
Pro Rege

Volume 36
Number 2 *Fine Arts Issue 2007*

Article 21

December 2007

Mixed Blood

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Recommended Citation

Vanden Bosch, Mike (2007) "Mixed Blood," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 36: No. 2, 33.
Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol36/iss2/21

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Mixed Blood

Mike Vanden Bosch

A bitch gives birth to you in a ditch, Sport, but you
become our watchdog against evil. Born from a
lineage of strays—collies, shepherds, and mixes—
you grow mis-matched jaws—a wolf top jaw and

a terrier lower jaw. Though you can't mince mice,
your jaws can crunch a rat's squeal. You growl at ghosts
we don't hear and at scents we can't sniff. Nightly
you take our foes as your foes, assail fallen angels

on low flights and wag welcomes to friends before
we put out a hand. We trust you like a mother so
we don't leash your love. But one moonless night
the smell of sheep in the wind whets your lust

for blood. Next morning you hobble at your hutch,
back leg busted by a bullet. Dad sees only evil:
"He's been at Pete's lambs—shoot him again," but
no-one can shoot lust in the face when eyes

beg save me. Instead ricocheted grace in human
hearts helps you hobble with us on our westward
trek, barking evil itches backward to the ditch,
bleeding paw dangling like sin on a thread of skin.