

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