

Playing with Numbers

It began upstairs, at my desk, twiddling brain-thumbs,
playing with numbers, hoping to account for something.

The first eureka the anguished purgatory of 13,
infamous and unlucky,

and I could see why –

an individual sealed in itself

while another reaches out

with everything they have.

Perpetually: 13.

Which precipitated a particular ennui,

spurring on that thing the mind does

when shipwrecked and grasping for timber

to survive a little longer, if only...

if both lines curved into themselves

and opened out – some shared and intimate

solitude with extending welcome,

like this, perhaps: 69.

Turn it this way or that,

screwing round or laid-out flat

it balances!

Even forced to turn away

96 – the footing is there, under standing

one another with support –

no wonder an emblem

to ecstatic mutuality!

Feeling better, then,
I focused on the simplest lines,
those part and parcel of all the rest,
single lines of symmetry.
1 and 1 another way,
pulled round (0)
neither beginning nor end,
eternal divisors,
crafting within, without
every here or there,
the endless mirrors.

What if they joined?
 \emptyset confounds the idea of god;
 \emptyset creates a paradox
of interdependent boundaries
and border.

All wound up together in 8,
the one and all in unending twists –
what's inside? what's out - ?
where beginning? where end?
how can two correlate this fluidly
and yet so distinctly divide?

How one all wound around itself
will equal at least two unknowns,
hoping to be some endless braid,
without escape –
there's never one
without an other.