The work of Jacques Roubaud is intrinsically linked to mathematics. The author defines himself as a ‘composer of poetry, mathematics and literature’ (Roubaud 2000: 65). His image as a poet-mathematician is now so well-known now that almost each article or study dedicated to Roubaud mentions both dimensions of the man, the writer as well as the scientist. But too often, the presence of mathematics is reduced to a mere instrumental status, mostly based on numbers and mainly of oulipian inspiration. In this perspective, Roubaud is seen as focusing on phenomena such as prime numbers or cubed figures, and to use those strictly to enhance programmatic writing. It would thus be possible to analyse the collection of poems *Trente et un au cube* (Roubaud 1973) as based on multiplication, or to underscore the role of the number nine in *Quelque chose noir* (Roubaud 1986a). But such a reading remains purely descriptive or mechanical. It leaves aside the fundamental relationship between mathematics and writing and their mutual influence on Roubaud’s work, in that both acts as representations of the world. This paper purports to consider the significance of mathematical patterns in Roubaud’s prose and poetry more closely. In particular, I argue that numbers function in his writing as personal signifiers, as markers of an unprogrammable specificity, and indeed that they operate on a spiritual plane.

1. Homo numericus

2. Versification

3. Multiplication

4. Project

5. Fascination

6. Life beyond Oulipo

7. Pythagoras