



* Stories of Knowing Otherwise *

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Coyote Gets Ugly

It was not the first time, nor the last time. But one day Coyote walked out of the sagebrush and stepped through the doors. He walked down the aisle between the seats and sniffed. He cocked his head and focused his piercing gaze on each passenger he passed. No one took notice of him. He found a seat next to a very fat lady who was eating chocolate bars and reading *The National Inquirer*. He sat down after the usual struggle to fit his tail under the armrest. Coyote had learned to travel in many ways since the Old Days. Airplanes and boats bored him. He could do that better with a flick of his tail. He never learned to drive a car himself. But there was something about the Greyhound Bus he could not resist.

When he had sorted out the smells of all the people and knew where they had come from, what they had eaten, where they were going and what they had done in their lives, he began to howl. No one seemed to notice. He stopped and scratched his ear with his hind foot and watched the fast food joints and hard, square buildings of the yet another right-angled town pass by the window. He had been here, too, he remembered. He had been everywhere and would be again. He stopped scratching and watched a flea jump from his hairy testicles onto the fat lady's arm. She turned a page of her paper to an article on a child raised by monkeys. Coyote had never learned to read words. But he understood pictures. He looked at the hairy little girl with the chimpanzees and shook his gnashed his teeth.

He jumped up and raced the length of the bus aisle, snatched a sandwich out of a child's hand, and leapt back to his seat in one motion. The child cried. It's mother scolded it. Coyote gagged and vomited up the processed baloney. He was hungry and lonely. It made him peevish. Sometimes he wished he was bear or eagle. But they had no sense of humor. He yipped and cyoo-ed. He gnashed his teeth again and thought of the way people were when they walked

the earth. His tail went to sleep. He decided to rape the fat woman.

As he stood up in his seat to attack her she spoke without looking up from her paper. "You have a beautiful voice, Mister. I never heard a man sing like you do." Coyote caught himself in mid-air. He looked at her soft cheek and dark eyes. Leaning close, he brushed her ear with his cold nose. A hideous screeching sound followed, then a crashing and smashing and people screaming. The bus rolled off the highway and down among the cactus plants. The fat woman found herself sitting some distance from the burning wreckage. She was scratching her arm with her fingers. Looking down, she saw a fleabite turning red. There were bodies lying all around. Everyone else was dead.

Coyote looked over his shoulder once. He farted. Then he trotted off to find a rabbit for dinner.

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Leslie Emery