

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.

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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

sandwich and beer
reading Wormwood
thinking about Roland
and Mary Duerksen, about
Hugh Fox's unpublished book
on Bukowski, the poem fails;
but if he says there is
a girl sitting here
with a candy cigarette
in her secret parts
perhaps interest revives
and the ground is laid
for something philosophical.

-- James Tipton

East Lansing, Michigan

The Closer Sky

My son condensed
the solar system
in his head. Squeezing
space with his hand
he drew it to scale.

Finding the front
lawn too small
he plotted out
the pasture, placing
the sun by the creek.

He paced nine
million miles
at a stride and stooped
to fix Mercury
and Venus in orbit,

altered his line of
direction to avoid
whirling the Earth
near the edge of the manure
pile by the shed.

He spun Saturn
at the fence and slid
through wire
stepping over
dust rings,
and measured and marked
his meteoric flight
three billion
six hundred
thousand miles

out to Pluto
then rotated the last
planet by the road.
At the edge of the woods
he stood and studied
the closer sky.
Behind the fence
the cow and I
blinked our eyes
in static wonder.