

On Coyotes and Quarantine

By Julie Little

I have been hearing them all winter. In the early morning, their howls and yips ring out through the quiet forest as they call to one another. I always stop to listen, enjoying the sound of the coyotes talking to each another in their strange canine language, grateful to live so close to the wildness of these mountains.

This morning was different. As I sat sipping my coffee in the early morning darkness, the howling and yapping began, but closer than ever before—they seemed to be right outside the yard. Their sounds rose loud and frantic in the still air, sending chills through me. The dog next door joined in with his long, wolf-like howl. The eerie chorus rose all around me, and I peered through my window into the blackness, seeing nothing.

I know the coyotes won't hurt me, and I'm not afraid of them. But their close, hungry presence this morning felt like a metaphor as I sat with my face pressed to the window, staring out into the darkness at an unseen predator yipping and howling around me.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the many emotions of quarantine: fear, anger, frustration, guilt over not being able to do more, loneliness, grief, even joy and hope. But mostly it's just easy to feel helpless. We sit in this unknown, listen to the howling, and wait.



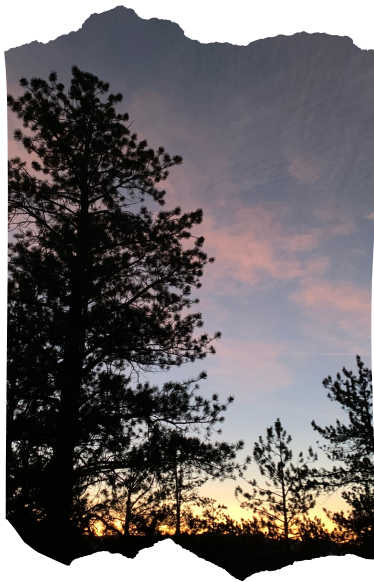
This is the verse God gave me after the noises outside my window abruptly ceased all at once, and silence returned to the morning:

"In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and in trust shall be your strength." (Isaiah 30:15)

We are saved by returning to Him, by resting.

We gain strength in quietness and trust.

This is what my churning heart needed to hear this morning. In all the frustration over all the things I cannot do or don't know how to do right now, He's saying, stop.

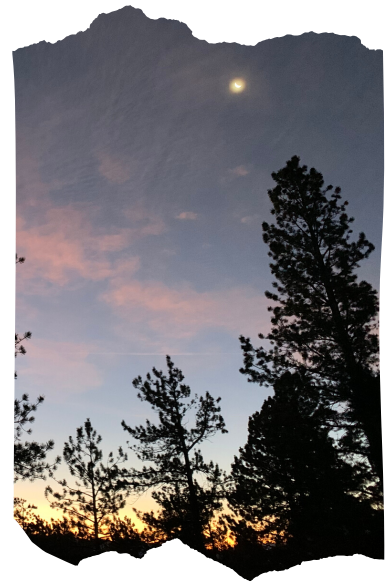


First, return.

First, be quiet.

Trust.

Wait.



That reminded me of another promise.

*"Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning."
(Psalm 30:5)*

The pink-edged clouds grew lighter and brighter as the morning came. The birds began to sing, and the coyotes went off to their breakfast or their rest.

I'm still here in the dark of the unknown, wishing I could do more, but I will embrace quietness and trust. He's the One who fights for us. He's the One who gives us strength. Darkness is not dark to Him. And even death has no victory.