
Pro Rege

Volume 34
Number 2 *Fine Arts Issue 2005*

Article 7

December 2005

Alien Species

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Recommended Citation

Van Gilst, Lorna (2005) "Alien Species," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 34: No. 2, 13.
Available at: http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol34/iss2/7

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

Alien Species

Lorna Van Gilst

My sandals sift the dust
in *Calle Junin*
and dodge a three-wheeled lorry
that takes the middle of the road.

I edge along
the narrow ditch
and cut between
the morning talk
of two sun-warming women,
dos mujeres neighboring
across the street
from open doors.
A child stumbles
toward a sleeping dog,
its paws outstretched.
“*No, niño, no . . .*”
Then suddenly the Spanish stops—
I feel the eyes that trace
my shadow in the dust.

The silence holds—

And then, one word:

Americano

¡Si!

They wait.
Silent now.

I sidle on . . .

a monster
in a sea of dust.