
Pro Rege

Volume 22
Number 2 *Arts Issue*

Article 4

December 1993

Quincy

David Schelhaas
Dordt College

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



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schelhaas, David (1993) "Quincy," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 22: No. 2, 6.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol22/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.

Quincy

by David Schelhaas

Not content
with having been the president,
John Quincy Adams went
back to work, a resident
of the House of Representatives.
Each day Old Eloquent
rose at five, the day still night,
to read the Word, his flickering light
a candle. An ice cold sponge bath or Potomac swim
followed by the writing of a sonnet or a hymn
to limber up that fertile attic mind
prepared him for the task (that God designed)
of battle with the South. For years they tried
to gag him with the rules, but he applied
keen wit and scathing tongue as teary-eyed
he fought to free the land from slavery's blight.
And if the session went into the night,
he did not leave the floor to his attackers
(His evening meal some water and three crackers)
but battled on.
When day was gone and work was done,
he went to bed.
But before he slept each night he folded hands and said
(Old Eloquent; past president, who published books of poetry
and gave impassioned speeches on the nation's bigotry):
"Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray thee Lord my soul to keep
If I should die before I wake
I pray thee Lord my soul to take.
All this I ask for Jesus sake. Amen."
He'd said it every night since childhood;
He said it loud and clear as a child would.

John Quincy Adams, ninth president,
diplomat, congressman and most eloquent
spokesman for Abolition—heaven sent.
At sixty-nine he finally was recalled and graciously he went,
saying, "This is the last of earth,
I am content."