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College of DuPage

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Is “F” for Function or Failure?

by Rita Puishes

If “F” is for function,
Then “g” I don’t get.
Algebra is pea soup
I heartily regret.

Where is that stuff
I struggled to employ;
Formule I memorized
And had no time to enjoy?

Of what use are conjugates,
Slopes and quadratic plans
If mind can’t grasp them, and
Tempers all that expands?

This old brain can’t twist
As nimbly as you wish,
It rebukes and rebels,
Says I’m dumb as a fish!

To calibrate engines
Simply isn’t the plan.
I’m merely a writer,
Don’t you understand?

“F” is for flunk
At geometry I’m no good
And I’ve had it to here,
Am I understood?

Why make me suffer
In my autumnal years
With formulae and equations
That shame me to tears?

“G” is for grapes
Sour as they can get,
Self-pity’s my mood,
And angry? You bet!

Who gives a fig if a
Number’s complex or real?
When the answer’s all wrong,
Stupidity’s all that I feel!

Arithmetic is fine-
Love it to pieces-
But math’s high hurdles is
Where gray muscle freezes.

An AA degree was that goal.
But math’s grating voice
Sneers, “Impossible, Imbecile
You’ve no brain nor choice!”

“F” is for failure
Depressed and dejected,
And far, far worse-
No more self-respected.

“F” is also for fig,
Which I just don’t give,
If I ever use math again
As long as I live!

I am not stupid,
I’m almost certain,
But degree dreams are dust
‘Neath math’s final curtain.