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# Pro Rege

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Volume 22  
Number 2 *Arts Issue*

Article 8

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December 1993

## Debits and Credits

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### Recommended Citation

Van Rys, John (1993) "Debits and Credits," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 22: No. 2, 9.  
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# **\*The Half-Hearted Semi-Vegetarian Meditates on Bread**

by John Van Rys

Holes. You're all holes.  
And man can not live on holes  
alone.

You're a springy sponge resisting  
solidity, creamy crumbs your only flesh,  
enclosed by a crust tanned smooth and cool  
like my old wallet. You're both empty.

Consider. The grain that grew in the field  
grew yeastily warm in you but could have grown  
fat in the cow. The cow's flesh is grain,  
like the leaf's green is sun, and the sun shines  
alike on the cow and the grain. To wit,

Give me my pound of flesh!

*\*Published in 1993 edition of Lyrical Iowa*

## **Debits and Credits**

by John Van Rys

Check book unbalanced, the tight rope tipped,  
I'm net-less, arrearred. Debits debilitate  
my pate while feeble credits fascinate,  
quaint in their thinness, whipped and tight-lipped.  
Bills flood high as Niagara, must be ripped  
open or flipped dripping in the can. "Late  
again, please pay the usual usurious rate  
NOW." Just stamp AMOUNT OWING on my crypt.

How do I sum my check book's inked columns  
with the Sermon on the Mount? The answer  
slips between my fingers—water, coins, grain.  
This alone remains: the scales of my clumsy  
sums, life balanced on a breath against a viper—  
the wily serpent coiled, brooding in my brain.