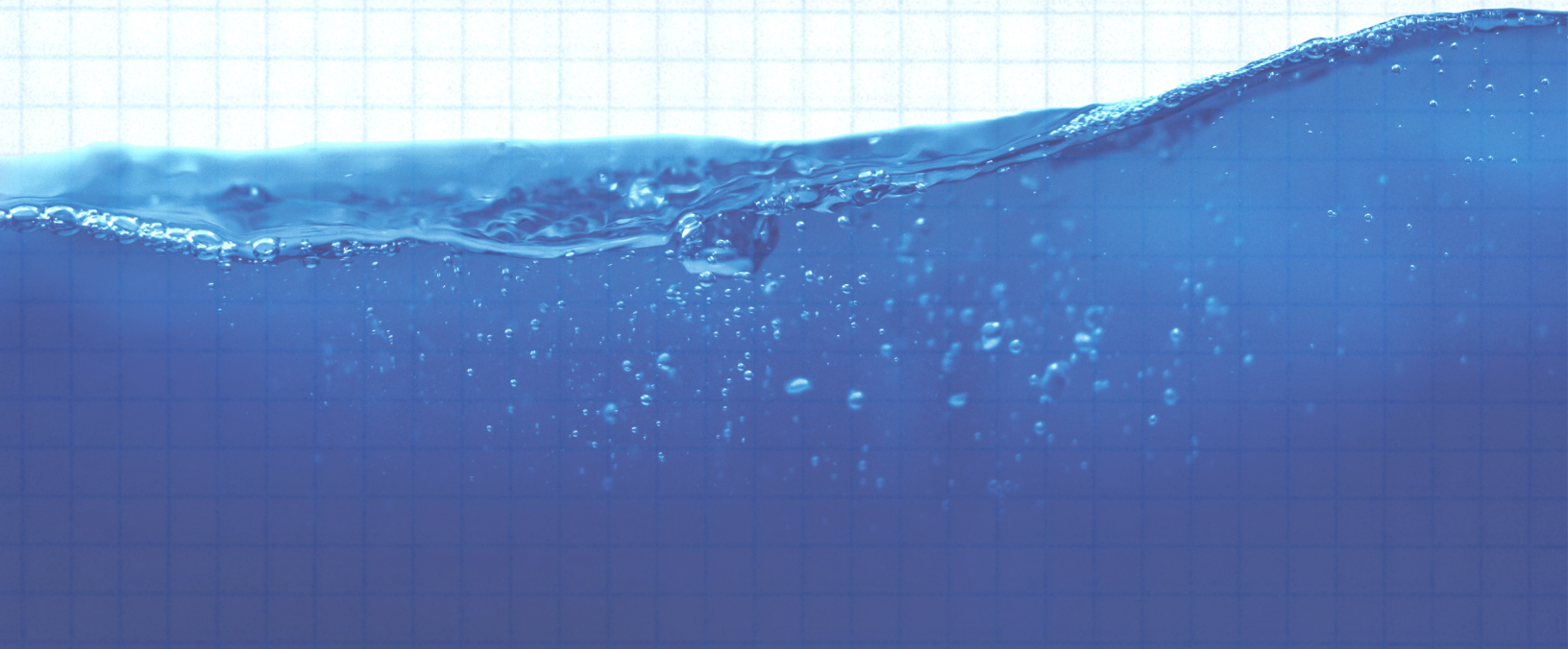


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(... an explanation)

Esquina Eve

Spices of Eternity (30/49)

maybe turn your ear
to this soft secret
and, well, here it comes:
i have to admit
i've been waiting years
to hear my own voice

for ages shrouded by dark
for ages crushed by the past
i've been deaf to certain things
not to mention wholly blind
to this universe of love
spices of eternity
at my feet the whole damn time

Glide (29/41)

float on the surface
or swim wild within the code
magic in real time
right at western and wilson
yet home everywhere

we're standing on it
the corner of here and now
a heaven-sent night
filled with shapes and sights and sounds
a heaven-sent night
make love at the intersect
of art and science

Homecoming (20/21)

and so my life's search
ends at beginning
this sacred journey
begins at the end

after 52 long years
it's true- can you believe it?
I'm finally coming home

Rapture (13/15)

eyes to the black sky
wet with stars
it is here we wait

December fifteenth
across the city
is Esquina Eve

Connect the Dots (14/10)

it is in this hallowed space
we remember the future

the paths that led us
connecting the dots

Crash City Compilation

The Ghost of Mayonnaise and Kisses (30/49)

party down the road
i can't remember
a novel's title
white light swooping up
an old brown bookcase
you said she'd never

dressed up in the thrift store style
friendly with a foreign tongue
certain sense of belonging
you said she'd never but she
in all her white laced glory
she swooped down on me and did
filled me with the kiss of life

Snowangels (29/41)

scraps of standard oil
make a kind of new design
just slip in cassettes
when the AP reads all wrong
light a smoke and drive

listening to jazz
with the windshield wipers on
and it dawns on me
we're just snowangels baby
angels in the glow
it's nuclear wintertime
and we're snowangels

Edge of Crash City (20/21)

snarl of metal barbs
cold river's blue edge
a black and white sign
stop! danger! poison!

under flourescent moonlight
frogman from the desert side
swallows up to the surface...

Rhythm (13/15)

jack under bebop
came to aid
a flailing drummer

follow these cold calls
direction of dream
headset falling off

Spider (14/10)

spider hovers in blade one
with a shotgun microphone

picking out the pearls
from crosstown traffic

Autumn Hymnal

Threaded Story (30/49)

the end of my rope
this journey over
far as i can go
these old spectacles
this old prescription
is working no more

no more room to move forward
and i can't go back in time
in my imagination
i envision a new rope
woven from the stuff of dream
today i grab this new line
in good faith will where it lead

M.A.B. (29/41)

my silent partner
buying boots for the winter
she judges nothing
leaving room for me to grow
she expects nothing

at nearby tables
tutors are guiding students
gentle mathematics
and with luck i might devise
a brand new program
with golden variables

Lazarus Rail (20/21)

an old train builder
grandpa used to be
deep in my mem'ry
stories told to me

travel facilitator
acceleration and mass
thundering to tomorrow

The Compass (13/15)

what lays by my feet?
everything
what is in my hand?

what trucks in my head?
hero g.p.s.
satellite inside

Runtime (14/10)

a new star interpreted
inside peaceful peaceful fields

from the clearest sky
static falls like snow

Night Moves

Patron Saint of the Abandoned Bicycle (30/49)

it's missing a wheel
it's missing a seat
chained to the meter
simply cast aside
yet he is our man
to get the job done

all hail the patron saint of
the abandoned bicycle
he patrols the scene at night
bolt cutters and heart of gold
cruise the streets in rare cologne
giving to metal and chain
the gift of liberation

The Man in Maroon (29/41)

glaring at his watch
his head shaking back and forth
looking down the track
soon enough the platform fills
anticipation

in ten minutes time
the sound of glorious bells
red lights flashing bright
and the train pulls up at last
everybody on
except the man in maroon
glaring at his watch

Invisible Journalist (20/21)

flies Pilot V5
precise rolling ball
taking photographs
developed in words

he's everywhere and nowhere
head filled with shapes and numbers
heart filled with universe love

Sweet Pea at the Door (13/15)

she welcomes you in
rubber stamp
initiated

mmp sss mmp sss mmp
groove the night away
thanks to ink on wrist

Middle Sister (14/10)

crushed at the end of the bar
no idea what she's got

blinded by beauty
no man will approach

Splash Constellation

The Cave (30/49)

primordial flame
licking up the walls
hands in dark circles
beating off old drums
ancient rhythms pulse
pulling toward the womb

under flag of shadowplay
i lean over uttering
eat, drink, and have a good time
to your heart and from my mind
this is the end of the line
this is the end of the line
this is the end of the line

The Journey (29/41)

i awake on fire
in the world that they call real
haunted by angels
after years of suicide
i finally ascend

terror from all sides
love and hell, ropes from the sky
thru the fire I climb
a trail of ashes behind
my naked body
collapsing in the new rain
cool mirrored diamonds

The Beginning (14/10)

evolution's primer flies
on the wings of butterflies

gentlest earthquakes
from smooth golden flaps

The Dream (20/21)

strange invitations
across my shoulder
splash constellation
(i must be crazy...)

all my sensibilities
overturned- somehow buoyant
small boats in a sea of light

Birthday (13/15)

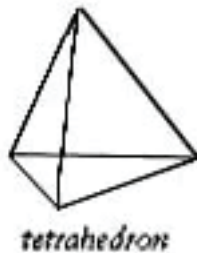
on the terra firm
being born
in a wash of white

tales of a new star
codetalkers whisper
lexicon of light

PLATONIC SOLID POETRY

(... an explanation)

To celebrate the common consciousness—and Mother Nature’s dear old templates— I have constructed poetry sets built on ratios derived from the Platonic Solids. These five polyhedra are at the root of many natural phenomena and were also considered by the ancient Greeks to represent ascending levels of consciousness. The formula for each syllable structure comes from the ratio of the shape edge length over the radius of shape’s circumscribing sphere. After much experimentation, I felt this was the best way to convey the different mathematical “personality” of each shape. My poems are presented in sets of five, with each poem representing the essence of each of the different solids. When the poems are presented here, the syllable structure is notated in parenthesis next to the poem name.

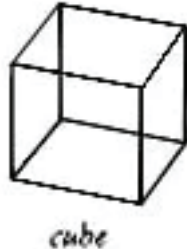


Most often, the first poem of each set of five is built on the ratios inherent in the TETRAHEDRON (4-sided pyramid). The ratio of this shape’s edge to the radius of its circumscribing sphere is $\sqrt{6}/4$, or .612 which I found could be simplified with the ratio 30/49. Put 30 syllables in the first stanza (6 lines of 5 syllables), and 49 syllables in the second stanza (7 lines of 7 syllables). See? I told you it was simple. Ma Nature uses the tetrahedron’s economy of strength to create such obscure compounds as H₂O. Yep. Water is a tetrahedral form. So are the amino acids in the human body. I figured “good enough for amino acids, good enough for poetry.” By creating these poems, keep in mind you are also re-enacting the same ratios that have been at work in nature since the beginning of American Idol and probably even earlier. Plato associated this shape with the element of FIRE.

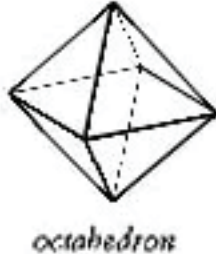
A

PLATONIC SOLID POETRY

(... an explanation)



The second poem of each set of five is built on the HEXAHEDRON (cube), whose shape edge to radius is $\sqrt{3}/2$, or .866 which can also be expressed as 13/15. This is a quickie. 13 syllables in the first stanza (broken into three lines of 5 syl, 3 syl, then 5 syl) then 15 syllables in the second stanza (3 lines with 5 syls each). Sodium Chloride (NaCl) is a cubic structure. So is the poem you can make here. Cool, huh? Plato associated this very strong and boxy structure with the element of EARTH.



Ok, we're onto the third solid now. This is a big fave of mine: the 8 sided shape called the OCTAHEDRON. The personality ratio of the octahedron is $\sqrt{2}/2$, or .707 which can be approximated as 29/41. It's a cool one, because the stanzas break into syllables in a staggering way. First stanza is 29 syllables over 5 lines (5,7,5,7,5). Second stanza is 41 syllables over 7 lines (5,7,5,7,5,7,5). Isn't it striking that all these shapes' ratios can be expressed in 5s and 7s? There are abundant examples of this shape in nature- especially in crystal form, but I'm a big fan of the way it appears in mythologies... the four corners of the earth (the square of the cross-section) and the points of heaven atop and underworld below. Plato's association for the octahedron? Air.

B

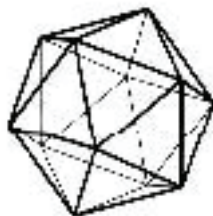
PLATONIC SOLID POETRY

(... an explanation)



dodecahedron

This is a cool one. Must be if Plato associated the shape with The Universe as a whole. The DODECAHEDRON was considered to be the embodiment of all the other solids, as well as a damn fine capsule for interdimensional travel for Ellie Arroway in the movie Contact. It's a twelve sided-figure, so it's easy to compare it to our systems of time, as well. Oh. The poem. The ratio of shape edge to radius of its circumscribing sphere is $\frac{1}{4}(\sqrt{15}+\sqrt{3})$, or 1.401 which I express as 7/5. So the first stanza is 7 syllables and the second stanza is 5 syllables. Knock yourself out, bucketholders!



icosahedron

Last but not least is the ICOSAHEDRON. 20 sides. Plato equated this shape with the element of water. The personality ratio for this one is $\frac{1}{4}\sqrt{10+2\sqrt{5}}$, or .951 which can be expressed as 20/21. So the first stanza has 20 syllables (4 lines of 5 syllables). Second stanza has 21 syllables (3 lines of 7 syllables). This shape realizes itself frequently in nature as the herpes viruses, and Dungeons & Dragons dice. Coincidence? You decide.

C