

# 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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**Author:** Patricia G. Maritz<sup>1</sup>

**Affiliation:** <sup>1</sup>Department of Philosophy, University of Zululand, South Africa

**Corresponding author:** Patricia Maritz, patricia.maritz@gmail.com

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