

# Émilie du Châtelet

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Émilie du Châtelet  
ancestor of the speed of light.

While Voltaire's kinetic energy  
vibrates in her bed  
She interprets Newton  
and borrows from Leibniz,  
even Kant notices she was clinquant  
no fool or beggar but a mine  
in between ectasis of sweet nothings  
she thinks of the square  
of the velocity.

She suspects more comes to pass  
between mass and velocity,  
vis viva depends on the square  
of  $v$ ,  
its total energy conserved  
would she find her bridge of light?

Weight plummets onto a pregnant future  
down the birth canal she comes  
square of her velocity,  
plunging many times into language  
awaiting her a web  
named daughter.

Where does she go in this planet?  
to be born not-a-daughter,

to be married not-a wife,  
to give birth not-a-mother?  
To be mere a force vive?  
Of whom Voltaire exclaimed  
— a soul for which mine was made.

Language is the house of being  
Language was invented to enslave us  
Language imbricates the body  
so do equations to the fabric of the universe.

Newton, 1643:  $F = m \cdot a$

Leibniz, 1646:  $\Sigma m v^2 E = \frac{1}{2} \Sigma m v^2$

Châtelet, 1706:  $E = m v^2$

Einstein, 1879:  $E = m c^2$



Émilie du Châtelet (1706–1749) with a pair of compasses in her right hand.

She was the first to publish the relation for kinetic energy,  $E = mv^2$ . This means that an object with twice the speed hits four times —  $2 \times 2$  — harder.

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