

## 81 — ABOUT MATHEMATICS

Mathematics is a cold thing to most people. It's not to me... People think it mad — anyhow in a woman — to be a mathematician. Even mathematicians themselves think that — some of them. They look at me. I know what they're thinking. "You!" — because I'm not ugly — and not cold. As if they'd found me selling matches or scrubbing floors. And others think I'm not doing my job in the world. They want me to use my brains their way — converting someone, compelling someone — politics, economics, anti-war. For me to shut myself up in the Green Hill Observatory seems to them just funk — an escape from life. If you won't march in one of their regiments you are always accused of escaping from life. Mathematics isn't that to me. It's one of the ways of listening. It's one of the ways of being and loving. One of the ways. They don't want to listen. They want to shout and compel. But the world is growing tired of the regiments. They fail everywhere. The misery they want to cure by force is the misery they have created by force — and will create again. Suddenly men and women will grow tired of marching in step and shouting choruses. We shall listen when we are still. The world is beginning to listen again. It is beginning to watch again. In poetry, the thing comes through words. Music says it direct. Saints and lovers know it. And mathematics... I want to listen; I must communicate but not through words.

**Charles Morgan**