

"Midnight, a whisker before. I wake up, the kind of wideawake with no dreams still lingering. The yard light is on, casting shadows across the old Turkish rug. I fumble for spectacles, none that I can locate in the darkness and right now I want no turning on and off of electric lights.

Binoculars, from bird watching down to the water meadows, are on the old Victorian pine table. Gratefully I flip off their covers and focus through the window. The white mare, sharp as ever, has her head up and scanning; I follow her gaze and for the next five minutes there is enchantment.

Two coyotes dancing on the lawn. Feinting, circling, front paws asplay and crouching, a look cast sideways across a shoulder. The mare's head is up but I notice the frosted plumes of her breath are steady and slow. "No threat just right now," drifts into my mind from hers but I notice she has blocked her body between the coyotes and her stablemate appaloosa still picking at hay snippets from their late night feed.

The pair slam dunk, roll over each other, then stand, face to face and noses a whisker apart. One leans forward and licks the top corner of her mate's mouth. They grin, panting foolishly, join shoulders and, minds suddenly decided, trot briskly towards darkness and the creek.

In the morning, I stop on the way to the barn and there in the snow are their tracks, a dance still."