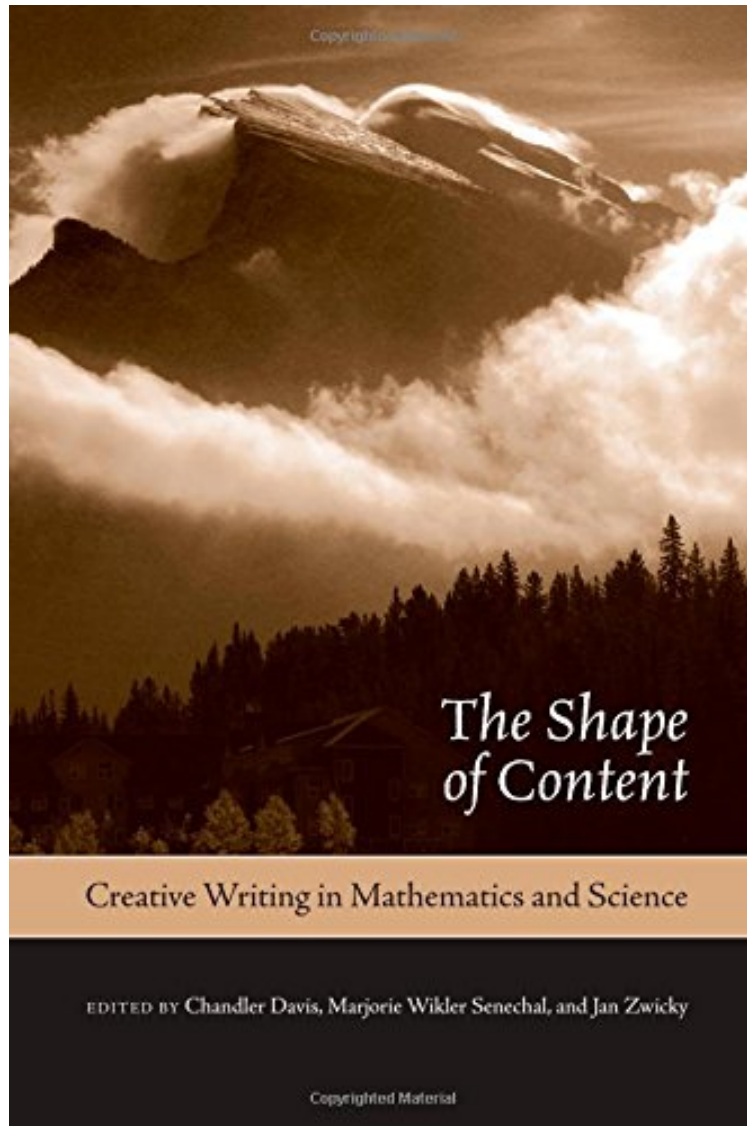


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The Shape of Content: Creative Writing in Mathematics and Science

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From A K Peters/CRC Press : **The Shape of Content: Creative Writing in Mathematics and Science** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Shape of Content: Creative Writing in Mathematics and Science:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A goldmine of literature-with-mathematics By JoAnne Growney Over a few recent days I've been sampling from THE SHAPE OF CONTENT and it has supplied ongoing delight. I began

with the collection's poetry and with names familiar to me--Robin Chapman, Chandler Davis, and Emily Grosholz. Liking what I found I went further and found Adam Dickinson and others. Turning to longer pieces, I met Eric Neville through the well-written prose of Marjorie Senechal. I was drawn in by the mathematical fiction of Manil Suri and Alex Kasman. And there is more, much more. For all readers who have connections to mathematics, this collection of creative work is a treasure to be oft-visited and enjoyed.

This book is a collection of creative pieces--poems, short stories, essays, play excerpts that give shape to mathematical and scientific content. This book portrays by example how various people work creatively with ideas from mathematics and other sciences. Creative writing about the content of mathematics and science is rare, and creative writing about the activity of mathematical and scientific creation is even rarer. And yet, when it occurs, it can be extremely popular, as well known plays like *Proof* and *Copenhagen* and biographies like *A Beautiful Mind* and *The Man Who Loved Only Numbers* attest. What draws the public to these works? And why, given that something does, are there so few examples of literature that engages these themes? Mathematics and science are part of world culture, part of the human spirit, fit subjects for art of all kinds.

The works collected in *The Shape of Content* vary incredibly in style and tone. Twenty-one authors contributed thirty-seven pieces to the book, including short stories, poems, and excerpts from dramatic pieces. The reader knows they are in for a wild ride when the first two entries in the book are a piece of metafiction by Marco Abate about exploring Evariste Galois's life and a humor piece by Colin Adams about a mathematical case before the Supreme Court. Darren Glass, *MAA s*, February 2009 [This book explores] the connection between mathematics and literature. That there is such a connection is not widely acknowledged . . . The topic deserves a more careful treatment than that and [this book goes] a long way towards filling that role. Keith Johnson, *CMS Notes*, May 2009 *The Shape of Content* is an admirable exercise in the fusion of left and right brain capacities and is a strong beginning for more work in this vein. Erin Carmody, *Association for Women in Mathematics Newsletter*, November 2009 At times, because some of the pieces are not presented in their complete form or have not been completed, the reader is left wanting more. Generally, however, the pieces are well written, entertaining, and, in many cases, instructive, inspired examples of how to express mathematical and scientific ideas and thoughts in creative ways. Mathematicians, scientists, educators, students of mathematics and science, and writers might all be interested in adding this book to their personal library. Kelly Edenfield, *Mathematics Teacher*, November 2009 No one reading this book can fail to be impressed by the depth of interpenetration between the mathematical and the worldly, and how permeable the boundaries between them can be. ... With 37 different pieces by 21 authors, *The Shape of Content* is a testament to the dazzling diversity of artistic possibilities around the common theme of mathematics. Amir Alexander, *American Mathematical Monthly*, January 2010 It is often said that the divide between poetry and mathematics lies in the disjunct between the rational and the romantic. On Feb. 25, these two disparities came together during the launch of *The Shape of Content*, a book comprised of drama, short fiction, critical essays and poetry that are all, in some way, relevant to science and mathematics. Martlet, March 2010 This remarkable book collects some interesting creative writing of 21 authors (young poets, writers, mathematicians, geologists, and philosophers... The book gives many opportunities to think about and discuss scientific works, their difficulties and their roles in our society, to learn why some people do science, to encourage young people into science, and to criticise the current situation and system. *EMS Newsletter*, March 2009 ...The content given shape here goes beyond mathematics and science to the intertwining of mathematical and scientific professional involvement, creative activity and the personal connections in which these are embedded. ... This may be the ultimate value of this volume: the humanity of science and mathematics that it may convey to the non-scientific, non-mathematical reader. ... If *The Shape of Content* inspired this reviewer to err in the direction of verbosity, here is the short version. This book is an enjoyable, readable collection of well-crafted pieces. Read it. Share it. Perhaps, as the editors suggest in their Introduction, you will become the writers and editors of its sequels. Douglas Norton, *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts*, June 2010 One contribution is called 'The Birth of Celestial Mechanics' about Isaac Newton; a short biography and a dignified tribute to his achievements in the world of mathematics and physics. This text is a real treat. And there are quite a few others in this book which are on a par with this one. J. Lang, *Internationale Mathematische Nachrichten*, April 2010 About the Author Chandler Davis has been on the faculty of the mathematics department at the University of Toronto since 1962. He has been an editor of *Mathematical s* and a Vice-President of the American Mathematical Society. His mathematical research ranges quite widely. His (non-mathematical) prose has appeared in *Astounding Science-Fiction*, *The Nation*, and elsewhere; selecta will be published as *It Walks in Beauty* (edited by J. Lukin; Aqueduct Press). His poetry has appeared in *Canadian Forum*, *Saturday Night*, *This Magazine*, and various little magazines. Combining his personae as mathematician and wordsmith, he has been on the editorial team of *The Mathematical Intelligencer* since 1987. Marjorie Wikler Senechal, a geometer and writer, is Louise Wolf Kahn Professor Emerita in Mathematics and History of Science and Technology at Smith College, where among other things she served as the (founding) Director of the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute. Her many books include *Quasicrystals and Geometry*, *Shaping Space* (a second edition is in preparation), and outside

of mathematics *Long Life to Your Children! A Portrait of High Albania*, and *American Silk 1830 1930*. Marjorie collaborated with Ellen Maddow on *Delicious Rivers*, and is, with Chandler Davis, co-Editor-in-Chief of *The Mathematical Intelligencer*. Jan Zwicky, a musician and a poet, also teaches in the Philosophy Department at the University of Victoria. She has published seven collections of poetry, including *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth*, which won Canada's Governor General's Award in 1999, and *Robinson's Crossing*, which won the Dorothy Livesay Prize in 2004. Her books on philosophy include *Lyric Philosophy* and *Wisdom Metaphor*. She has also published widely on issues in music, poetry, and the environment.