

This is the Creature (from Possibility of Being)

by Rainer Maria Rilke

This is the creature that had never been.
They never knew it, and yet, none the less,
they loved the way it moved, its suppleness,
its neck, its very gaze, mild and serene.

Not there, because they loved it, it behaved
as though it were.
They always left some space.
And in that clear unpeopled space they saved
it lightly reared its head, with scarce a trace
of not being there.

They fed it, not with corn, but only with the possibility
of being. And that was able to confer
such strength, its brow put forth a horn.
One horn.
Whitely it stole up to a maid — to be
within the silver mirror and in her.