

**MARION DEUTSCHE COHEN**

**Not as Much as Before**

Kara tells us she doesn't really love math all that much any more, now that she's taken all that calculus. And then I read on someone's Friendly Questionnaire how she used to love writing but doesn't all that much since she's been in college. And somebody else: I used to be creative when I was younger. It's a phenomenon, I tell the class; not loving something as much as before college, or before high school, or before your first job, is a phenomenon. If you feel that way, I say, you're not alone. Then I tell them about me, before college I was like a kid in a candy store with math, I'd plop myself down in the math section of Barnes and Noble, sit there on the floor for hours with math upon math book, and at home I'd write what I called My Treatise, hours and hours with My Treatise. The profundity of math could make me cry.

But in college I had math homework just like all my other homework and math tests like other tests and math grades like other grades. It wasn't a candy store any more. I wrote to my favorite high-school teachers, "It's just not the same".

But in fact I didn't really need the candy store in order to keep working on My Treatise and alternative arithmetics and to invent-slash-discover the theorem that might solve the problem I'm working on right now. Candy was still candy even without the store and fifty years later I'm still a kid with candy. Don't worry, I tell the class, looking extra-closely at Kara, if you're not loving something as much as you did before college don't worry. Loving can come in spurts and it can come back, don't worry if you're not loving something or someone as much as before.

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