

Coyote Winters

I keep seeing that coyote. In fact, it has been haunting me since last fall. That “tiny brown glitch in a distant field of blond wheat stubble”. It weighed about 90 pounds and had been squeezed into smaller and smaller territories, relentlessly hunted year after year because it was a coyote. This time was no different.

It wasn't being hunted because it had damaged the environment, stolen pension fund money from widows, started brush fires illegally or held the wrong faith. It was being hunted because it was born a coyote. Because it knows how to watch, how to catch a scent and circle its prey, trotting the miles away as needed, how to wait for the moment.

It doesn't do this using upgraded gear, new technology or additional weapons. It was born a coyote and so it has all of what coyotes have: pack-sense, tracking savvy, quickness, patience, and good feet for long travel over hard ground. It doesn't know how beautiful its pelt is, tanned and trimmed, made into slippers. Or hung on a barn wall.

Some, like John B., make their living by being good at hunting coyotes and teaching others to hunt coyotes. And kill them. Well, in this case, with this coyote, “hunt” is not exactly the best word choice. It takes all the machinery, bait, and technology so far imagined and invented by humans to out-match this coyote.

This time, John shows up with his electronics and gear: loudspeakers, wire, batteries, spotting scopes, , AR-15 Range-Finder scope, shotguns, binoculars, coyote-urine scent oils, camouflage hat and clothes and rifle, remote controlled digital caller, hand-held callers, plus a working knowledge of what precise calls of coyote and rabbit bring coyote in closer for a look-see. John's knowledge of sound is legion, he can accurately imitate the pack's call to dinner, the cry of wounded rabbit, and the distress sounds of death of the coyote's natural prey. He has mastered the howling call used during denning season when the coyote and its mate are calling in the pups for food and safety. He broadcasts these calls with speakers onto the land of coyote-hating ranchers and landowners, to their eventual delight when he meets with success.

I work and wait for the day such Neanderthal-like behavior is no longer the norm here. Not to give those early hominids a bad rap, but they went the way of climate change, maybe their own ignorance was also causal. Meanwhile, as we try to improve on the human experience of interconnection and kindness, this is not beyond possibility. Until then, may as well give up, tiny brown glitch, John's got you bested and beat.

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