

E. R. LUTKEN

Emmy Noether and the Conservation of Hope

Leather satchel slung over her shoulder,
she strode between classes into stinging
cold, slicing through crowds
of black-robed men radiating
disapproval with their stares.

Studying math was like quenching a thirst.

In the midst of the Great War,
young friends enthralled by death,
an unapologetic pacifist braving
derision of those dressed in medal-
encrusted uniforms, she called out,

Why war in this magnificent world?

Working as surreptitious advisor,
under-the-table professor,
her drab label, *assistant*
unpaid to protect sensibilities
of bearded administrators.

Her awe of abstract algebra endured.

Against winds fanning hatred,
purge of Jews from academics,
she wrote, thought, taught from home.
Flames reaching the streets
forced a journey of tears,
exile to America.

She searched the heart of mathematics and physics from wherever.

*Symmetry amid a stream of bitter disruptions.
A quantity conserved.*

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