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Half-Hearted Semi-Vegetarian Meditates on Bread

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***The Half-Hearted Semi-Vegetarian Meditates on Bread**

by John Van Rys

Holes. You're all holes.
And man can not live on holes
alone.

You're a springy sponge resisting
solidity, creamy crumbs your only flesh,
enclosed by a crust tanned smooth and cool
like my old wallet. You're both empty.

Consider. The grain that grew in the field
grew yeastily warm in you but could have grown
fat in the cow. The cow's flesh is grain,
like the leaf's green is sun, and the sun shines
alike on the cow and the grain. To wit,

Give me my pound of flesh!

**Published in 1993 edition of Lyrical Iowa*

Debits and Credits

by John Van Rys

Check book unbalanced, the tight rope tipped,
I'm net-less, arrearred. Debits debilitate
my pate while feeble credits fascinate,
quaint in their thinness, whipped and tight-lipped.
Bills flood high as Niagara, must be ripped
open or flipped dripping in the can. "Late
again, please pay the usual usurious rate
NOW." Just stamp AMOUNT OWING on my crypt.

How do I sum my check book's inked columns
with the Sermon on the Mount? The answer
slips between my fingers—water, coins, grain.
This alone remains: the scales of my clumsy
sums, life balanced on a breath against a viper—
the wily serpent coiled, brooding in my brain.