

On the life of rhinos: Written into the simple stars



Leave them quiet repose
beside their place of thorn
dung and dragon fly
allow them still shade beneath
the flame-blown trees
whilst spiders, beetles, worms and tortoises
spin, bore, creep, explore...

let their rock-ribbed outlines old as the world
be one with its rugged rim and wide ridged ranges
allow them to forklift a wall of turf
tread apart the clods
plough beyond the frontiers
to wade in waters where coronets of lily weed cap
the brows of drowsing hippos
let their eyes gleam yellow as they dream over pools
reflecting fever trees, algae and mimosa

permit! for rhino eyes have over the aeons
mirrored trellis works of track-forged trails
where migratory hordes encoded
to creep the earth's seams
find their way to warmth

midst thorn, hook and barb
grant that their ductile hides and vulnerable horns
remain whole and unhurt
let the descending star-shoots fill the streams
where the herds gather
and phosphorescent waters
dribble from their muzzles as they slurp

enable a night pricked to life by African ardour
its innominate stars like beams glanced off knife tips
to describe a trapezium over the huddle
of heads, backs and hinds of a hundred rhinos.



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