

**The Cure**

The neighborhood rhino took a liking  
to me. Met me at the gate each morning,  
by the bus stop after work, ambled  
along as I tended my daily chores.  
She was old, for a rhino, childless,  
cast out, rumor was, by the local herd  
for some unknown offense, never again  
to roam her ancestral plains. I didn't  
mind the attention, Linda being in  
the final throes of her disease, in fact  
I rather liked it, how she huffed until  
I scratched behind her ear, her horn, until  
I plucked the ticks from where she couldn't reach.  
When the poachers got her I slept for days  
on the porch with my gun. As if they might  
come back, as if they might come back for me.  
As if I too were made of the cure, and all  
I needed was to be crushed into it.