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# Pro Rege

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Volume 20  
Number 2 *Arts Issue*

Article 5

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December 1991

## Melons in the Seed

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### Recommended Citation

Schelhaas, David (1991) "Melons in the Seed," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 20: No. 2, 4 - 5.

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# The Melons in the Seed

by David Schelhaas

On that cool spring day  
when I took from my hand  
Those small, flat seeds  
And placed them in the soil,  
Who could have imagined  
These seven fat striped beauties?

Now, smiling down stupidly  
At this wedge of watermelon  
Smiling back crookedly at me,  
Juice running down my chin,  
I need to know  
If the seed knew all along  
How it would grow,  
Or if, perhaps, it just played a hunch,  
Made a snap decision  
When its sap began to flow.

Did the seed say  
(if seeds indeed could talk),  
I think I wanna be a watermelon  
Ripe and juicy watermelon  
Not a melancholy rutabaga  
Or a narrow-minded cuke  
But a jolly watermelon,  
Round and bawdy, gushy, gaudy watermelon  
Is what I wanna be?

Then did it muster all  
Its energy and wit to slowly grow  
These seven hymns to sweetness and delight?

Did it grab that hazy pink  
At random from the sky?  
Did it measure out the sugar  
It could hold and still not cloy?

Did it plan the sharp, melodic crack  
When knife first bites,  
The eager leap with which the melon  
Opens to the taste when ripe?

Did all this come by whim or chance,  
A hunch and nothing more?  
Or did the seed already know its mission  
When I dropped it in the soil?

Did some strictly coded DNA  
Insist that it must be  
A watermelon, ripe and juicy,  
Round and bawdy, gushy, gaudy watermelon  
And that's all that it could be?

And if that's so  
Then I must know  
Who planted that genetic code  
Inside the seed I planted in the cold  
Spring soil.

For surely gradual accretion  
Of component parts, across the centuries  
Of seed time and of harvest  
Cannot explain the mystery of the melons in the seed.

In my heart I know the only hand  
That's fine enough to code that little seed  
Is the only hand that's large enough  
To hold the wide, wide world.

But my heart cannot inform my head,  
The mystery still stands.  
I sit here silent, juice on my face,  
With folded, sticky watermelon hands.