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Untitled

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Untitled

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Today Devin catches me at it.
“Mommy, what’re you trying to do?”
“Oh,” I say, “well, these lines.
“I’m trying to fix these lines.”
And then I explain triangles.
And then I explain transitive.
“Sometimes it can’t be done,” I tell him, “and other times it can.
“I’m trying to figure out when it can.”
“I get it,” he says. “I get it, Mommy.”
And later he catches me at it again.
“THAT one WORKED, right?”

’Cause maybe, if that one worked, we can go play Parchesi.
Or cards. Or ice cream.
Or at least Mommy won’t
keep staring at those lines.

This poem is from Marion’s poetry book, *Crossing the Equal Sign*, about her passion for math. Most of the poems (including this one) in that book were written while she was working on a particularly intriguing problem in graph theory; the problem had been solved already but, as she wrote in another line from that book, “I’m a do-it-yourself-er”. Marion is the author of 27 books and chapbooks of poetry and prose. Her chapbook, *Truth and Beauty*, is about the interactions among students and teacher in her course, Mathematics in Literature.