

Numbers **Mary Donnelly**

I was a calculator in my former life.
In a former life I would calculate.
I was no good with form, with shape,
protractors stabbing holes

into my bloodless hip. I would sit in my
room in the orange black dark
and scribble away at the certainties
of the world, until my fingers flattened

and my eyes vibrated with fatigue.
The night I proved that one plus one
equaled three was the final slap.
My freedom came to me and with it

a masochist's delight in the unrequited
love of things. The beach that doesn't
give a damn about its grains of grit.
Clouds strutting by at any old angle.

MARY DONNELLY is a manuscript coordinator for the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* at Rockefeller University Press, the poetry editor for the online journal *failbetter* (www.failbetter.com), and a poetry teacher through *Gotham Writers' Workshop*. She earned her MFA in writing from Bennington College. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Indiana Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Hat*, *Open City*, *Crowd*, *5AM*, and *Hunger Mountain*.