Hockey Poem

The goalie—sixties and fit, his graying mustache leapt as he spoke—said, No fucking talk about books here, to two defensemen breaking down a novel. The room—we were cinching shoulder pads, grabbing helmets—roared. If you haven’t been in this locker room

here follows the list of subjects allowed: sex lives (with detail), deer or moose hunting, barrooms, and hockey—kids, adult, professional, pond, even women’s. We’re twenty-first century hockey players, I said, and then, I read this wonderful poem the other day. We roared again. I wasn’t kidding but wanted the roar. Keep your fucking medals for reading poems or writing them—someday I’ll deke that goalie—catlike at six am on a Thursday,

swiveling, kicking out puck after puck—I’ll crush a body, sprint the boards and swing in front of him, show him the forehand twitch and switch and slip puck into net

and then I’ll deliver lines on a man who finds and kisses his brother, make his heart leap and flutter in the way he thought could never happen outside this brutal, beautiful game.