
Pro Rege

Volume 27
Number 2 Arts Issue 1998

Article 10

December 1998

Worldview

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Recommended Citation

Van Gilst, Lorna (1998) "Worldview," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 27: No. 2, 12.

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Worldview

Lorna Van Gilst

People who live at bird level
view the world by leaning out
and looking down
over ledges that extend
and redefine their purchased space,
catching street sounds—jointly owned—
that rise and waft,
catching the shapes of the neighborhood socks and underwear
drying in windows six levels up, or sixteen,
catching bits of birdseed and pin feathers
from the parrot on the ledge above;
people stacked in layers—
known by the windows
from which they lean and gaze.

People who live at ground level
view the world from the roots up—
planting, mowing, fastening their lives
to parcels of soil,
peering discreetly at their neighbors
from curtains pulled slightly back
or glancing out the kitchen window
while washing dishes at the sink,
noting what child's bigwheels roll off the sidewalk
and into the flowerbed,
whose dog noses into the grass,
whose children press their faces into the screen door
on summer afternoons.