

*May Day*

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PENGUIN



POETS



## A RHINOCEROS AT THE PRAGUE ZOO

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*While ducks and swans paddled placidly on the Vltava's rushing waters, penguins, storks and gorillas were evacuated from the Prague Zoo, and a crane was used to lift two rhinoceros to high ground. But one turned violent and had to be killed, and keepers had to shoot a 35-year-old Indian elephant named Kadir as water rose to his ears and he refused to move to high ground.*

*The New York Times, August 14, 2002*

A blindfolded rhinoceros  
is being lifted  
out of the water.

It is important he doesn't see  
what is going on.

Please pass it on:

please pass along  
his blindfold  
so we can be lifted, too.

Take us slowly from the flood,  
the rising water  
that threatens to wash  
everything away.

The world keeps unraveling,  
the riverbank  
dissolving,  
the blood flowing,

and the rhinoceros  
had better keep  
that blindfold on

because he is dangerous  
if he sees what is dangerous.

Unlike a unicorn  
he is heavy and  
clumsy and dumb.

He will crush someone  
with his fear,  
he will tear us apart  
if he panics.

Raise him  
gently,  
lower him  
gently  
into a meadow  
of cool waters.

Then pass along  
the blindfold  
so we can be lifted, too.

Raise us  
out of the muck  
onto a bed of grass,

pass the bright bandana  
covering his eyes,  
a blanket  
of surrender,  
a curtain of bliss:

a checkered napkin  
taken from a tavern

or a chessboard  
seen  
from above.

## THE OTHER RHINOCEROS

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Actually, there were two  
It is spelled the same in the singular  
Or the plural

Now there is one

What is the plural of flood  
Does more water make it plural  
No, only more water in more places

A flood  
A big flood  
A great flood

Water  
The water  
The waters rising

And no ark  
No dove  
No branch of an olive

Live  
Olive tree  
Live

O live  
Olive  
O live