

---

# Pro Rege

---

---

Volume 31  
Number 2 *Fine Arts Issue* 2002

Article 16

---

December 2002

## Animal Rites

Mike Vanden Bosch  
*Dordt College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro\\_rege](https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege)



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Vanden Bosch, Mike (2002) "Animal Rites," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 31: No. 2, 29.  
Available at: [https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro\\_rege/vol31/iss2/16](https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol31/iss2/16)

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

# Animal Rites

Mike Vanden Bosch

Home from the cavalry, he backs into farming. Now,  
low on oats, out of corn, he sees an ad: "Old nags  
for sale: cheap." Ah, a way to turn horse meat  
into pork and gold, he thinks, but then he feels

eerily crippled by scruples. He wouldn't have given—  
had he had one—a kingdom for a horse, but still he  
waits to ring the number till soft-heart mom is out—  
to her horses were horses—animals—neighbors

like Bell and Star who'd sweat years for him. He  
trucks the nags home in twilight, tight-lipped,  
wanting no help unloading. He stalls seven days,  
feeding oats to them like old pets. On the eighth

day he halts the silver, leads her to the hogs, and  
shoots it before he can change his mind. A 4-10 slug  
in the forehead drops her like a sling of hay. He can't  
bear to look: mane in the mud, nostril flared, blue

eye blank. He turns to leave, but he looks back to see  
hog hooves stomp silver into mud. With hyena humor,  
ten sows, jowls bloody, exult at huge horse rumps  
like avenging dogs lapping up the blood of Jezebel.

"Animal Rites" appeared in the 2002 edition of *Lyrical Iowa*.