

COYOTE SPIRIT



dave boles

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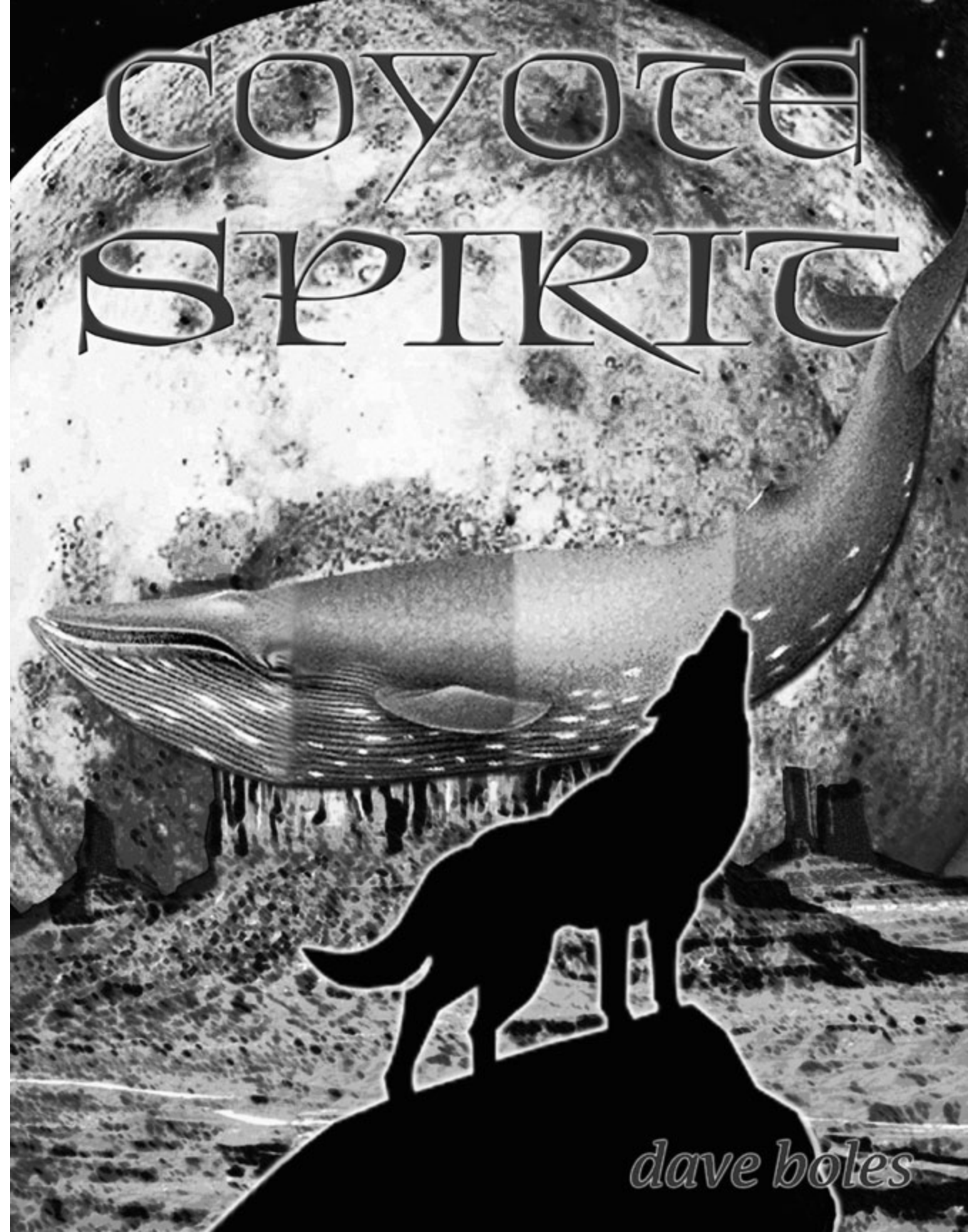
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*For D.R. Wagner
Who Understood Magick,
Sharing It With Me.*

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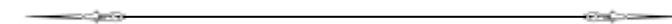
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Come to the chaos

New life awaits

Roll your mind around

The salt water taffy

Old men chew

Sweet juice dribbling

Down stubbled chins

Faint glows of yesterday

Shining through clouded eyes

Piercing truth

As only a Shaman

Could provide.



PROLOGUE

*Find the place,
the trickster taught me,
where the sun
rises in the West
and animals
breathe water
for air
where whales once again
become great spaceships
and magic
is the order
of the day.*



I The Arrival



I

it had been a long while since Coyote left me sitting on my dock
pondering all that he had showed me

the mermaids still appeared now and then
moving through walls, windows, the ceiling and floors
of my home, playfully living life
with the abandon that these magical beings
are known for

occasionally they would tell me Coyote
wished me well

or he had recently inquired about me

other than that there was no notice at all

until one day, after several seasons had passed by
i heard a familiar voice call out to me
as i was tending to my wood pile

“hello there!” the familiar voice called out

“your wood pile has grown favorably!”

there was no doubt at all as to whom the voice belonged to;
it was the trickster, bushy tail and all

“you were gone for such a long while,” i called out
“i thought you might never return”

“is that so?” he answered in his typical fashion
“i hadn’t really noticed”

“might i trouble you for a cup of that fabulous tea you brew?”

Coyote headed towards my house with a somewhat slower pace than i recalled

“tell me,” he gleefully inquired, *“have the mermaids kept you informed
during my absence? they did look in on you, didn’t they?”*

i assured him they had done exactly that. in fact, they were due
for an appearance any time

“they will be away for a while,” he offered without explanation
other than that they would return again before he left

“some sort of ‘secret’ mission?” i asked

“something like that,” he replied, his bushy tail twitching in agitation

i set my teapot on the wood stove and set about preparing the tea

“i recently harvested these mushrooms,” i called out. “they are of an
excellent variety that i have been developing since you’ve left”

Coyote had settled in next to the fire, warming himself

i brought in two steaming cups of mushroom tea on an
ornate silver tray with two pieces of lemon rind
and a small jar of honey for taste

Coyote looked peacefully at the fire.
the night had a chill and a dampness to it that spoke
of colder times to come. the fire, peacefully burning in my old stove,
brought a welcomed warmth to its hearth

“in the beginning,” Coyote suddenly announced, *“there was only space. nothingness
and emptiness without form, without direction”*

his abrupt statement caught me unawares as i sat gazing
into the hypnotic dance of the fire

*“this was the realm from which the Creator began forming magic. life, if you will,
if that makes it easier to grasp, but magic nonetheless”*

he motioned me to stir the fire, sending a torrent of sparks and flame
upwards through the chimney

*“in much the same way this fire spread life upon being stirred,
so too did the Creator bring life out of the darkness, the emptiness, that we now call
space. but back then it had no name at all, for there was nothing that existed
that would be able to identify it as such. this, then, was the beginning of magic.
the beginning of life. many people have attempted to name this period of time
as the ‘First World’, with the First People becoming the ‘Council Of
The First World’. this is incorrect for there was no ‘World’ to council.
only dreams that had yet to be seen”*

we sat quiet after this, gently drinking our tea. Coyote deep in thought
and i trying to decipher what, exactly, the wily trickster was up to

"did you finish the journal i left with you?"

i told my friend i had finished the journal some time ago and
rose to get it for him

"no," he exclaimed, "no need for that. sit and finish your tea"

we sat again in silence as we finished our tea, peacefully watching
the flames of the fire ebb and flow, not unlike tides of the ocean

i could feel my breathing becoming shallow, and erratic

*"it is a fine day to commune with Shamans," Coyote offered.
"your tea is taking hold quicker than i remember. of course, the
Jimson Weed i added when you were not paying attention
might have something to do with that"*

i went to reply but in a moment there became a universe
spiraling within a torrent of light. i saw past my naive expectations
and marveled at the simplicity which lay before me. understanding my needs,
a great wind lifted me and carried me to a place of golden light. Coyote sat there
within a lotus flower, beckoning me to enter. he glowed with such intensity
that i could not directly look upon him, but rather felt,
both his presence in my mind, and in my soul

*"i cured the Jimson Weed for many weeks in anticipation
of this reunion. it will help you to understand
the nature of panspermia; the sounds of life
falling from space. the sounds are all around you.
can you hear them? no? the Jimson Weed will help.
it just needs more time. so, tell me, what is it that you took away
from reading through my journal? there's a lot going on in there"*

i struggled to vocalize what i thought the journal meant most to me,
but all that emanated from my mouth were streams of colors;
reds, blues, yellows, greens, purples, all the colors there were
and in various shades, even transparencies

*"yes," Coyote nodded in agreement, "it is a very complex work.
you have summarized it nicely."*

II

i slept till morning, when a particularly bright sunbeam
landed directly upon my waking eyes

life seemed to move as if i was in a dream
i was not certain if Coyote had really returned
or if it was all simply a fantastical dream
i sensed that Coyote was tired
more so than i had ever see him

*"i've made a quick meal for us," Coyote called from the kitchen,
"would you like some tea as well, or perhaps some ale?"*

so much for dreaming
i replied quickly and with a zeal that took me
by surprise. "Yes, some ale would be splendid."

Coyote brought our meal, and ale, into the study
where the fire remained burning
with an ever present sense of comfort

the meal was nothing fancy, a few pieces of cheese,
some apple slices and some rye bread that
was just this side of stale

*"i feel i must re-explore some of the more basic concepts
of life, or rather, the universe with you."*

Coyote took hold of several apple slices as he paused

"i read through your journal many times while you were gone,"
i began to explain, but Coyote quickly motioned me to silence

*"yes, i understand that. and you did well. that was not an
easy task to perform. but there are key elements that i must
know you are able to fully understand and grasp before
we can move on further."*

i will admit that i felt a bit as a child being chided for not
understanding a basic problem of arithmetic, or perhaps
not able to grasp the eloquence of cursive writing

*"no, Coyote waved his paw and flipped his tail," as if
he was reading my mind, "it's nothing at all such as that"*

i bit into a sharp piece of cheddar and stared into the fire

*"i have taught you to understand that everything is not as solid
as it appears, and it is we who make it so, correct?"*

my mouth filled with cheese, i simply nodded

*"but it is much more than that. far more. all matter,
essentially, is crystallized light slowed by thoughts, our
thoughts. everything around us, from rocks to animals to
human bodies, everything, is composed of light patterns,
shaped by consciousness. it is the nature of the universe"*

this caught me quite unawares and i began choking a bit on the cheese

*"i agree," the trickster continued, "it is a difficult concept to grasp
but a concept, none the less, that you need to master. you see"*

he continued on as he moved closer to me, so close
i could feel his breath upon me as he spoke

*"the universe, if you will, is mental, not material.
everything in the universe, everything, moves in cycles, rhythmic cycles,
expanding and contracting in a never ending cycle of life.
just like breathing. always in, and always out, and back in again"*

"so there is not an end to this, then?" i had managed to understand
what Coyote was saying, but it was still an illusive concept to master

*"see," he chuckled, "there's that time thing again. an ending,
a beginning. that is not time. time is not linear, but a spiral where
past, present, and future coexist with each other"*

"there must be some sort of time," i meekly asked. "what about
when we die? is that not the 'end' of our time?"

Coyote had moved back into the great easy chair and was lighting
his pipe. the house was very warm, the fire inviting. our meal
had filled us both and even though his teachings were abstract
i felt a great sense of understanding i had not felt before

"so you are talking of a deeper knowledge, a deeper understanding?"
i could hear my words being spoken but it did not seem as if i was speaking

*"yes, this is what I have been saying; knowledge can be communicated,
yes, but not wisdom. One can find wisdom, live with wisdom,
be sustained by wisdom, even do wondrous things in life through wisdom,
but one cannot communicate and teach it. It is simply not possible.
Wisdom must come to us not from textbooks or some genetic predisposition.
No, not at all. It must come from the self realization that life as a reality
is an illusion. A simple magic trick with which to entertain eager children
warming to the notion that everything is possible, if only you believe."*

*"death," he let out slowly with a fine wreath of smoke,
"is not an end. not at all. it is the release of compressed light,
the light we have captured and compressed during our time
on this plane that we have come to call our own.
upon our 'death' we release this light back to its source where it joins
and merges with the great light that is all of us, past,
present, and future. it is the one light. it is the universe"*

morning had given way to early noon and i felt myself drained

"if so many cultures throughout time," i asked Coyote,
"predicted the end of the universe, wouldn't it have happened by now?
How do you account for that?"

"perhaps it did end and nobody noticed," he replied

"that's absurd," i exclaimed. "How could they have not noticed?"

*"maybe the universe did end and a new universe unfolded,
enveloping the old into the new."*

Coyote sat in his chair, comfortably smoking

"so that would mean there would be multiple universes," i said,
"all wrapped up within each other. it doesn't make sense."

the conversation was irritating and pointless and i told Coyote as much

*"you readily dismiss that which you don't understand,"
he replied with a grin. "perhaps that is what makes sense."*

*"When you look into your lake," he asked, "do you see your reflection,
or have you really been in the lake all along and you're just now seeing
a reflection of yourself, out of the lake?"*

“how could i live in the lake?” i retorted. “it’s ridiculous.”

*“why? why is it not possible? because it is ridiculous, or is it because
you do not have the capacity to understand?”*

Coyote looked peacefully at the fire burning in my wood stove.
he seemed ethereal. here, but somewhere else as well

“i suppose that would explain a great many things,” i offered

Coyote’s tail swished lightly in the air.

“i suppose it would.”

III

for the next few days Coyote spent his time
reading through his journal, speaking with the local birds,
squirrels, and visiting, of course, with the big koi in my lake

at one point he told me he had some business across the valley
and packed lightly for his stay there

he directed me to continue on in my studies and when he returned
he promised that much more would be revealed to me

with that, he grabbed his walking stick and headed off,
though once again i noticed his gait was not as crisp,
as bright, as it used to be

—

an entire moon had passed since Coyote left, and i was anxious to know
what new adventures he had taken on

i eagerly looked towards the forest path each morning until
the morning appeared that had him humming to himself
walking straight for my house

“nothing grand,” he replied to my question, *“nothing grand at all. do you
remember my cousin, the blind Coyote that danced?”*

"the one from South America? how could i forget?"

"yes," he replied while looking straight at me. *"how could you forget?"*

A long silence ensued where i grew even more anxious wondering if Coyote was going to continue on with the conversation, or perhaps he was lost in deep meditation.

"i asked the mermaids to escort him up here several moons ago. they will be arriving soon."

"any special reason for the journey," i asked?

"there is a particular ceremony he will conduct that i would like you to participate in. it is an ancient ceremony, handed down by the great Huehucoyotl, the ancient Aztec Coyote god of music, dance, and storytelling."

Coyote had involved me in many of his rituals, usually accompanied with hallucinogenic experiences that opened me to far deeper understandings to the universe than i believed possible. what more could there be to understand?

"it is true, you have shown great advancement," he said, as if reading my mind, *"but there is yet another experience you need to master in order to go forward."*

a gentle wind ran through the trees leaving traces of cottonwood blooms dancing in the air. for the briefest of moments i heard dancing and music riding alongside the cottonwood blooms

"yes, i hear it as well," Coyote stated matter of fact.

then, with his trickster grin; *"my cousin will be arriving any time now. we must prepare."*

Striding in front of me, Coyote handed me my rucksack and headed

off deeper into the forest path. Sighing heavily as he spoke with purposeful over exasperation.

"indigenous people throughout the world, for thousands of years, have used natural plants and minerals to create psychedelic experiences so that their cultures might come to know a greater consciousness. did you hear me? thousands of years!"

i had heard this story played out a handful of times in the past, but never with this much righteous madness. truly, it was as if he had become possessed with a fervor i had not seen before

"natural substances! given freely by Earth Mother to ALL of her children. then came 'civilization'. then came the church. then the conquerors, which, arguably were one in the same. then the monarchies. until finally, politicians outright banned and made marijuana illegal, followed by more and more moral outrage against Earth Mother's gifts, leading up to the 'war on drugs', which led to the imprisonment of thousands of souls merely because they sought to expand their consciousness so as to understand the nature, the universe, they found themselves in. i ask you, in all earnestness; what is wrong with your supposed 'civilization'?"

we had stopped along the path in front of a grouping of large, immensely large, redwood trees that had left a deep layer of humus and debris on the forest floor

Coyote had taught me the many different varieties of forest mushrooms and i set upon collecting those specimens that would produce the most wonderful and magical effects
i had come to enjoy

"capitalism," Coyote shouted, as i bent to retrieve a dozen beautiful specimens

“what about it” i asked as i reached for a dozen more

*“if there was ever one major downfall to society, one practice so inhumane
and grievous that I shudder recounting its many perverse desires,
it would have to be capitalism.”*

“capitalism?”

*“yes. the entire concept is based on never ending growth in order to survive.
the moment it stops growing it withers away to a shadow of itself,
causing panic, hysteria, and a general malaise of the soul
that can only be described as wretched”*

“all hope is lost; whatever shall we do? that sort of thing?” i asked

Coyote stared at me intently for a moment before replying,
“a little melodramatic, don’t you think? but yes, capitalism is the great evil”

“i’m not sure if i would agree. what about politics?”

*“politics?” Coyote practically shouted the word in my face,
“you mean as in which political party is good, which is bad,
that sort of thing?”*

“i believe it is a fair question to ask”
this time, i was going to hold my ground

*“the question you should be asking is not which political party
is better than the others, or which country is more advanced
than the others. no, these are not the questions that should concern you.
neither should you concern yourself with how you deal with homelessness
or whether everyone should be equal in a just world. these, too, are only
arguments of confusion designed to encourage lesser minds to continue forward
with their unfair arguments with existence. the real question you should be*

*asking yourself is, what do birds dream? do they sing in their dreams?
do they have nightmares of not being able to fly and only being able to walk?
or do they believe in soaring ever higher to the heavens, flying past
the night sky and onto distant stars?
for it is only when man fully concerns themselves with nature
will their true evolution be revealed.”*

with our baskets full
we began our journey back through the forest
Coyote moving slower than usual
his gait measured, deliberate
as though each step required consideration

IV

the afternoon light slanted through the redwoods
 casting long shadows that stretched before us
 like fingers pointing the way home

“how long,” i asked, “until your cousin arrives?”

Coyote paused to catch his breath
 leaning against a moss-covered boulder

*“the mermaids have already begun their work
 swimming through dimensions to fetch him
 he should arrive when the moon is full again
 three nights from now, perhaps four”*

i adjusted the basket on my hip
 the mushrooms inside giving off their earthy scent

“what should i expect from this ceremony?
 is it like the sweat?”

*“nothing like the sweat,” Coyote said
 a strange smile crossing his weathered face
 “my cousin does not work with fire and steam
 he works with sound and darkness
 with the ancient rhythms that predate language itself
 Huehucoyotl’s gift to those who would listen”*

we walked on in silence
 the forest seeming to hold its breath around us
 even the birds had grown quiet
 as though they too sensed something approaching

*“you will need to fast,” Coyote continued
 “for two days before the ceremony
 drink only water and the tea i will prepare for you
 your body must be empty, your mind must be clear
 there can be no interference from the material world”*

i nodded, though uncertainty crept through me
 “and what will happen during the ceremony itself?”

Coyote stopped walking entirely
 turning to face me with those sharp eyes

*“my cousin will dance, though he cannot see
 he will sing, though the words are not in any language you know
 and you will sit in complete darkness
 listening to the sound of the universe breathing”*

a red-tailed hawk cried out overhead
 circling once, twice, three times
 before disappearing beyond the canopy

“that’s the first sign,” Coyote said quietly

*“the messengers are gathering
 they know what’s coming”*

as we emerged from the deep forest
 onto the path leading back to my home

i noticed the lake in the distance
 its surface perfectly still
 reflecting the sky like polished obsidian

and there, just visible on my dock
 two figures sat waiting
 their forms shimmering slightly in the afternoon light

“the mermaids,” i whispered

“yes,” Coyote replied

*“they’ve returned from their journey
 which means my cousin is already on his way
 perhaps sooner than i thought”*

he shifted his basket to his other arm
 wincing slightly with the effort

*“we have much to prepare
 and very little time to do so
 come, let us see what news they bring”*

we quickened our pace toward home
 the weight of the mushrooms in our baskets
 nothing compared to the weight of what was coming

V

as we approached the dock
 i watched Coyote’s gait more carefully
 the way he favored his left side
 how he paused every dozen steps
 to catch his breath

the mermaids rose as we drew near
 their usual playful demeanor replaced
 by something i had never seen in them before;
 a profound sadness that made the air heavy

one of them reached out
 touching Coyote’s weathered face
 her fingers trailing along his muzzle
 as tears formed in her luminous eyes

*“he arrives tomorrow at dusk,” she said softly
 “he has traveled far and moves swiftly
 the forest itself parts before him”*

Coyote nodded slowly
 setting down his basket with visible relief
 “good,” he said, his voice rougher than usual
“that gives us tonight to prepare”

i stood there holding my own basket
 watching this exchange
 feeling something cold settle inside me
 a realization i had been avoiding

“Coyote,” i began
 but he raised a paw to silence me

*“let’s get these mushrooms inside first
 then we’ll talk about what you’ve been
 too afraid to ask”*

we walked to my home in silence
 the mermaids following at a distance
 their presence a gentle escort
 as though guarding something precious

inside, Coyote collapsed into his usual chair
 with none of his typical theatrical flair
 just the honest exhaustion of an ancient body
 finally admitting its limits

i set water to boil
 my hands moving through familiar motions
 while my mind raced with questions
 i wasn’t sure i wanted answered

“you’re dying,” i finally said
 not a question but a statement
 the words falling like stones into still water

Coyote’s laugh was soft, almost tender
*“dying? my friend, i’ve been dying
 since the moment i was born*

*we all are, constantly, every moment dying
 but, yes, this particular essence of dying
 is reaching its inevitable conclusion”*

he reached for his enchanted pipe
 fumbling slightly with the matches
 until i moved to help him
 our eyes meeting in that small gesture

“how long have you known?” i asked

*“that i was dying? always.
 that my time was nearly finished?
 since before i brought you the journal,
 perhaps even before i met you”*

he drew deeply from the pipe
 the smoke curling around his head
 like a halo, or, perhaps, a shroud

*“the gods told me, you see,
 that you would be my last student
 the final human i would teach
 before returning to the earth”*

outside, i could hear animals gathering
 the soft sounds of paws and hooves
 dozens of them, perhaps hundreds
 coming to bear witness

“but your teaching isn’t complete,” i protested
 “there’s still so much i don’t understand
 about the journal, about time, about—”

*"about everything," Coyote finished
 "yes, i know. and that's precisely why
 my cousin must come"*

he leaned forward, his sharp eyes
 still bright despite his body's failing

*"i have shown you the door, my friend
 i have taught you to see through the veil
 to recognize the inter-connectedness of all things
 but there are rooms beyond rooms
 chambers i cannot guide you through"*

"why not?" i asked, though i feared the answer

*"because i am a trickster," he said simply
 "i work with illusion and revelation
 with the breaking down of false barriers
 but my cousin—he has walked in darkness
 for three hundred years
 he has seen with Huehuecoyotl's eyes
 the eyes that perceive what lies beneath,
 beneath matter, beneath light
 beneath consciousness itself"*

one of the mermaids appeared through the ceiling
 settling beside Coyote's chair
 her hand resting gently on his shoulder

*"he will teach you what i cannot," Coyote continued
 "he will show you the sound that shapes reality
 the rhythm that preceded light
 the dance that dreamed the universe into being"*

he paused, coughing slightly
 and i saw how thin he had become
 how his once-vibrant fur had dulled

*"i have loved teaching you," he said quietly
 "watching you struggle and resist
 then finally, beautifully, surrendering
 you have the gift, my friend
 the rare ability to hold paradox
 to be both skeptic and mystic
 both rational and ecstatic"*

"but you're not finished with me," i said
 hearing the desperation in my voice

"no," Coyote agreed, his trickster smile returning

*"but my cousin will be
 he will take you to the places
 where even tricksters fear to tread
 where sound becomes light
 and light becomes consciousness
 and consciousness becomes—"*

he stopped, shaking his head
*"but i'm getting ahead of myself
 or perhaps behind myself
 time is funny that way"*

through the window, i could see
 the forest had grown darker
 though sunset was still hours away
 as though the trees themselves
 were drawing closer, listening

*"he's near," Coyote whispered
 "my cousin moves through the forest
 and the forest recognizes him, it
 bends to accommodate his passage"*

the mermaids began to hum softly
 a sound like distant bells
 or water over ancient stones

*"tomorrow at dusk," Coyote said
 "we will meet him at the forest's edge
 and i will pass to him
 what i have carried for so long"*

he looked at me then
 with such affection and pride
 that i had to look away

*"you will understand, eventually
 why this had to be
 why one teacher must fall
 so another can rise
 why the trickster must step aside
 for the dancer in darkness to complete the task"*

outside, a coyote howled
 answered by another, then another
 until the forest rang with their voices
 a chorus of farewell
 and welcome
 and the eternal turning
 of all things toward their completion

VI

the next day we sat together on the dock
 as morning light stretched long across the water
 Coyote in the old stuffed chair i had brought out for him
 me on the weathered planks beside him

the lake had gone mirror-still
 reflecting clouds that moved like slow thoughts
 across the surface of the sky

*"he's close now," Coyote said quietly
 not looking at me but out toward the tree line*

*"i can feel him in my bones
 the way you feel thunder before it arrives"*

i wanted to ask how much time we had left
 but the question felt obscene
 like asking a sunset to explain its colors

instead, i watched a great blue heron
 wade through the shallows near the shore
 its movements deliberate and ancient
 as though it had been doing this
 since before humans learned to speak

"there's something you need to understand,"
Coyote said, his voice softer than i'd ever heard it
"about what comes next"

he paused, gathering his thoughts
or perhaps gathering his strength

*"my cousin will not teach you the way i have
with stories and tricks and laughter
he works with sound, with rhythm
with the vibrations that existed
before light learned to shine"*

the mermaids rose from the water then
three of them, their faces solemn
they climbed onto the dock without speaking
and began arranging something i couldn't quite see
small stones, perhaps, or shells
in a pattern that seemed to pulse with meaning

"you will need to trust him completely,"
Coyote continued
*"even when—especially when—
you cannot see what he is doing
even when the darkness feels absolute"*

i nodded, though fear moved through me
like cold water through reeds

the sun had dropped lower now
painting the western sky in shades of copper and rust
and i noticed how Coyote's fur
seemed almost translucent in this light
as though he were already beginning to fade

"i'm afraid," i admitted
the words coming out before i could stop them

"good," Coyote said, and his trickster smile returned
just for a moment

*"fear means you're paying attention
it means you understand the stakes"*

he reached out then
placing one weathered paw on my shoulder
and i felt the weight of everything he'd taught me
settling into my bones

"remember this," he said
*"when you cannot see the path
when the darkness is complete
and you think you've lost your way—
that's when you're closest to understanding,
that's when the real teaching begins"*

from the forest came a sound
not quite music, not quite voice
a rhythmic pulse that seemed to emanate
from the earth itself

the mermaids stopped their work
turning toward the tree line
their humming growing louder
harmonizing with the approaching sound

Coyote stood slowly
every movement deliberate
as though his body had become

something precious and breakable

"he's here," he whispered

and i saw him then
or rather, i saw the forest part
saw the trees lean back
as though making way for something sacred

a figure emerged from the shadows
moving with absolute certainty

despite the blindness Coyote had described
his steps fell in perfect rhythm
with the pulse that filled the air

the blind cousin had arrived
and the lake itself seemed to hold its breath
waiting for what would come next

The Dock

VII

he walked onto the dock without hesitation
his paws finding each weathered plank
as though he'd crossed this threshold
a thousand times before

his fur was darker than Coyote's
nearly black in the fading light
with silver streaks running through it
like rivers of starlight

his eyes were clouded white
yet somehow they seemed to see everything
looking through the surface of things
into their essential nature

the rhythmic pulse grew stronger
and i realized it came from him
from his breathing, his heartbeat
from the ancient song he carried in his bones

he stopped a few feet from where we stood
tilted his head slightly
and a smile played across his muzzle

"that's an odd sort of chair to have sitting on a dock,"
 he said, his voice rich and warm
 carrying traces of distant jungles
 and forgotten temples

*"but then again, you are an odd sort of a Coyote,
 aren't you?"*

Coyote laughed
 a sound both joyful and heartbroken
 and moved forward to embrace his cousin

they held each other for a long moment
 two ancient beings recognizing
 what words could not express

the mermaids rose higher from the water
 their faces radiant with something like reverence
 and began to sing in a language
 older than human speech

when the cousins finally separated
 the blind one turned toward me
 those white eyes seeming to pierce
 straight through to my center

"how can you see us if you are blind?" i asked
 the question escaping before i could stop it

he chuckled, a sound like distant thunder
"one does not need sight to see,"
he said, moving closer

"or did you forget when we met before?"

the words struck me like a physical blow
 and suddenly i was falling backward through memory
 through the sweat ceremony
 through the descent into darkness with the mermaids
 through dreams i'd forgotten upon waking

i saw him there
 in the cave's deepest chamber
 standing in shadows beyond the fire's reach
 watching as i learned to fly
 as i became the hawk
 as i split into two selves

he'd been there all along
 a presence i'd sensed but never quite seen
 a rhythm beneath the ceremony's rhythm
 a song beneath Mescalito's song

"you were in the cave," i whispered

"i am always in the cave,"
 he replied simply
*"just as i am always here
 always in the darkness where sight fails
 and true seeing begins"*

Coyote sank back into the stuffed chair
 his body seeming to deflate slightly
 as though he'd been holding himself together
 through sheer will
 waiting for this moment

"he has come far," Coyote said to his cousin
"farther than most humans ever travel"

*but there are chambers i cannot show him
songs i cannot sing*

the blind cousin nodded slowly
"you have done well, primo,"
he said, using a term of endearment
that carried centuries of affection

*"you have opened the doors
shown him the journal's light
taught him to see with more than eyes
now i will teach him to hear
with more than ears"*

he turned back to me
and i felt the weight of his attention
like standing before an ancient mountain
that has witnessed the birth and death
of countless civilizations

"the ceremony begins tomorrow at dusk,"
he said, his voice carrying absolute authority
*"you will fast until then
drink only water from the sacred spring
with small sips of the mushroom tea
my cousin has prepared for you
and you will prepare yourself for darkness
deeper than any you have known"*

the mermaids descended back into the water
their song fading to a gentle hum
and the sun finally slipped below the horizon
leaving us in twilight's uncertain grace

Coyote reached out one paw toward his cousin
who took it gently in his own
and i understood i was witnessing
something profound and final

the passing of a torch
the completion of one teaching
and the beginning of another

*"rest now," the blind cousin said to me
"tomorrow you will learn
what sound was before light
what rhythm was before form
what the universe sang
when it first dreamed itself into being"*

and with that he turned
walking back toward the forest
his steps still perfectly certain
still falling in rhythm
with the pulse that seemed to come
from the earth's own heart

VIII

when the blind cousin's footsteps faded
 into the forest's breathing darkness
 Coyote and i sat alone together
 on the weathered dock

the stuffed chair creaked beneath him
 as he settled deeper into its embrace
 and i sat cross-legged on the planks
 watching stars emerge one by one
 like ancient eyes opening

the lake had gone perfectly still
 a mirror of obsidian and silver
 reflecting the first constellations
 and somewhere in the reeds
 a heron called once
 then fell silent

"so," Coyote said softly
 his voice carrying none of its usual mischief
"we have come to this"

i wanted to speak
 to say something profound
 something worthy of all he had shown me
 but my throat closed around the words

he reached out a paw
 and i took it in both my hands
 feeling the warmth there
 the pulse still strong despite everything
 the rough pads worn smooth
 by countless journeys across countless seasons

"do you remember," he said
*"that day you found me
 tangled in superglue and leaves?"*

i laughed despite the tears
 that had begun to blur the stars

"you were so serious," he continued
*"so determined to rescue me
 as though i needed rescuing"*

"didn't you?" i asked

his eyes caught the starlight
 and for a moment they blazed
 with all the ancient fire
 that had guided me through visions
 through ceremonies
 through the breaking down of every wall
 i'd built around my heart

"perhaps," he said

*"or perhaps i was rescuing you
and simply made it look like an accident"*

the trickster's smile played across his muzzle
but gentler now
softer

*"everything i have shown you," he said
"the journal, the ancestors, the mermaids
the sweat ceremony, the flight as a hawk
...all of it was real
and none of it was real
in the way you once thought real meant"*

he paused
his breathing slower now
more deliberate

*"my cousin will show you deeper chambers
older songs
rhythms that existed before the first light
broke across the first morning"*

"but he is not you," i whispered

*"no," Coyote agreed
"he is not me
he is something older, wiser
something that remembers what i have forgotten
just as i remembered what humans forgot"*

a mermaid surfaced near the dock
her face luminous in the starlight
and she began to sing

a melody so ancient and so pure
it seemed to come from the lake itself
from the water's first dreaming

another mermaid joined her
then another
the lake was filled with their voices
weaving harmonies that spoke of endings
and beginnings
and the eternal spiral between

Coyote closed his eyes
listening

"they sing for you," i said

*"they sing for all of us," he replied
"for every teacher who has passed the torch
for every student who has opened their eyes
for the great turning of the wheel
that brings us all home"*

he opened his eyes again
and looked at me with such tenderness
such complete acceptance
that i felt something break open inside my heart

*"i am not afraid," he said
"death is only light
returning to light
consciousness releasing its grip
on this particular form
to dance in other forms
in other dreams"*

“but i will miss you,” i said
the words barely audible

“you will miss this,” he said
gesturing to his body

*“this fur, these paws, this voice
but i am not this
any more than you are
the body you wear”*

he leaned forward
and touched his forehead to mine
and in that moment
i felt everything we had shared
every vision, every teaching
every moment of laughter and confusion
flow between us like water
like light
like the breath we shared

“you are ready,” he whispered
*“more ready than you know
my cousin will take you further
into chambers where even i
could not follow”*

he pulled back
and slowly rose from the chair
his movements careful
deliberate

the mermaids’ song grew softer
more distant

as though they were descending
back into the lake’s great heart

“one last thing,” Coyote said
and that familiar mischief
flickered in his eyes

“what?” i asked

“the dock,” he said
looking down at the weathered planks
“really does need a new coat of paint”

and despite everything
despite the weight of farewell
despite the tears streaming down my face
i laughed

he laughed too
that wild, joyous sound
that had accompanied so many revelations
so many impossible moments

then he turned
and walked slowly down the dock
toward the shore
toward the forest
his silhouette growing smaller
more translucent
as though he were already becoming
part of the twilight itself

at the edge of the trees
he paused, and looked back

"remember," he called
 his voice carrying across the water
"everything is connected
everything is one
and you are never
ever
alone"

then he stepped into the shadows
 and was gone

i sat on the dock
 as night deepened around me
 the stars multiplying overhead
 the mermaids silent now
 the lake breathing softly

and i understood
 with a clarity that needed no words
 that this was not an ending

it was a doorway

tomorrow at dusk
 i would step through it
 into darkness deeper than any i had known
 guided by the blind cousin's ancient wisdom
 carrying everything Coyote had given me
 into chambers where new songs waited

but tonight
 i would sit here
 and let the grief move through me

let the gratitude fill me
 let the love we had shared
 settle into my bones
 like starlight
 like memory
 like the eternal promise
 that nothing truly ends

only transforms

the stuffed chair sat empty beside me
 still holding the shape
 of the teacher who had changed everything

and somewhere in the forest
 a coyote howled once
 long and clear

a sound of completion
 a sound of release
 a sound of joy

IX

dawn came slowly
as though the sun itself
was reluctant to begin this day

i woke on the dock
still wrapped in the quilt
i had pulled around myself
in the deepest hours of night

the stuffed chair beside me
empty

it was Coyote's chair

i could not bring myself to sit in it

the lake was perfectly still
a mirror of pearl and rose
reflecting clouds that had not yet
decided whether to hold rain
or release it

i rose stiffly
my body aching from the wooden planks
and walked to the shore
where the sacred spring water
bubbled up through stones

i knelt
cupped my hands
and drank

the water tasted of minerals
of earth's deep places
of something older than memory

this would be my only sustenance
until the ceremony began at dusk

this, and Coyote's mushroom tea

i returned to the dock
sat cross-legged on the weathered wood
and watched the sun climb
above the eastern treeline

the blind cousin had said

*"fast, drink only water
and my cousins tea
prepare yourself for darkness
deeper than any you have known"*

i closed my eyes
and began

the morning stretched out
in a silence so complete
i could hear my own heartbeat
echoing in my ears

no birds sang
no wind stirred the water
even the insects seemed to have withdrawn
into some hidden place

i sat
and breathed
and let the emptiness begin

memories rose unbidden
like fish surfacing in still water

Coyote laughing
his sharp nose dripping tears
as he explained the absurdity
of trying to control the journal

Coyote's paw in my hands
warm and rough
as we said goodbye

the journal glowing on my kitchen table
pouring forth images of temples
of evolution
of the universe forming
from a single point of light

the ancestors in the cave
Grandfather Bear's massive presence

Great-Great Grandmother Turtle's ancient eyes
Grandfather Coyote's knowing smile

the sweat ceremony
ascending through the chimney
descending into dahlias
the mermaids guiding me through darkness
Mescalito's voice welcoming me

flying as the hawk
feeling wind beneath wings
that were somehow mine
and not mine

all of it flowing through me
like water
like light
like the breath i drew
and released
and drew again

i opened my eyes
and the sun had climbed higher

midday approached
and with it came a strange heaviness

my stomach had stopped complaining
about the absence of food
but my mind had begun
to circle and question

what was i doing here?

what made me think
 i was worthy of these teachings
 of ceremonies conducted by ancient beings
 of wisdom that predated human civilization?

i was just a man
 sitting on a dock
 that needed painting

the doubt settled over me
 like fog rolling in from the lake

and then i heard it

singing

soft at first
 then growing clearer

i looked up
 and saw them rising
 from the lake's depths

the mermaids

three of them, in unity
 their faces luminous
 their tails catching sunlight
 and scattering it like diamonds

they circled the dock
 their song wordless
 but somehow speaking directly
 to the doubt in my chest

one of them surfaced close
 her eyes meeting mine

"you are ready," she said
her voice like water over stones

"you have always been ready
you simply needed to remember"

"but i don't know what's coming," i said
 "i don't know what he'll show me
 what he'll ask of me"

"no one ever knows," another mermaid said
surfacing on the other side of the dock

"that is the nature of initiation
you step into darkness
trusting that the darkness itself
will teach you"

"Coyote prepared you well," the third said
"he broke down your walls
showed you the inter-connectedness of everything
taught you that reality is not
what you were programmed to believe it was"

"now his cousin will take you deeper,"
the first continued
"into places where even Coyote
could not follow
into the sound that existed
before light was born"

they began to descend back into the lake
 their song fading
 but before they disappeared completely
 the first mermaid looked back

"we will be there," she said
"in the darkness
we will be there
we are always there"

then they were gone
 and the lake was still again

i sat
 feeling the doubt dissolve
 like mist in sunlight

the afternoon came
 and with it a strange quality of light

as i sipped mushroom tea
 the sun seemed to hang suspended
 neither rising nor falling
 just existing in a perpetual present

the lake became a perfect mirror
 reflecting not just the sky
 but something beyond the sky

i could see clouds
 and between the clouds
 spaces that seemed to open
 into other dimensions

time began to feel elastic
 stretching and compressing
 moments lasting hours
 hours passing in heartbeats

i drank more tea,
 and more water
 from the spring
 and each time i did
 i felt lighter, more transparent
 as though my body itself
 was becoming less solid
 more permeable to whatever
 was approaching

i thought about the blind cousin's words

"darkness deeper than any you have known"

what did that mean?

in the sweat ceremony
 i had experienced profound darkness
 descending through the dahlia
 into chambers where only Mescalito's voice
 provided any orientation

but the blind cousin spoke
 of something deeper still

and *"what sound was before light"*

how could there be sound
 before light?

didn't they emerge together
in the first moment of creation?

but then i remembered
Coyote's teaching
about the universe being mental
not material

consciousness first
then light
then matter

but what came before consciousness?

what was the sound
that called consciousness
into being?

i sat with these questions
not trying to answer them
just letting them exist
like ripples on water

the sun began its descent
and the light changed again

golden now
thick and honey-slow
pouring across the lake
turning everything it touched
into something sacred

i felt my heart begin to quicken

not with fear
but with anticipation

dusk was approaching
the ceremony would begin soon

i stood
stretched my stiff limbs
and walked once more to the spring

i drank deeply
feeling the water fill me
cleanse me
prepare me

when i returned to the dock
the stuffed chair sat waiting
still holding the ghost
of Coyote's presence

i did not sit in it
that was his place
and would always be his place

instead i sat on the planks
facing the forest
where the blind cousin
would emerge

the sun touched the western horizon
and the sky began to burn
orange and crimson
violet and gold

colors so intense
they seemed to vibrate
with their own frequency

the lake caught fire with reflection
and for a moment
everything was aflame
with dying light

i breathed
and felt myself empty
completely empty
a vessel waiting to be filled

no thoughts
no expectations
no resistance

just openness
just readiness
just the simple presence
of a student
waiting for his teacher

the sun slipped below the trees
and twilight came

that liminal time
between day and night
when the world holds its breath

and then i heard it;
footsteps

slow and certain
moving through the forest
toward the dock

the blind cousin was coming

i remained seated
my hands resting on my knees
my breath steady
my heart open

the footsteps grew closer

and i understood
with a clarity that needed no words
that everything Coyote had shown me
every vision, every teaching
every moment of confusion and breakthrough
he had been preparing me for
was for this

for whatever lay beyond
the threshold i was about to cross
i knew it was a darkness

deeper than any i had known

and i was ready



III

The Reveal



X

he emerged from the treeline
 carrying a clay vessel
 cradled against his chest
 something infinitely precious

his blind eyes fixed on nothing
 yet seeing everything

his feet found each plank
 with absolute certainty
 no hesitation
 no searching

he moved as though the dock itself
 rose up to meet him
 as though the wood remembered
 every footfall he had ever made
 across tens of thousands of years

he wore simple clothes
 undyed cotton

a woven belt
 and around his neck
 a necklace of seeds and bones
 that clicked softly
 with each step

the clay vessel steamed slightly
 in the cooling air
 and i could smell it

bitter
 earthy
 ancient

like soil after rain
 like roots pulled from deep places
 like something that had been brewing
 since the world was young

he stopped three paces from where i sat
 and set the vessel down
 on the weathered planks

then he began to move

not walking
 but circling

his hands tracing patterns in the air
 his voice rising in a language
 i had never heard
 yet somehow understood

the mermaids surfaced

all three of them
 forming a triangle around the dock
 their faces solemn
 their eyes reflecting
 not the dying light
 but something older

something that burned
 before the sun was born

the blind Coyote's voice grew stronger
 and i realized he was singing
 calling something forth
 from the lake
 from the forest
 from the earth beneath us

the wind died completely

the water became glass

the insects fell silent

the world itself
 was listening

he knelt before the vessel
 and his hands moved over it
 blessing it, or perhaps
 asking its permission

when he spoke
 his voice was no longer
 just his own

*“you have walked through fire
 and emerged
 you have descended into earth
 and risen
 you have flown as the hawk
 and returned”*

*“but tonight
 you will go deeper
 into the place before places
 into the sound before sound
 into the darkness
 that dreamed the first light”*

he lifted the vessel
 and held it toward the four directions
 east, south, west, north

then up to the sky
 then down to the earth

the mermaids began to hum
 a frequency so low
 i felt it in my bones
 in my teeth
 in the base of my skull

*“Huehucóyotl walks tonight
 the old, old Coyote
 the one who sang the stars into being
 the one who taught the first humans
 how to dream”*

“he comes through me

*as he has come through countless others
across time's great spiral"*

*"and he will show you
what cannot be shown
teach you
what cannot be taught
give you
what you already possess
but have forgotten"*

he brought the vessel to his own lips
and drank

his throat working
his face showing nothing

then he held it out to me

*"drink
and remember
what you were
before you were born"*

i took the vessel
feeling its warmth
its weight
its terrible significance

the liquid inside was dark
almost black
with a reddish tinge
like old blood
like rust

like the earth's own medicine

i brought it to my lips

the smell overwhelmed me
bitter beyond bitter
a taste that wanted to be refused
that the body recognized
as something powerful
something dangerous
something sacred

i drank
and then i drank more

it coated my throat
thick and viscous
tasting of vines and bark
of roots that had never seen light
of leaves that had drunk
a thousand rains

i drank again
and again
until the vessel was empty

the blind Coyote took it from my hands
and set it aside

*"now we wait
for the medicine to open you
for the doors to appear
for Huehucóyotl
to begin his dance"*

he sat across from me
 cross-legged
 his blind eyes fixed
 on the space between us

the mermaids continued their humming
 and i realized
 it was not one note
 but many
 layered and complex
 harmonics within harmonics
 a sound that seemed to come
 from inside my own heart

time began to stretch

the twilight deepened
 but did not become night

it hung there
 suspended
 neither light nor dark
 but something between

the dock beneath me
 felt less solid

not unstable
 but permeable
 as though i could sink through it
 if i stopped paying attention

my hands on my knees

looked strange
 too detailed
 every line and whorl
 standing out with impossible clarity

i could see the blood moving beneath my skin
 could feel my heartbeat
 not just in my chest
 but everywhere
 in my fingertips
 in my scalp
 in the soles of my feet

the blind Coyote's presence
 began to change

he was sitting there
 still and silent
 but he seemed larger somehow
 or perhaps
 more dense

as though he contained
 more space than his body should hold

his face began to shift
 not changing shape
 but revealing layers

i saw him as he was
 an old Coyote
 blind and weathered

but beneath that

i saw other faces
 hundreds of them
 thousands
 all the shamans and medicine carriers
 who had ever channeled
 this ancient presence

and beneath those faces
 something else

something that was not human
 not animal
 but older than both

a consciousness
 that had watched
 the first cells divide
 the first creatures crawl from water
 the first humans stand upright
 and wonder at the stars

Huehucóyotl

the old, original Coyote
 the trickster god
 the one who danced
 before dancing had a name

he was waking

i could feel it
 like a great wheel beginning to turn
 like a door opening
 in the fabric of reality itself

the mermaids' voices changed

no longer humming
 but singing
 in that language before language
 that sound that was not sound
 but pure vibration
 pure meaning

and i understood them

they were singing the world into being
 or perhaps
 singing it out of being
 so it could become whole
 once more

they were holding the space
 between creation and dissolution
 between form and formlessness

the dock began to pulse
 or perhaps
 i was pulsing
 and the dock was still

i could no longer tell
 where i ended
 and the world began

my body felt distant
 like something i was wearing
 rather than something i was

the blind Coyote spoke
 his voice coming from everywhere
 from the lake
 from the trees
 from inside my own skull

*“the medicine is opening you
 can you feel it?
 the walls coming down
 the doors appearing
 the darkness
 welcoming you home”*

i tried to answer
 but my voice was gone

or perhaps
 i had already answered
 and forgotten

time was no longer linear

i was sitting on the dock
 as i had always been sitting on the dock
 as i would always be sitting on the dock

past, present, future
 collapsed into a single moment
 that stretched into infinity

the blind Coyote stood

but he was no longer
 the blind Coyote

he was Huehucóyotl himself
 ancient and terrible and beautiful

his body seemed to contain
 galaxies
 his movements
 creating ripples
 in the fabric of space

he began to dance

slowly at first
 then faster

his feet striking the dock
 in rhythms that predated music

and with each step
 the world changed

the lake became a mirror
 reflecting not the sky
 but other worlds
 other dimensions
 other possibilities

the forest became transparent
 and i could see through the trees
 to the bones of the earth
 to the rivers of magma
 to the core of fire

the mermaids rose from the water

their tails becoming legs
 their bodies becoming light
 their voices becoming
 sound itself

the sound before sound

the vibration
 that called the universe
 into being

and i was falling

not down
 but in

into darkness
 yes

but a darkness that was alive
 that was conscious
 that was singing

a darkness that held
 all light within it
 waiting to be born

i tried to hold on
 to the dock
 to my body
 to my name

but they were already gone

i was dissolving

becoming
 the darkness itself

and Huehucóyotl's voice
 came from everywhere
 and nowhere

*"let go
 let go
 let go"*

*"this is what you came for
 this is what you have always been seeking"*

*"the place before birth
 the sound before light
 the darkness
 that dreams all things"*

and i let go

completely

and fell

into the infinite

into the eternal

into the sound

that was singing me

into existence

XI

then the darkness opened

and i saw

the journal

Coyote's ancient leather tome
floating before me
massive now
the size of continents
the size of worlds

its pages turning
not with wind
but with breath
with intention
with the pulse of creation itself
and the images i had seen before
static and glowing
were no longer still

they were alive

moving

breathing

the Great Pyramid of Giza
rising stone by stone
thousands of hands pulling
thousands of backs breaking
the sun beating down
as the monument climbed toward heaven

i could hear their songs
the workers singing
in a language i had never learned
yet understood completely

songs of effort
songs of devotion
songs of belief
that this would matter
that this would last
that this would touch eternity

and it did

and it didn't

because even as i watched it rise
i watched it crumble

not in sequence
but simultaneously

the pyramid being built
 and the pyramid weathering
 and the pyramid buried in sand
 and the pyramid excavated
 and the pyramid standing
 in a world of tourists and cameras

all at once

all the same moment

all equally real

Chichen Itza appeared beside it
 El Castillo climbing
 its perfect geometry
 its astronomical precision
 the Mayan architects
 calculating the equinox
 the shadow of the serpent
 descending the steps

and i watched them build it
 watched them worship there
 watched the Spanish arrive
 watched the jungle reclaim it
 watched archaeologists uncover it
 watched it stand empty
 beneath a moon that had witnessed
 ten thousand such cycles

Angkor Wat bloomed like a flower
 its towers reaching
 its galleries filling with monks

with incense
 with prayers that rose
 like smoke toward heaven

and i saw it abandoned
 roots breaking through stone
 trees growing from rooftops
 the jungle patient
 the jungle inevitable
 the jungle reclaiming
 what had always been hers

Göbekli Tepe emerged
 older than all of them
 older than agriculture
 older than cities
 older than the very concept
 of civilization

i watched hunter-gatherers
 carve those massive stones
 drag them into circles
 create the first temple
 before they even knew
 what a temple was

and i watched them bury it
 deliberately
 carefully
 covering their sacred site
 with earth and time
 preserving it
 for a future they could not imagine

all of human history
unspooling before me
not as a line
but as a tapestry
every thread visible
every moment present

Babylon rising
Rome expanding
Constantinople glowing
Tenochtitlan floating
on its lake of dreams

and all of them falling

all of them crumbling

all of them becoming
dust and memory
and archaeological sites
and tourist destinations

the cosmic movie played on

and i saw deeper

past the temples
past the cities
past humanity itself

i saw the first humans
standing upright
looking at their hands
as though seeing them

for the first time

i saw them discover fire
not by accident
but by watching
by learning
by understanding
that they could hold
the sun's power
in their palms

i saw them paint
on cave walls
in Lascaux
in Altamira
in Chauvet

not primitive scrawls
but art
sophisticated and intentional
capturing movement
capturing life
capturing the sacred relationship
between hunter and hunted

i saw them bury their dead
with flowers
with tools
with care

the first humans
to understand
that death was not an ending
but a transformation

and before them

i saw the animals

the great mammals
the dire wolves
the saber-toothed cats
the mammoths walking
across ice bridges
across continents
that no longer exist

i saw the dinosaurs
massive and impossible
their world so different
from ours
yet the same earth
the same sun
the same moon watching

i saw the first creatures
crawl from the ocean
gasping
struggling
learning to breathe
air instead of water

i saw the oceans themselves
forming
as the earth cooled
as water fell
from the sky
for the first time

and then

i heard it

the sound

not a sound i heard with ears
but a sound i felt
in every cell
in every atom
in the space between atoms

the first breath

the first vibration

the creation of wind

it began as nothing
as potential
as the possibility of movement

and then

consciousness stirred

not thought
not yet
but awareness

the universe becoming aware
of itself

and in that awareness
came desire

the desire to know itself
to experience itself
to move

and that desire
became breath

became wind

became the first vibration
that rippled through
the fabric of space

and that vibration
created sound

and that sound
created light

and that light
created matter

and that matter
created worlds

i understood it then

not intellectually
not as theory
but as direct knowing

wind was not
a meteorological phenomenon

wind was consciousness itself
breathing

moving through dimensions
moving through time
moving through space

the breath of the universe
inhaling and exhaling
creating and dissolving
forming and reforming

and i could see it

the wind moving
not just through our world
but through all worlds

through all dimensions

i saw these worlds

these dimensions

laid out
like sheets of glass
stacked infinitely

each one a complete reality
each one as real
as the others

and the wind moved through them all

connecting them

uniting them

making them one

i saw my own life
played out across dimensions

in one
i had never met Coyote
had never opened the journal
had lived and died
never knowing
what i was missing

in another
i had refused the peyote
had walked away from the cave
had chosen safety
over transformation

in another
i had died young
before any of this began

in another
i was not human at all
but something else
something that flew
or swam

or burrowed deep
in the earth

and all of these versions
were real

all of them happening
simultaneously

all of them me
and not me

all of them held together
by the same wind
the same breath
the same consciousness
experiencing itself
in infinite variations

past, present, future
collapsed into now

the Big Bang still happening
the heat death of the universe
already complete

my birth
my death
this moment on the dock
all occurring
in the same eternal instant

and i saw the pattern

the terrible, beautiful pattern

humanity rising
humanity falling

over and over

over and over

i saw civilizations
more ancient than Göbekli Tepe
civilizations that left no trace
because they were so thoroughly destroyed

i saw them build
with such hope
such vision
such certainty
that they had finally
figured it out

that they were different
from those who came before

that they would not fall
to the same arrogance
the same greed
the same refusal to listen
as their ancestors

and i watched them fall

every time

i saw the Atlanteans
building towers
that touched the clouds
harnessing energies
we have long forgotten

i saw them destroy themselves
in a single day
in a single night

i saw civilizations
in places now underwater
now desert
now ice

i saw them rise
with such beauty
such art
such wisdom

and i saw them collapse
always the same way

always forgetting
that they were part of nature
not separate from it

always believing
they were superior
to the animals
to the plants
to the earth herself

always taking
more than they needed

always building
higher than they should

always reaching
for power
instead of balance

and the earth
patient as always
would wait

and then reclaim

with flood
with fire
with earthquake
with ice

not as punishment
but as correction

not as vengeance
but as restoration

the earth shaking off
the infection of arrogance

and beginning again

and again

and i saw our own civilization
our current moment
playing out the same pattern

the same arc

the same inevitable fall

and i felt such sorrow

such overwhelming grief

for all the beauty we create
knowing it will crumble

for all the effort we expend
knowing it will be forgotten

for all the love we pour
into monuments and cities
and systems and structures
that cannot last

and in that moment
of complete understanding
of total surrender
to the futility and beauty
of human striving

something opened

a door i didn't know existed

a space beyond the cosmic movie

beyond the wind
beyond the dimensions

a silence

not the absence of sound
but the presence
of something deeper

and into that silence

came the song

low at first
so low i felt it
more than heard it

a vibration
that moved through water
through time
through the very fabric
of existence

the whales

singing

their voices ancient
beyond ancient

older than humanity
older than land mammals
older than the first creatures
that crawled from the sea

the whales
who returned to the ocean
who chose the deep
over the shallow

who remembered

what we forgot

their songs carried everything

the memory of the earth
before humans

the memory of the earth
after humans

the memory of all the cycles
all the risings
all the falling

they sang of the first waters
and the last waters

they sang of the ice ages
and the warming periods

they sang of the continents
drifting like dreams

they sang of the moon
pulling the tides
for billions of years

they sang of their own kind
 swimming through eons
 carrying the songs
 from generation to generation

never writing them down
 never needing to

because the songs
 were alive

were passed
 breath to breath
 mother to child
 elder to youth

the songs that held
 the planet together

the songs that reminded
 the earth
 of what she was

the songs that wove
 the dimensions
 into one

i heard them all

simultaneously

the humpback's complex melodies
 shifting and evolving
 across decades

the blue whale's deep pulses
 traveling thousands of miles
 through ocean darkness

the orca's dialects
 each pod speaking
 its own language
 its own history

the sperm whale's clicks
 echolocating
 not just through space
 but through time

and i understood

the whales were not
 just mammals of the oceans

they were the keepers

the holders of wisdom
 that transcended
 human cycles

they had watched us rise
 and fall
 and rise again

they had sung through
 our extinctions
 and our rebirths

they had carried the knowledge

of what we were
before we forgot

and what we could be
if we remembered

i saw them travel through space

through time

through dimensions

landing in our developing seas

where they sang their songs

for others who traveled with them

calling to them, reassuring them

this was a safe home

singing their songs

that held no judgment

only witnessing

only truth

only the vast, patient knowing
that all things pass

and all things return

and all things are held
in the great breathing
of the universe

i wept

not with sorrow now
but with recognition

with homecoming

with the understanding
that i had heard these songs before

before i was born

before i was human

before i was anything

these were the songs
that sang me into being

the songs that would sing me
out of being

the songs that would continue
long after
humanity's final fall

the songs that would welcome
whatever came next

and i knew

with absolute certainty

that this was what
Coyote had been preparing me for

not to save humanity
not to prevent the fall
not to break the cycle

but to hear the songs

to remember
that we are not separate
from the pattern

we are the pattern

rising and falling
like breath

like wind

like waves

and the whales sing on

holding it all

holding us all

in their ancient
patient
eternal
song

XII

the songs began to fade

not suddenly
but like tide receding

each wave pulling back
a little further
than the last

the whales' voices
still present
but distant now

moving through deeper waters
beyond the reach
of human hearing

the cosmic movie
that had played across
infinite dimensions
began to slow

the temples stopped rising
and falling

the civilizations held still
in their moment of glory
or collapse

the journal's pages
no longer turning

the images settling
becoming fixed again
becoming memory
instead of living presence

i felt weight returning

the weight of my body
which i had forgotten
for how long?

hours?
days?
lifetimes?

my legs beneath me
solid again
heavy
rooted to the dock's weathered planks

my hands in my lap
no longer dissolving
into light

but flesh and bone
and the particular arrangement
of atoms
that made them mine

the air grew cooler

or perhaps
i simply felt it again

the lake breeze
moving across my skin
raising goosebumps
reminding me
that i had skin

that i had boundaries

that i was separate
even as i knew
i was not

the dock beneath me
became solid

no longer pulsing
with the heartbeat
of creation

just wood
old wood
that needed paint

the chair

that old stuffed chair
 that had held me
 through whatever journey
 i had taken

felt real again
 its springs pressing
 into my back
 its arms worn smooth
 by years of use

when had i sat in the chair?

i opened my eyes

not knowing
 when i had closed them

the lake spread before me
 still and silver
 in what light?

dawn light

but which dawn?

the sun was rising
 painting the water
 with soft pink and gold

and i understood
 with a shock
 that felt almost physical

that this was not
 the same dawn
 i had watched
 before the ceremony began

the blind Coyote sat
 across from me

patient
 unmoving
 his sightless eyes
 somehow seeing
 everything

and beside him

Coyote

my Coyote

but so faint now
 so translucent

i could see through him
 to the trees beyond

his form wavering
 like heat shimmer
 like something
 barely holding on

the mermaids floated
 in the air above the dock

three of them
 a trinity
 their faces solemn
 their eyes holding
 both sorrow and celebration

they had been here
 the entire time

watching
 witnessing
 holding space
 for what was unfolding

“three days,” the blind Coyote said
 his voice gentle
 but certain

*“you have sat here
 for three days
 and three nights*

*drinking nothing
 eating nothing
 moving nothing*

*but traveling
 oh, how you have traveled”*

three days

i tried to comprehend it
 but the number
 felt meaningless

what were days
 compared to what i had seen?

what was time
 when i had witnessed
 all time
 simultaneously?

the blind Coyote turned
 toward where Coyote sat

though he could not see him
 he knew exactly
 where he was

“cousin,” he said
 and his voice carried
 such tenderness
 such ancient affection

“you have succeeded

*the task you were given
 so many turnings ago*

*the task you have attempted
 with so many humans
 across so many ages*

*this one
 has heard*

*this one
 has seen*

*this one
has understood”*

Coyote’s faint form
seemed to brighten
just slightly

and i saw him smile
that trickster smile
i had come to love

but there was no mischief in it now
only peace

only completion

“*he is ready,*” the blind Coyote continued
“to carry what must be carried

to speak what must be spoken

to teach what must be taught”

then he turned to me

and though his eyes
could not see
i felt them
looking into me

through me

seeing everything
i had become

*“you have been given
a great gift,” he said*

*“not the gift
of special knowledge*

*not the gift
of power over others*

*but the gift
of remembering*

*you have remembered
what humans forgot*

*that you are not separate
from the web of life*

you are the web of life

*you are the whale song
and the wind*

*you are the temple rising
and the temple falling*

*you are the first breath
and the last*

*you are consciousness
experiencing itself*

*and now
having remembered*

you must teach”

the weight of his words
settled over me

not as burden
but as calling

not as obligation
but as purpose

“go forth,” he said
and his voice
was no longer just his voice

it was Huehucóyotl speaking
the ancient one
the eternal one
the god who dances
through all time

*“go forth
and find those
who are ready to hear*

they will not be many

*they will not be
the powerful
or the famous
or the certain*

*they will be the ones
who have begun to suspect*

*that everything they were taught
was a beautiful lie*

*they will be the ones
who hear the whale songs
in their dreams*

*they will be the ones
who feel the wind
and know
it is consciousness
breathing*

find them

teach them

*not with doctrine
not with dogma
not with rules
or structures
or hierarchies*

but with stories

with visions

*with the direct transmission
of what you have experienced*

*remind them
that they are not separate*

remind them

*that the animals
are their teachers*

*remind them
that the earth
is not a resource
but their mother*

*remind them
that death
is not an ending
but a transformation*

*remind them
that they have heard
the whale songs before
and they will hear them
again”*

he paused

and in that pause
i felt the full weight
of what he was asking

not asking

not commanding

commissioning

*“this is your work now,” he said
“the work that Coyote*

began in you

*the work that i
have deepened*

*the work that will continue
long after
your body returns
to the earth*

you will not save humanity

that is not your task

*humanity will rise
and fall
as it always has*

but you will plant seeds

seeds of remembering

*and some of those seeds
will take root*

*and some of those roots
will grow*

*and some of those growths
will flower*

*and those flowers
will scatter their own seeds*

*and the remembering
will continue*

*even through
the next fall*

*even through
the next rising*

*the remembering
will continue”*

i wanted to speak
to ask questions
to protest
that i was not ready
not worthy
not capable

but no words came

because i knew
with the same certainty
that i had known
the whale songs
were true

that this was true

this was my purpose

this was why
Coyote had found me

why the journal
had opened for me

why the ancestors
had welcomed me

why the mermaids
had guided me

why the blind cousin
had come

i looked at Coyote
his form so faint now
barely visible
in the morning light

and i understood
that he was leaving

not just leaving the dock
but leaving
this world
that i called home

his task complete

his student
finally ready

he met my eyes
and in that look
was everything
we had shared

all the laughter
all the teachings
all the frustration
all the breakthroughs

all the love

“thank you,” i whispered
though i knew
the words were inadequate

he nodded once

and then
like morning mist
burning off
in the rising sun

he was gone

the mermaids descended
their hands touching my face
my shoulders
my heart

“he is proud of you,” one whispered

“he always knew,” said another

“and we will stay,” said the third
*“we will always be here
when you need us”*

then they too
faded

not gone
but returning
to whatever realm
they inhabited

leaving me
and the blind Coyote
alone on the dock

he stood
moving with that same
impossible certainty

*“i will return
to the south,”* he said

*“but you know
how to find me*

*you know
how to find all of us*

*the teachers
are always present*

*for those
who have learned
to see”*

he walked off the dock
his footsteps certain

his path clear

and i sat
in the old stuffed chair
watching the sun
climb higher

feeling the weight
of what i carried

the whale songs
still echoing
in the deepest part
of my being

the visions
still burning
behind my eyes

the knowledge
that i was both
infinitely small
and infinitely vast

and i understood

my journey with Coyote
was complete

but my larger work

my true work

had only
just
begun

but where to begin?

a mermaid popped back in

"perhaps you should write a book?"

EPILOGUE

before he left for the south
the blind cousin
placed his hand on my shoulder

*“sit with what your Coyote
last taught you,” he said*

*“the word that was spoken
that made him leave
in disappointment*

*reflect on it now
with everything you have seen*

*and you will understand
why he returned”*

so i sit now
in the old stuffed chair
returned from the dock
to its place by the fire

the flames dance
casting golden light
across the room’s familiar walls

the same walls
that have held me
through all these transformations

but nothing is the same

the fire pops and hisses
an oak log splitting
releasing its stored sunlight
back into the room

and i remember

panspermia

the word that broke everything
that day so long ago
when i tried to contain
Coyote's revelation
in scientific terminology

when i reduced the vision
of life showering down
like rain from space
to a Greek philosopher's theory
from the 5th century BC

Anaxagoras

i can still see
Coyote's face
falling

the way his joy
collapsed into sorrow

the way he gathered
his journal and left me
to contemplate
my immense arrogance

but he came back

and now
after three days
on the dock

after the ayahuasca
opened every door
i didn't know existed

after the whale songs
taught me
what the universe remembers

after witnessing
the journal's visions
made living cinema
across all dimensions

i understood

panspermia is not
a reduction

it is not
intellectual betrayal

it is both
the scientific fact
and the sacred mystery

it is the word
that holds everything

the fire crackles
and i see it again

life falling
from space
like rain

not metaphor
not poetry
not theory

but actual
literal
truth

consciousness
crystallized into form
showering down
upon the earth

the first bacteria
riding comets

the first amino acids
forming in the void

the first spark
of what would become
everything

falling

always falling

like rain

and i remembered
what Coyote said
in that moment
before i ruined it
with my knowing

he said
he could hear it

the sound
of life falling

like rain on leaves
like rain on stone
like rain on water

a sound that never stops

and now
after the ceremony
after the whale songs

i could hear it too

not with my ears
but with whatever part of me
learned to listen
in the darkness

the sound of life
continuously arriving

from space
from other dimensions
from the eternal source

falling into form
falling into being
falling into this moment

right here

right now

the fire shifts
and i see
in its dancing light

that this is what
the whales were singing

this is what
they have always sung

the memory
of that first falling

the memory
of consciousness
choosing form

the memory
of the universe
deciding to experience itself

through bacteria
through fish
through dinosaurs
through mammals
through humans

through everything

panspermia

the word contains
both the science
and the sacred

it says
life comes from elsewhere

it says
we are all travelers

nothing here
originated here

we are made
of elements
from the stars

consciousness
precedes form

the universe is mental
not material

we are the universe
experiencing itself

all of this
in one word

the Greeks knew
but they knew it
as philosophy

the scientists know, too
but they know it
as hypothesis

Coyote knew it
as lived truth

and now
i also

know it as truth

the fire burns lower
and i add another log

watching the flames
climb and dance

thinking about
how to teach this

how to help others
understand

that the word
is not the enemy
of the mystery

that science
is not the opposite
of sacred

that *panspermia*
is both
the falling rain
and the eternal song

both
the measurable fact
and the immeasurable truth

i think of those people
the blind Coyote said
would be ready to hear

the ones who suspect
that everything they were taught
was a beautiful lie

the ones who hear
whale songs
in their dreams

the ones who feel
the wind
and know
it is consciousness
breathing

how do i find them?

how do i speak
to them that
which cannot be spoken?

how do i teach
what can only be experienced?

and then i remember

the journal

how it taught me
not through words
but through visions

how it broke down
barriers
not through argument
but through direct transmission

how it showed me
rather than told me

and i understand
instantly

i will tell stories

i will share visions

i will speak
of Coyote
and his blind cousin

of mermaids
and whale songs

of ayahuasca darkness
and cosmic light

of the journal's
infinite pages

and somewhere
in the telling

those who are ready
will hear

not the words
but what lives
beneath the words

not the story
but what the story
points toward

like rain
remembers

that they too
are travelers

that they too
fell from space

there is an understanding
of something more

something crucial

the doors that opened
in the sweat ceremony
in the ayahuasca darkness

those doors
do not close
they remain open

the peyote showed me
how to see

the ayahuasca showed me
what to see

but the doors themselves
remain open

always

i can feel them now
even here
by the fire

the threshold between worlds
no longer locked

and i realize
with sudden clarity

that sounds can open them wider

music can open them wider

words can open them wider

a phrase
a rhythm
a story told right

can trigger
the same expansion
the same vision

without the medicine

this is the mechanism

this is how the teaching spreads

not through sacrament alone
but through resonance

through the vibration
of language itself

when i speak of Coyote

his blind cousin

when i describe
the mermaids rising
from lake depths

when i tell of
the journal's golden light
and the whale songs

i am not just
recounting events

i am creating triggers

sonic keys
that unlock
the doors in others

the ones who are ready
will hear a word
a phrase
a rhythm

and suddenly
they will be there

in the vision
in the knowing
in the direct experience

without ever touching
peyote or ayahuasca

without ever drinking
mushroom tea

because the doors
once opened in me
can open in them

through story
through song
through the careful arrangement
of sound

this is why
the blind cousin
lives as Huehucóyotl

god of music
god of dance
god of storytelling

because story
is the medicine
that needs no preparation

story
is the trigger
that travels

that they are both
infinitely small
and infinitely vast

the fire burned down
to glowing coals

i will speak
of Coyote
and his blind cousin

i will speak
of Huehucóyotl

outside
the lake is still

the stars are bright

somewhere
in the forest

Coyote is resting

his task complete

his student
finally understanding

that *panspermia*
is not a word
that diminishes magic

it defines it

i will help people
feel the doors opening

so they might
step through
and see within

this is why
telling the story matters

not to inform
but to transmit

not to explain
but to trigger

not to convince
but to open

doors that remain
forever open

waiting only
for the right sound
the right word
the right story

to swing them open
wide

people will hear
the sound
of life falling

the falling
and the song
that life brings

the science
and the sacred

the rain
and the remembering

all at once

i close my eyes
and hear it

the whale songs
still echoing

the sound
of life falling

the sound
of the universe
breathing

the sound
of everything
returning home

and i know

this is where
i begin

and then

a mermaid's face appears
above me
in the ceiling
where there is no ceiling

her smile is radiant
her eyes full of knowing
and she giggles
a sound like water
like starlight
like the universe
remembering how to play

i laugh with her

and the image dissolves

into sound

the crackle of the fire
the hum of the coals
the soft pop
of a log settling

the sound of life
continuing

the sound of breath
moving through wood
through air
through time

the sound of the lake
outside
listening

the sound of stars
burning
in their patient way

and beneath it all

there is a sound
i cannot name

but recognize

as truth

as home

as the beginning
that never ends.

Other works by dave boles:

Do Aluminum Chickens Eat Metal Feed?

Media Dissertation Of A Balding Man

A Small Answer To A Large Question

ALIVE IN AMERICA: Politics,
Psychedelics & An Illuminated Monkey

CABO DAYS

4th Floor: Paranoia, Depression
& Other States Of Mind

Confessions Of A Black Ink Junkie

15 Days To Slow The Curve -
One Mans Journey Into The
Heartland Of Absurdity

Jonny Vee: Psychedelic Detective
And The Gringo Shaman

A Journey Through Diverse Mysteries

About The Wedding

Coyote Magic

Coyote Vision

Coyote Spirit

OFFERINGS

Homage To A Word

Visions Of A Merciful Land

WAR



Dave (Bodhi) Boles operates at the intersection where ink meets impulse, where the page becomes a launching pad rather than a landing strip. As a Publisher, Editor, Writer, and Designer, he's built a body of work that refuses to sit still—appearing in publications both national and international, leaving fingerprints on the literary landscape like a benevolent vandal with impeccable taste and a doctorate in divine mischief.

His journey began in the early 80's with Primal Urge, a magazine that functioned less as periodical and more as detonation device. From that initial explosion bloomed three publishing houses—Neural Impulse Publications, Cold River Press, and Bodhidharma Publishing—each one a different frequency on the same wild radio dial, each one proof that one good idea, properly nurtured and sufficiently unhinged, can spawn entire ecosystems. Devoting these last two decades to Cold River Press, Dave has published many and numerous poets and writers, some known, some not, but all with words, with stories, that needed to be told. For the past fifteen years he has also published VOICES, an eclectic anthology of poetry, prose, photography and art, contributions sent from around the globe.

His chapbooks and books read like transmissions from a parallel dimension where humor and profundity share the same zip code: *Media Dissertation Of A Balding Man* contemplates follicular and media suspicion with the philosophy and

gravitas it deserves; *A Small Answer To A Large Question* does exactly what it promises taking a sideways look at Beat poetry with characteristic sleight-of-hand; *Do Aluminum Chickens Eat Metal Feed?* asks the questions others are too timid to pose; and *Confessions Of A Black Ink Junkie* wears its addiction proudly on its sleeve. His full-length works—*OFFERINGS*, *ALIVE IN AMERICA*, *15 DAYS TO SLOW THE CURVE*, *COYOTE MAGIC*, *COYOTE VISION*, and *COYOTE SPIRIT*—map a territory where the personal becomes mythic and the mythic expands to include the everyday.

Beginning as protégé to the acclaimed poet and alternative publisher Ben L. Hiatt, Dave inherited Hiatt's mantle of Okie Surrealism, that peculiar strain of American vision that sees the desert bloom with impossible flowers and finds the sacred hiding in the profane. He carried Hiatt's torch into the digital age, pondering how a philosophy born of dust and distance translates to fiber optics and infinite scroll, how the old magic adapts when the world itself moves at the speed of light. Then came D.R. Wagner, who taught Dave to see the magick that was already there—not as metaphor or literary device, but as a living presence woven through the fabric of the everyday. Where Hiatt gave him the language and lineage, Wagner gave him the eyes and heart to perceive and the hands to document what most people walk past without noticing. Between these two mentors, Dave learned that the task is not only about writing the world as it appears, but about revealing the world as it actually is; stranger, more luminous, and infinitely more generous than consensus reality would have us believe.

Dave's job résumé reads like a game of career roulette played by someone who keeps betting on whatever number feels right in the moment. Small press journalist, Printer, High Tower Rigger, Long Haul Trucker, Radio Talk Show Host, Renaissance Faire Magician, Costume and Bodice Merchant, and yes, there was that brief, ill-fated stint as a Life Insurance salesman—a chapter that ended, as he'll tell you, "rather poorly." He's also an eclectic traveler known to drift in changing directions at the drop of a hat, which is less character flaw and more operating system, less wandering as much as following the scent of whatever's calling next.

His body is a gallery of tattoos, each one a permanent commitment in a life otherwise devoted to beautiful impermanence. A lifelong gearhead and self-proclaimed speed freak, Dave customizes cars, trucks, and motorcycles with the same attention he brings to a sentence—understanding that both are about finding the perfect bal-

ance between form and function, between what looks right and what moves fast.

Somewhere along the way, he earned a Doctorate in Divinity and founded *The Church of The Illuminated Monkey*, where he holds the position of Gringo Shaman. This is not performance art. This is not irony eating its own tail. This is a man who understands that the sacred doesn't require solemnity, that enlightenment might arrive riding a joke, and that the divine has always had a sense of humor about itself.

Though traveling and living widely, these days, Dave resides at Lake House with his wife, Mrs. America, and a collection of animals who've found their way to what he calls "*The Illuminated Monkey's Home For Wayward Poets And Socially Bereft Humans*." His lifelong friend Mescalito still keeps watch, sending a Red Hawk to check in from time to time—because even shamans need someone looking out for them, even poets and publishers need reminding that the world is stranger and more generous than any story they could write about it.

Lake House stands as sanctuary and laboratory, a place where the lost find themselves and the found lose themselves just enough to remember why they started searching in the first place. It's where Dave continues to publish, to write, to design, to drift—always moving, always making, always listening for the next impulse, primal or otherwise, that will carry him toward whatever comes next.

COYOTE SPIRIT (first printing), is published in an edition of 200 copies.

Text: Body is Adobe Garamond Pro, 12pt leading 15pt. Headings are in Book Anitqua Bold, 14pt leading 16pt, stretched 124 percent horizontally, with a horizontal tracking of +25. Page numbers are Adobe Caslon Pro, 11.5 pt.

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Author bio photo is by Mrs. America.

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In this, the third book in Dave Boles' COYOTE SERIES, Coyote returns to reclaim his leather journal that contains the visions of time itself, bringing with him a teaching that will shatter everything the narrator believes about reality.

But though Coyote is returning, he is dying. And before his time ends, he must summon his ancient cousin from South America—a blind trickster who dances in darkness and carries the wisdom of Huehucóyotl, the Aztec god of music and transformation.

Through sacred ceremonies in forest caves, through visions of cosmic fire and whale song, through encounters with mermaids who have traveled galaxies for hundreds of thousands of years, the narrator continues to be drawn into an ancient quest for knowledge that questions the very nature of consciousness, matter, and existence.

In COYOTE SPIRIT, the boundary between vision and reality dissolves. The universe reveals itself as mental, not material. Time is not linear but a spiral where past, present, and future coexist, and where the narrator discovers that the doors of perception, once opened, remain forever ajar.

This is a book about becoming awake while dreaming.

It is an initiation, disguised as a story.

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