



Give HER Your Support

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AFTERMATH

Give HER Your Support

JOANNE GROWNEY



A

s a math-
woman and
grandmother
to future
math-women,

I am alert to
the lonely and undervalued
positions experienced by
many girls and women who
pursue mathematics. I express
some of these attitudes below
in syllable-square stanzas.
These are poems in which the
number of syllables per line in each
stanza is the same as the number of lines in the
stanza. Counting my syllables helps me keep my
language careful and precise.

Little Women

In school, many
gifted math girls.
Later, so few
famed math women!

What Math Teachers Do

They ignore me. I
raise my hand—wave it
to ask questions, to
offer answers—but
they call on the boys!

Counting

When I look around
the room—if I don't
know in one glance how
many women are
there with me, I smile.

Smart Girl Speculating

Last Sunday's paper had
an essay by a clown
who said as long as I
play dumb people let me
do what I want. And I
cannot stop wondering.

Square Attitudes

To publish mathematics,
a woman must learn to think
like a man, learn to write like
a man, to use only her

initials so reviewers
guess she's a man! Women must
masquerade, pretend man-think—

or can we build
new attitudes,
so all of us
have fair chances?!

*JoAnne Grownney is a retired
(Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania)
mathematics professor and a poet. Her blog,
poetrywithmathematics.blogspot.com,
offers a host of resources that link the
precision, beauty, and mysteries of
mathematics with the precision, beauty,
and mysteries of poetry.*

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