

feeling envious of and sorry for Billy Wheeler,
who had to read the exercise out loud in class.

The funniest word that all of us had discovered
was shittim.

I can't remember what it means now, and while writing
this poem

I have tried to find it, unsuccessfully,
in my new Penguin English Dictionary.

Which brings me to my subject, my new dictionary.
It has the words we looked for that were never there.
Dramatic Breakthrough in Lexicography -- I can imagine
some pedant pronouncing,
while smacking his lips over cunt.
But these words must be less exciting for kids nowadays
when even a dictionary has them,
and if they read modern poetry they're well used
to seeing them all without even asterisks.

My new dictionary seems to have all of the four-letter
words,
and the curious thing is I came across them by chance
without even bothering to look;
and I don't know whether I'm glad they're included or not,
as there goes still another link with my childhood.
The one consolation is the funny definition of fuck
which applies the word to males only: "(of males)."
Now what do you make of the bloke who wrote that definition?
What do you suppose his wife is doing while he fucks her,
having intimate carnal knowledge of her husband?

-- Knute Skinner

Kilshanny, Co. Clare, Ireland

Why Some People Write:

Rabbits, Women

1

Suffering from an attack at nineteen
of wisdom, I began collecting poems,
initially, poems about the poor,
or poems for peace, love, or exposing.

2

After I accidentally drove
over a rabbit on the way home
from a dance, I began
collecting poems about killing

things with cars: deer, purple
ducks, a cow in Indiana, a row
of skunks, the ghost of Dido
in a dark fog.

3

Finally I forgot the rabbit,
began to read poems
about women, read them
as others read
Playboy; poems about
Female poets, about
female parts, about coeds
in a union of students.
I even added a few
artistic nudes to my desires,
but they never quite stacked
up against my poems.

4

I didn't forget the women poems,
but I was forever losing them,
soiling them, finding them
behind the toilet, stuck on
the bottom of my bathtub,
open on my office desk; so,
I decided to collect poems
I didn't understand.

5

Consequently I've cancelled
Harper's, Saturday Review,
and N.Y.R.B., and now subscribe
(not a single one run
by a university)
to twenty-seven
little magazines.
Not much, but better
than nothing. Therefore,
I have become
a poet.

December on the Floor

If one says absurd or sexy things
he might become successful
as a poet. Last week I
made love to the Queen's butter-
fly (note line break)
but the monarch didn't
like it;

but if one
says he is sitting
at his mother-in-law's
eating a swiss cheese