
Pro Rege

Volume 23
Number 2 *Arts Issue*

Article 4

December 1994

To Arnold S., the man who sees things

Mike Vanden Bosch
Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vanden Bosch, Mike (1994) "To Arnold S., the man who sees things," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 23: No. 2, 4.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol23/iss2/4

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

To Arnold S., the man who sees things*

by Mike Vanden Bosch

A dozen men and boys sprawl in the corn crib alley,
the rain stalling their threshing, when the mailman
brings a *Sears and Roebuck Catalogue* into the lull.
I, at thirteen, see you, forty-ish Arnold, turn pages,
then stop to leer at women's panties.

Country joker, you play to the lolling sprawlers.
"Look, Sam," you say to the oldest, my father,
"Panties with three snaps across the crotch.
We had to work for ours, didn't we, Sam."
Raucous laughter from the men and boys,

but I barely grin, hearing the joke through
dad's deacon ears as he has through mine.
Mom in white wedding dress steps through my mind.
I peek for dad's eyes—he is no prude,
but his downward glance haunts the laughter.

Is he seeing his first wife—dead from flu at twenty
and himself widower with a two-year-old daughter?
Or his second wife, my mother, who often told us:
"Two years, knees on wood, I prayed, 'God, move shy Sam
on the next farm to ask me to be his wife' "?

Or my sisters, girls of fifteen and sixteen,
ducking down, down into dark backseats
where country jokers lord it over small spaces
and toy with daughters, snakes, and snaps?

Ah Joker, how you slay the men and boys with myth.

*A shorter version of this poem appeared in the 1994 *Lyrical Iowa*.