

Writing Between the Lines

for Ruth Seidman

She had a special library way about her
when she came, formed by Hanscom,
environmental work and other tasks
she brought complete to the new job
under the Dome: to herd the stray cats,
Science, Engineering, all the branching
disciplines; to help support a world where
innovation is the norm.

How do we measure such a career?
Change is the constant,
catalogs advance,
even e-mail evolves;
we master only the next precursor.
Perhaps her projects mark the path:
instruction, LTEs, TOCs;
that endless frontier, space.

Professional, presidential contributions must be counted;
local, national, international,
committees, conferences, publications,
being The Editor.
Or perhaps the personnel she brought:
those who left went well prepared,
those who stayed, work hard and press on.
I've heard some bore offspring on her watch.

But now the variables for our measure will change;
try velocity: fast, soaring out to the sky.
Range: great, moving at will.
Altitude: high, pressure: hopefully none.
We bid you build, like the engineer,
a lasting structure on a solid base;
Learn, like the scientist, the wonders
which further truth.

Chris Sherratt
June 30, 2003