

The Math Poem II – “When Algebra Attacks”

It's lurking there
Deep within my father's old textbook
Even on vacation I can feel the call
Oh, the dreaded call – the awful pull
Of that which I dread so

It's lurking there
Even in my dreams
The ordering of both numbers
And letters

Even the written word can't escape
its evil grasp!

Solve the equation algebraically
And then I have to prove it graphically
Yes, it's all too graphic, isn't it
even for the most fearless of heroes
This dreaded curse that so traumatizes
My ever-impressionable brain cells
That work so adversely to my disadvantage
Whenever I try to grasp these concepts
that The Man insists are so simple...

(Yes, I'm looking at you, Dad)

This...this...*evil*...
It saturates my brain with
Horrid, meticulously-drawn symbols that will surely
Kill me one day
This branch of mathematics
That seeks only to further confuse my poor mind
And befuddle my wits
With this awful, gut-wrenching substitution
Of numbers with letters of the English language
Whatever will become of the little sanity I have left?!

I have no choice but to struggle on
I can't let the math win
If the algebra book wins
Then algebra will rule the world...

I have to save the world!

And now

As I sit at my desk

Finishing up this poem-yet-not

I glare, pencil in teeth, down at my algebra book

Bone weary of this fight already, but

Ready for any challenge it might present.

I decide to recharge my brain a little

Before continuing this fight

So I wave the white flag

(a sheet of college-ruled paper –

yeah, I know I'm cheap)

and close my eyes...

(Wait.)

(Does falling asleep mean

that the algebra wins?)

(...)

(My war, my rules.)

But just before the pages of my book

Are covered with a protective coating of

Patented quick-drying Lea-slobber

In sleep

I read the cover and realize

That I haven't been doing Algebra

after all...

...

I hate Geometry.