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**THE STEER**

Standing staunchly, sturdy legs grip the firmness of the ground,
Broadset eyes are wary as you keep apart,
watching me feed the Brahmas.
Traced hard and dark in your brief history,
the human smell scatters disjointed visions through your memory dusting your dreams with fear.
Now the sun's welcome rays pour down yellow hot
on sibilant pastures blessed with others of your kind
Rain sodden grasses, spongy underfoot must call some bovine heaven to your mind.
It was not always thus.
Your ragged, rusty coat, once red and white.
The innocence torn forever from your eyes.
Bespeak that other place, that other time.
How did one single steer get here?
How did you escape the veal crate, the rodeo ring, the feed lot, the slaughterer's knife?

Mary Sternberg

*Barry Kent MacKay  
Animal Protection Institute (API)  
Canada*