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## Visitant

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# The Visitant

Mike Vanden Bosch

I step off the schoolbus and see him digging dirt  
in our stubble. A badger, I think, remembering my  
cousin's stuffed badger trophy. I run for Dad's  
410 shotgun—this badger will be my bounty as I

tell jealous pals at school tomorrow: "I grabbed  
dad's shotgun, popped in a shell, waited for him  
to back out of his hole—then one shot and it  
was all over—nailed him in the chest—one shot."

But as I cross the fence, the badger backs out, sees  
me, and waddles off through oats stubble. I shoot,  
winging him—a wound I can't let go. I chase, cursing  
my useless single-shot 410, fearing I'll lose him, but

he is dragging his hind leg, me three steps behind  
when he turns on me, baring his teeth as if to say,  
"Come and get me, biped. With my fangs, I'll take  
blood for blood." I step back, swap my gun for a

club to attack the bleeding beast. Her eyes cry for  
reason: "Could you not share one square foot of  
your farm with me and my pups?" Her question burns  
and my bullet won't stop it. I bury my trophy in mud.

*\*This poem was published in the 2001 issue of Lyrical Iowa.*