
Pro Rege

Volume 25
Number 2 *Arts Issue*

Article 15

December 1996

Cave Living

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Recommended Citation

Van Rys, John (1996) "Cave Living," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 25: No. 2, 14.

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Cave Living

John Van Rys

Nightly in my panelled, trimmed,
and papered basement, the spiders and I
stumble upon each other, set traps
in the way of living things—seeking food
for thought in the damp dark.

My feet I keep up off the cracked concrete,
padded and plush with earth-
toned broadloom. I lean far back, at ease
in my lazyboy, then kill the brutes
by smashing them with books.

Last night one stumbled
over me. She,
genuinely startled, raced,
Arachnid Olympian, into
the corner, hugging
the baseboard, seeking
oneness with brown-dyed carpet
fibers and plastic-grained wood.

Her eight-pistoned speed was
exquisite. As was the eight-legged fear
keeping pace in my pulse.

I caressed her with Darwin,
coaxed her into the open with Jung,
but she didn't buy
what I was selling,
clung to the baseboard,
believing she was safe.

Because I too trust
I am wedged safe in my den,
hugging baseboards faithfully, I didn't
kill her, last night.