

**"And then . . ."**

**I am NOT coyote . . .**

I am bear, I am bobcat, and raccoon . . .  
I am opossum, raven, and ringtail . . .  
I am fox and turkey vulture . . .  
I'm hungry . . .  
I must eat . . . something to eat, this must be meat . . .  
I smell . . .

**and then . . .**

I lived my place in the world, and the world lived through me  
and now, I am dead.

**I'm a playful dog**

It's good to be outside, running . . .  
I'm so happy!  
Look a toy . . . some fun, o boy! let's have some fun . . .  
I bite . . .

**and then . . .**

PAIN!  
Whining, whining, whining . . .  
PAIN, PAIN!  
BLEEDING from my ears and nose and mouth.  
PAIN, OH PAIN!!  
PARALYZED . . . I fall over.  
PAIN, FEAR . . . then . . .  
CONVULSions . . . CONvulsions . . . con-vul-s-i-o-- n----s  
MY LIFELESS BODY . . .  
PINK foam drains from my nose, my eyes glassy . . .  
I'm a good dog, I WAS a good dog,  
"Good boy, good boy!" they would say  
as I smiled, and wagged my tail.

**My name was Max,\* I was someone special**

Because . . .  
I loved someone and they loved me,  
and now . . . I am dead.  
**and now . . . I . . . am . . . dead . . .**

**I'm a curious child**

*I never seen this before, what is it?*  
I touch . . .

**And then . . .**

*(End of poem, Source on next page . . .)*

## M-44s lure animal with smelly bait, kill with cyanide | © The Sacramento Bee

By Tom Knudson - [tknudson@sacbee.com](mailto:tknudson@sacbee.com) / April 30, 2012 12:00 AM, Updated October 08, 2014 09:35 AM

As she walked through the quarry looking for decorative flagstone, Sharyn Aguiar noticed that Max, her 2-year-old German shepherd, was missing.

She shouted, but the dog did not respond. She shouted louder – still no Max. Worried, she walked down the dirt road where she'd last seen him.

There was Max, lying in the brush, dead. "He had a salmon-colored foam coming out of his nose and a glassy look in his eyes," Aguiar said. "I was screaming, 'No, no, no.' It was horrible. I sat there for a long time, crying and crying."

On that windy afternoon in Utah in 2006, Max joined the ranks of thousands of non-target animals – wild and domestic – that have been mistakenly killed by one of the most lethal tools in Wildlife Services' arsenal: spring-loaded metal cylinders that are baited with scent and fire sodium cyanide powder into the mouth of whatever tugs on them.

Known as M-44s or coyote-getters, they have been deployed across the West to protect livestock for seven decades. This spring, two congressmen, John Campbell, R-Irvine, and Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., introduced a bill that would ban the cyanide cylinders because of their threat to people, pets and wildlife.

"When I was working, they killed grizzly bears. They killed black bears. They killed cows. They're indiscriminate, even placed with the utmost care," said Carter Niemeyer, 65, a former Wildlife Services district supervisor.

The agency's deputy administrator, William Clay, defended the devices. "Generally, there is not a problem with non-targets," Clay said. "They (M-44s) are pretty much canid specific. But, of course, canids means dogs and things like that. Every now and then a skunk or a raccoon will take it."

Agency records show that more than 3,400 animals have been mistakenly killed by M-44s since 2006, including black bears, bobcats, raccoons, opossums, ravens, ringtails, red fox, gray fox, kit fox, swift fox, turkey vultures and dogs.

At least 18 employees and several members of the public have been exposed to cyanide, too, over the past 25 years. None died, but many were treated for nausea, blurred vision and other symptoms.

"It's mind-boggling that these toxic devices are still being used," said Brooks Fahy, executive director of Predator Defense, an Oregon environmental group. "It's not: Will someone be killed? It's when. They are ticking time bombs and do not distinguish between species."

M-44s are hollow metal tubes 5 to 7 inches long that are driven into the ground, loaded with 0.9 grams of sodium cyanide and coated with the smelliest bait possible.

An agency fact sheet says that employees place the devices strategically "to minimize the risk of attracting non-target animals." It also says that M-44s – unlike leg-hold traps – kill rapidly. "Unconsciousness, followed by death, is very quick, normally within one to five minutes after the device is triggered. Animals killed by sodium cyanide appear to show no overt signs of distress or pain."

But Rex Shaddox, a former agency trapper who has watched dogs die from M-44 poisoning, disagreed.

"It's not a painless death," he said. "They start whining. They start hemorrhaging from their ears and nose and mouth. They get paralysis and fall over. Then they start convulsing and they're gone. They are suffering endlessly until they die. It'll make you literally want to puke."

In Utah, Max's death is still felt by Aguiar, whose claim for \$1,500 in damages was rejected by Wildlife Services.

"I have concerns about the government settling cases with dog owners because it is all too easy for someone to intentionally take a dog into an area posted with signs with the intention of getting the dog killed," wrote Michael Bodenchuk, then-state director of Wildlife Services in Utah, in a memo about Aguiar's claim.

"That is the most ridiculous thing I have ever read," said Aguiar. "It was out of line, outrageous and unbelievable."

She also said no warning signs were posted at the quarry where Max died.

Aguiar has not replaced her dog. "The day M-44s are finally banned," she said, "will be the day I get another German shepherd."