

Raven's Love is an Omen

Crow! Crow! The wicked trickster!
 Gypsy dog, she saw you as a fingerprint
 to her black eye;

saw your lolling tongue hang open,
 saw it glisten in the day and swallow
 worlds at night. And she was right
 in her own way: you are mirth and the gray
 blur at the corner of a prey's vision: spirit
 of the trick.

Taking chaos to feast like a suitor,
 she was an oracle. Crow took one look
 at Raven's love, made off like a storm
 was coming.

Saw something neither you nor I could
 see past us.

Crow's Prophecy is Cruel

Daughter of First Coyote,
 there is a cruel irony here:

When First Coyote was busy creating
 the world, the glassy lakes and the woodpecker's
 rhythmic hunt—while he was busy with the fin flip
 of a fresh-spawned trout and the fall of mammoth
 beasts

he forgot about you.

That one day you would come, howl feral, love
 through the grin of your teeth.

And so when Coyote was created,
 mirth smiled, spun her
 a birth in jest.

The Trick

Coyote, you are the trickster whose fate
 was tricked. The joke, after all was never
 your laughing jaws or pointing teeth, savage
 heart or slide of mind, but simple irony

of an omen. Crow cried out blood-call,
 so the heavens rearranged

and it was true. Crow pressed her eyes
 to the jugular of time and prescanned

your story. Stole psalms from your life,
 traded them back sullied or poisoned.
 But she was right, my gypsy beast: you took
 to dying. Your body rebelled and pocketed

your skin. You grew yellow and thin. Slipped in
 and out of hospitals, the stink of man;

took medicine. Until one night the bottle rang.
 You answered howling.

Coyote, Who Tricked the Gods

Coyote, who tricked the gods,
 is continually resurrecting—
 they have played with time.

Coyote, called coma girl, eater
 of man-made poisons

was handed the trick of eternal.

Great small Coyote who spent youth
 beating at the gods and stalking

through life, sees more than Crow,
 laugh's lazy, sometimes—
 sometimes in pain.

Coyote, Raven loves you.
 Your thinning beast of yellow skin

Carrion, Squawked Crow

1.

You are the trickster, unraveled;
 I caught sight of you as the games tore on,
 landed on your carrion life, cocked my head
 to the left,

Said: Coyote, there's a gleam about you; I have
 an eye for the finer things, for the possession.

Said: I don't care who has previously
 laid claim to you. I don't care

what bodies are on the way. And you laughed

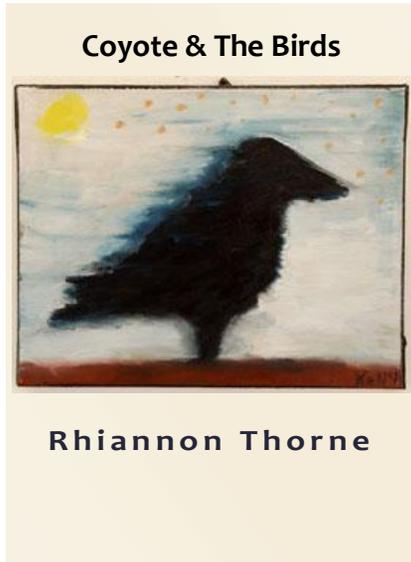
tongue fat and pink, lolling against your
 bright white teeth.

2.

Crow caught wind
 and crooned Carrion! Carrion!
 you were death and spoils
 to the things you touched—

Death and spoils to flesh and love.

for Kate Hammerich



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Coyote & The Birds
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