

If the occidental  
prototype  
is Dürer's little  
Indian,  
sheathed as if  
by a Renaissance  
armourer (you  
can all but see  
the rivets  
on the plates) then  
we are at a multiple  
loss. How can we  
see anything so  
innocent ever  
again? We rue  
extinction  
for its abrupt  
and final un-  
spooling of DNA,  
but there's a kind  
of shunt in  
curiosity too:  
never again

will we see it  
anew. It will go  
into the twilight  
of curiosities,  
the gloom where  
dodo and auk  
moult to a dust.  
Dust to dust.  
Yet remember  
crossing to Paterson  
on the public road  
and suddening on  
a mother and infant  
in the scurf scrub-  
land. Everyone  
dotes on the obvious  
horn, but it is  
so plainly antic  
phallic. Recall  
instead how  
bandy-legged  
they are, and their  
differentially

evolved lips;  
and there, in that  
degraded thicket  
under the low  
clout of the sky  
out east, how  
the infant orbited  
its massive maternity.  
You were there  
with me then,  
and now that's  
extinct, yet  
I'm writing you  
this drizzle of words,  
pepper-milled  
horn of compact  
hair. I think lust  
drove us forward  
before those  
all-but-last  
rhinoceros  
turned for the  
occluding

xeric thicket, there  
to become  
the slenderest  
hope of something  
enduring.  
Monumental,  
let's say, got up  
on the fifth  
day, worked over  
by Dürer and Kipling:  
after all  
deserving their cud,  
milk, shadow  
and respite. To you  
I send this  
fond glance  
in the rear-view  
as we go forward  
into the general  
catastrophe.

Peter Anderson



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2018-2026