
Mary

an episode

'He's telling you that you'll need math more than you know. "Actually", you say, "I intend to be a poet, sir." ...

"How you plan to get folks to pay you for it?" This stumps you a minute.

Finally, you say, "I'll sell my books."

"How much you think that'll make you?" he says...

You want to say he's being unfair. But you can't quite locate the unfairness of it... You peel the bottom of one sweaty thigh up from where it's stuck to the chair and tug down your skirt... Your parents never give that concern the slightest credence. "Shit, you can do whatever you feel like, Pokey", Daddy would say, while your mother would claim "those idiots wouldn't know poetry from piss ants."

Briggs waves his hand saying, "Let's drop the poet thing. It's true you don't need math to write poetry. But any other task you undertake will require a thorough grounding in mathematics." ...

You know better than to invite him into the various lives you've constructed for yourself - an apartment in New York, a beachcomber's hut, a Victorian mansion surrounded by a maze-like garden. Your own silence nudges you to the edge of tears...'

Mary Karr (2001). 'Girl's stuff'.
The Guardian Weekend,
June 16th

how did Mary get here, and how can she move on?

This is material in development at the Career-learning Café
this version is based on Fewer Lists, More Stories at
www.hihohiho.com/underpinning/cafblog.pdf

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