

mathematician

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You've spent your life altering the formulas,
constants and variables—
mostly variables—
carefully constructed so that only you know the solution.
Now you're in your prime,
random laws are on your side.
But today you slipped, the induction to your demise.

She keeps adding . . . one plus one doesn't equal three,
 you remind her
 to remember
 the importance of x .
One plus one plus x could equal three.

You pride yourself in your ability to keep the formula in tact.
It changes every few years but you know how,
you have every detail memorized,
 every change,
 every variable.

Your friends believe that you are a magician.
 Transforming simple algebra to advanced calculus.
You are a master mathematician.

She knows that x never equals one.
One plus one plus x is therefore never three.

She still silently adds one plus one plus x but
sometimes it's four, sometimes it's one.

It doesn't fit. / It can't. / She asks you.

The brilliant, diligent teacher—you explain again + again.
You remind her that you are the mathematician, the master.
(Arithmetic was never her strong point).
You are unequaled in your infinite knowledge.
She is not positive that you are right but she retreats—
silently adding one plus one.

Finally, she is determined to solve the equation.
One morning she asks you to plot it out.
Insisting that you include all that has been undefined.
Lazily, you comply.

Checking her chart against the problem,
Hoping that she is wrong, she
Asks again for clarification—
Only hoping for a different answer.
She begins to group the symbols.

Errors in the formula multiply.
She divides.