

CAROL DORF

Dear Ivar,

I read your book on the unexpected.
Like most poets, I opposed mathematics
when I was young, seeing it as the converse
to feeling. The previous statement is false.

When I was very young I loved counting
and zero and even numbers. At sixteen,
I wanted to imagine calculus as a novel
of limits and motion. Yet by college,
I had learned mathematics could not correspond
to poetry in a one-to-one intensity.
Would your book have mattered to me, then?
Most likely, I would not have read it.

Today, I am sending this fan letter. Thank you
for explaining catastrophe and instability.
I spent so many years writing my way
through them. And boundaries, I kept insisting
they were psychological or geographic,
unwilling to see them as breaks
between states of matter. Your words
matter to me, a language as precise as poetry
to delineate universe and being.

Sincerely,

Note: This was a response to Ivar Ekeland's *Mathematics and the Unexpected*.