

THE GADFLY

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photo by Holly Huey

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60 COLLEGE AVENUE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
SJCA.GADFLY@GMAIL.COM

Founded in 1980, the *Gadfly* is the student newsmagazine distributed to over 600 students, faculty, and staff of the Annapolis campus.

Opinions expressed within are the sole responsibility of the author(s). The *Gadfly* reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit submissions in any way necessary to publish a professional, informative, and thought-provoking newsmagazine.

The next *Gadfly* meeting will take place Sunday, Aug 31, at 7 PM in Room 109 on the first lower level of the Barr-Buchanan Center.

Articles should be submitted by Friday, Sep 5, at 11:59 PM to sjca.gadfly@gmail.com.

STAFF

Sebastian Barajas • Editor-in-Chief
Kira Anderson • Managing Editor
Cameron Byerly • Editor
Katherine Rees • Editor
Malori Richards • Editor
Cyrus Schiller • Editor
Bianca Lora • Submission Organizer

CONTRIBUTORS

William Braithwaite
Willem van Engen
Rachel Goad
Holly Huey
Judith Seeger
Thomas Springer
Ivan Romanovich Syritsyn

From the Editors:

Alright, y'all. If those sunglasses and that Slurpee mean anything to me, it's that it's *Gadfly* time. Fun fact: this fine periodical would not exist without Coca Cola and/or Mountain Dew Slurpee flavors. They are the green and caramel colored fuels that keep your submissions formatted and edited with an 87% success rate. But do they get credit? Shoot, the last time someone wrote a thank-you letter to the Coca Cola Company was in 1926, and it was only because a little girl saw an ad and thought that was Santa's name. Those guys are insidious. In any case, it's time for sanity. It's time for some real quality. It's time for the issue to begin.

-The *Gadfly*

Pangaea Presents:

Lizi Akhvlediani Tries a Slurpee



To promote cultural exploration, Pangaea is exposing international students to food and activities from other cultures. Lizi is an international student from the Republic of Georgia in the class of 2017. She is the current archon of Pangaea. This is her first time trying a Slurpee, although she is familiar with 7-11.

Do you try new food often?

I'm not very experimental about food at all, and I'm scared to try new food!

So have you tried desserts like this before?

I think I've tried a smoothie and that's the closest case that I can think of.

Have you tried any other food from 7-11?

No.

What are traditional Georgian desserts like?

We bake lots of cakes and natural-based stuff like dried fruits and we use dried fruit juices in lots of traditional things.

So in flavor and consistency this is probably really different than traditional Georgian fare.

Yeah it's very different. Of course we have Dunkin' Donuts and everybody can try a milkshake, but this is very refreshing and good for summer and very different from everything I've tried before. It doesn't come close to any Georgian desserts or dessert drinks.

What are the main flavors of Georgian food in general?

I don't think they're very sweet and they're all natural so we don't use anything that's in this. It's all artificial, I assume. When we bake cakes there are lots of sugars, but they're still homemade cakes.

Pangaea is the St John's College International Student Club. Meetings are every Tuesday at 6:00 P.M. in the Private Dining Room. All are welcome! Contact Lizi Akhvlediani if you have any questions and find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SJCAPangaea>

On Anglophilia

Willem Van Engen A'19

I for one tend to live by the idiom "To each his own." I do, however, wonder if this rule can be, on occasion, broken if one tends to impress their views heavily on another. For instance, if one were to harp upon the culture of Britannia and revel in all the spoils of the United Kingdom, I would never question for a moment their freedom to do so. However, to compel one's family to follow suit, it is my opinion one ought to at least be open to the suggestion that one's stance was a touch too radical. Understand, however, these words come not from hate, as this is the situation I was brought up under, with my own mother being the culprit, as it were. Instead, I wish only to convey that I felt at times in my youth a bit smothered by the embrace of Buckingham Palace. Also, let us not confuse my vexation with a disdain for our neighbors across the Atlantic, as I will state later on, I have found a great many hidden pleasures amongst this vast, albeit at times overwhelming, treasure trove of all of Britain has to offer. As such, I wish to pose a question to the general Polity: Does enjoyment cross over into the realm of obsession when one brings others into enjoyment less than willingly? With that, let us hoist up the Union Jack, put the kettle on and turn to my present query.

Growing up, I was brought in a house surrounded by all things British. In fact, some of my very first memories of my mom involve me playing with my small Star Wars action figures, only to look up and see my mom on the couch, eyes firmly fixed on a program about a British magician who solves mysteries as well, or some such mid-afternoon BBC programming. Besides television, even out of the house, there was more still my mother entreated me to take in, as a trip to the store was often begun and ended with one of many books on tape from writers hailing from the shores of Britain. However, in the haze that pollutes the youth of so many, those memories may very well have been wiped away had I not ruminated on her Britanic passion. However, as I grew up, this infatuation with British culture became more noticeable, as I began to note how the TV never left the BBC America channel when my mom was in the room

or how my parent's iTunes playlist became a veritable clutter of British 80's rock numbers, chafing against my father's folk rock favorites. As I grew older still, I began to find it worrying that I had somehow acquired the knowledge of being able to differentiate people from London, Newcastle and Manchester just off their accent. What's more, I was alarmed when it had appeared that a Cockney woman had broken into my house and ordered me to "make a cuppa, add sugar", only to discover my mother otherwise engaged in a mystery drama about a decreptive solving murders on the islands north of Scotland. To add on to this, my resistance to this deluge of British culture and questions of why others must partake in tea time and "Midsomer Murders", yet another British murder mystery, were met with sneers and disappointment. Mind you, in conclusion, my mother has visited the UK once, for a week. Thus, I cannot for the life of me, comprehend where such a profound love of Britain stems from.

That being said, for all my gripes, I do not at all despise these years of BBC and WETA-UK through and through. For example, as much as some like to accuse television programs of being mindless entertainment, there are quite a few I've been introduced to, courtesy of "me mum", which I daresay outpace anything else I've seen. Also, the foods you can order from Britain aren't half bad either. Just try a Malteser; just one, you will not be sorry. For example, Inspector George Gently, telling the story of a policeman now solving crimes in the Northeast of England (available on Netflix, for all those interested) was one of the most compelling detective dramas I have watched in my time. Plus, the music is fortunately, quite as fruitful to those looking for something new check out on Spotify. That is to say, although the 80s rock numbers were seemingly infinite on my parent's iTunes, to this day, I won't turn down a bit of the Smiths, the Who or of course, The Beatles. Plus, a bit of my own delving into the Clash or the Sex Pistols allowed me to

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Notes from the Other Side: 4

Judith Seeger TUTOR

Dark Sky in May 2015, 11° South Latitude

The Evening Star pierces the twilight's deep blue.

To the north the Big Dipper pours out all its contents,
until toward dawn, drained dry, it dips below the trees.

To the south the Southern Cross proceeds across the heavens.
Some must have seen it as a sign.

From east to west the smaller stars are strewn across the sky,
the glowing embers of a burning tree they say.
Celestial animals tread that starry trail.
You see them as patches of darkness
silently making their way.

From time to time, with blinking lights, a jet cuts through the dark.
"Did you see?" I ask my friend, as we sit on a blanket outside the long house,
"The sky canoe! That's the way I came and that's the way I'll leave."

Exhibition

◆ R.M. Goad

Come to me wilted,
no feigned tension;
I trust your fatigue—

My love, you are tired.

Let me flex my privilege—
I'll draw the water—
Sink below your debts.

Forget me,
then remember me,
and return to me
when you are free.

The Mathematics of Johnnie Dating

Sebastian Barajas A'17

In the first semester of my freshman year, I became obsessed with a math problem: what is the maximum number of Johnnie couples there can be on campus? This problem is tricky, and depends on the permutations (e.g. each person's gender requirements, whether we count relationships with non-johnnies, whether we assume polygamous relationships, etc.). I wrote a mathematical piece on the subject called, *A Million Couples On Campus*, which for no excusable reason I still haven't gotten around to resubmitting to *Energeia* (the editors my freshman year told me they were going to publish it and then never did).

Although the piece itself was just for fun, the mathematics of Johnnie dating is a very serious issue. Our campus is alarmingly small, as anyone knows who's tried to find love here (or even a simple hookup). In real life, we can't just adjust our dating permutations so that everyone on campus is an open-minded omnisexual, omniamorous free spirit with infinite leisure time. In real life, you have to find someone who:

- 1) is the right gender.
- 2) is the right sexual orientation.
- 3) is attractive to you.
- 4) isn't in a closed relationship.
- 5) is interested in you.
- 6) has time for you.
- 7) is currently emotionally and/or physically receptive to you.
- 8) is relatively mentally stable.
- 9) has not already dated someone you are close to.
- 10) does not have lots and lots of classes with you.

These are all reasonable requirements, and the list goes on. So far we haven't even included basic compatibility of personalities, religious and moral principles, etc.

So whenever Johnnies get out of bad relationships and their friends say, "You shouldn't have been in that relationship, you weren't right for each other," I always want to say, "Yeah, but who the hell is?"

We have a campus of less than 500 people. The fact that we have any long-lasting relationships at all is astounding. If it weren't for this bizarre unique experience that we all share, I'd say that a successful relationship on this campus would be a statistical freak of nature.

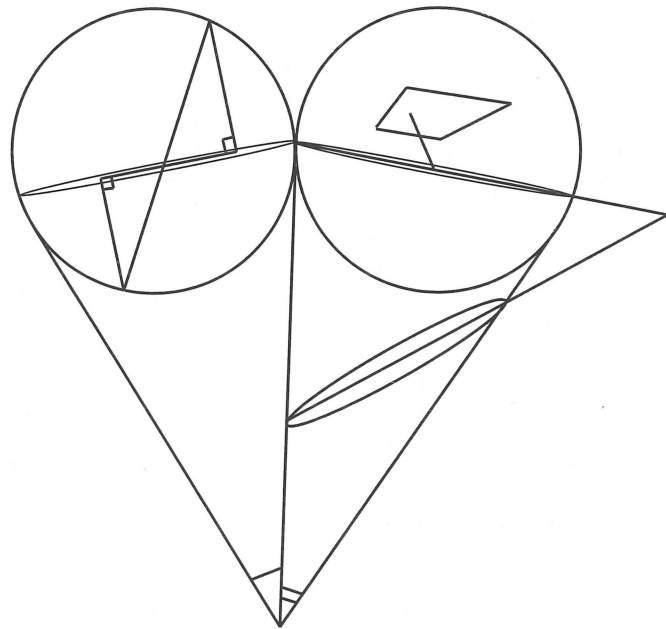
If you strictly follow all the parameters we listed above, you're looking at a cross section of zero people. There are no people on-campus who fulfill these criteria. Number 1 alone can cut the Polity roughly in half, and then Number 2 shaves off ten percent of that. So unless you're bisexual, you're already left with 45% of Johnnies to choose from after only two very basic requirements.

The point is that you're going to have to compromise at some point. If you want to date someone who's mentally stable, chances

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turn down a bit of the Smiths, the Who or of course, The Beatles. Plus, a bit of my own delving into the Clash or the Sex Pistols allowed me to rebel a bit, while still conforming with the Anglocentric tastes of my dear mother. Bearing all that in mind, I do not begrudge my mother for having her personal favorites in terms of entertainment and food, I just didn't feel like being taken along for the ride sometimes.

Thus, we return to my original question: when does one go too far in bringing their likes and dislikes to others? Surely, some of you will find my grievances trivial and ignore my argument as being that of a disgruntled child. However, much like Socrates, I welcome being refuted. I believe that I am in the right airing my ire, but by all means, call me out as a petulant youth if my logic doesn't ring true. Until then, cheerio and keep a stiff upper lip, love. ♦



are you'll have to go after someone who's already dated someone close to you, or who has lots and lots of classes with you, or who isn't as interested in you as you'd like.

It's the tragedy of the Johnnie. It's not that we're not attractive people—far from it. The number of incredibly attractive people at this school is unbelievable. Last year, I was doing the layout for the Croquet Issue of the *Gadfly*, and went through profile pictures of both the St. John's and Naval Academy teams, and I realized: we have extraordinarily beautiful students. The Middies are dapper, sure, but their looks are all dry-cleaned and angular: like they had their whole bodies starched and folded. Johnnies look like the illustrations from Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants*. Maybe these descriptions only came to me because it was 3 AM when I went through the photos—or maybe they're only coming to me now because it's currently 3 AM—but that doesn't mean they don't also make sense in the daylight. Johnnies are beautiful. Striking. Like plants, we grow and bloom and wither, and hibernate, and then bloom again.

Most of us have already realized that our self-esteem shouldn't be founded on the fate of our relationships. But it's especially true of us Johnnies, since the odds are stacked so cruelly against us. I'll keep saying it forever: don't let anyone tell you you're taking the easy path or pampering yourself by coming to St. John's. Being a Johnnie is a sacrifice. It's hard as hell, and we should be proud as hell.

It's for this reason that I highly encourage anyone on campus who is beautiful and frustrated with love to try trawling online dating sites. I did several years ago, back when I was frustrated with love, and I got to meet one of the most rewarding people I've ever met. The trick is to treat the internet like a mine: you're going to be digging up a lot of boring or disgusting rocks, but eventually you're bound to find something worth tagging and sending back to the university (which is the paleontologist equivalent of a first date). It's worth it, as long as you treat it like the numbers game it is.

In the meantime, we need to cut our fellow Johnnies more slack when they compromise in their relationships. We may be beautiful, but we're often horrible for another romantically. Like a flower and a fireworks display, sometimes beautiful things just don't go together. But we can't be blamed for trying. ♦

A Case for The Case Against Literacy's Case

by Warner E. Crab

Thomas Springer A'18

As an illiterate man, I've often had trouble expressing myself through the written word. Luckily, I haven't needed to. That is, I haven't needed to before now.

Every encounter I've ever had with text has been secondary. Most often this is in the form of Mother, who daily reads aloud books, articles, ingredient lists on water bottle labels, just so that I "may share in the graceful edification of that which is written," to use one of her inscrutable phrases. I tend to ignore my mother during these readings, content to care not for whatever garbled nonsense slides through her mouth.

It was, however, on an occasion just recently gone by when my whole existence was rocked by the words of another. Mother had gotten into her hands the September 29, 2015 issue of *The Gadfly*, the issue released previous to this that you see (or hear) now. As you must be well aware, this publication, made by and for recycling, provides half-interesting odds-and-ends articles and page-filling poetry that even Mother is wont to skip over. Still, in this issue, among the usual refuse of real perspectives from the St. John's College community, arose a glorious article entitled: "Down With Reading: The Case Against Literacy."

Why would Page Burns employ satire, which is used to criticize the follies that satirists find in their world, to criticize the follies he does not find in his world?

The author, Page Burns, brilliantly puts on display, in his words, "the great pestilence that ravages people from all ages in societies worldwide: the curse of literacy." I was smitten with the man who made such a stunning argument, my heart inflamed by his message. Of course literacy is evil; of course it is counter productive to modern society; and of course it forms "intellectuals" who undermine our very peace and prosperity. As for myself, no longer would I be happy with sitting in the shadows of my living room, ignoring all the evil that writing brings to our world; instead, I would burn books, demolish libraries, and teach as many as possible that reading is misleading.

I was taken aback, however, when Mother had the gall to suggest that the article, so clear in its divine inspiration, no, in its divine source of Page Burns himself, is satire. I made no big fuss, but just as any sensible person would do, I had Mother do some research. The results were grim. In short, she found that the past ten years have seen American literacy, library usage, and publishing at an all time high. Even more, modern technology facilitates the near constant accessibility of the banes of human existence: reading and writing.

If the piece were satire, its actual message would be that literacy is positive and that society looks down on the literate. Clearly, this is not his intention. The increasing influence of the written word on modern society indicates that literacy as a positive attribute is already the common belief. Why would Page Burns employ satire, which is used to criticize the follies that satirists find in their world, to criticize the follies he does not find in his world? Moreover, why would he feel the need to say this to the members of St. John's College, where the so-called "Great Books" are the very life-blood of what the college stands for? Such an attempt of satire would be both useless and juvenile.

No, Page Burns's article means just what it says: literacy is evil and literates are the instruments of evil. Please, Polity, even in your ignorance born of literacy, recognize the value of what Page Burns says and do not misconstrue his words as pointless chatter. Why would you even hesitate to abandon literacy if you could see that it allows persons to address many others so that they can say a whole lot of words that really mean nothing?

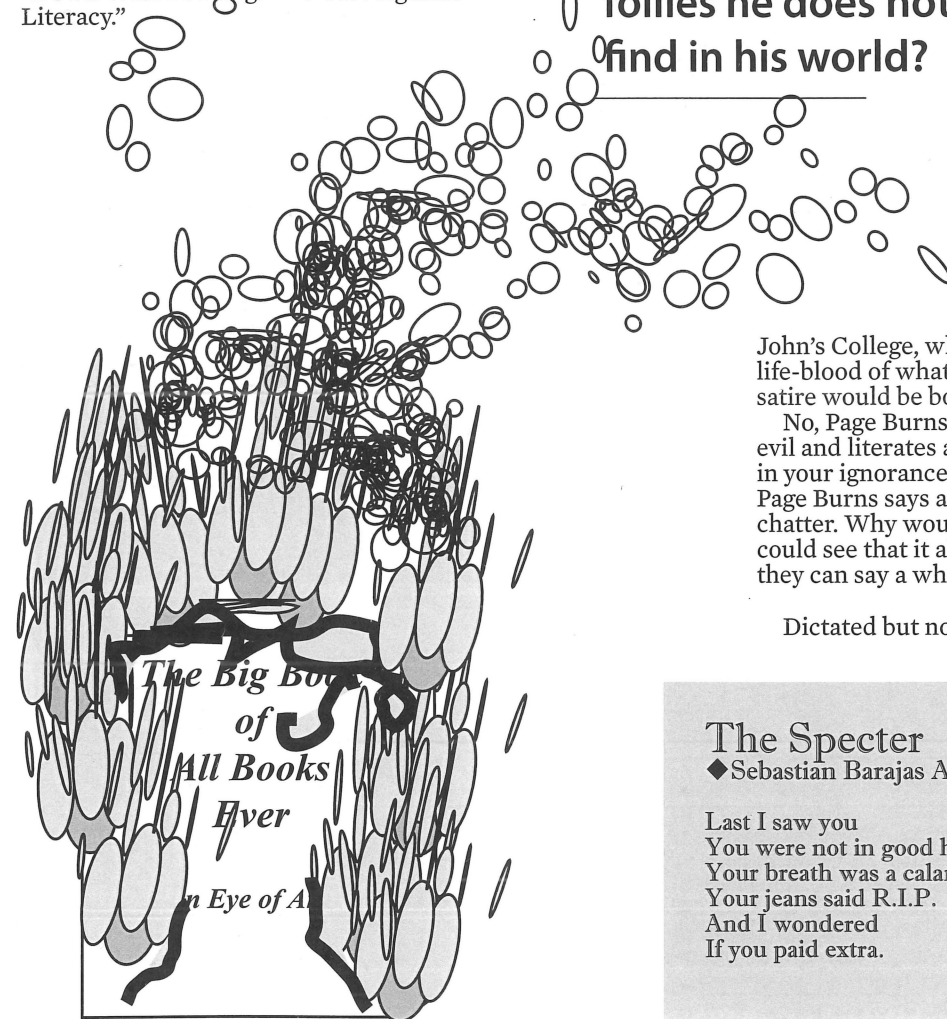
Dictated but not read. ♦

The Specter
♦ Sebastian Barajas A'17

Last I saw you
You were not in good health.
Your breath was a calamity,
Your jeans said R.I.P.
And I wondered
If you paid extra.

There was no art in you,
No swagger in your stagger.
The grave had humbled you,
The way your summer in Europe
Never did.

You stole my shovel
And I want it back.



EUCLID DEFINITIONS (BOOK I)

William Braithwaite TUTOR

Euclid's *Elements* begins with 23 definitions. Lists (such as this one), one of my teachers remarked, are always interesting: they have a beginning, middle, and end—an order. Any order, if it is an order, is a sign of intelligence at work. The order means something. The order of the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* II (Odysseus' is in the middle) is not likely to be just happenstance.

What is the principle of order of Euclid's 23 definitions? "Principle," from Latin *principes*, "first," is here equivalent to Greek *arche*, "beginning," or more precisely, ruling source. A beginning that rules is one that points to the end (that which comes after the middle), and also somehow governs the character of the end. Is this what prompted the thought that a good beginning is half the task? Does understanding a beginning as a beginning mean we can at the start discern, even if dimly, the shape of the end, and so of the whole?

Book I "begins" with the 23 definitions (along with the five Postulates and five Common Notions) in the sense that these are what's presented first. It "ends" with Proposition 47 (and its converse, P. 48), the theorem named after Pythagoras, in the sense that 47-48 are what appear in last place. But what did Euclid think of first? Did thinking about what a point is lead him to P. 47? Or did the Pythagorean Theorem lead him to think of the geometrical point as that which alone among geometrical objects has no part?

What would be a good geometrical image of Book I, of the movement of its argument (or inquiry)? A straight line would image a one-way trip, no looking back or return. A circle would suggest return to the starting-point, on the same level (in the same plane).

I propose the cone; more precisely, the spiral path traced out by an ant crawling around and around the cone surface until he reaches the apex. This image represents a motion that starts with the point (Def. 1, what has no part) as the extremity of a line (the ant's starting-point) and ends with a particular point, the apex of the cone. As we ascend in understanding (continually changing planes), we can look both backward at where we came from and forward to where we are going (P. 47).

At 47, we can look back (re-view, or re-collect) and try to see how we got here from Prop. 1. At P. 1 (if we don't chose to look ahead), are we likely to see the possibility of 47? We certainly won't if it doesn't occur to us to ask the question.

But to ask, at the beginning, the foreseeability of the discoverable end is to ask what the governing principle of order is. How Proposition 1 leads to Proposition 47 is same question (with different material) as asking how Definition 1 leads to Definition 23.

Can it be just happenstance that the middle definition is 14, a figure (Greek, schema) is what's contained by a boundary or boundaries? If the definitions are in

some order, and if 14 is in the middle, what can we say about the principle that governs the arrangement of the whole list? How are 1-13 (the "beginning," or if you like, the "first half") different from 15-22 (the "end," or if you like, the "second half")? [I'll return to 23].

Definitions 15-22 classify the figures lying in a plane, according to increasing number of boundary-lines: the circle (one "side" or "boundary"), 15-17; semi-circle (two sides), 17-18; and the straight-sided figures, 19-22. The figures are also classified according to whether the boundary-line(s) are curved (the circle), both straight and curved (the semi-circle), or only straight.

If 15-22 are a taxonomy of planar figures, what are 1-13? Might we say the "elements" of figures? (What, for Euclid, is an "element"?). Again the ordering is from simple to complex—point, line (2-4), surface (5-7), angle (8-12), boundary (13)—from element to structure.

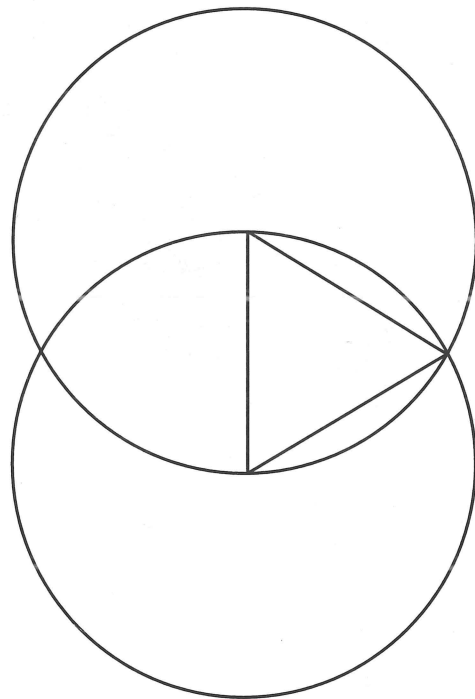
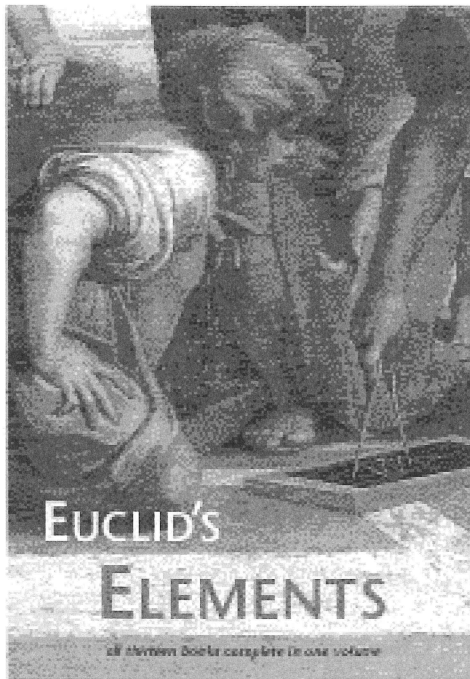
The singling out, among angles, of those made by straight lines (Def. 9) brings this particular sub-set of angles to the foreground of attention while at the same time implying that there are angles contained by lines that are not straight. The singling out, among rectilineal angles, of the right angle (Def.10) marks it as of particular importance for the argument of Book I.

The right angle is special because it is the equal-to-itself angle (Def. 10, Post. 4) that lets us compare all other angles as either obtuse or acute (Defs. 11-12); and because it is the ordering principle of the taxonomy of rectilineal figures in Defs. 21-22; and because it is the apparatus for determining whether two straight lines in the same plane could meet if produced indefinitely in both directions (Def. 23; Post. 5).

What we're looking for is the ruling beginning of the arrangement of the definitions. Noticing the terms that are not defined may provide a clue: "part," "extremity," "evenly," "inclination," "set up on," "adjacent," "standing on," "contained," "falling on," "bisect," "direction" etc. And perhaps most important of all, "equal." What is Euclid assuming his students (us) bring to the book, before we even open it to the Definitions?

I propose that he takes for granted his readers' experience of the world, its shapes, sizes, places, and motions (e.g., of the sun, moon, and stars), its samenesses and differences (spring comes every year, but not always on the same day; spears are straight, shields round, the path of an arrow curved). He takes for granted, that is, that we know, albeit imperfectly, not only that order is, but also what it is.

If this speculation is sound, we might say that Euclid's principle of order in the Book I definitions, the source or starting-point that governs the subsequent direction of the inquiry, is order itself. On this view, his project would be to give an ordered account of order—to show the bones of order, so to speak, and therewith the reasons why the elements of order hold together as ordered in the *Elements*. Is Book I the beginning of a logos of order itself? ♦



To R.A.L. (R.E.L.) ♦ Ivan Romanovich Syritsyn A'19

Through snowy jagged peaks
A caravan goes forth
Through snow, sleet, and stone
The brave go towards their goal

It is just a pair
A human and her friend
Where one, the other's there
Together till the end

Elizabeth is her name
Alpacas are her love
Together they do stare
At the sky above

The darkness coming fast
A shelter they must seek
The thunder bars their way
The path is awfully sleek

What shall the union do?
Where shelter shall they find?
They yell "Why me? Why you?
O, what is our great crime?"

O, what to do? Strive forth!
Indeed this is a must.
So through the floods they went
Encased in icy crust.

"El, look!" Alpaca screamed
"There is a cavern there!"
The next Alpaca knew
She's flying through the air

But great reflex and strength
In Eli's limbs were found
She grabbed the woolly fur
And said without a sound

Right straight into her eyes
"I have no avarice
Release your burdensome coil
To me you are my world."

A frozen tear flew forth
The command was obeyed
And with love's greatest force
Her dear was quickly saved

They hugged, and cried, and thanked
That this wasn't their end
The end of their great union
If one, then two are dead

Into the cave they went
And saw a place to sleep
Sweet dreams did Eli have
Enclosed by caring fleece

The morning, it will come
Their sorrow will be done
But never, friends, unsee
This blissful memory

Four Years of the Johnnie ♦ Anonymous

In freshman year the bricks were clean:
Red under blue horizon.
The shade of trees held no stories,
And Achilles ran alone across the lawn.

In sophomore year the Ptolemy stone sprouted,
And I mourned the ecliptic as it dropped,
Disillusioned, a mere apparent path,
To the non-Lucretian floor of the cosmos.

In junior year the gym closed early,
But the parabola came back to me,
A basketball arc,
An arrow from the 1940s archery club.

In senior year I will find God,
Meet him at Dry 85 for drinks,
"Remind me: What is a book? What is love?"
Pick up the tab.

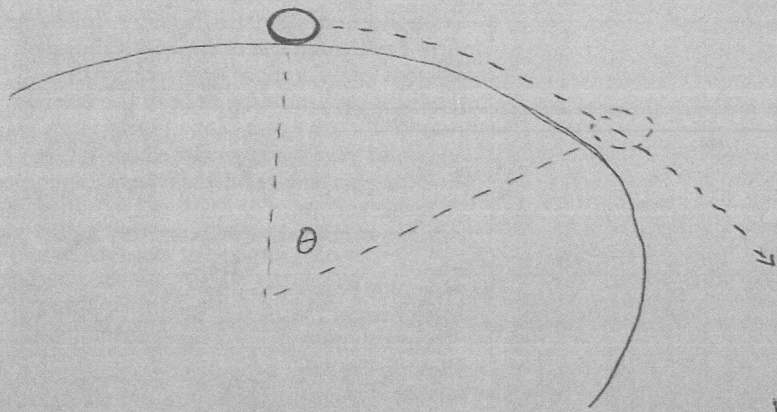
Four is the number,
The amorphous magnitude:
The pages
Of the book of Johnnie.



photo by Kit Rees

Dearest Polity,

I have, for your consideration, a cute little math problem:



A sphere, situated on top of a larger sphere, leaves unstable equilibrium and rolls. Assuming perfect conditions,

At what point or angle from the vertical will the sphere break contact and continue falling?

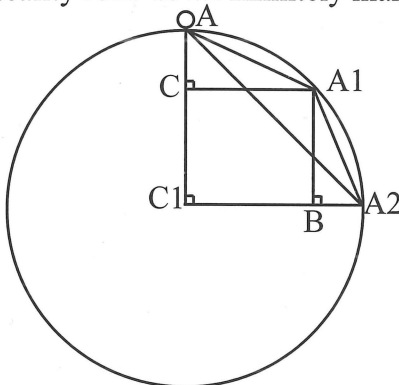
Radii and masses matter.

Good luck.

Yours,
Alex Kudrzycki

Dear Ms. Kudrzycki,

Although I have not yet made much progress on your fascinating problem, I have stumbled across an interesting application of Galileo's *Two New Sciences*: if we treat the falling sphere as simply a Galilean body (or for simplicity's sake, a point with Galilean properties) then we may deduce that its speed in the direction of any tangent is equal to the speed it would acquire in free fall at that height. That is, theoretically the final speed along AC1 will equal the final speed along straight line AA2 (if the ball could so move.) We may simply consider—after Leibniz's fashion—that along arc AA2, the ball in reality rolls down infinitely many infinitely small triangles, which must add up to height (final speed)



AC1. For example, if the ball travelled along only 2 straight lines AA1A2, it would acquire final speed AC1 ($AC + A1B$), pointed in the direction of A1A2. Over infinitely many hypotenuses of triangles like ACA1 and A1BA2, the direction of final speed AC1 will turn into the tangent at point A2. Thus, the speed at which the upper sphere breaks contact with the lower will equal the theoretical speed at that same height in free fall. I am sorry that this is not a solution.

Sincerely,
Sebastian Barajas