

NUMBERS

Continued from Page 3 and never indulged in sex, art, fiction or movies.

Thankfully, readers do not have to share Erdős' reputation as a "mathematical monk" to enjoy Hoffman's easy, fiction-like recount of Erdős' life. The prolific genius spent most of

his life searching for mathematical proofs "straight from the book" — a compliment of Erdős' that referred to his belief about mathematical truths. "I'm always



saying that the SF (God, whom Erdős always called the Supreme Fascist) has this transfinite (greater than infinite) book," Erdős said. "[The book] contains all the best proofs of all mathematical proofs that are elegant and perfect." Hoffman's book is mainly an account of Erdős' selflessness and sometimes overwhelming strange-

ness and requires little mathematical heavy-lifting. It also does not delve much into Erdős' findings, so those without a background in math should not get lost or confused. Hoffman wisely supplements information about Erdős with stories from colleagues and Erdős' own anecdotes, taken from interviews Hoffman conducted with Erdős dur-

ing the last 10 years of his life. The Man Who Loved Only Numbers will not entertain readers looking for a sexier topic than a talented genius, but for those whose interests are slightly more intellectual, Erdős' life makes for a quick and enjoyable read. (Grade: B+)

- Beverly Mireles

First Loves Carmela Ciuraru (editor) Scribner Poetry

Few genres of literature are as timeless or aware of their own history as poetry. Every new generation of poets is inspired by a former and works to refine and define poetry with its own style. First Loves is a testament to poetry's cyclical nature. The book is a collection of more than 60 personal anecdotes by modern poets in which each writer recalls the poem they first fell in love with. For non-literature fans, First Loves will probably look like a collection of unfamiliar names writing about older, likewise unfamiliar names. Even for the most bookish English majors, some of the contributing poets will draw looks of confusion.

However, the book offers something for both modern and classic poetry enthusiasts. Notable modern poets like A.R. Ammons, Philip Levine, Seamus Heaney and Robert Pinsky contribute to First Loves. Printed after each poet's narrative is the full text of his or her first love. Likewise, students who have enjoyed classes covering British and American literature will appreciate rereading classics by Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickenson and Robert Frost.

But the best part of First Loves is the combination of the old and the new. The synthesis shines in anecdotes like the one submitted by Robin Becker. While Becker may not be a household name, her recounting of her first love, William Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey and how it spoke to her as a frustrated adolescent is a highlight of the book.

First Loves is a tribute to poetry and poetry, but more than that, it's about inspiration. While some poets may be turned off by the book's unwavering focus to the art of poetry, students who have ever written a poem and felt like the author was speaking directly to them will find for First Loves' quaint collection of poetic memories. (Grade: A)

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FOR SALE

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Looking for three roommates for brand new 4bdm/4bth condo in University Place on Southwest Parkway. \$380/mo. +1.4bills. 680-1776.

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ACROSS 1 Soccer score 5 Bar bills 9 Call to mind 14 The King and I character 15 First name in scat 16 Green carvings 17 '60s sitcom mom 18 Fossil fuel 19 Upscale 20 Make peace 23 Digging tool 24 Facts 25 Incentive to action 29 Manhattan, for one 33 Madrid Mrs. 36 The Chosen author 38 In of (rather than) 39 Make peace 43 Golden- (senior citizen) 44 Mennonite group 45 W.C. Fields persona 46 Curator employer 49 March honoree, for short 51 Starting with 53 Army weapon 57 Make peace 62 Cutting tool 63 Rookie 64 "Too bad!" 65 Acquire, as debts 66 Petroleum grp. 67 Campbell of Scream 68 Film units

PEACE OFFERINGS by Rich Norris Edited by Stanley Newman

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