

## Rhinoceros

He's looking down—a medieval machine  
staring from some battlement—calmer than I would be  
with a chain under my belly  
and a crane creaking me two-stories up.

Perhaps he thinks he's floating  
and that's why he cocks his leathery head  
past the men in their truck to see  
with his poor eyes some river

where he can hide his timid shoulders  
and bluff the fish before retreating  
from their curious scales. Or maybe  
his new height obliterates it all

and he doesn't think of the armored plates,  
the shifting, of the horn filed down  
on a cage wall, of the weight tightening  
around his flanks, of the machine's lowering—

a jay wing blue against his muzzle  
as he hangs like a baffled god  
over the rig's muddy exhaust,  
straining to see with a single eye.

*Linda Ramey*