AFRICA'S BIG FIVE

By Wayne Visser

I. LION

Expectant black to watchful grey
Then bleeding streaks of red

A regal roar to break the day -
The pride has killed and fed
A shaggy mane in silhouette
Content to strut and purr

Across the plains of Africa
The wild and wary stir

II. LEOPARD

Pink-purple bruises blotch the sky
Then heal to soothing blue

A veil of leaves, a hunter's eye
Surveys the grassland dew
A dappled form with velvet spots
Outstretched along the branch

Amidst the trees of Africa
The sheltered take their chance

III. RHINOCEROS

Fierce-fiery eye of golden white
Looks down with withering gaze

Half-blinded beasts escape the light
Their shapes a shimmering haze
A horn-cursed head dips low to charge -
Vain bid to stay alive

Great sanctuaries of Africa
Fight battles to survive

IV. BUFFALO

Puce-pregnant clouds to thunder storm
Then swathes of orange blush

A jostling mass of muscled form -
The knot becomes a crush
A head-flick scoop on spear-sharp horns
Inflicts a fatal blow

Migrating herds of Africa
Maintain the ebb and flow

V. ELEPHANT

Dry-dusty sand to muddy pool
Then slurp and splash and spray

A trumpet squeal of blissful cool -
The herd's come out to play
A flap of ears, a trunk raised high -
It's time to take roll-call

Wild watering holes of Africa
Quench creatures great and small

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