

---

# Pro Rege

---

Volume 39  
Number 2 *Fine Arts Issue 2010*

Article 4

---

December 2010

## After Getting the Mail

Howard Schaap  
*Dordt College*, [howard.schaap@dordt.edu](mailto:howard.schaap@dordt.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro\\_rege](http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege)

 Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Schaap, Howard (2010) "After Getting the Mail," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 39: No. 2, 5.  
Available at: [http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro\\_rege/vol39/iss2/4](http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol39/iss2/4)

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact [ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu](mailto:ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu).



A quarterly faculty publication of  
Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa

## After Getting the Mail

---

*Howard Schaap*

We approach the house at the elbow-bend of the one-way,  
the boys in the steel-spoked stroller and me pushing.  
The house lies vacant now at noon on a fall weekday,  
the half-closed blinds are a skeptic's eyes, their  
glasses reflecting what one son dubs "the burning trees";  
one door is shut halfway, the cement drive is pocked  
and vacant, the last puddles from last night's rain  
empty into atmosphere's thirsty throat. We turn, pass  
a pile of leaves, raked but left for dead, and an inert  
trampoline, black mat sprung tightly to its metal frame.

"That's Jay's house," one son says. "He's my friend. He's at school."

Simple sentences all. I'm stuck on "He's my friend":  
the shortest distance between two points, a declaration  
of place in the cosmos, the universe turned from mighty stranger  
into neighborhood where doors are left half open at midday  
and life is paused unafraid while folks are away. I know they  
know this older boy only by name, only by the simplest of run-ins  
and yells-out as we pass: "Hi, Jay." Yet he's named: They know it,  
they call it, and he responds to it. And were he trouncing  
the leaves now or launching spaceward on the black tramp  
they would call his name, "Jay, friend," and continue on their way,

happy to be a part of this universe home.