

Big Gosnell came and said  
(Voice like heavy cold lead  
But warm he was)

He said,

"I like to lift heavy things,  
I do,  
And I've got a book, you see ...

(MATH 151, USAFI)

(In the compound, Pfc Fisher,  
Pfc Fisher ... report to  
gate 2)

... and (wide eyes and big round face)  
I need some math for a high school  
DEEgree,  
you see ...

Are you the education adviser?  
(Push him away with eyes)

... mostly because,  
not so much for me,  
you see,  
but this teacher ...

(back home in cool spring  
where the earth smell  
fills the air)

... he made me say  
(when I quit school  
and joined the army) ...

(Attention in the compound,  
Attention in the compound,  
Five minutes to headcount,  
Five minutes to head -- )

... he made me say  
(boy, was he a good guy!)

'... get those credits, Gosnell,  
the army can help you if ...'

(Attention in the compound!)

... and I don't like not to  
keep my word  
to a man who ...

(Everyone not testing,  
Outside!  
Move!)

... but the algebra in the book,  
I mean they make numbers equal letters,  
and ...

(Gosnell! Testing?)

... no Sarge, I ...

(back home where  
fields are green  
and cool nights  
and soft girls with  
swelling breasts)

... really, I mean --  
can't you help me do it? ...

(Attention in the compound!)

(Gosnell! Out!)

... I must go to (I'm coming Sarge!)  
Please help me make 'em equal letters,  
because the credits  
and I gave a man (the army can help  
you Gosnell!)  
my word  
and heavy things I like to lift  
(wide eyes and round, round face)"

(Attention! Attention  
In the compound!)

(Back home,  
where darkness comes at night,  
instead of so much glaring light,  
and numbers don't equal letters).

-- J. Bennett, Jr.

Muenchen, Deutchland