Strange Attractors
Poems of Love and Mathematics
Edited by Sarah Glaz and JoAnne Growney

“A delightful juxtaposition of that which is supremely precise and that which is supremely imprecise and all of it deeply human.”
—Alan Lightman, author of Einstein’s Dreams

“If you are fond of mathematics and believe that love is the sweet mystery of life, you’ll find this anthology an endless source of pleasure. Edited by two mathematicians who also happen to be poets, this fine collection includes pieces from many famous poets. Some of the mathematical topics embedded in the stanzas are π, e, primes, Venn diagrams, Fibonacci numbers, Möbius bands, Alexander’s horned sphere, quaternions, chaos theory, NP-completeness, the Mandelbrot set, and even calculus!”
—Martin Gardner, author of Mathematical Games

“One day there may be as much mathematics in poetry as there has always been poetry in mathematics. That is what the mathematically minded learns from these pages, which will also intrigue the more poetically inclined. The restriction to love poetry entails no serious loss of generality.”
—Hendrik Lenstra, Universiteit Leiden

“Poetry may begin, as Yeats said, in the ‘foul rag and bone shop of the heart,’ but it is completed with the music of the spheres. What a wonderful collection Strange Attractors is, offering readers—the ones who know mathematics is a form of poetry and the ones who don’t—a place to find, as Emily Dickinson says, what ‘eludes the finding out.’”
—Robert Hass, author of Time and Materials

“‘What, after all, is mathematics but the poetry of the mind, and what is poetry but the mathematics of the heart?’ So wrote the American mathematician and educator David Eugene Smith. In a similar vein, the German mathematician Karl Weierstrass declared, ‘A mathematician who is not at the same time something of a poet will never be a full mathematician.’ Most mathematicians will know what they meant. But what do professional poets think of mathematics? In this delightful collection, the editors present the view of the same terrain—the connections between mathematics and poetry—from the other side of the equation: the poets. Now is your chance to see if the equation balances.”

Strange Attractors: Poems of Love and Mathematics is a collection of about 150 poems (from various time periods) with strong links to mathematics in content, form, or imagery. The common theme is love, and the editors draw from its various manifestations—romantic love, spiritual love, humorous love, love between parents and children, mathematicians in love, love of mathematics. The poets gathered here include literary masters as well as celebrated mathematicians and scientists.