Chimerical, the rhinoceros egret, its keratin dehorned in South Africa and container-shipped to Vietnam or China where it’s ground by aphrodisiasts and snorted by affluent boneheads,

metamorphs into the hippopotamus egret, the elephant, Cape buffalo, zebra, giraffe, the ostrich, and the camel egret, the deep-domed tortoise, and in the Americas the cow heron or cattle egret.

Ranging like wildfire over the last century, a migration prodded by the transmutation of forests into ranches, the cattle egret writhes and champs and tilts and plods and darts in cursive at grasshoppers.

And where its livestock gets concentrated, decapitated, tenderized, charred, whatever, the *Bubulcus ibis* or cattleman wader, capitalizing on a field without cattle, reinvents itself as the tractor egret

though the unattached bird is emblem enough of the other end of extinction, ignition, when not just its shaggy breeding crest and breast plumage go up in flame but its legs, beak, lores, and irises catch color.