



How To DRAW A RHINOCEROS

poems Kate
Sutherland

FIRST EDITION

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A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE RHINOCEROS

A nose-horned beast
strange and never seen in our country
a very wonderful creature
entirely different from what we fancied

In its fifth month, not much bigger than a large dog
At two years, no taller than a young heifer
but broader, thicker, jutting out at the sides
like a cow with calf
Large as a horse, not much larger
than the bounding oryx, bigger than a bull
Equal to an elephant in length but
lower to the ground. Like a wild boar
in outward form and proportion, especially its mouth
A mouth not unlike the proboscis of an elephant
the underlip like that of an ox, the upper like that of a horse
tongue soft and smooth as a dog's
Piglike head, eyes the shape of a hog's, ears like a donkey's
Skin the colour of an elephant's, two girdles hanging down
like dragons' wings

Dark red head, blue eyes, white body
On its back, dense spots showing darkly
purple spots upon a yellow ground
Red hairs on its forehead, yellowish brows
Skin the colour of boxwood:
mouse grey, grey brown, blackish brown
dirty brown, dark brown, dark ash
the colour of a toad
the colour of a speckled turtle

It fears neither the claws of the tiger
nor the weapons of the huntsman
its hide impervious to darts
so thick as to be impenetrable by a Japanese dagger

Lead musket balls flatten on impact
It does not feel the sting of flies
Dry, hard skin, four fingers thick
studded with scales, like a coat of mail, loricated like armour
covered in calluses resembling clothes buttons
Extravagant skin, loose like so much coach leather
lying upon the body in folds. Between the folds
smooth and soft as silk

The horn stands upon the nose of the animal
as upon a hill, rises dread and sharp
as hard as iron, a little curved up
sometimes three-and-a-half feet long
The base is purest white, the sharp point
flaming crimson, the middle black
The colour of the horn is various:
black, white, sometimes ash-coloured
Commonly these horns are brown or olive-coloured
yet some are grey and even white

There is another horn not upon the nose
but upon the withers

Small piercing eyes, red eyes
dull sleepy eyes
that seldom open completely
eyes in the very centre of the cheeks
eyes placed as low down as the jaws
eyes so small placed so low and so obliquely
they have little vivacity and motion
eyes that only see sideways
eyes that only see straight ahead

Teeth broad and deep in its throat
teeth so sharp, they cut straw and tree branches
like a pair of scissors
two strong incisive teeth to each jaw

twenty-four smaller teeth
six on each side of each jaw

It will kill with licking
and by the roughness of its tongue
lay bare the bones
No animal near its size has so soft a tongue
it feels like passing the hand over velvet

Strong legs as big around as a man's waist
massive legs terminating in large feet
each foot divided into three great claws

Sprouting from its slender inconsiderable tail
black shining hairs a foot long
the thickness of shoemaker's thread
not round like other hair but flattish
like little pieces of whalebone

All the breed are males
and a female is never seen
The penis is an extraordinary shape
The female is the same in all respects
except the sex. The female has two teats
and an udder. The female brings forth
but one young. The male horn is harder
and sharper than the female's
The male has a small extra horn
on its back right shoulder

It never attacks men unless provoked
but then becomes formidable
If it meets a man in a red coat, it will rush him
and throw him over its head with such violence
the fall alone is fatal

It can reach an age of a hundred years
It is probable that it lives as a man, seventy or eighty years
It seldom lives beyond twenty

No creature that pursues it can overtake it
It falls asleep before virgins and then
can easily be taken and carried away
Attack it during hot weather when it is lying in the marsh
Cover a pit with green branches on the path
from the forest to the riverside
Destroy the old ones with firearms
If there happens to be a cub
seize and tame it
Take it by gunfire

HOW TO DRAW A RHINOCEROS

Begin with an elephant. Shorten the legs and the nose, pin back the ears
To cement the distinction, assert eternal enmity between the animals

Compare to:

cow calf bull ox
oryx buffalo camel
horse donkey goat lamb
lynx lion
pig hog boar sow swine
dog rabbit mouse
eagle duck
tortoise turtle toad
dragon elephant
overturned coach
mountain

Distinguish from:

fox
tiger
elephant
hippopotamus
unicorn

Use a woolly rhinoceros skull to sculpt a dragon's head

Delete all rhinoceros references from the Bible
Replace with unicorns

Add a dorsal horn and a suit of armour

Incorporate its image into an apothecary's coat of arms

Put a jaunty human skeleton in front
and one behind

Sketch a front view, a back view, a side view. Inset details
of horn, hoofs, ears, nose, tail, each of its component parts

Liken its genitalia to botanical specimens with Latin names:
e.g., *Digitalis floribus purpureis*, *Aristolochia floribus purpureis*, &c

Picture it grazing placidly in the foreground, while a fearsome compatriot
gores an elephant in the background

Position it on an island under a palm tree
in a jungle draped with vines
in a marsh rolling in mud
next to a river
in a desert
on a cliff edge

Depict it stalked by an Indian swordsman, or African tribesmen
armed with bows and arrows. Don't be afraid to mix and match

Confuse its armour with an armadillo's and situate it in the Americas

Render it with a ring through its nose, being led by a chain
or with its legs shackled

Paint it lying on its side, feeding in its pen
preening before an audience. Divest it of its horn
Mask the audience. Make *it* realistic
the audience fantastical

Sculpt it from marble. Cast it in bronze. Model it in porcelain
Perch a turbaned Turk on its back
Place a robed mandarin cross-legged at its feet
Put a clock in its belly

Enamel it on a serving plate

Engrave its likeness on a medal, a series of medals
suitable for collecting

Emblazon it together with a sailor on a banner
the sailor raising a glass of beer
in a toast: *Bon voyage!*