

Coyote and the North Wind

Long ago, the Indian people lived out in the open air more than they do now. Wind was an important part of nature to them. The wind carried clouds to different parts of the country and cleaned the odors from the air.

The wind helped to cool the hot, dry summer days. Wind helped to dry the clothes after a good washing in the river. Wind also helped to dry the meat and the fish, as it hung to dry for the long winter.

This is a story my mother told me of Coyote and the North Wind. I will share it with you. Maybe you will be able to tell it to someone someday.

Many years ago when animals lived like people, Coyote was angry with North Wind. When Coyote was hunting, the North Wind would blow the grass and scare away the rabbits. When Coyote would try to sleep, the North Wind would wake him up.

Coyote decided he would trap the North Wind. Coyote set all kinds of traps of many sizes. He set them by the river. He set them in the tops of trees. He set them in the tall grasses or wherever he could see the wind blowing things. He worked very hard but could not trap the North Wind. North Wind was just too fast for him.



Coyote tried four times and failed each time. Coyote called to his brother and sister, "Come out and help me! Tell me what I'm doing wrong!" They answered him saying, "No, you do it yourself. You always know more than anyone, or at least you think you do!"

Coyote became angry. "I'll make it rain hard, if you don't help me." he growled.

His brother and sister didn't like to hunt in the mud, so they agreed to help him.

Coyote's brother and sister told him, "Set your trap over on top of the knoll on that hill." As always, Coyote said, "That is just what I thought." Coyote acted like he knew it all the time. Without even thanking them, Coyote set off to trap the North Wind.

He set the trap on top of the knoll just as they had told him. The next day, Coyote trapped the North Wind.



Coyote was so happy at his success, he danced and sang two whole days and nights. The wind didn't blow for a long time. Coyote kept North Wind trapped on top of the knoll.

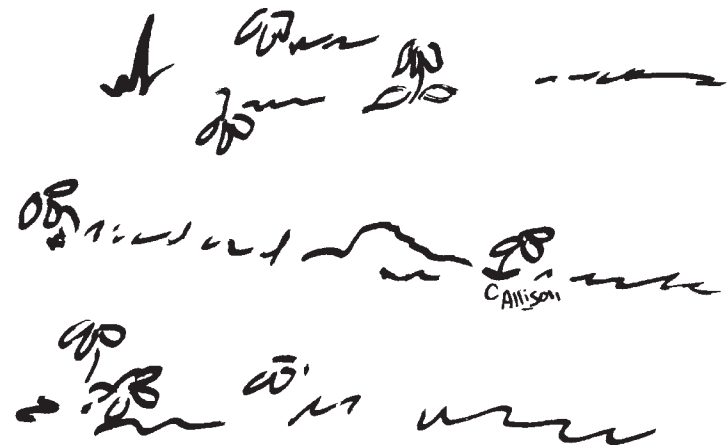
Then one day, Coyote became very warm. The sun was shining very bright. Coyote thought of North Wind trapped on top of the knoll on the hill. Coyote decided to let North Wind loose.

“North Wind will blow a cool breeze,” thought Coyote.

Coyote was singing as he climbed to the top of the knoll. He was thinking. “How cool North Wind will feel blowing through my fur.”

Coyote let North Wind out of the trap. “Blow North Wind! It is so warm today. You might do us some good!” said Coyote in a rude voice.

North Wind was free once more to blow across the trees and grasses.



“North Wind! We are so glad to see you. Please, blow your cool breeze and cool us off!” the animals shouted, as they jumped up and down with joy. “North Wind, we are so glad to see you!” sighed the trees. “Our leaves are waiting for you to blow them off. It’s getting late and soon the snow will fall!”

North Wind was glad his friends all missed him. “I will help you all,” said North Wind, “but I am going to teach Coyote a lesson.”

North Wind blew very very gently the first day.

Coyote hollered at North Wind, “Blow harder! It’s warm today!”

North Wind just looked the other way and gently ruffled the leaves as he passed over the trees.

The second day, the sun shone very bright. North Wind was blowing just a tiny bit harder.

Coyote went out into the desert to hunt. As he walked and ran through the sagebrush chasing rabbits, he became very warm. He called to the North Wind, “Can’t you blow harder?” But North Wind closed his ears and gently rippled the grass as he moved across the fields.



Coyote woke up early on the third day and went to the river to wash his clothes. As Coyote hung his clothes up to dry, he thought to himself, "Hmm, North Wind is blowing a little harder than yesterday but still not hard enough to dry these clothes." So Coyote called to North Wind, "Blow harder! My clothes are wet! Can't you blow harder?"

North Wind was busy blowing flower seeds across the meadow.

The fourth day came and North Wind was blowing a little harder than he was yesterday.

Coyote went off to pick berries with the other animals. Skunk was picking huckleberries from a bush next to Coyote. "That North Wind only blows when you don't want him to!", Coyote said to Skunk.

"You just want your own way," said Skunk and walked away.

Coyote went over to Porcupine who was picking berries near the river. "I trapped the North Wind!" boasted Coyote, "He's not as windy as he thinks he is!"

The animals picked up their baskets of berries and walked away from Coyote. They didn't like to hear Coyote talk about their friend that way.

North Wind peeked at them from behind one of the clouds he was chasing across the sky.

The morning of the fifth day, Coyote woke up and sleepily crawled out of his tepee. He had been up late cleaning his berries and spreading them out to dry. North Wind saw Coyote and blew across the hill with a strong gust of wind.



“Is this hard enough?”
howled the North Wind. He blew
Coyote head over heels, rolling
him down the hill and knocking
him out.

When he woke up he told his
brother and sister, “Oh, I just went
to sleep for awhile.”