
Pro Rege

Volume 33
Number 2 *Fine Arts Issue 2004*

Article 9

December 2004

Sending

Luke Schelhaas

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Recommended Citation

Schelhaas, Luke (2004) "Sending," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 33: No. 2, 14.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol33/iss2/9

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Sending

Luke Schelhaas

Every summer I watch seedpods skitter down the sky:
little kamikazes bailing out of crash-course trees,
packing all they'll ever need to grow except for ground.

Maples dazzle their seed silly.

A dry sheath holds them to their branches
'til a chance wind cuts them free. They don't know what they're for
until they're flung. A single-prop sail steers them, a rudder of a
ribbed green fin. They flip out and flutter down.
Blown, they go blindly, unbound and slung.
Sent in search of earth, they sound out ground.

Few get there. Those that do get mowed.
It's like that famous parable: They all get *down*, but
some fall on lawn chairs and some drown in birdbaths; some plug up
gutters or drift through doorways and lodge in garages.
Some get as far as gardens and grow—as good as weeds there—
and are uprooted.

How many sapling maple trees are made in a season of flying seeds?
Few, I think. None in my neighborhood. Here we have
as many trees as we need; we like to keep their numbers down.

But find yourself a forest and this prolific spending,
this sending, this oft-shedding nature has a wind and a way,
and somehow the world gets by: seeds find soil,
new trees shoot roots and grow.

I've seen this same wind course over dandelions cornered in a cut field:
catch 'em gray and seeds go flying; a city park blows yellow in a day.

* * *

A prayer ends it, and then *amen*:
May the Wind that is Spirit and the Way, which is our Lord,
move like the quiet voice of God into our midst,
move us into the world in droves,
move the world into eternity whole:

Just a puff and a spray of gray, a gust and whirligig seedpods sailing,
A forest and field of new things made,
none failing.

“Sending” won second prize in the 1996 Conference on Christianity and Literature annual Student Writing Contest when Luke Schelhaas was a senior at Dordt College.