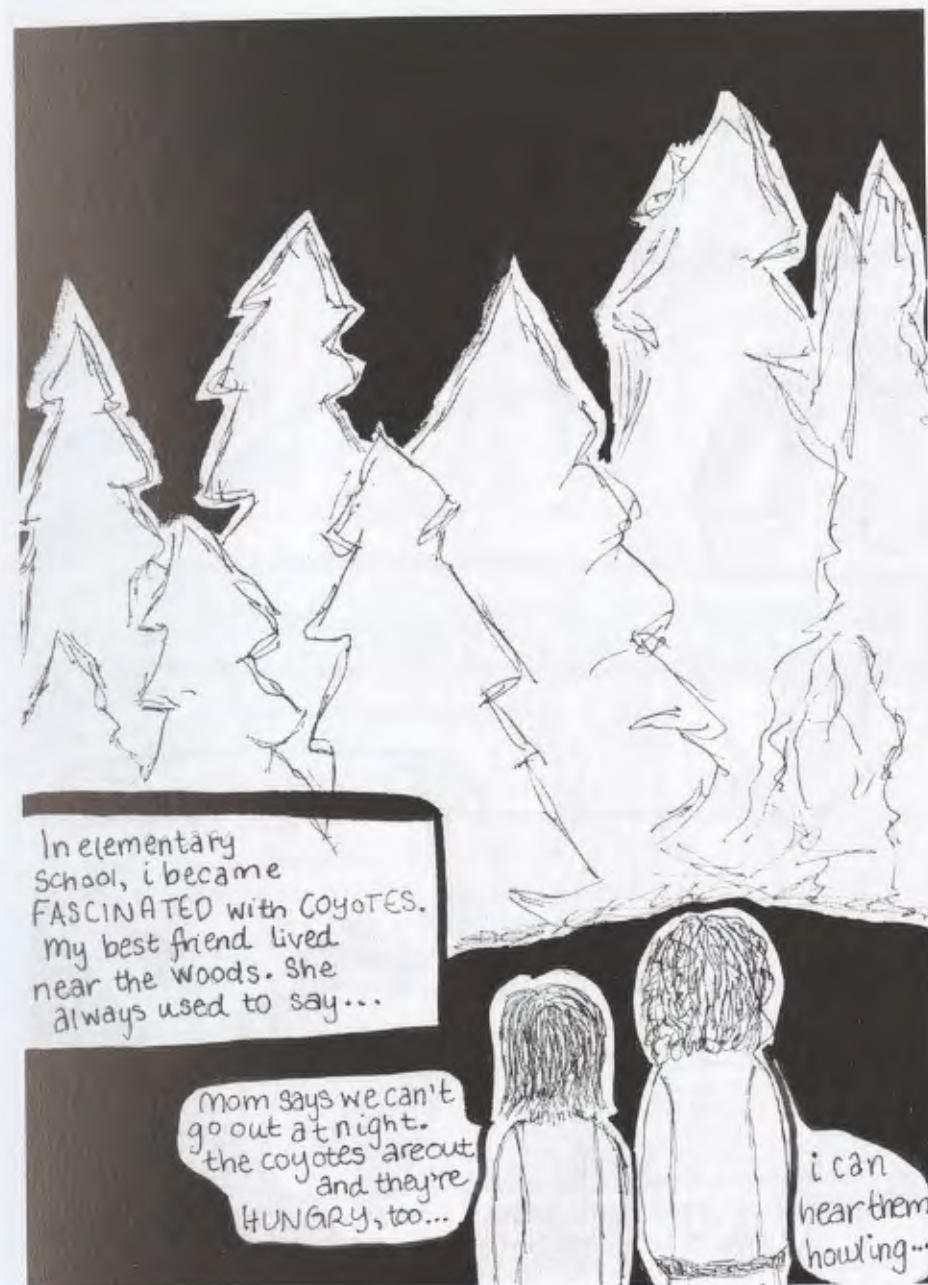


# Coyote—Lonely

Frankie Spring







i was a little afraid of them. so i watched some documentaries to find out more about them.

the documentaries told me coyotes were intelligent, adaptable, bold, and opportunistic.



all things i wanted to be.

the first time i actually saw a coyote, i was mountain biking at Potato Creek State Park with my family. i was alone, far ahead of them.

red fur flashed before my eyes.



it saw me and darted away. it was just as majestic as i had always imagined.

You might wonder why i wasn't more fond of the wolf, an animal far larger and more domineering.

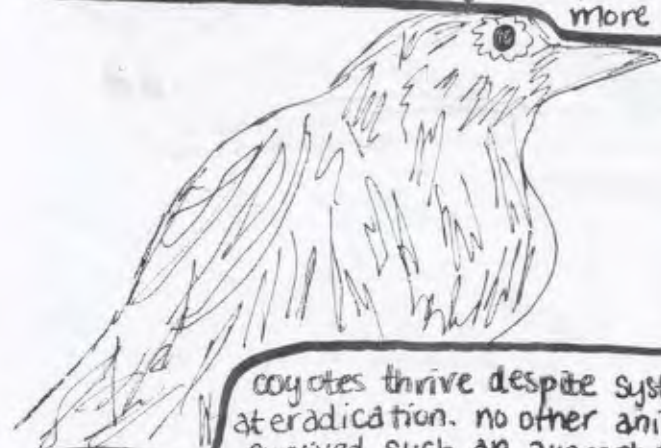
Every year in Yellowstone, as much as  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the coyote population is killed by wolves. But coyotes breed like rabbits and their numbers keep growing.



The answer is simple: the power of predators at the top of the food chain is unambiguous and, to me, uninteresting.



Stories of survival from the ranks of the scavengers, the hunted, the crows and coyotes of the world, are far more admirable.



coyotes thrive despite systematic attempts at eradication. no other animal has ever survived such an attempt to stamp it out.



So why have i spent so much of my life chasing after people who overshadow my landscape like a wolf on the hunt?

i have long been drawn to worshipping people who behave like they're BETTER than me.

...from my preschool best friend with her pretty green dresses ...

LUCY,  
the  
PERFECT  
GIRL

FRANKIE!  
Pick up my toys!

OK...

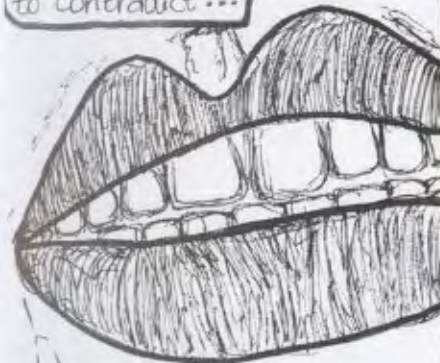
3 days worth  
of CLUTTER

To my Parents, who i still  
can barely force myself  
to contradict ...

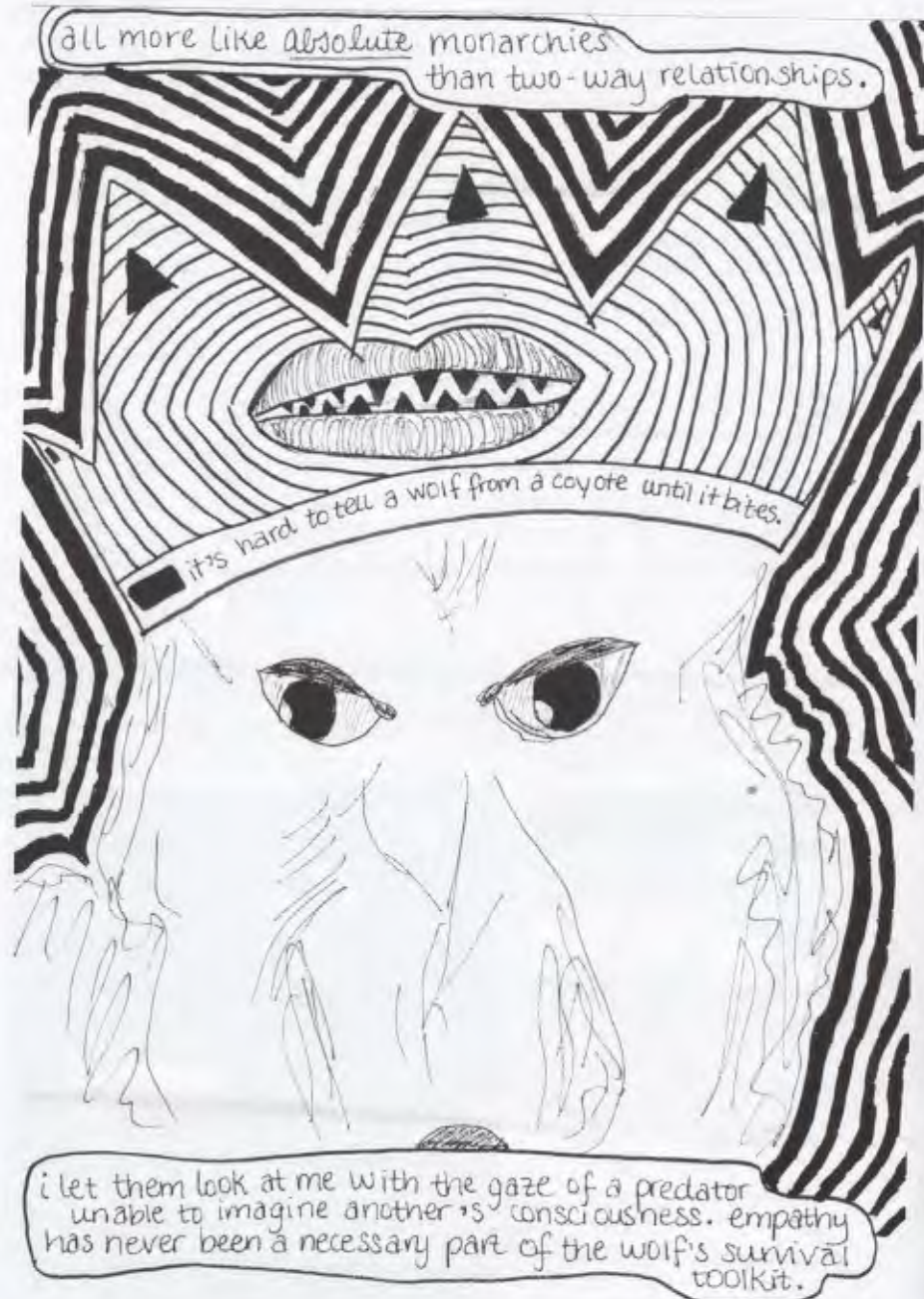
To cruel lovers whose anger  
sent me scuttling like a  
cockroach for dark space,

CRAMPED

but safe.









The other night, i was driving home from Michigan on a back-country road. my drunk friend was asleep in the passenger seat. my drunk boyfriend was asleep in the back.



i was just looking at the moonlight hit brittle corn stalks when a coyote emerged from between the tall yellow rows.

i slowed down. he glanced back at me.

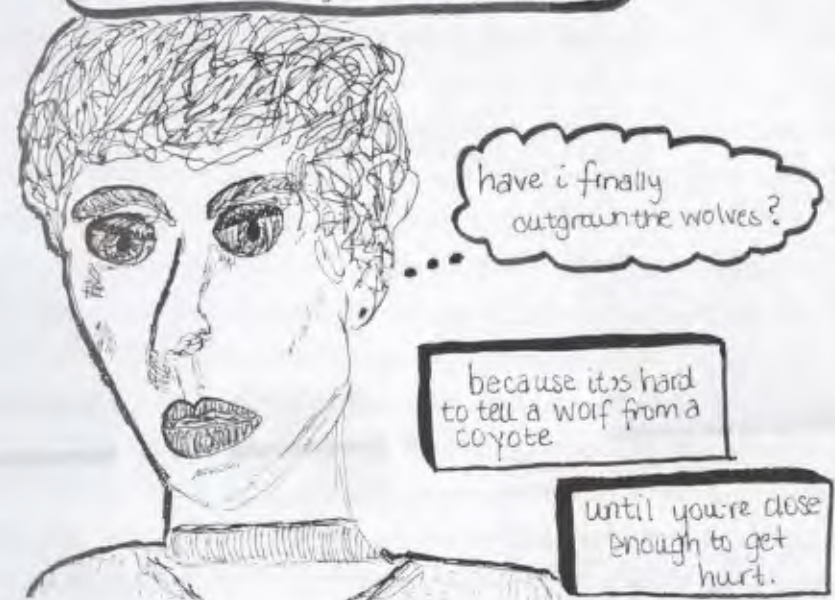


and trotted across the street.

i didn't know whether the coyote was chastising me or congratulating me or whether it had no message for me at all. but all the fascination of my childhood came back to me. i glanced at the calm and dreamless face pressed against the window of the passenger seat, and then the backseat.



and all the way home i wondered:



have i finally outgrown the wolves?

because it's hard to tell a wolf from a coyote

until you're close enough to get hurt.