

Why I Gave Up on Math and Began My Big Fat Writing Career

by Jerry Ratch

I'd met this crowd of drunken poets from San Francisco
Even though this was smack dab in the middle of winter
Smack dab in the middle of the flattened Illinois plains
Why they all left San Francisco I'll never completely understand
But there we were. And there was I
In my math class at 8 a.m. and at every question
While me and a few other stragglers from last night's drunken
party
Sat at the rear of the lecture hall trying our best to avoid direct
eye contact
With our math professor, at every question six hands shot up into
the air
And kept waving in his face from the six brilliant, wide
awake Chinese students
Sitting upright in their hard wooden seats in the very front row of
the class
Six hands, I say, shot up at every damn one of those questions.
This was, I repeat,
8 a.m. every morning, on the plains of Illinois.
And I took a good long look into the face of our math professor,
And I remember thinking: "There, in a number of years, and not
all that many,
Go I, myself."
And that was the end of my career in math
My immanent rendezvous with Steve Jobs at Apple, and with Mr.
Microsoft,
Whom I was until then destined to become

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And then I took up my pen, and this selfsame career right here,
With words. And what a boon to society it has been!

