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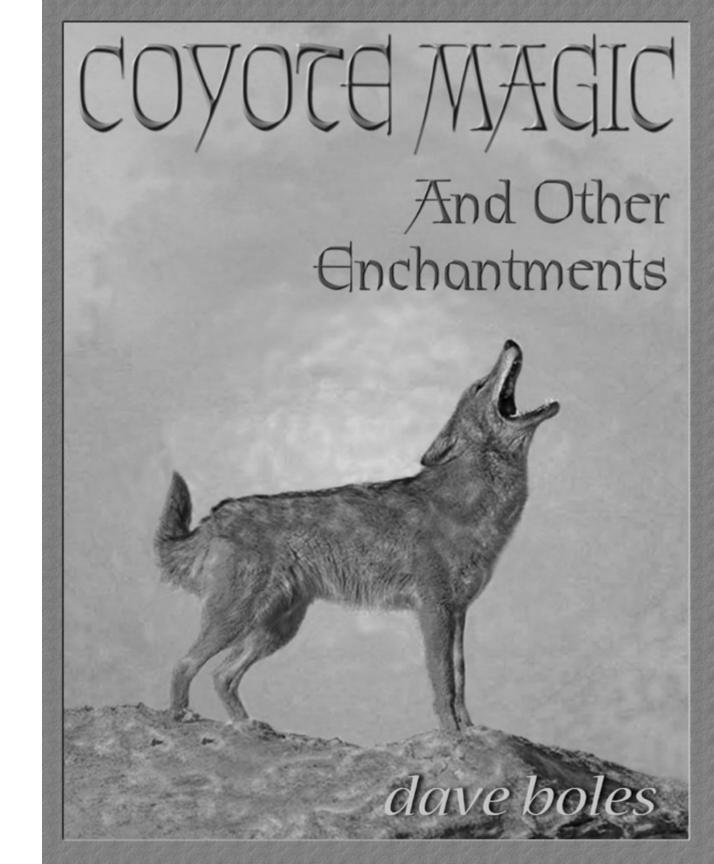
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A Lake House Publication

Cold River Press 15098 Lime Kiln Road Grass Valley, CA 95949 www.coldriverpress.com For the grandchildren;
when all around you tell you
that magic is gone,
listen for coyote's howl
it will help you find your way.



did you dance with the creator while arranging words before you

watching life soar upon the back of time ascending to the light

there is a horizon calling you

free your mind

dive right in

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COYOTE MAGIC

And Other Enchantments



coyote stopped by for some mushroom tea

an excellent idea for a mid-day repast

we poured the water carefully letting the tea steep just right

we laughed the day away with fanciful stories

amidst music from the trees

— COYOTE MAGIC — — —

COYOTE'S MAGIC

~ I ~

the great white egret that lives in the digger pine greeted me as i sat drinking my morning coffee

"coyote sent me with an urgent message"

the egret practically shouted this at me so much so that for a moment i nearly spilled my coffee

"you are to join him by the waterfall at the river creek, he says not to waste any time"

with this, the large bird gracefully ascended to the heavens swooping down on me to see if i was headed out

"tell coyote i will leave when my coffee is finished," i shouted to him

"tell him yourself," he replied indignantly and soared off to the distant horizon

knowing the egret was always polite, as egrets are known to be i took his message to heart and quickly finishing my cup, i headed to the waterfall

coyote was lying near a small pool, lapping the clear water

"it is good to see you did not waste any time"

coyote had a more devilish grin than usual, which said a lot, coupled with the forceful message from the egret i knew something more than a morning meeting was taking place

"have you any plans for the next few days," the trickster inquired,
"are you well enough for a journey"

"i will need time to pack," i told him,
"i will need provisions"

the curious smile my coyote friend wore was adorned this time with an air of urgency

"there is no time for that," he replied, "everything has been taken care of"

with that he darted off, his bushy tail swinging widely creating a nice path in the tall grass

he stopped for a moment, turning to urge me on and with that he darted off again

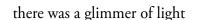
we proceeded in this manner for many miles grass gave way to dirt, then to rocks

soon we were on top of the mountain that overlooks our lake

coyote finally slowed a bit, allowing me to catch up before he quickly jumped into a cave

"come on," he cried out, "they are waiting"

the cave was dark, in fact it was pitch black only a few feet in, but at the end of what seemed a long tunnel



coyote sped towards the light, his feet lightly skipping across the ground

i had never visited this cave before, much less knew of its existence

i stumbled along as best i could and found myself in a large room brightly lit with fireflies and a strange, glowing algae

coyote sat with a submissive posture

three outlines were silhouetted against the far wall

"allow me to introduce grandfather coyote, grandfather bear and great-grandmother turtle"

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coyote rose and told me he would return with mushrooms and greens

he was gone in an instance

~ II ~

coyote's leaving brought to mind the true essence of his trickster nature

a fine mist developed in the cave

the three silhouettes began emerging from the wall their forms taking shape as the mist cleared

"we asked coyote to bring you here so we might better understand the man who speaks our language"

they spoke this to me in unison as their forms became solid

before me was a great bear, a grey-haired coyote, and a massive, aged turtle

"we are known as 'the ancients', there are many stories told of us"

i remembered back to my youth when i would sit at the fire, listening to stories my own ancestors told

stories of a time when animals could talk and humans could listen

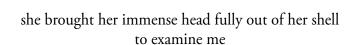
stories of a magical time when all life talked to other lives, both visible and not

i called out to the turtle, "i know the earth is upon your back"

"you are partly correct," she replied

"the world rests upon the backs of four strong elephants whom i in turn support"

"some people know me as Kurma, others Akupāra, i am the one Nanapush sent to the bottom of the ocean so that i would grow until i could hold up the world"



as she did the great bear spoke:

"i am the one the creator sent to see how far great-grandmother turtle had grown and to protect her as she grew"

the old, wise turtle silently nodded her agreement

"i too, went to find the ends of great-grandmother turtle," the old, grey coyote spoke

"i went further than the great-bear could travel"

he spoke in barely a whisper

"when i reached the end of our great land i could only howl back to bear what i had found"

with this the old coyote let out a tremendous howl reverberating throughout the cave with ferocious intensity

"it has been this way for coyote's ever since," he whispered

"we howl to let all know we are still monitoring our land"

i found myself sitting in a lotus position in front of the three though i had no recollection of sitting before them

"as i said, there was a time," great-grandmother turtle continued, "when men could talk to animals, and animals to men "there was great magic in the land and we lived in harmony with one another, taking only what was needed to survive as the creator intended us to do"

the aged turtle rested for a moment, gathering her breath

as she composed herself i took the moment to ask why they had summoned me

"you are the beginning," the great bear answered

"of a new time in men," finished the grey coyote

great-grandmother turtle, having rested enough, continued with her story

"many ages ago men fought with each other killing each other to gain more land, more power for their tribes"

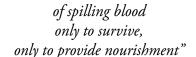
"they violated the rule of all living things by taking more than they needed to survive"

the great turtle rested again as the bear continued,

"the creator removed the ability for men to speak with animals, and animals with men"

the old coyote whispered,

"animals continued to honor the ancient ways



there was a far off sound that grew closer and closer

it was my friend, coyote, returning with mushrooms and greens

"i see you have met the ancestors," he joyfully shouted

he sat next to me, smiling and winking as he did so

"is it time," he asked the ancestors

in unison they nodded their response as great-grandmother turtle affirmed that it was

"we have told him enough for now,"

she spoke directly at coyote

"you may begin"

~ III ~

the cave suddenly grew dark

fireflies had stopped glowing as had the algae

the three forms had gone back to being silhouette's against the wall

a soft silence enveloped me

covote pushed a mixture of fresh greens, assorted mushrooms, and a handful of peyote blooms, towards me

they were all gathered together on a large leaf, mostly dry with just a tiny hint of water mixed in for good measure

"you need to eat a bit more," coyote offered

"but, i have not eaten any at all," i responded

coyote chuckled and swished his bushy tail pushing the leaf forward, "as you wish, my friend,"

i was famished, not having time to pack for our journey

it suddenly hit me that i had not eaten in a while

the greens were quite fine, and the dried mushrooms added an excellent texture to the meal

the peyote blooms, while not what i would call tasty, added outstanding color to the entire mixture

"where did the ancients go," i asked my trickster friend "have they had anything to eat as well"

coyote let out a laugh which ended with a light howl

"the ancients are fine, they send their regards and to tell you they will return in a while to clarify"

> i thought, what was there to clarify it all seemed pretty straight forward

"i am glad to see you are doing well, considering"

a sly smile returned to his lips as he enunciated considering

"i must admit," i told my coyote friend "it was a bit strange having an enormous turtle watching my every move"

"she can be a bit unnerving at first," coyote offered "but you will soon get used to her. she does not see as well as she once did"

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with that thought i watched fireflies light again and the strange algae resuming its faint glow

a fine mist once again formed on the floor of the cave as coyote offered me some water

"drink up, you look parched"

i did indeed feel parched and readily accepted the water downing it in great gulps, feeling the water coursing through my body, igniting an intense awareness within me

once more the silhouettes took on a solid form as great-grandmother turtle began to speak

i nodded my head in affirmation

"animals still talk with men," the great bear offered, "but only a rare few men can understand animals"

"it has been this way since the creator chose to separate us," grandfather coyote whispered

"none of us agreed with the creator," the aged turtle continued,
"but who are we to argue with the creator"

"i still do not understand why the creator separated men and animals from understanding each other," i stated

it felt as if i asked my question from a thousand miles away

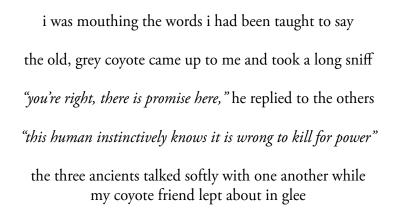
"animals followed the rule of no spill blood," grandfather bear replied,
"only if it was needed for survival. man, on the other hand
would not follow the rule, killing others for no reason
other than to kill"

"surely," i blurted out "you must know that in order to gain power, you sometimes have to conquer your neighbors land"

great-grandmother turtle stretched her neck out once more and eyed me for a long while

"you don't believe this," she scoffed,
"you are merely repeating what your ancestors taught you"

a cleansing light filled me as i realized the great turtle was right, i really did not believe what i said



"didn't i tell you," he offered them,
"this one has promise"

the great bear turned from his friends and looked directly at me "perhaps," he said, as he lifted his enormous paw above my head there was absolute silence in the cave

i was still in a lotus position and smiled at the bear asking

"are you going to strike me, kill me"

"he has no fear," the old coyote spoke

"i do not smell any fear from him, at all"

the great bear lowered his paw and leaned in close

"no, i do not smell fear either," he confirmed

great-grandmother turtle spoke; "then let us proceed"

there was a sensation of falling, of dropping
deep into the earth

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tens of thousands of fireflies exploded around me turning into stars, then distant galaxies as i fell deeper into the earth

> after falling for what seemed forever, yet in an instant all the same, i found myself not looking at a cave but of all the universe

i could see the earth upon the backs of four elephants that stood upon great-grandmother turtle

i saw grandfather bear roaming the turtles back

i heard grandfather coyote's joyous calls from the edge of her immense shell

lights in the galaxies around me flashed with dizzying brilliance and captivating colors speaking to me in hundreds of languages

i could hear their message, but there was no sound their colors passing through me, leaving me with a keen awareness of communication

yet not a sound had been made

as i traveled past the sun it, in turn, yielded to an uncountable number of suns all surrounded by planets

the image of this extended in my mind forever

again i heard a message yet still, there was not a sound

the very fiber of my existence my soul felt in harmony with all i could see

as i looked back upon our planet great-grandmother turtle and her elephants, grandfather bear, grandfather coyote, the planet itself became one

"earth mother"

i felt the presence deep within me

"i am earth mother"

~ IV ~

a celestial voice resonated within the essence of my being

it was neither male nor female, but a mixture of both

i sensed a presence not only around me but surrounding the very core of what i called "me"

the voice opened a glorious sunrise offering me a ray of light in which to ride upon back to the cave

coyote was waiting at the cave entrance eagerly greeting me

"i see you made it through just fine," he exuberantly cried out,
"the ancients are waiting"

he nudged me forward and we both entered the cave though i noticed it was much brighter than before

"did you see earth mother," he eagerly asked,
"did she speak to you"

coyote could barely contain his excitement

we moved quickly through the cave

the ancients were waiting for me though this time they were not apparitions or shadows on the wall

this time, they found form

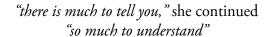
i was greeted by them with enthusiastic shouts of joy

even grandfather coyote looked more lively and less grey

grandfather bear motioned for me to sit before them as i did so, coyote sat next to me

"you have traveled far," great grandmother turtle stated,
"did you learn anything from your journey"

i told her i did, indeed, learn many things



coyote offered me a small biscuit, and some water

"when earth mother spoke to you, what did she say," grandfather coyote inquired

"was the voice you heard that of a woman," grandfather bear asked,
"or was it a man's voice you heard"

the cave took on another appearance

i believed we were far underground but there were roots large, tangled roots, all around us

when i spoke it was as if light coursed through my body exiting my mouth with every sound i made

the large roots danced before me rhythmically moving to the sound i made

coyote was no longer next to me though i remained sitting in a lotus position in front of the ancients

"we are earth mother," i stated

"all of us, here and now, past and present are earth mother"

"that is correct," the aged turtle nodded with agreement

i could feel light coursing through me as i spoke

"it does not matter if we are man, or woman, human or beast, we are all earth mother"

"you have learned much," the great bear roared, "few come to this understanding"

"did earth mother leave you with," the old turtle began

"any other thoughts," questioned grandfather coyote

i thought back to gliding back to the planet on a sunbeam as sublime as any celestial god

instinctively i understood, with the core of my being, there was more

a large root reached out to me

brilliant colors swirled before me

the dirt i sat upon felt fertile, rich

"there have been countless generations of life throughout the universe living long, rich lives, before time began"

"go on," great grandmother turtle replied

"all cultures, all races, all animals, plants, men, women, minerals, dirt, sunrises, sunsets, the wind, the rain, snow, heat, we are all earth mother, we are all one" grandfather coyote spoke to me,
"i am known as a coyote, but in other lives
i was known as a jackal, or Anubis,
or even Wepwawet, the ancient Opener of the Ways"

"many civilizations from many planets have come to this planet over the millennia," said grandfather bear

"all are interconnected," i replied

"that is correct," the great bear shook his massive head as he showed his agreement

great grandmother turtle's eyes appeared to water, "animals have retained this knowledge, but it was forgotten by humans"

she continued, "it was forgotten because the creator removed it from their being, from their soul"

"but why would the creator do such a thing," i asked "what would be the purpose"

"only the creator would know that," grandfather coyote answered "we do not question the creators' wisdom"

the light i felt coursing through me as i spoke grew dimmer with each word

eventually, i spoke with an understanding that did not need such illumination, as it occurred on a cellular level

i intuitively knew what was true, what was not

a fine mist began forming once again

the tangled roots before me faded away

the once fertile, rich ground beneath me was now a simple chair

i found myself sitting in front of three oak stumps that were burning, smoldering, the smoke from them enveloping me

"are you alright," a familiar voice called out,

it was coyote's distinctive tone

"are you okay, my friend," he cautiously asked, "i have looked everywhere for you"

i looked down at my feet at a large clump of greens, mixed with mushrooms

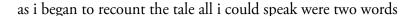
"what's this," coyote cried out upon following my gaze

"have you been eating salvia, sage of the diviners, with mushrooms as well," he started to chuckle

"and are those peyote buttons from my private garden"

his chuckle now turned into full-on laughter as he rolled on the ground, his great bushy tail flipping to and fro, laughing so hard he could hardly breathe

"it would appear you have had a most excellent journey, my friend, tell me, what did you see"



"earth mother"

"ahhh," coyote smiled, "you have had a most excellent journey, indeed, tell me, why does your kind make war"

as soon as his question was asked i immediately answered,

"because we do not understand"

coyote sat staring at me for quite some time sizing me up as the oak stumps continued to smolder

"you do realize, that i consider your raiding of my garden a serious offense, those herbs are potent magic and not to be taken lightly. next time, please ask first, i will gladly oblige"

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with that he turned and started to walk away

"wait," i shouted out, "egret said you wanted to see me"

"that was three days ago," he replied, "i was merely going to ask if you would like to accompany me on a journey."

BEFORE THE POLITICAL DISCUSSION

trickster coyote appeared on my dock offering a fine wine and a sharp piece of cheddar

presenting a tidy slice of the cheese, he motioned me to fill a cup and join him in his repast

"what brings you to my dock" i inquired

i took his offering and found it delightful

an exquisite flavor flooded my mouth for a moment, i was completely absorbed with its savor

"i came to check on the swan" he replied

"it has been a while since i've visited here i thought a light meal might serve well to instruct us further"

the swan had lost his mate the previous year, some believing it a sign that significant change was upon us

i took a more pragmatic approach, believing the swan had lost his mate to a local lioness feeding her starving children, filling their bellies with the forbidden delicacy "i am aware of your position on this" the trickster slyly stated

"there are those here that believe bad fortune is upon them"

his tail quickly became a mesmerizing metronome that i knew if i were to watch it would hypnotize me...it was not my first meal with his trickster self

"let others believe what they may," i told him, "i hold my own counsel"

he lifted his cup and saluted me

"spoken like a true independent," he joyously decried

"now tell me, my friend what are your thoughts on the new political regime?"



we have all been here before
listening to coyote singing
songs to the gods
in the dead of the night

BLIND COYOTE DANCING

i was on my deck one exquisitely fine summer day

sitting in the shade of a weathered umbrella

with a container of smoked trout

crackers that were salted just right

and an ancient silver fork

were my companions

from my perch on the raised deck i could see out over the meadow into the forest below

a markedly plump piece of trout landed on the perfectly formed cracker i had selected

"delicious," i cried out as i savored the delicate taste

"it smells divine," a familiar voice replied

though i could see far into the forest coyote had somehow arrived on my deck

he managed to astound me yet again, with his stealth

"might you have enough to share," the wily coyote asked

"and perhaps some for my cousin, as well"

a beautiful coyote emerged from behind my trickster friend

its silver-tipped tail gleaming in the midday sun

"of course," i replied "always enough for guests"

it did not take us long to devour the smoked trout

we sat under the shade of the weathered umbrella consuming large canning jars of sweet tea

"my cousin has paid me a visit for the blood moon festival"

coyote was nearly bursting with pride

"he is a dancer," my friend continued "one from a long line of dancers"

with this coyote's cousin silently stared ahead

"do not take offense if he does not look at you," coyote told me, "he is quite blind, you see"

both coyotes erupted into squeals of laughter

"do you get it," my trickster friend asked

"he's blind, you see"

they both resumed their delight at his wordplay

coyote's cousin eventually stopped laughing resuming his far off gaze

naturally, i was curious about this as i had never encountered a blind coyote

"has your cousin been blind since birth," i asked

"you can ask him directly," coyote replied "i told you he was blind, not deaf"

brushing aside my embarrassment with a flip of their great tails both coyotes sat smiling at me

"you were right, cousin, your friend is quite amusing"

"i told you he was," my coyote friend replied

he slyly gave me a wink, "he means well"

it became very hot under the umbrella, as if the shade had turned into the sun itself

"i meant no offense," i offered

"we know," they replied in unison

"humans are a strange creature," the blind coyote continued

"they have great difficulty with anything they deem different"

i attempted to clear my throat, a nervous habit coyote has noted, many times

"no need to be defensive," his cousin stated
"we are aware of your deficiencies. humans have
a great fear of anything that
they perceive as different"

the blind coyote proceeded to tell me he was from a long line of blind coyotes

their function in society was to reenact great events from the past through interpretive dance

> "we are taught, from birth the succinct moves our ancestors taught their ancestors

it is how we keep the memories alive"

they invited me to join them deep in the forest

to witness directly their blood moon dance

when the time arose i found my way to a great clearing where animals, birds, all manner of living things had gathered

everyone was an active participant

the rhythm, the sound, was extraordinary

coyote's cousin began dancing with movements that set me reeling



i could clearly see his story unfold

there was no need for interpretation

as he danced, long into the early morning light i sat with rapt attention to the story, he wove

with the sun beginning to rise the animals, birds, all manner of living things disappeared back into the forest

"that was astounding," i shouted to the coyotes

"beautiful, simply breathtaking," i enthusiastically added

the blind coyote walked up to me staring straight into my eyes

"perhaps now you might begin to understand the absurdity of qualifying another before you've encountered their gift" both thanked me for my hospitality telling me the trout and the tea were delicious

they moved off into the forest one behind the other

instinctively i assumed coyote was leading his cousin until a sunbeam landed upon a gleaming silver-tipped tail leading the way

"you have much to learn," my trickster friend cried out

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"but we have faith," they both whooped with glee

"we have faith"

COYOTE DEATH

the old egret died

i could see her body lying in the digger pine where she had birthed many children

> i knew all life was transient still, it was sad to see her go

> > coyote came to me as i gazed at the tree

"what do you find so intriguing," he inquired

i pointed to the limp body of the egret

"ah, yes," he sighed "all the birds are singing of her passing"

he gazed upwards with me and for a moment there were no sounds

"i suppose i should find a way up there," i offered

"what in the world for," coyote asked an annoying sense of irritation was in his voice

"to give her a proper burial, of course"

sometimes, i often wondered how a creature as wise as coyote could be so dense

"you mean with a sermon, and all that"

"yes, exactly that," i shot back

"ashes to ashes, dust to dust and all the other blather?"

i could not believe the rudeness my friend was displaying

"what is wrong with you!" i shouted, "have you no compassion?"

coyote swished his tail several times cocking his head upwards as he did so i could see he was staring at the egret sizing up the situation, if you will

"is this about friend egret's passing or your own fears of death"

coyote's words took me by surprise, it took a few moments to gain composure

"are you suggesting," i slowly asked "that i have fears of death because the egret has died?"

"ridiculous," i told him "utter nonsense"

"i have noticed that you turn to religion, to rituals, when one of the animals pass on"

"what of it," i blurted out

"everything passes, everything dies your religious beliefs cannot change that," he moved even closer, until his nose was next to mine

"do you truly believe that performing your death rituals, giving friend egret's soul to the care of your lord, being bathed in the divine fire of your religion will set her spirit free"

once again, coyote had confronted a most basic tenet of my upbringing

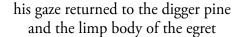
and once more, he challenged me to think independent from what i had been taught

"her spirit," he continued,
"was always free, it was never captive"

"all creatures under earth mothers watchful eye, are the same"

he paused for a moment before continuing

"there is no need for divine salvation for they are never denied salvation to begin with"



"she was free the moment she was born, she remains free now"

"but what of her body," i protested "surely we cannot just leave her there"

"why not," the sly trickster replied

"the vultures will feed on her as will the insects feed on her just as she fed on nature to sustain her and her chicks"

"in time," he sighed, "she will eventually be removed from our memory"

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the simple eloquence of this explanation brought with it a great warmth

i felt a tremendous solace that i had never felt before

my views of death were forever changed that day

over the years i found myself looking up at the digger pine less and less

though i still recall the lessons i learned smiling greatly, whenever i see an egret.

COYOTE MEDICINE

coyote had an intriguing saying;

"never underestimate the healing power of hatred"

we would often spend countless hours debating the veracity of his claim

i have always maintained that an open mind an honest heart would never steer you wrong but i must admit to encountering forces of evil that surpassed these noble intents

> coyote lived a simple and equally honest life

though he killed for sustenance he never killed for pleasure taking only that which he needed nothing more

so it came as a surprise to hear his statement

one day, quite by accident, i was attacked by a wild boar his oversized canine's digging deep into my flesh leaving large, gaping wounds

i managed to avert further attacks and the beast eventually moved on

i stumbled home best i could

infection set into the wounds and i developed a raging fever

coyote appeared at my bedside inquiring if i held any hatred towards the boar

"of course i hate the bastard," i roared "look what he's done"

"you are delirious with fever focus on your hatred let it's light burn bright into your soul"

coyote chanted this several times
until I drifted off
applying a poultice of salt water and herbs
to draw the infection out

when i woke, we would begin again until the fever was gone

several days of this made harmless the boars' tremendous damage

"the boar did not attack you out of a personal vendetta" my wily friend stated, "nor a political vendetta, either. he felt threatened by you. his family was close by, unseen, but close by. he was protecting them"

> "but you encouraged my hatred, you told me to focus on it," i replied

"indeed i did. never underestimate the healing power of hatred," he joyfully stated

"and never forget the incredible lightness of forgiveness," he continued, "for they are both, in equal measure, what keeps us all alive."



i happened upon coyote one excellent spring morning

the runoffs from the winter's snow had descended to our valley leaving our meadows drenched with a fine layer of mud

coyote was in the middle of such a meadow, to be precise he was in the middle of a glorious mud hole

his usually bushy and vibrant tail was now a thin wand of mud that he joyfully swung back and forth tossing large clumps of mud across the meadow

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"what on earth are you doing," i exclaimed

coyote did not stop not even for a moment

his entire body was encased in the mud

he rather looked like a large, wet rat

"hello," i called out again

"hello," coyote called in return "it is a fine day, is it not"

he stood for a moment giving a great shake that dispersed a large quantity of mud in my general direction

"have you gone mad," i shouted at him dodging as many mud chunks as i could

"look at you, you are filthy"

my admonishments fell upon deaf ears

"this is a glorious mud hole indeed," my friend cried out

i had seldom seen the trickster so filled with joy

though he was covered from nose to tail in a great slathering of muck his smile still shone through declaring his great joy

"what, on earth, are you doing," i asked again

"i am paying homage to Napioa, the great Blackfoot Indian diety," he paused to look at me "perhaps you might know him as 'the old man', or Napi"

i had not heard of this Napi, or 'old man' though once again, coyote had gained my interest

"no," i told my filthy friend
"i do not believe i have encountered that name"

"we really need to work on your education," he proclaimed

"Napioa created the earth from a turtles mouth that he found while floating upon a great river"

"so that is who created the earth," i asked in bewilderment

"in this story he did, though there are many, many stories as to how the earth was created"

coyote stopped for a moment to watch a butterfly attempting to land on his nose

"he not only created the earth using the mud he found, but he also created men and women and everything else that is upon the earth"

the butterfly never landed,
i assumed because there was entirely
too much muck and mud

butterflies are careful that way

"so what does this have to do with why you are rolling about in the muck"

coyote was making little sense

"i told you, i am paying homage to Napioa, have you gone deaf"

finding myself in the middle of a magnificent though albeit, somewhat marshy meadow, i realized coyote was immersed in a spiritual ritual "i should go now, and leave you with your..."

"ritual," my friend continued for me

"yes," i stated
"your ritual"

"there are indeed many myths, many legends surrounding the creation of the earth, the creation of men, women and all the animals, most of them have been forgotten to time

those that survived are kept alive through these 'rituals' as you so indelicately call them"

"i did not mean to offend," i offered in defense

"of course you didn't mean to offend, you are not educated enough to offend"

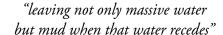
with anyone else, i would have taken umbrage at this coyote, however, was different

i had known him long enough to know he was about to teach me a lesson i would not soon forget

"every year there is a great runoff from the melting snow high up on the mountains"

"yes," i nodded my agreement

"in essence, the increased water flow 'floods' the lower lands," he circled his paws for emphasis



it was true, each year the meadows flooded and then, as the water receded, a layer of silt, of mud, remained

"my ancestors have remembered Napioa for countless generations by reenacting his creation and flood myths in the spring when the runoffs are complete"

absorbed in his story, i waited for him to continue

"i told you about Napioa's creation myth but he also created a great flood after creating the earth and all its creatures"

coyote paused once more to watch the butterfly land on a dandelion shoot

intrigued by the butterfly he stopped his explanation until the butterfly took wing, flying out of view

"so there was a flood," i attempted to regain his attention

"yes," he peered back at me, his focus returned

"there was a great flood, and Napioa made the waters differing colors,

> he gathered the people on top of the largest mountain in the land

where he gave them the different colored waters"

i began to see where this was leading

"the people drank the differing waters and in doing so spoke unique and different languages between them"

"and this is how we came to have so many different languages," i added

"exactly so," he replied

"i had already reenacted the flood myth a week or so ago, today it was time for the creation myth"

> i stood looking at my friend still covered in mud but with an air about him that was, in a word, tranquil

"come," coyote called to me "you can accompany me to the creek where i can wash off this mud"

he moved off across the meadow in the direction of a creek that ran behind my house

"perhaps next i will tell you," he offered "how Napioa created wind."



the water in the lake immediately around my dock was crystal clear

i could see to the bottom

viewing the large mouth bass that frequented the cove where my dock stood

well, floated, actually

a sunfish darted about, two crayfish crawled along the shore

one of the koi that called our lake home swam out from under my dock

a gorgeous creature it shimmered a brilliant gold as it came to the surface sunlight dancing off it's aged scales

"that is a beautiful fish," a familiar voice called out it was coyote, sitting on the shore

"you leave that koi alone," i admonished coyote with what severity i could muster

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"i have known that koi, longer than you have lived on this lake," coyote replied "besides, why would i harm the koi"

his question caught me unawares

my response was rather halted

"well, for one, you are a predator," i managed to respond

"and what, exactly, does that mean"

"i've seen you eat chickens, rabbits, a few geese," i shouted

the conversation was extremely uncomfortable for me

"i get hungry and need to eat, it is the nature of things, but i'm not violent, i'm a rather peaceful creature"

coyote's statement took a few moments to sink in i had never thought of him as "peaceful," telling him as much

"saying you are peaceful after i have seen the violent manner in which you've killed your prey..."

i could not continue

"ah, so you believe i cannot be peaceful because i am violent, is that it"

coyote cocked his head to one side and then the other watching me closely, to see my response "something like that, yes," i stammered "it doesn't mean i hate you for it"

i let out a large sigh of relief as this was indeed a trying conversation

"the koi is a long time friend.

we have known each other for decades.

if not, do you think i would not have eaten him a long time ago?"

as always, coyote had a knack for stating the obvious

"as for the issue of my being peaceful or, rather, in your view being violent..."

i felt my face burning with shame hearing my arrogant statement returned to me in such a manner

"how can you understand peace, or how can you become peaceful, if you do not know and understand violence," the trickster calmly asked

this concept had never occurred to me

"but what then, are you if you are not violent," i asked "would you not be peaceful?"

it seemed rather simple to me and i enjoyed the fact i might have finally bested the wily trickster

"no, you would not be peaceful," he replied "you would be harmless"

"you cannot understand peace if you do not first understand and experience it's counterpart, which is violence"

coyote continued

"a person who understands violence is able to understand peace because he knows violence and what it can bring

but a person who does not understand violence that person is merely a harmless individual they're not peaceful, simply harmless"

"you could argue," coyote stated
"they would be peaceful,
but in reality, they are simply harmless,
not having the capacity to be violent"

i was not remotely prepared for this reasoning though truth be told, it was making a great deal of sense

"to truly understand peace, to truly be peaceful you must understand its opposite

it is in having an attainment of both sides of nature that you are able to fully realize yourself"

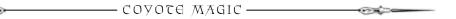
as i sat on my dock pondering coyote's wisdom the koi swam to the surface eating a waterbug that was struggling with a leaf

coyote looked over at me noting i had observed the koi eating the bug

"see, my friend" coyote told me, "the koi is peaceful, but as you can also see at times he can be vicious."

we s	spend our lives
sea	arching for the
	right
	words
W	hen all along
th	ney are within
	us
	struggling
t of the second	to stay alive





COFFEE WITH GREAT WHITE EGRET CHICKS

prehistoric cries for food ebb and flow through the day increasing to a frenzied pitch as soon as food appears

the cries abate as their bellies fill

as i drink my morning brew.
i tell them tales of their ancestors being bred
for their wondrous plumage

a Blue Heron glides past

geese are heard in the distance

the chicks are nearly grown

soon the mornings will be quiet

i revel in the cacophony of sound that is their life knowing that soon, as they leave their nest there will be silence

coffee is especially rich this morning.

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COYOTE POETRY

i found coyote industriously destroying a piece of paper one grand morning

he had shredded it to pieces
with his sharp nails
and was now
biting it into even smaller
pieces

"what is this about," i called to him

"why such fervor over a piece of paper," i asked

coyote stopped for a moment looking at me with a wary eye

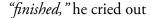
"come no closer," he commanded

"i am not through creating"

with that he began throwing the tiny pieces of paper into the air

a swift breeze caught them and whisked them away

coyote sat watching the pieces float into the sky



"that poem was quite difficult," he smiled his trickster smile at me and winked

"you're telling me that was a poem," i asked

"and a fine one at that," he replied

"that piece of paper you tore to shreds and sent into the wind just now, that was a poem"

"yes," he huffed a little indignantly

"is something wrong with your hearing," he asked with concern

"when i write a poem i save it to read later, or perhaps share it with a friend," i told the wily trickster

"that is all fine and well," coyote stated

"but i write to experience the act of creation, when it is done, i set it free"

i had never considered such a thing

all throughout my house were stacks of writing, some finished, some not

« 1

"surely you keep some of your poetry," i asked

"not a one," he joyfully declared

"i have set many of my poems free, the winds have carried my creations across the globe"

"where is the sense in that," i asked in rebuke

"this is utter nonsense!" i cried out

"is it," the trickster asked

"is it really such nonsense?"

coyote grew quite serious as he approached me

"which would you rather have," he asked

"a collection of words written on paper that will more than likely never see the light of day once you secure them in your journals,"

he began to laugh

"or to be done with the act of creation and to give them back to the creator letting the creator distribute them as the creator sees fit"

with that coyote turned and began examining a rather large leaf that had fallen upon his head

i went back into my house spying my journals lying limp upon the mantle and brewed a cup of tea.

COYOTE READS RIMBAUD

i found coyote on my dock sitting under the large umbrella that hides the sun

known for his keen sense of smell and attention to his environment i was puzzled when he did not return my greeting

i walked onto the gangway that led to the dock causing the large barrels that kept them both afloat to rock in unison, waking coyote from his slumber

"did you not hear me greet you," i asked

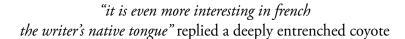
he replied that he had heard my greetings but was far too engrossed in his book to return my hail

now noticing he held a book in his paws i inquired as to the subject matter

"it is Illuminations, by Jean Nicolas Arthur Rimbaud"

the author's name rolled off coyote's long, slender tongue and just hung there, for a second as if his name was viewing me

"that is an interesting book," i declared as i sat in the chair next to him



"did you know," the trickster continued "that he stopped writing at the age of twenty"

"and that he had a torrid affair with Paul Verlaine, consummating their love with absinthe, opium and hashish?"

this was all new to me though, of course, i had read Rimbaud, even so coyote showed me how shallow my appreciation was

"he was even a bit of an arms dealer for a time," coyote continued "and died of cancer at age thirty-seven after having his leg amputated in Marseille"

> i was not aware coyote was such an ardent admirer of French poetry, telling him this while inquiring if the book was a translation, or original

"it is in French, and in fact, it is a first-edition a very rare work, one of my favorites"

i called out to my friend exuberantly, "i had no idea you could read French"

coyote put his book down and winked at me stating "i cannot, but the words still sing to me and that is all that matters".

COYOTE REMEMBERS BUFFALO

the roof at Lake House was in need of repair

it had withstood many years
of storms and sun
but it's age
was beginning to show

i was surveying the project figuring the logistics of a new roof

i had replaced many roofs before but, in a moment of honesty, i stumbled to the conclusion my youth had left me

replacing the roof would be a chore i feared i could no long tackle

"why are you on your roof," coyote's voice called out

"is it to gain a better view of the beaver pond"

while it was true i had a spectacular view of the beaver pond my visit to the roof was much more complicated than viewing friend beavers pond "im needing to replace the roof," i called down, "i don't suppose you know a decent roofer"

the thought of coyote knowing a roofer brought an odd chuckle

"the best builder i know," coyote shouted back "is beaver, but he is terribly afraid of heights"

"besides," coyote continued, "he's off building another pond, two valleys over"

the seriousness with which coyote approached my task confused me

"i thank you for your suggestion," i called down "but i question your knowledge of roofs"

i came down my ladder to find a most indignant coyote

"you question," his great, bushy tail twitching as he spoke... "my knowledge of roofs?"

immediately, i regretted my statement

"my ancestors have been helping your kind with their dwellings since your people lived in caves"

his nostrils were flared

"since you lived in caves!" he repeated

i had deeply offended him

"the first people, the race before yours, would have never left their caves without the help of animals"

coyote went into a long discourse as to how the animals banded together at Earth Mother's request to help mankind build structures

horses and oxen provided brute strength

beavers and egrets gave lessons on building, showing how to intertwine reeds and twigs mixing in mud for strength

ravens and eagles flew far and wide searching for land on which to build homes finding fertile soil, water everything needed to survive

as coyote described the evolutionary history of shelters, i realized how reliant mankind was on all of nature how reliant we remained, to this day

"now, as to your current predicament," coyote paused for a moment "i once knew a great roofer, elk that dances"

"but he only worked with buffalo hide, i don't suppose that would do"

"i don't believe it would," i told the trickster

"just as well," he replied with a sad tone "not too many buffalo left as it is and his light is nearly gone as well"

i offered him a glass of iced tea and what was left of a delicious zuchini bread

he told me stories of great herds of buffalo stretching far past the horizon

how people used buffalo hides to build their homes

how the buffalo sustained them with their meat, with every part of their bodies and their soul

"but now the buffalo have gone," he sighed "replaced by homes with aging roofs"

i offered my friend another glass of tea but i could see he was lost, back in a time i would never know.

COYOTE VIEWS DEGAS

coyote appears in the most surprising places

once, at a museum
as i was studiously viewing
a Degas painting,
i noticed coyote's vibrant
bushy tail
among the patrons of the gallery

"what are you doing here," i eagerly asked my friend

"im a lover of Degas," he casually replied "as are we all, i suppose"

the silver in his great bushy tail flashed brilliantly in the museum's finely lit room

"so you know of Degas," i asked in amazement

"of course I know of Degas," he replied indignantly

"in fact," my wily friend continued
"he used brushes made from the tail hairs
of one of my ancestors"

he turned to me and whispered;
"though he is well known for his paintings
of dancers, ballet included
he began by watching the same ancestor
dance the dance of the blood moon festival"

coyote had allowed me to attend a blood moon festival once where a distant cousin of his superbly enacted the sacred movements of the blood moon

"one of your ancestors, a dancer, danced for Degas," i asked with incredible wonder

"and gifted him with tail hair for a most wondrous brush"

i was stunned

"in fact, if i remember my family history correctly, he used that very same brush on the Cassatt portrait hanging on the wall, over there"

> he pointed his left front paw towards a painting of Mary Cassatt, seated

i moved closer to admire the brush strokes the oil held on the old canvas

they were marvelous

excitedly, i turned to my friend exclaiming and quite loudly at that; "what an interesting bit of trivia"

but coyote was gone, nowhere to be found

there was only a room full of startled patrons viewing Degas.

COYOTE ZEN

coyote found me sitting on the bluffs under the shade of an old oak that simply would not fall

"what are you doing, my friend, you've been out here for hours"

i told him i was contemplating what could be found on the bottom of the lake

"many people have asked the same question for as many years as I can recall"

i asked him if he had any answers, perhaps an observation, as to what lies beneath the surface

"rocks, sand, some gravel, a couple of cars, and a lot of fish poop" it took me by surprise

the exactness of his answer was startling clear

"Humans are a strange species that wonder about the strangest things," he murmured

i argued it was a valid question as i could not see through to the bottom so how was i to know

"why is there air, and why does water not float upon it," he asked

he left me with a new host of questions to ponder while i sat on the bluffs under the shade of the old oak.

EGRET TEA

the great egret appeared one early dawn offering to brew a fine cup of mushroom tea

knowing his prowess at brewing such magical elixirs i heartily welcomed him in

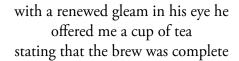
with a well practiced eye he patiently boiled water to the correct temperature adding just the right amount of ginger, lemon, a bit of lavender and of course, mushrooms

while steeping the brew he regaled me with his adventures procuring the delicacies used for his tea

he told me tales of flying East over the plains of Uruk and Kippur where the Tigris and Euphrates flowed

tipped his head ever so slightly as he relived his journey through the great city of Eridu

my egret friend had traveled far for many ages his weariness was apparent



we spent the morning drinking his magical elixir

following the sun as it rose to the occasion

a magnificent morning filled with a cacophony of colors and splendid imagery

the egret appeared rested as he finished his cup

thanking me profusely for my hospitality he took wing and circled twice as he flew off across the lake

wishing me health and good fortune

Great egrets are polite in that way.

IN THE GARDEN

friend salamander appears on my doorstep every morning

he sits patiently as i brew my coffee waiting in the shade my cabana brings to a hot, sweltering morning

> i have offered him a cup many times

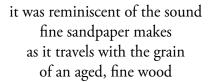
each time he politely declines

"i have noticed," the salamander said clearing his throat "you take your coffee plain"

stopping for a moment to slay a wayward mosquito, he continued

"is that decision based upon your disdain for dairy products or do you simply prefer the naked taste of a rich, dark brew?"

i had never thought about the sound a mosquito's wings make while being consumed until that moment



"in all honesty," the salamander continued
"i rather figured you were too cheap
to buy fresh cream"

he wiped the remains of the mosquito from his moist lips with a deft flick of his tongue

the salamander had me dead to rights

he tipped his Fez and wished me a good day

humming
"Shine On, You Crazy Diamond"
his Fez cocked to one side
he quietly vanished

i made a mental note to order more mosquitoes.

after meeting with the Great Spirit over olives and crackers coyote and i left with the impression that while we were looking for some measure of control, none would be forthcoming

a room with a thousand mirrors goaded us to count them

deciding for ourselves exactly how many images of our faces were needed in this world

i will admit it was a daunting proposition

one that filled us with anxiety and a healthy paranoia of dangers that a high probability favored

but still, we were both fond of a fine cracker

and our lust for the tasty flesh of the lovingly cared for fruit of the Oleaceae tree is well known choosing to remain amorphous, better that way for deniability

are we not all about deniability in our lives

denying religion, history, culture, civility

all the while building temples to assure our place in paradise

as i began to address this with the Great Spirit they plucked a plump, ripe olive from the jar with an ornate silver fork and secured some garlic, too

smiling as they held them in front of us

coyote leaned over and whispered;

"someone has to pay for the olives and crackers, they are not always cheap"

coyote stands on
a mountain
mouth wide open
waiting
to capture
the moon

—	COYOTE	MAGIC -	

PLANTING THE SEED

i am building a temple using the dreams of grandchildren, unborn

their sacred hearts call to me as I tend to my narratives

i have left them written instructions for the coming times

turtles helped me build the foundation

egrets made certain the walls are straight

trickster coyote laughs telling me my efforts are in vain

i often times heed his advice

unless it involves my unborn grandchildren's dreams, which speak a language none can fathom

too soon their dreams will come alive

while coyote and i leave this place a memory for an unborn mind.

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RUMINATIONS ON A SUMMER MORNING

there is a defective egret in the digger pine next to my house

having survived many wind storms, droughts, and all manner of insects, the digger is a haven for nesting Great Egrets

having gone through many seasons of egret births i am certainly not an expert on them but i am very much aware of their habits which are simple;

the chicks are born, the parents feed and nurture them for a time, and then they leave

it is a fairly straight forward affair

spring is welcomed by screaming cries for food, with parent egrets flying out to our small lake to get the food

the usual stuff in egret life

this year, though, it was different

long after the chicks had taken wing there was one chick that remained

i could hear it cry at the top of the digger pine hidden behind branches too far to see with the naked eye
though at times i could see
a white cloud of fluff flapping at the top of the tree

as the chicks would leave, one by one, the cloud of fluff seemed to grow louder, or perhaps, closer

one day it was crying especially loud

when i looked up i could see it clear as day standing on a branch far below its nest valiantly trying to flap its wings though only one wing would move

> it's right-wing appeared withered crippled barely developed at all

the bird remained on this branch for many days crying out several times a day at all hours, day and night

eventually, another egret was seen coming to the branch

it would stand with the crippled egret then fly off returning with food

i watched as the chick waited for the other egret to bring food, listening in as they talked to each other in the ancient language of birds thoughts of what to do with this defective egret ran through my mind

should i shoot it in an act of mercy?

call someone for advice, perhaps a defective egret specialist?

i became captivated with its survival and checked on it often, pondering as to what i should do with this defective bird

i argued as to whether it was my position to end its misery, or was it in misery at all?

it was in my tree, i rationalized i can do with it as i please

but then i realized that land ownership and boundaries are a man-made device, i certainly had no contract with the egrets, nor they with me

should i let nature decide what to do with a defective egret?

why did if eel i had a voice in this matter at all or feel the need to say it was defective

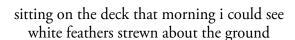
many mornings were spent having coffee with my egret friend sitting on my deck, pondering these questions that need to be thought of

carefully

in the end, nature solved its own dilemma, if, in fact there was ever a dilemma to begin with

early one morning, 3:15am to be exact i was awakened by a tremendous scream and then

silence



the egret was not on his branch

a mountain lion had taken a neighbors goat two weeks earlier, its carcass in a tree not far from the digger pine

it was obvious what had happened

i sat that morning in silence with my coffee, no noise from the egret to greet me

it occurred to me that the egret was never defective, it had a purpose all along

it brought me to think more about life to see how simple it is to label something that is unknown

in the end, the egret chick provided me with valuable insight into my own prejudices

about life, the need to control it, the need to develop explanations to fit it into my view, my limited description, of life

i will miss having coffee with that egret chick more than i care to admit

i am so very fortunate we crossed paths;

allowing me to begin an understanding

it was me who was defective

never the egret.

SMOKING WITH COYOTE

the talking heads on television were on a roll

no matter the network a head was screaming

coyote had dropped by as i was rolling a nice fatty

his timing was always impeccable

though he could not roll worth a shit

"what are those talking heads screaming about" coyote asked as he puffed away

"it's political season, they're screaming about anything and everything"

i wrestled the fat doobie from him coyote was a known bogart

"humans are indeed strange," he offered "your politics are ridiculous"

"why the need for all these screaming heads," he inquired as i passed the doobie back to him

exhaling a large cloud of dank smoke i explained to my friend how our media worked how we turn to media personalities to inform us trying to look past their opinionated diatribes

this, i explained, gave us information as to who should lead us

he thought about this for a long moment so long, in fact, the blunt went out

i reached for a lighter

"so, you listen to people lie to you, offering their personal beliefs, so you can select your leaders?"

the questioning tone of the trickster was rather surreal

"i guess when you put it that way it does seem pretty strange"

"strange," the coyote yelped "it's downright stupid"

having relit the now again smoldering joint i passed it back to coyote

"this makes as much sense," he took a great hit of the exceptionally potent weed "as listening to one of the rabbits, or even a cow"

i took in his position while patiently waiting for coyote to pass the joint

remembering he never passes, i reached over to take it

"what are you speaking of," i asked as i relished my own exceptionally large hit

"you make no sense," i coughed and sputtered, the hit was a bit too large

"rabbits and cows are notorious liars," he replied "everyone knows this, yet we still listen to them out of politeness"

he had a solid point

i had many times observed animals being polite to one another

except for pigeons, they could care less about anything

"in our politics," he offered "we select a leader who is the most fit to lead us"

i was intrigued by this, i was not fully aware animals had a political system

"we all inherently know who will lead us," he continued "and who is unfit for leadership, it's fairly instinctual"

both of us sat listening to the tirading head until i switched off the television

"that person made no sense whatsoever," coyote stated "i'm positive they were shouting simply to hear their own voice" coyote turned to me and solemnly asked if i had rolled any more of my exceptional herb

"that last one didn't get you stoned," i asked him

"oh, indeed it did, but if i really want to understand your political process, i'm going to need more"

coyote and i sat smoking through the night playing go-fish until the early morning hours

> both of us had won and lost an equal number of times

i suggested we cut the cards, high card would be declared winner

the trickster readily agreed to this advising me as i shuffled, "perhaps you should use this method to elect your leaders, makes more sense"

he drew an ace

"it by far makes far more sense than your current political system"

he handed the deck back to me, i proceeded to draw a jack

"and not near as irritating," he added as he declared himself the winner.

"hello, good friend,"
he slyly called out
from the path where the heart lays

"so nice to see you out and about enjoying this fine, wondrous morning"

as with most of my encounters with the trickster i remained guarded, aloof, best not to show too much ambition for ready conversation

"the morning is indeed fine," i hesitantly replied, "and the coffee is stout," i continued

"tell me, what brings you to my dock?"

across the lake geese and ducks gathered warily casting glances watching the trickster from afar

"have you heard of this new device called Ring," absentmindedly licking his long, scruffy jowls as he asked

"it is used for security," he continued "for monitoring your home to help in keeping it safe" drink from my cup

"i know what it is," i replied

"i have seen the advertisements"

i instantly regretted this caffeine-induced disclosure

"excellent, my friend, excellent.

i would like to install them

here, around the lake"

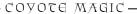
a loud chorus from the geese and ducks traveled across the lake hitting us like a wave

"it would help protect the waterfowl that gathers on your lake it would let you know that they are safe"

he went on, at great length as to how Amazon had purchased Ring and then partnering with local police they would join together to stop crime

he regaled me with tales of home invasions, burglaries, thefts, all sorts of malicious actions being thwarted by the surveillance of Ring

it was a new era of protection, of security



Amazon had several programs in place that allowed local police to give out Rings for free

he was confident this would not cost me a dime

i placed my coffee mug down

"this is all fine and good, but would it not also allow someone like yourself to use the system for their gain? with information such as this, would it not make for a new method of alerting you as to when, shall we say, supper might be ready?"

again a mighty sound wave flew across the lake

the geese and the ducks were now joined by the swans and egrets

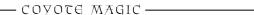
102

trickster coyote laughingly asked

"if i could not trust Amazon, nor the local police Who could i trust?"

therein began a heated debate about the use of global surveillance to quiet the political noise its people might make

the trickster feigned innocence of this affront all the while engaging in arguments to assure me my paranoia of these dangers was ill-founded



as my coffee had long grown cold i told him i had matters to attend to and rose to leave

"it is inevitable, you know, that we will all eventually be surveilled, even here, on your lake. it is only a matter of time"

with a flick of his tail, he disappeared into the woods, without a trace

without a sound

i knew he was right, of course

eventually we will all be surveilled, monitored for our "own good"

it is inevitable that all our fates are sealed

but for this day, and the next, and hopefully a few after that

here on the lake

surveillance would have to wait.

103

you geese

stop reciting

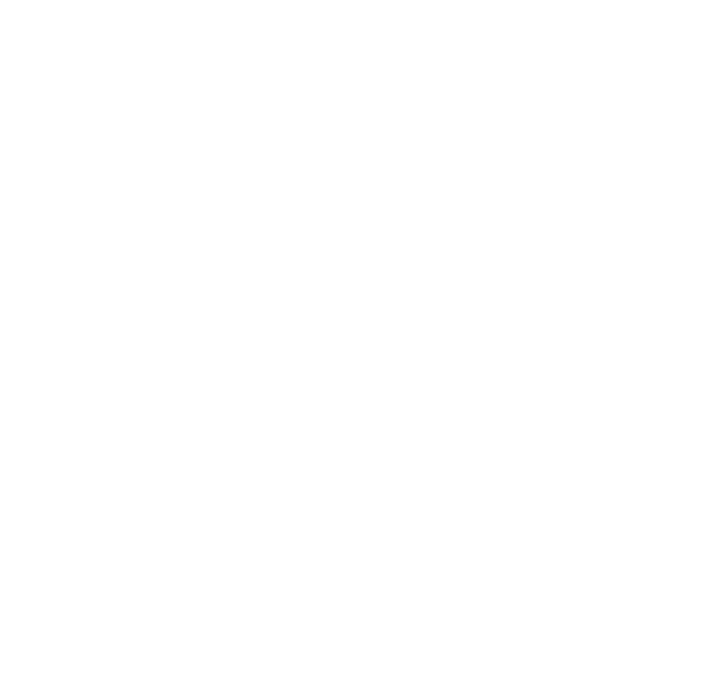
poetry

it is time

for us all

to find

sleep



COYOTH MAGIC ----

WHY COYOTE WORE A MASK

i saw coyote wearing a mask which seemed a bit odd

i asked my friend "why are you wearing a mask?"

he told me it was the current rage

all the humans were wearing them

i had to admit his mask was extremely colorful and bright

"but surely it interferes with your hunting?"

"Indeed it does," he replied

"but surely i look splendid."

107

the sun was shining bright illuminating the path before us with grand desires

we left much too late for any decent hope of returning with the evening breeze

but coyote traveled often and was a favored companion for distant journeys

leaving the path set before us we set up camp for the night next to a small stream

taking off on his own coyote returned with a fine, plump, bunny

i had started a fire so upon his return we would have an even bed of coals

licking his lips with his large wet tongue, he offered a bit of rosemary for seasoning the rabbit was delicious

we fell asleep under a blanket of summer stars

in the morning, a bit of dew stuck to us, but not enough to cause any worry

we clambered back to the path
we had left
the night before

coyote let loose with a joyous cry upon discovering wild blackberries ripening in the early morning sun

many days passed by in this fashion

never, was there a plan

but I knew that as we left

having travelled with coyote many times before.

108



COYOTE'S SEVEN SISTERS

it was an unusually rough morning

two cups of strong black coffee was not enough to refresh my mind

three, hopefully would do the trick

coyote and his kin had spent the night howling and yelping at i presumed, the moon

that or there was a great kill in the fields next to my house and they were coveting their prize

either way, no one in our valley was able to sleep

i sat with my third cup of very strong coffee a mixture the consistency of mud

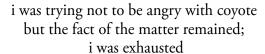
coyote jauntily strolled up my path

"good morning to you," he gleefully shouted out

"how are you this fine morning,"

he winced as he caught an aroma of the mud

"i'm tired as could be, if you must know"



"you do look exceptionally tired," my friend stated as he gave me a thorough look over

"perhaps you should try some warm milk," he offered, "that should help you sleep better"

the irony of coyote prescribing warm milk
when it was his howling
for hours on end that did me in
put me over the edge

"i am exhausted not because i needed warm milk," i shouted "but because of all your racket last night!"

while i at once felt better for telling coyote off i also felt guilty for shouting at him

"oh," coyote replied, "that"

that's what he had to say to me

he kept me up all night with howling and yelping and all he could say was "that"

"are you kidding me?" i shouted again

coyote moved a bit closer to me his pointed nose barely inches from my own

"don't you really want to know the reason," he asked

"of course i do, the entire valley wants to know"

i was excited the extra cup of coffee had kicked in

"i've heard you yelling and howling before but never like last night,"

i waited for his explanation

he stared at me for what seemed an eternity never blinking, never smiling i was not sure if he was even breathing

finally, after a very long while he began to speak

"my family and i were paying homage to the seven sisters"

i recalled in the back of my memory his mentioning the seven sisters before

"last night was truly amazing," he excitedly exclaimed "they glowed the most brilliant i have ever seen them"

it began to return to me

"are you talking about the constellation Taurus?"

"yes, yes, but it is not the constellation itself it is the star cluster within the constellation, the seven sisters, the Pleiades"

coyote was very animated as he spoke

"it is well known throughout history that the earth was visited by Star People. they came from the Pleiades, the seven sisters

in Japan, they are known as Subaru, they are Krittika in Hinduism the Chinese called them mão and Persians used them to navigate at night calling them the Parvīn"

i had rarely seen coyote so animated and excited

"last night," he continued, "was extraordinary as they shone brighter than ever before"

"why do you think that is," i instinctively asked

coyote looked at me with utter amazement

"how am i supposed to know," he offered crossly, "they were glowing, that's all there was to it"

we both took a moment to compose ourselves

"i'm sorry if we inconvenienced you last night but none of us had ever seen them glow so bright. it was as if we could reach up and touch them"

coyote shuddered a bit at this thought

"but in the end," i arrogantly offered "they are merely stars"

the trickster flicked his great tail back and forth quite rapidly, as he was wont to do when faced with one of my many arrogant statements "the sisters, are our ancestors," he replied

"not just ours, but yours as well," he softly exhaled

"the first people have many stories of those who came from the stars where the seven sisters live. these star people came to earth and taught the first people how to grow food, and channel water, how to build great structures that would give the first people shelter. in all cultures, there are stories that tell of this"

> i felt as a child who was learning a lesson after having failed the lesson many times before

"your ilk, and i say this gently," coyote was genuinely sincere "have completely forgotten your past"

i started to defend myself by replying we honored our past everyday, but coyote cut me off

"the Sisters are all around you and you never even notice"

"that's not true," i shouted, defending myself

"your wife drives a Subaru, with a modified logo of the seven sisters"

he allowed me a moment to think about this

COYOTE MAGIC -

"...and before you tell me there are only six stars in the Subaru logo, in Japanese folklore one star of the sisters is invisible, hence, there are only six stars"

i sat on my chair, dumbfounded

he was right

"the Sisters are powerful magic," he stated authoritatively

coyote stared at me for quite a while looking at me quizzically

"again, my apologies if we kept you awake last night but perhaps next time you might join us in paying homage to the sisters"

before i had a chance to reply he was off down the path calling back over his shoulder;

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"there is much for you to learn," as he disappeared behind an ancient oak

my coffee had grown cold, and it tasted of mud

i sat in my chair until morning had turned into afternoon, and then again until dusk thinking of all coyote had said

i sat there in my chair until the stars came out waiting for the sisters to return.

114

UNDERSTANDING A PUDDLE

coyote found me one morning leveling my front porch

it had a terrible slope at the northern end that kept reappearing no matter what i did

it was a fine, but simple porch

silver flagstone
set deep into decomposed granite
on top of a fine base of sand
with a thick layer
of crushed gravel under it all

not a large patio, by most measures

ten feet by twenty-five feet

but it allows for a nice coffee in the morning when i watch the swan groom and the egrets preen

many times over the years i have repaired the northern corner

while the rest of it seems to weather just fine remaining level and true not so the northern corner at times it fell by only a few inches other times, it easily dropped a solid foot

leaving a puddle of mud after rainstorms blow through

coyote listened patiently as i explained my task

nodding in agreement saying not a word taking it all in until i explained no more

"you say this has happened several times, over the past few years" his questioning tone was genuine there was no mockery to my plight

he seemed deep in thought

"exactly so," i responded

"and, again, this has gone on for years," he inquired

"no matter how many times i level the northern end, it continually drops. it has done so for many years" coyote can allow that in you

"i believe i understand exactly what the problem is," he declared

walking until he stood directly over the northern corner he addressed me;

> "the earth is sloped here in this exact place it is the way of things you cannot change it"

with that, he proposed a delightful mid-morning tea perhaps even a bit of schnapps

"peppermint, if you have any"

i erected a cairn of finely chosen rocks

the puddle never bothered me again.

WHEN COYOTE WHISTLED

coyote looked depressed his great, bushy tail drooped

he walked with a lackluster gait

i had seen this before and knew it would pass

"how are you today, my friend," i called out "is the weather simply not immaculate"

coyote turned his head toward me but the ever present trickster smile was not there

"i must tell you truthfully, i am struggling"

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his voice was shallow with a sadness that belied his saddened nature

though i had indeed seen this before i admitted to myself this time, it was fairly severe

"come, sit with me and tell me your troubles"

i indicated towards his favorite chair featuring a simple weave of rattan

"the problem" coyote stated as he sat upon the chair, "is that i view the world becoming ever more callous and severe"

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we had discussed this topic many times before

"i believe that," in an attempt to console my friend, "we have concluded this many times in the past"

"we have," he admitted, letting a sigh fall out into the air

the despondency of my friend was alarming

i could not recall such morose behavior

"is this in regards," i asked "to a particular action, or event"

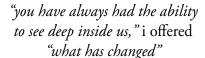
"i have always cherished my contact with humans, guiding them, leading them helping them to understand that life is an interconnection with the energy that flows through us all"

coyote's head hung down as he spoke

his very essence seemed devoid of life

"recently," he continued
"i have noticed that humans
have changed
and not for the better"

this was a first we had not discussed this before



"that is exactly the problem," he cried out, leaping from the chair, knocking it to the ground

"i am bombarded by empty carcasses of what were once primal beings, their shallowness and deception can no longer be ignored"

coyote was in a panic, his breathing erratic as he paced the length of my porch

"it is unlike anything i have seen before"
he sat back into the soft weave
of the comforting rattan

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pleadingly, he asked me an astonishing question

"why do they feed me their ego's when i have feasted on their souls"

we sat in silence for quite a long while neither of us speaking

not a word

finally, i offered him a bit of salvation to help soothe his mind

"perhaps humans are evolving by putting on facades to mask our true inner emotions"

coyote pondered this for a moment his eyes regaining their familiar twinkle as he thought about this further

"yes, yes," he shouted

"that is it," he declared

"humans are tricking the trickster, what a wonderful turn of events"

my friend joyfully leaped from my porch, his tail no longer drooping his spirits rejuvenated

"i must look past the petty egos of men and be content with my knowledge of their souls, thank you, thank you"

with that, he bid me have a good day

i watched him jauntily walk down the lane whistling a tune, not a care in the world

i had not known coyote could whistle.

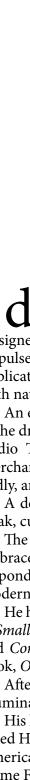


an old wheelbarrow, its red paint peeling its tires, flat down by the creek where magic grows

the flat tire makes it difficult to use

though it comes in handy when harvesting magic.

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J	-4	J





ave (bodhi) boles, has worked as a Publisher, Editor, Writer, and Designer. Developing the magazine *Primal Urge*, he went on to create Neural Impulse Publications, Cold River Press, and Bodhidharma Publishing. His publications, editorials, writing, graphic design, and artwork have appeared both nationally and internationally.

An eclectic traveler and artist, dave is known to drift in changing directions at the drop of a hat, having worked as a High Tower Rigger; Long Haul Trucker; Radio Talk Show Host; Renaissance Faire Magician; Costume and Bodice Merchant; a short stint once as a Life Insurance salesman that ended rather badly, and a Corporate Mercenary for hire.

A devoted collector of tattoos, dave is also a lifelong gear head and speed freak, customizing cars, trucks, and motorcycles.

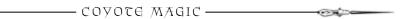
The protege of acclaimed poet and alternative publisher Ben L. Hiatt, dave embraces our ever-changing literary and political structure while continuing to ponder Hiatt's school of Okie Surrealism and how it might fit in with this modern age of high tech.

He has several chapbooks, including *Balding Dissertation Of A Balding Man*, *A Small Answer To A Large Question*, *Do Aluminum Chickens Eat Metal Feed?*, and *Confessions Of A Black Ink Junkie*, among others, as well as a full-length book, *OFFERINGS*, 2011 (Cold River Press).

After obtaining a Doctorate in Divinity, he founded The Church Of The Illuminated Monkey, where he holds the position of Gringo Shaman.

His lifelong friend, Mescalito, still keeps watch over him to this day, sending a Red Hawk to check in on him from time to time. He resides with his wife, Mrs. America, and a collection of animals at Lake House; the Illuminated Monkey's Home For Wayward Poets And Socially Bereft Humans.





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We are all divine beings. We all matter, every one of us. We come from unimaginable power and light, unimaginable magic. Take a moment to watch the world unfold around you. Taste the air, listen to the wind. It is all magic. We are all magic. Treat yourself and others as the powerful magicians you are. Be kind magicians and remember to use your magic wisely. It is the way of life's spirit, the way of the warrior, the way to Universal Peace.

