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About the Cover

In the early 1820s, Louis Braille developed and published a system of dots to represent letters, numbers, mathematical symbols, and musical notes. Braille himself was blind from trauma and subsequent sympathetic ophthalmia at age 3. When he was a child at the school for the blind in Paris, France, Braille learned a phonetic system of raised dots and dashes that had been developed by a French army captain for soldiers to compose and read messages at night. As a teenager, Braille refined this technique of tactile writing into a succinct 6-dot system of the alphabet. Each letter of the alphabet is represented as a combination of dots and spaces in a rectangle of 6 cells containing 2 columns and 3 rows. Our cover provides representational examples, modified for print, of Braille's method and also serves as a visual portal for this issue's special theme: blindness.