

## Celestial Terms

*Sarah Dunster*

You love me in algebra—  
D + d = L to the Nth degree,  
and I love you in quarter notes—  
a fierce appoggiatura and a soft, high C.  
We loved each other then in  
a jumble of chords using mostly black keys,  
in square roots, and Pi with ice  
cream, and the straining of infinity.  
We passed my childhood in a  
barrage of love-fear-grief-love—our Symphony.  
When firmaments fell, you were  
quiet. You held your anger safe from me.  
At my wedding dance (neither  
of us dances) we circled awkwardly,  
and when I left the house for good  
I looked up the long, steep length of driveway  
and choked on my new freedom.  
I couldn't picture what my life would be.  
And now, we tiptoe on the phone  
(not our favorite). But then, last Christmas Eve  
we debated math, Ron Paul,  
and the theory of relativity,  
and my poor husband went to bed  
with a titan headache, like Sicily  
invaded by the Romans.  
But it is the inevitability  
of you and me, the red-haired  
inventor and blond pigtailed girl, hungering  
for the best of what you could  
(D+d) and could not quite give to me:

*Someday we will share feelings.  
In celestial terms they'll zip, from heart to  
heart, like electricity  
elegant with algorithms, channeled in  
raw-sung soliloquies.*

## In the Night

*Sarah Dunster*

We slumber heavy in the night  
so long as hills are bare and white  
and what is real, is pressing. What  
can you do but answer. What can  
you do but take my jaw in hand  
and answer. And what can I, but  
know you while night visions press us, hot  
in our down blanket. What cannot  
be spoken, we will speak with night  
still resting on us—your air  
on me, and my warm shoulder bare  
to you—real, real as day is light  
until we wake in morning's cold,  
when mountains, rimming in the gold  
of cresting sun, can no more be  
deferred. What can we do but rise . . .  
that I could stop you with my gaze  
as you work your task of leaving me.

## Tangled Women

*Sarah Dunster*

Mother always dreamed of our perfection;  
daughters who escaped her careless jumble  
with cool minds and clear heads. A strong woman

was (she first thought) like lines of a chi garden  
with stones laid straight, and raking gravel—  
tines in furrows, dug for our perfection.

Then, battling with star thistles and watermelons  
sprung up from seeds of wars in a tough tumble  
of coiling vine, she became the sort of woman

who taught her daughters the raw mysticism  
of broken earth, while the sting of new soil  
stirred us. She demonstrated the perfection  
of bulbs thrown, of planting in the pattern  
of scatter. With closed eyes, she tossed her handful  
in hope that we would all grow to be women  
of choice. What renaissance—the perfection  
of rebellion in us, tangled women.