

At his last intake of breath, he smells grass with a hint of soap, a whiff of fresh bread. The medical alarms, the rhythmic hiss of an oxygen pump start to sound like a looping tune, the beginning of a track by Soft Machine. He remembers for the last time.

He looks down at his hands. They are small. They grip silver glittered grips of his tricycle. A Brook Stevens design. He studies the big tube of the body of the tricycle like the fuselage of a mighty jet fighter, the nose a shiny ruby red cone of translucent plastic. He is not wearing shoes. The rubber pedals feel reassuringly warm on this feet, the little stars embossed in the black bars are slightly sharp against his soles.

The grass is freshly cut and the lawnmower is in the driveway. His father has washed off the errant blades with a big green hose. The water quickly evaporates, a crust of chopped green chlorophyll around the edges of the puddles. His father keeps calling to him and he looks to his right; he is holding a black leatherette box of a Brownie camera, peering down into its little crystal window. Behind his father is the criss cross white of a fence he has recently built around the yard. The boy loved to play in the front yard with his yellow tin truck. He liked touching the freshly painted wood and running his hands along the bevels his father carefully cut with his Craftsman table saw. He liked hearing the saw motor wind up to full speed and watch as the v-belt vibrated on the pulley, watch the plume of sawdust and take in the fresh smell of cut fir.

Father was talking to his mother and she made bashful sound to him. He wanted her to stand closer to her son. The boy bent his head back and could see her chin and shock of black wavy hair, her unfocussed dark eyes looking toward the camera. She wore a rayon dress with gold and green paisley patterns that fit her tightly. She didn't want her picture taken. But she acquiesced, removing her apron and put it inside the front door.

His father made a few clicks, but the boy only remembers this picture: in front of the house, his mother looking at some point over his head, the smart tassels on his tricycle overexposed and the taillights of the 1956 Mercury Monterey peaking out behind the edge of the house on the right.

Just a few blocks north is the Barbara Ann Bakery that puffs out the deeply arousing smell of yeast and flour from its steaming stacks. On the building sign is a painting of a pretty blond haired girl with pigtails wearing a blue print dress, her head tilted slightly.

His mind returns to a feeling, like the moment the roller coaster reaches its apex and begins its downward hurl. The feeling of unreality of this situation. His parents, this world, even his small body are a series of incomprehensible symbols. Glowing runes overlay the everyday language of existence. Behind the runes a network of lines of force. Is he real? His parents? Is it a false set with flats for the fronts of buildings, everything a gossamer thin illusion? Is this memory that he is their son a grand figment, as grand as the beaming sunlight, the warm grass and the growl of cars passing down the street?

The boy that is a dying man comes back to the moment. His body cannot exhale, his brain projects shimmering light into the back of his eyes. "It is time to return to my beloved mountains," he hears clearly, "Your real name is Coyote. A new adventure begins."