

ROBIN CHAPMAN

Mary Laycock

(1915-2011)

What did she do for us in three years of high school math?
Let us confer like kids on the playground, rushing now
to the monkey bars, suspended hand over hand
between the number lines' equal intervals; or jumping now
on the merry-go-round that spun its polar co-ordinates
as we rode the sine and cosine waves of the palominos;
or piling on the seesaw, learning the tradeoffs of placement
and weight, the way the strictly-paired angles of plank
widened and narrowed; or, on the track, how the lever
of the pole vault's thrust could carry us to new heights,
or the conversion of our distance and time to rate—
for it was play that she brought to the room, and trust
that we could map it onto Euclid, Fourier, and Descartes.

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