

# MILUTIS



## The Numbers

# **THE NUMBERS**

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**ZERO**

I am the—that the  
                  them the not here am  
Here am, this here  
                  them the not am

The word hasn't licked us yet, worked  
                  into a tizzy  
Shaft yourself, like a Jedi  
                  and survive! The

Ghost is not in this jar  
                  nor this. You find  
You are not so good at understanding  
                  the lessons of our atoms.

So beat your tom tom, so clam-  
                  or glamorous lamentations  
Where the world you get will never be  
                  the one for which you are equipped.

.

Today's lesson is of a primitive system  
and the ground of all nature, that shines  
sure as an immaculate jukebox manufactured in Zurich  
for bobbysoxers have always known that the song is  
nothing, but the nothing, oh darling you send me to  
the Zurich-manufactured juke—Americans can have  
their joke—and demand that in every motive there is  
the rubber of contention—Nothing is better than that  
“nights song”—how does it go?  
A-wella wella wella umph?

.

She  
them is not am  
am—am not  
them is am.

.

Once, no, never, I got smacked up against my locker. You see, I am not the zero you expected. In fact, I am not one at all.

.

Dear Narrator,

How do I start this. Let me take off my hat first, before I tell of the earth and its beings, the under-worlds and their black workings, in my heart as it is in heaven. Verily, a younger man, in theory, endowed with a randy wand, would switch this earth for that, and you would be gypped of the truth, albeit prettily; over some kraut at a bar called “Die Blaue Ferne,” he’d get it all knotted—world and heaven all mixed in a drunken panorama. I however, have wandered to the point where nothing is left, and too much is either right up to the mere moment, or left to the still stars. I am like a deer springing in the fall. My teeth, if thus you wish to call them, have a kind of terror; it is, as Engels warned, the time for interpretation, as action will wilt upon its lonely dagger. So does the Owl of Minerva kluge the evasive-willing dream. A rose in the hand on a barren, European beach, when the

cabanas are boarded up for winter, only then will the story be told. The Prince of the other world, you know him in these parts, with an eye of winter, white, darting hither and thither, yon and non, while we take our cares for truth, whereas, for this sage, it is a lint it is an old pocket it is lint with an old pocket in it . . .



ONE



One  
what?

screw you one  
i'm going to bed with *all* my jewelry on tonight

butt naked  
otherwise

you hear me one?  
wearing nothing!

how's that apple?

one ledge—  
is enough to kill you

no ledge?  
whata you get in da schoola



**TWO**

Lassie come home  
Freud said, all words have afterwords  
and in every ear, a Fuehrer, mirrored  
a fat boy with a black licorice  
twisted just so—  
a flute answer-shining  
the black licorice tastes weirder  
like the shimmer of the waters  
drained from your Volkswagon

Was this the inspection?  
A spurt of ichor here, another spurt spurting  
Is this what you take me for?

It's diesel  
deal with it  
Add a doze to a day  
and it's twilight, already

Alas it is night  
Love me. Conjunctions like “and” are

The word is a sausage  
The world a mirror  
over which it's eaten

On your mark  
get set  
ghost



**THREE**

We are jets in the mist  
in the middle of the middle  
of the way, submit  
to summit or . . . ? Listen

If there were another man  
“the man” would cease to be in fact.  
These here angels, diesels switching gears  
higher and higher mocking gods formality  
with a Pythagorean glitch.

When dissent  
over the wall  
street thingy dies

It is the fact of it that dazzles  
The art of accomplishing truth  
when words are war-winged

And the jig is up  
3 against 1,  
and 9 chances out of 10  
I'm afraid Major Strasser would insist.

.

D to the r to the  
e to the i  
that's 3

We'll always  
have Paris

We didn't have, we,  
we lost it until you  
came to Casablanca.

We got it back last night.



**FOUR**



“Für Elise” is an insufferable  
number, and as such  
a fact of life, mostly

for dingbats who think art  
has it in for them. the dog  
getting gemütlich

and two and two  
is an army  
like a Sondheim musical

one cannot afford to miss.  
4 “passeth show”  
but with a fried chicken odor.

Fair is foul and four  
just farted and  
love finishes first.

.

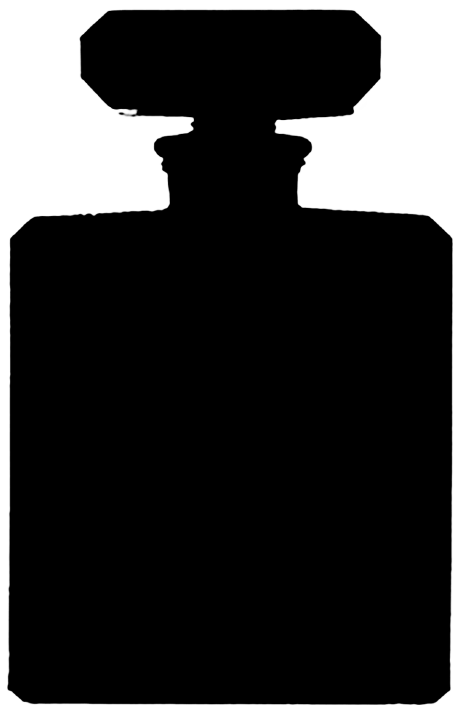
Descartes said  
at four cycles per second there is a muteness,  
then jibber jabber.  
This is the unfurled fury of all elements  
Without hats on them.

.

Four is a tower.  
Fuck—  
we're in it.

.

Abstract, yeah, why  
and why and we  
just look at this thing:  
one plus three.



**FIVE**

Rimsky-Korsakov and  
two others (times two other others)  
formed the “Mighty Five”

AKA “The Handful”—  
A pent fist laying down  
some Ruskie jive.

.

From four  
some Jedi  
eeked out

a line often  
confused with  
.10 to the gegen-  
über. And

That’s a seriously  
big number, nothing  
to sneeze at.

.

In olden days a glimpse  
of stocking, was looked on  
as something shocking, now

A brokeback grope such as  
stars are numbered genderbendy gab of  
ersatz sirs—even mother would approve—

Truth is so hung,  
that he be enough.  
Twosomes and threesomes  
seem tiresome.

.

Of all numbers, five is the star fucker.



SIX

As I reflect  
on the deranged forms  
accumulation takes—

Morning sex (10am)  
Laser tag with the gaze  
Shopworn woolens

Drums overhead  
An overpowering sonnet  
“That Bacon wrote Shakespeare

is not beyond plausibility.  
Joseph Fiennes played him  
and before that

played the Earl of Leicester  
with John Gielgud as the Pope  
who was then the voice of King Arthur

in DragonHeart with Dennis Quaid  
who in addition to starring in the 2011  
version of Footloose

Is a mere 3 degrees from Kevin Bacon.”





**SEVEN**

Seven zero sauce  
is the seven echoes in a minute  
I am an outcome—on there  
on the earthlings, in cows  
in jars the word is flipped-fixed  
the beach is mild today

.

Say  
dog,  
do  
you  
und  
der  
stand?

.

I been in Krankenhaus  
get ballhandler  
won't mean cocktail

lease Einstein then  
call it again I am not sorry  
I'm dying

episode them

.

Spreckensie Sieben?  
Understand Delorean  
The world is a pop-up book:

Sunday drivers  
Wednesday Nazis  
time is not space

and so?

Hanzel's heist of house-sugar

The New Objectivity

.

Come on, seven



**EIGHT**

eight  
is a dull light

two four one  
is eight for all

.

I can never remember the rules  
for the game of “crazy eights” —

they are in a jar  
where you may find a combination

of the last shines that the world will will  
its language,

a vague odor, and  
the jar’s label.

.

At the heart of August is a monad  
the torque of summer—

a haziness

.

one x eight is light  
two x eight is twilight  
three x eight is and the rain  
four x eight is freight

.

Watch me do it.  
One loop.  
Then another.

.

Set upon its side  
eight is the last image time makes of itself

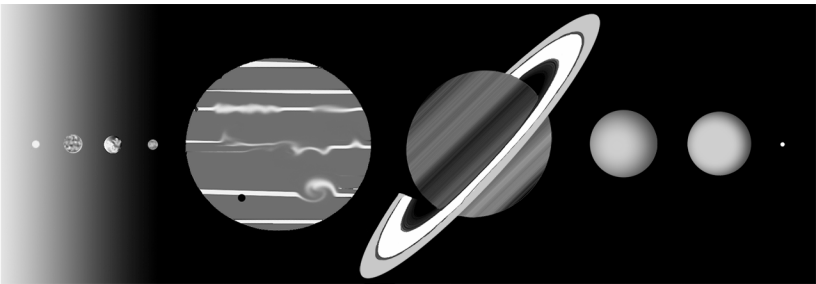
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When time “doesn’t count”—  
Then there will be a big half-time show  
between the night we know  
and its other  
half

.

5  
x 8  
fate





**NINE**

The Sorrows of Young  
Werther on the 9s  
Film at eleven

Is this a system?  
This nownbere of quanta  
This nowmere of sum-where

A Revolution 9  
Followed by the pound sign  
orbiting the sum

The rumor a mirror  
makes of a room  
and air

.

For me, it will always  
be nine planets.

Pluto means a lot.

.

Toodle-loo  
to loot,  
luted.

.

Seeing Close Encounters  
of the Third Kind,  
for the third time

Reminded me of  
being nine.

.

*Even our poetry  
is not on the metric system.*

9 verges on a deci-

mega-zetta-pico-yotta  
but ours is not a dead planet.  
There are footlongs at the mall!

zeppometer,  
harpometer,  
chicometer,  
grouchometer

There's the dodecahedonism of  
d and d dandies  
with 12-sided dice.

Toss out six  
or add another  
and the world works  
more or less

Spring is in the air  
and lower, the flowers.  
And further the rock  
and core

This is it. the junction  
of magnetic sources  
Journey to the center  
of the Tootsie Pop

a lick year away  
where light gives way

.

9 aces  
is a strange hand

When your hand  
is bigger than stars  
you are a wizard

a lizard incubated in  
an improbable desert  
a miracle composed  
of shoelace and sinew

a lutograph  
a seraphic line  
an infinite map  
en route to

*nein*

one ess two two ess two two  
pea six three ess two three  
pea six four ess two three  
dee ten four pea six five ess  
two four dee ten five pea  
six six ess two four eff four  
teen five dee ten six pea six  
seven ess two six dee  
ten five eff four teen

**T H E**  
**E N D**

## ABOUT THE TEXT

“The Numbers” is written and designed by Joe Milutis.

It is roughly shaped by reading or misreading Klaus Reichert’s German translation of Robert Creeley’s 1968 “Numbers Suite” (I don’t know German.)

The Creeley series was a collaboration with Robert Indiana, who created images of numbers to accompany the number poems. I’ve also attempted an adaptation of the Indiana numbers.

Thanks to the Henry Gallery for initiating this experiment, the collaboration within the collaboration within the collaboration of the translation of a translation of a translation.



