

Portland I

For the Mathematics Softball Team in the 2024 Renn Fayre softball bracket.

001. We shall build, shining brick by shining brick, a monument to Reede,
002. and in place of mortar we shall use liquid bronze,
003. for when it sets, there is no-one who will be able to pry them apart,
004. and once the work is done we shall gaze upon it and create a record of greatness,
005. so when, in years to come, they extol the feats of victors past,
006. or when that sweetest sound, the crack of a bat, rings true
007. and the muses decorate their books, it will be as if the gods on Olympus are joined together.
008. It is not my place to tell Acrataphorus [Dionysus] to beat the drum
009. nor Archegetes [Apollo] to raise his lyre,

010. but when Hagnus [Helios] peers onto Reede and sees honest, unmixed laughter,
011. I do not need that oracle to tell me what will happen next,
012. and I would be remiss to leave these great deeds unsung.
013. Like a beacon to earth, Reede honors itself year by year;
014. yes, the endless pursuit of knowledge is indeed beautiful,
015. but dazzling all is that practiced elegance, moulded valor.
016. Do not mistake my intention because I mince my words,
017. I speak, of course, of softball,
018. truly grasped only by a worthy few.

019. And who, in Reede, is most learned in the games, most practiced, most embedded,
020. it must be mathematics. The first department, great children of Olde Reede and Griffin,
021. who, but math, could have accumulated such skill?
022. Descended from pythagoras and archimedes, there is no discipline more developed than math.
023. And it is no surprise, then, that the displays are worthy of Pindar.
024. I admit, the hand can move on its own—the gods were tricked by
025. the silver tongued son of Zeus [Tantalus],
026. but found sense before the motion was complete,

027. and you, arbiters of song, do not repeat that grave error;
028. before you Reede has shown countless victories,
029. numbering more than their own olympics,
030. and as if each has been crowned at Olympia, so please
031. hold my tongue as the gods held theirs if they are not worthy of this song.
032. Is it that owl that trains them for greatness,
033. or perhaps that Reedite spark is enough;

034. today I sing of mathematics. That beautiful subject,
035. to prove their eternal brilliance, it cannot be hard,
036. but it is an old tale now, and to repeat it would only bore the muses.
037. An exercise to fools I leave it,
038. and instead we shall celebrate the exercise of the department:

039. after claiming victory over its peers, mathematics graciously passed the flame to those of the frisbee.
040. (Why would Heracles need to touch his own pillars?)
041. Listen, though, to the frisbee players. Are they not, dear Reede, speaking of mathematics?
042. When Diagoras handed victory to his son, the fire burned until only the purest victory remained.
043. The greatest joy is to be overcome by the one which you raised, and
044. to embody the griffin brings shining glory to everyone,

045. but tell me how Griffin came to know Reede
046. and why we celebrate this immortal tradition.
047. A man of numbers, how did he come to know words so well?
048. The first to Reede, he came knowing numbers
049. but soon saw in Reede, like himself, a vacancy,
050. (it brings truest joy to one who seeks experience in all great things)
051. quickly, he sought, in himself, to profess more than symbols.
052. He taught golden language and Reede grew.
053. Under the sun of words, math came to know more;
054. and literature blossomed alongside language.

055. The new day unfolded and soon
056. all great achievements hid themselves in Reede's halls.
057. But the sweetest son of Reede had not sated his void. Not satisfied with language,
058. he knew he could bring even higher excellence.
059. He sought to bring the greatest games also. And in that first year,
060. with too many for those of Pindar, the Reedites,
061. still determined to play, found softball-pride of Portland.

062. Racing towards victory, they found none who could best them.
063. So they divided themselves: where there was only math, after Griffin opened their eyes, his kin chose
064. numbers, language, science, or literature, and where there was one,
065. four stood, and against themselves, they soared, illustrious,
066. and reached such heights which might again wake tabor.

067. But high above the earth, in that happiest state like Daedalus' son [Icarus]—deaf to his
father's pleas,
068. as though he had wax in his ears—did Griffin find them.
069. The sun, liquid gold, godlike fire, purest brilliance, can melt all;

070. indeed, it is not the place of mortals to live in the gilded palaces of gods
071. or to hear the most beautiful tune of all the muses in chorus, no, not anymore,
072. so Griffin shielded them from the sky, from that terrible wrath;
073. away from the games did the Reedites hide.

074. But like a well in the driest desert,
075. when the son of Uranus [Kronos] demanded from his mother [Gaia] that water flow,
076. Oceanus followed, and the Reedite's taste for games,
077. once contained by Griffin, began to leak out as he came to know Kronos,
078. and when he was leaving with Kronos' son [Hades], the games flooded forth.
079. Please, kin of Griffin, repeat not your mistakes from years prior—what's that?
080. Like water, the wax had melted from their ears, the wonders of Reede had homes,
081. never again to fall on deaf ears, and the words of
082. Griffin still echoed through Reede, so they knew to avoid their mistakes,

083. and with dazzling glory, the games again commenced, a true gem for the world.
084. And when the peerless victors instructed Reede, such talent became commonplace.
085. Tell me Griffin, is it your smile which keeps the Reedites passing their beauty,
086. from one to the next, senior to junior,
087. or is it some nameless flavor of Reedite instinct?
088. What's that, oh daughters of Zeus? Like nectar I hear
089. a new voice, I was not aware.

090. Calliope, I thought I was joined by Clio and Erato,
091. how long have I entertained, and what brought you to join this song?
092. Was it these brilliant students, shining with glory? I must endeavor to keep your interest;
093. we must not, for too long, set anchor at this port,
094. perhaps I should instead weave a tale of Doyle,
095. or Pythagoras—no, the light of song still shines through the night,
096. the kin of Reede are fit for Ergane's [Athena's] loom, and the piece is nearly complete;
097. we can let ourselves enjoy safety from the winter storms for longer still.

098. Radiant Reedites, birthless kin of Reede, likewise raised by
099. the bearer of all great knowledge [Athena], and forged to greatness by math,
100. when new starry eyed students join your ranks, will you teach them your skills and make them

shine,

101. as you were taught by seniors, and they too, until that first team?
102. Will you sing as I do of the glories of that first department and the first son of Reede [Griffin]?
103. I hope, this honey-sweet tune of the muses carries far, and with it,
104. brings ever more glory to Reede and its greatest team. I do not, now,
105. wish to demand more from the muses, and like a ball hit by glorious Reede, I disappear.

Portland I was written in 2025 C.E. and has not (yet) been performed.

6: The “crack of a bat” refers to softball, but blurs the line between softball and baseball

8-9: Dionysus and Apollo are deities associated respectively with percussive and stringed instruments (Asbo, Graf).

10: Renn Fayre coincides roughly with the end of the wetter seasons.

11: The oracle at Delphi

24: There is a double meaning in “the hand can move on its own” here. First, as though one is writing something down without thinking and second, as though one is eating without inspecting the food.

24-26: Tantalus tricked the gods by feeding them his son, but they found out before finishing the meal.

30: Seniors are crowned with Laurels, the symbol of victory at Delphi, the author has conflated the Olympian games with the Pythian games.

39-41: The mathematics softball team lost in the quarter finals to the ultimate frisbee team who won the game. Mathematics “claiming victory over its peers” refers to making it further than other departments—though this is incorrect as they tied with the Economics department.

41: The author brings the ultimate frisbee team into the math team, claiming some contribution towards the latter’s victory as consisting of math students.

42: This references the tale of Diagoras losing to his son.

44-45: Griffin is both the mascot of Reed and the first professor of Reed. The professor Griffin was known for emphasizing mathematics as a language (Reed College, Pellegrin-Alvarez).

67 - 68: Daedalus’ son Icarus had wax wings and flew too close to the sun causing them to melt.

68: The author has added the detail that Icarus had wax in his ears.

75: Kronos, the first son of Gaia and Uranus is sometimes conflated with Chronos, a deity of time.

77-78: 77 describes Griffin growing older. Kronos’ son is Hades. In 78, The year before Griffin died was the year the first Renn Fayre celebration took place (Reed College, Crotty).

79-80: The author uses conflicting tenses to blur the line between present and past

80: “wax [melting] from their ears” references line 68.

90: Calliope, Clio, and Erato are muses for epic poetry, history, and lyric choral poetry respectively (Schachter).

98-99: Athena was “birthless” in that she did not have a conventional birth. Similarly the “kin of Reede” are not true children of Reed.