

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Coyote's Journey

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2rf28171>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 4(1-2)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1980

DOI

10.17953

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Peer reviewed

Coyote's Journey

WILLIAM BRIGHT

INTRODUCTION

Like many native groups of western North American, the Karok of Northwestern California believed that the earth had once been inhabited by a pre-human race—the *ikxaréeyavs*, translatable as "First People."¹ Their myths describe the adventures, the loves, and the misfortunes of these people during a period of time which ends with the spontaneous emergence of the human species. At that point, the First People are transformed into animals, plants, inanimate objects, or intangible spirits—often after an announcement that, "When human beings come, they will live in such-and-such a way." The most famous of the First People is Coyote, who appears in many myths and plays the same paradoxical (but all-too-human) combination of roles as he does in the literature of other tribes: lawgiver and hero, but also trickster, buffoon, and dupe.

Karok myths are told in different ways by different individuals—and, indeed, in slightly different ways even by single individuals. A narration which is told as a complete myth by one person may be only an episode in a longer myth told by another person. Nevertheless, some of the best-known Karok stories deal with a famous journey, in which Coyote travels from the "Center of the Earth" far to the north, upriver to Klamath Falls, to seek shell-money—but fails, floats (or is chased) downstream, all the way to the river-mouth at Requa, but finally "hitch-hikes" back to his home at Panámniik (modern Orleans). It is tempting, from our European viewpoint, to hypothesize an "original" or "complete" or "correct" version of Coyote's Journey; but such a concept is probably

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meaningless in a preliterate (and, furthermore, highly individualistic) society like that of the Karok. It is more likely that episodes have been combined, detached, or modified by individual story-tellers over a period of many centuries. I should emphasize, then, that the arrangement of incidents into the single narrative which appears below is *my* doing; I do not know that any Karok narrator ever put elements together in exactly this way. My motive is to offer a sample of Coyote's adventures, translated in a style which aims to preserve as much as possible of Karok literary structure, while still being accessible to English-speaking readers.

The basis of his translation are in recent work by Dennis Tedlock (1971, 1972) and by Dell Hymes (1976, 1977), who have demonstrated that much American Indian oral literature can be understood as having the structure of poetry—in which units such as “verses” and “lines” are

* * *

Káan áraar úkrii,
 taay vúra mupazúvriin,
 káan Pihnêefic ummáahti,
 tóommah poopazuvrîinati,
 ára kaan.

Kári xás Pihnêefic uppiip,
 “Hôoy immáahti,
 peespuk?”

Kári xás ára uppiip,
 “Kahyúras.”

Kári xás Pihnêefic,
 xás upvâaram.

Kári xás uxxúti,
 “Tîi kanparísriihvi!

“Xasík Kahyúras nivâarami!

“Vaa peespúk nikyâarees,
 íf tánitápkuup.”

Xás vaa táay tuparísriihva,
 pá'aan.

Ta'íttam tukíffukvaheen,
 pá'aan.

Kári xás uxxus,
 “Cími kan'arámsiiprini.”

identifiable, not on the basis of meter or rhyme, but in terms of pause-points, sentence-initial particles ("So . . .", "And then . . ."), and morphosyntactic structure. Analyses of two Karok Coyote stories in these terms have been carried out (Bright 1979a, b); their details will not be repeated here. The reader should merely note the following:

(1) Verses begin at the left-hand margin, and each ends with a major pause.

(2) Lines within a verse are successively indented, and each ends with a minor pause.

(3) Divisions of the narrative into "acts" and "scenes"—corresponding to changes of locale and participant, respectively—are indicated in the right-hand margin; but these are provided by the translator, not by the narrator.²

* * *

A man lived there,
 he had many strings of shell-money,
 Coyote saw him there,
 he saw him measuring shell-money,
 that person there.

And then Coyote said,
 "Where do you find it,
 that money?"

And then that person said,
 "At Klamath Falls."

And then Coyote,
 he went home.

And then he thought,
 "I'll make some string!
 "I have to go to Klamath Falls!

"I'll go get that money,
 I like it so much."
 And he made a lot of it,
 that string.

So he tied it in a bundle,
 that string.

And then he thought,
 "Now I'll start out!"

THE CENTER OF THE
 WORLD. Coyote.

GOING UPRIVER.
 Coyote.

Kári xás u'árihroov,
 áan izá'izva,
 antunvêec,
 vaa poovúpparees,
 peespuk.

Víri vaa patóozvássip,
 tóozvároov,
 pá'aan.

Cavúra yíiv káruk tu'árihroov.
 Xás kâam útroovuti,
 kâan íppaha u'íihya.
 Yánava itráhyar akváat kun'irukûuntakoo.
 Xás uppiip, "Yeehe, yôotva!
 "Pooráppiit nikyâavis,
 káru vúra nanivoonváannaac,
 káru akvákkir,
 káru vúra naniyukúkku."

Xás upixivsúroo,
 pamússaanva.
 Xás u'ixaxáxxax,
 vúra tûupicas.
 Xás sáruk uxyáffakoo.
 Xás íiskar upihyárihis.
 Xás kári ta'íttam,
 "Cími kankúnniihki!" —
 hínupa páy tóokfíripriv.
 Xás paakváat sáruk uskákkuni.
 Xás kúkkuum vúra yíz ukúnniihka,
 kúkkuum vúra uum uskákkuni.
 Xás koovúra tóokfíriprin.
 Xás vúra kâarim tóopmahóonkoon.
 Xás sâam ukfúkkuni.
 Xás upíffik,
 koovúra pamusanveesxaxáxxax.

Xás ta'íttam upiptákkizvaheen.
 Xás íp táay áan ussâanvutihat,
 káruma vaa íp uvúppareesat,
 pamúspuk.
 Xás upasasîp.
 Xás u'árihroov.
 Xás vúra xára u'áhoo.

And then he hurried upriver,
the string in a pack,
the little bits of string,
what he was going to string it with,
that money.

When he had packed it up,
he carried it upriver,
that string.

Finally he had gone far upriver.
And he looked upstream,
a tree was standing there.
He saw ten raccoons were sitting there.
And he said, "Aha, good!
"I'll make new pants,
and a shirt for myself,
and a quiver,
and shoes for myself."

And he ripped them apart,
his clothes.
And he tore them to bits,
little bits.
And he threw them downslope.
And he stood naked.
And so then he said,
"Now I'll shoot one!"—
and he missed.
And the raccoon jumped away downslope.
And again he shot at one,
again it jumped down.
And he missed every one of them.
And he felt BAD.
And he crept away downslope.
And he collected them,
all his torn-up clothes.

So he mended his clothes.
And he'd been carrying a lot of string,
that's what he was going to string it with,
his money.
And he put his clothes on.
And he hurried upstream.
And he traveled a long time.

UPRIVER COUNTRY.
Coyote and the Raccoons.

UPRIVER COUNTRY.
Coyote and Lizard.

Xás vúra íssaha tooxrah,
puxxíc.

Xás pamúprii vúra puxxíc tuváxrah.

Xás yánava káan ikmahácraam u'íikra.

Xás yánava káan ára upíkniihvuti,
upakuríihvuti.

Káruma Pihnêefic vúra tuzapáxrah.

Xás yánava káan axak'ássip axrát'aas uzázriin.

Xás uppiip, "Yôotva!

Nâacis mu'íssaha cí ní'issees.

"Cími cîimic vúra kanpakatkâati!"

Xás kúkkuum vúra,

"Xâatik vúra kumatêesic kan'îisi!"

Xás áxak vúra pa'ássip u'ísfip.

Xás uppiip, "Nâacis,

xáyfaat ík vúra neexviphûunis!"

Xás kári u'árihroov.

Kári xás Ciimûuc poovõonupuk,

ikmahácraam uvõonupuk,

xás uxúti, "Ee!

Naa nippêes Pihnêefic õok uvúrayvutiheen."

"Vaa panini'íssaha tupafipsîiprinâheen.

"Kíri íssaha úxrah!"

Xás uxúti,

"Vaa kíp kôok uvístaanti,
xazímtas."

Xás uppiip,

"Cími kám'iinvi,
mú'aavkam!"

Kárukvari tu'árihroov,

tu'invákkaamha.

Xás tutúraayva,

vúra uum táay paxazímtas.

"Vúra puna'áveesara."

Cavúra yimúsic tu'uum.

Xás uxúti,

"Tîi matêe kóomahic kan'íffapvi,
paxazímtas."

Hínupa cími u'íffapvees.

Kári xás uxúti,

And he got thirsty,
VERY thirsty.
And his tongue was very dry.
And he saw a sweathouse was standing there.
And he saw a man was sweating himself there,
he was singing.
And Coyote was terribly thirsty.
And he saw two baskets of gooseberry juice there.
And he said, "Good!
I'll drink Nephew's juice.
"I'll just take a little taste!"
And again,
"I have to drink just a little more!"
And he drank up both bowls.
And he said, "Nephew,
you mustn't be angry at me!"
And then he hurried upstream.

And so when Lizard came out,
came out of the sweathouse,
then he thought, "Ah!
I bet Coyote's been around here!
"He's drunk up that juice of mine.
"May he be thirsty!"
And he thought,
"He likes those things,
roasted grasshoppers."
And he said,
"May there be a brushfire,
up ahead of him!"³

UPRIVER COUNTRY.
Lizard.

Coyote went on upstream,
there had been a big brushfire.
And he looked around,
there were lots of roasted grasshoppers.
"I won't eat them."
Finally he went a little ways.
And he thought,
"I'll just gather a few of them,
those roasted grasshoppers."
There he was going to gather them.
And then he thought,

UPRIVER COUNTRY.
Coyote and the
Grasshoppers.

"Hûut ata kuz,
papunayâavahitihara."

Xás uxúti,

"Naa nixúti íffuzkam napávyyiihrisukti,
paní'áamti."

Xás uxuus,

"Cími panini'afupcúrax cími kanipsivsâapi!"

Ta'íttam axváha ukyâaheen,

xás pamu'afupcúrax vaa kummûuk upsív sap.

Xás uxus, "Púya páy uum,

payêem uum nayâavahees.

Tá íp nipsívsaapat panini'afupcúrax."

Ta'íttam u'aamváheen—

vúra tu'invákkaamha.

Víri káan ukucnáxxazunati.

Xás uxúti,

"Nixúti cími ní'uumêes,

Kahyúras"—

tuzíttiv,

poozivnúruti,

vaa ukupazítivahiti,

kúnis upíti HUHUUHUUHU.

Xás uxúti,

"Cími ní'uumêes,

Kahyúras"—

vaa kíc poozítiv páHUUUHUUHU.

Hinupáy afupcúrax,

poo'iinkúti.

Hinupáy íp pa'axváha,

mûuk upsívsaapat,

hinupáy vaa poo'iinkúti.

Víri hûut cími u'íinees?

Vaa vúra káan âapun,

yúuxak ukûuruzun.

Víriva kíc upíti "ATUHTUHTUHTUHTUH!"

Púyava cavúra úmsip pamu'afupcúrax.

Púyava uxus,

"Payêem vúra puna'íppaveesara,

paxazímtas.

Tá koo, vúra puna'áveesara."

"I wonder why it is,
I'm not getting full."
And he thought,
"I think they're coming out my rear,
while I'm eating them."
And he thought,
"I'll plug up my ass!"
So he gathered pitch,
and he plugged up his ass with it.
And he thought, "There,
now I'll get full.
I've plugged up my ass."

So he ate them—
but there had been a BIG brushfire.
And he was sticking his butt all around there.
And he thought,
"I think I'm getting there,
to Klamath Falls"—
he heard it,
the thundering,
he heard it like that,
it sort of said HUHUUUUUU.

UPRIVER COUNTRY.
Coyote.

And he thought,
"I'm getting there,
to Klamath Falls"—
all he could hear was that HUHUUUUUU.

It was really his ass,
there it was burning.
It was really the pitch,
what he had plugged it with,
there it was burning.

What could he do?
He slid all around there,
on the ground, in the sand.
And he was just saying "ATUHTUHTUHTUHTUH!"
So finally his ass stopped burning.
And he thought,
"Now I'll never eat them again,
those roasted grasshoppers.
That's enough, I won't eat them!"

Cavúra yíiv káruk tu'áhoo,
 vúra tooxrah pa'íssaha,
 vúra vaa tooxxus,
 "Puna'ísseesara,
 naa ispúk nikyâanti."

Kári xás cavúra tooxrah,
 vúra tooxrah pa'íssaha.

Kári xás uxxus,
 "payêem vúra ni'íssees,
 passaamvároo nimmáhaak."

Kári xás púyava cavúra yíiv tu'áhoo,
 vúra tá kâarim,
 tooxrah íssaha.

Kári xás yánava pa'íssaha,
 passaamvároo úxxaakti,
 tooxxus,
 "Ni'íssees,
 pakáan ni'uumáhaak."

Kári xás poo'uum,
 yánava tupivaxráheen,
 passaamvároo.

Kári xás, "li, púya íf íššaha tánéexrah."

Kári xás uxxus,
 "Vúra tá iiv nimmáhavrik" —
 tooxrah pa'íssaha,
 vúra tuváxrah.

Kári xás uzíttiv,
 úxxaakti,
 pa'íssaha úxxaakti.

Kári xás ucunvakkir,
 pa'íssaha.

Kári xás ûumukic tu'uum,
 vúra vaa uzíttiimti,
 úxxaakti,
 pa'íssaha,
 patucunvakkir.

Xás tóommah,
 pa'íssaha,
 poovúunti,
 vúra ûumukic vúra tu'uum.

Kári xás ukvíripsip,
 káan u'uum.

Finally he traveled far upriver,
he really got thirsty,
he was just thinking,
"I can't drink water,
I'm going to get money."⁴

And finally he got dry,
he really got thirsty.
And then he thought,
"Now I'll drink water,
as soon as I see a creek."
And then finally he traveled a long way,
he was really bad off,
he was so thirsty.

And then he saw the water,
where a creek was sounding,
he thought,
"I'll drink water,
as soon as I get there."

And then when he got there,
he saw it had gone dry,
that creek.
And then, "Oh, how thirsty I am!"

And then he thought,
"I can't stand it"—
he was thirsty,
he was so dry.

And then he heard it,
it was sounding,
the water was sounding.
And then he sneaked up on it,
that water.

And then he got close,
he heard that,
it was sounding,
that water,
as he sneaked up.

And he saw it,
the water,
where it was flowing,
he got really CLOSE.
And then he broke into a run,
he got there.

UPRIVER COUNTRY.
Coyote and the
Creek Water.

Yánava tupivaxráheen.

Kári xás uxxus,

“Púya íf tánéexrah!”—

vúra tá kâarim,

vúra vaa u’áhooti,

vúra tá yíiv káruk,

sáruk tóotfákkuti—

sáruk peeskêes uvuunvárakti.

Xás uxxus,

“Kíri páy kári vaa ní’is.”

Kári xás ee! vúra vaa u’áhooti,

vúra tá kâarim,

vúra cími u’uumêes,

Kahyúras.

Kári xás yánava yíiv káruk tu’áhoo.

Kári xás yánava kúkkuum káan íssaha úxxaakti,

ussaamvároohiti.

Ktári xás kúkkuum tooxus,

“Hôoy íf ní’uumêes”—

kóova íssaha tóoxrah.

Kári xás kúkkuum ucunvákkir,

passaamvároo—

kêec, samvaróokaam.

Xás uxxus,

“Tîi kúuk kaníkuukmi.”

Kári xás pamúvaas upisnákkarisuk.

Kári xás ta’íttam páy unníssaheen.

Xás úmmuusti,

vúra uum táay pa’íssaha,

vúra ûumukic.

Kári xás ukvíripsip.

Xtás kúuk uppáazma,

pamúvaas—

ámtaap kíc uzívpup,

tupiváxrah pa’íssaha.

Kári xás uxxus,

“li, vúra tá puná’uumara,

vúra íssaha tánéexrah.”

Kári xás sáruk tóotfákkuti,

vúra vaa sáruk uvuunvárakti,

peeskêes.

He saw it had gone dry.
And he thought,
 "I'm really thirsty!"—
 he was really bad off,
 traveling like that,
 far upriver,
 looking downslope—
 down there the river was flowing.

And he thought,
 "I wish I could drink that."⁵
And then oh! he was traveling like that,
 he was really bad off,
 he was about to get there,
 to Klamath Falls.

And there he had traveled far upriver.
And there again he saw the water sounding,
 there was a creek.

And again he thought,
 "I can't get there"—
 he was so thirsty.

And then again he sneaked up on it,
 that creek—
 it was large, a big creek.

And he thought,
 "I'll crawl up to it."
And then he undid his blanket.

And he wadded it all up.
And he looked,
 there was a lot of water,
 just close.

and then he broke into a run.
And he threw it in,
 that blanket—
 only dust puffed up,
 the water had gone dry.

And then he thought,
 "Oh, I can't get there,
 I'm really thirsty."
And then he looked downslope,
 down there it was flowing,
 that river.

li! xás uxxus,
 "Cími vaa kan'îisi,
 peeskées!"

Ta'íttam sáruk u'árihfakaheen.
 Xás uxxus,
 "Púya íf kâarim tánikúupha,
 pacími íssees,
 káruma Kahyúras ispúk nikyâanti!"

Xás astiip uvîis.
 Xás úuz utkárati.

Xás uxxus,
 "Vúra puna'ísseesara,
 astiipic."

Kári xás uppiip,
 "Cími ikkúrinisrihi,
 izáriip!" —
 tóokkúrinisri.

Xás uváttakar.
 Kári xás iskées'aacip u'uum.

Kári xás ta'íttam ukúkkuriheen,
 vúra uum xára pookúkkuri,
 pa'íssaha,
 tu'ís taay.

Kári xás poopvôonsip,
 taay tu'ís.

Víri vaa vúra úpikyívivraa,
 vássihkam úuz úkyiimkar.

Kári xás yúruk uzívruuhrup.
 Cavúra tá yíiv tóopzívruuhvarak.
 Cavúra ôok izivzanéen'aacip tóopzívruuhvarak.

Kári xás yúruk utrûuputi.
 Yánava yúruk ífáppiitsa kuntákkiriti,
 astiip.

Kári xás uppiip,
 "Sah'ahupyâamac kanpárihis!"
 Kári xás sah'ahupyâamac vaa uppárihis.

Kári xás uzívruuhvarak,
 ûumukic vúra tóommuusti,
 pakuntákkiriti.

Xás uppiip,

Oh! then he thought,
"I'm going to drink that,
the river!"

So he hurried downslope.
And he thought,
"What a bad thing I'm doing,
going to drink water,
me who's going to Klamath Falls to get money!"
And he went down to the riverbank.
And he looked out to the water.
And he thought,
"I won't drink right here,
by the shore."
And he said,
"Fall down,
you fir tree!"—
it fell.
And he walked out over the water on it.
And then he got to the middle of the river.

UPRIVER COUNTRY.
Coyote and the River.

So then he stooped to the water,
he stooped a long time,
down to the water,
he drank a lot.
And when he got up,
he'd drunk a lot.
There he fell over backwards,
he fell backwards into the river.
And then he floated downriver.
Finally he floated a long ways back downstream.
Finally he floated back here to the center of the world.
And then he looked downriver.
There were young women downriver leaching flour,
on the shore.
And then he said,
"I'll turn into some pretty driftwood!"
And then he turned into some pretty driftwood.
And then he floated down from upstream,
he watched them close by,
while they were leaching flour.
And he said,

IN THE RIVER.
Coyote and the Girls.

"Astiipic vúra kanzivrúhi,
astiipic vúra kanzivrúhi!

Mukunsá'kukamic xasik nipzivrúhroonees."

Kári xás pa'ifáppiit sárúk úuz utkárati.

Xás uppiip, "Yáxxa, éev!

Oo, yáxxa kóo yâamac,

sâam,

pasah'áhup!"

Xás yízza uppiip, "Hôoy?"

Xás uppiip, "Máva sâam."

Xás uppiip, "Oo, êev,

cími núttaatripaa,

pasah'áhup."

"Cémmi!"

Ta'íttam sâam kunizvíripuni,

tákunimússar,

poopzivrúhroonati.

Xás uppiip, "Cími, êev,

hôoy kíc ahúp'anamahac?

Vaa mûuk nuttâatripaavis."

Xás ta'íttam kuntâatripaaheen.

Xás oo! tákuntápkuup.

Oo, púya íf yâamacic,

pasah'áhup,

tákuntápkuup!

Kári xás kúuk uppáazma yízza,

tákuníxtiivhar,

vaa pasah'áhup,

yâamacic pa'ahúp'anamahac.

Kári xás yízza uppiip pa'ifáppiit, "Aâx!",

uppiip, "Aâx! Atafâat Pihñêefic.

Mít kuníppaat kárúk úuz tu'íimkar."

Kári xás úuz kunpíppaazkar,

pasah'áhup.

Kári xás tákun'akízkiz,

pamukúnxuun,

pamukuntákkir.

Cáva tá xánnahisic yánava xákkaan vúra tákunímmuutaraha.

Pihñêefic yóokpuuhrup,

kuyûum xás ukpúhis.

"I'll float to the shore,
I'll float to the shore!
I'll keep floating in circles just downslope from them."
And then one girl looked downslope to the river.
And she said, "Look, my dear!"
Oh, look how pretty,
downslope,
that driftwood!"
And the other said, "Where?"
And the first said, "There, downslope."
And the other said, "Oh! my dear,
let's hook it out,
that driftwood!"
"All right!"
So they ran downslope,
they went to look at it,
where it was floating in circles.
And one said, "Come on, my dear,
Where's a little stick?
We'll hook it out with that."

And so they hooked it out.
And oh! they took a liking to it.
Oh, how pretty it was,
the driftwood,
they took a liking to it!
And then one threw it to another,
they played with it,
that driftwood,
the pretty little stick.
And then one girl said, "Ugh!",
she said, "Ugh! Maybe it's Coyote,
they said he drowned in the river, upstream."
And then they threw it back in the river,
that driftwood.
And they took it up,
their acorn mush,
what they were leaching.
Sure enough, in a while, they both were pregnant.
There Coyote floated downstream.
then he floated ashore downriver from them.

THE CENTER OF THE
WORLD. Coyote and
the Girls.

Kári xás u'íppahoo,
 Pihnêefic,
 áraar tóoppárihis,
 uum vúra tóoppárihis.

Kári xás ummah,
 yána ôok páy kun'ihukvunaati.

Ta'ittam u'ihukûumaheen,
 ta'ittam u'êezvarayva,
 payêeriphar.

Kári xás úmmuutaraaha.

Kári xás úkvip Pihnêefic.

Kári xás kun'áharam,
 kunpiip,
 "Vaa pávaa tákupavêenahan."

Kári xás úkvip,
 cími kunipáhariizunees.

Kári xás ahváraak upístaaxva,
 uppiip,
 "Kíivyiihrisuki, kíivyiihrisuki!"

Kári xás asvúut kunívyiihrisuk,
 kunkitaxríhahiti,
 víri vaa kuníppeenti,
 "Pihneefpístaaxva."

Kári xás kun'iruveehísriihva,
 pa'tin kun'áharamuti,
 kunímmuusti,
 kunpiip, "Fâat kook?"

Xás Pihnêefic uum ta yiiv.

Kári xás kúkkuum cími kunipáhariizunees.

Kári xás ahváraak uzzúrivkaa.

Kári xás kunívyiihrisuk,
 kun'ixipríssukva,
 páacviiv.

Kári xás kun'iruveehísriihva,
 Kunímmuusti,
 kunpiip, "Fâat kook?"—
 vaa pakuníppeenti,
 "Pihneefcúnnivac."

Kári xás Zúffip mummáruk tóokvíripvarak.

Kári xás vaa káan tuysipréekaam úkrii.

And then he traveled on,
Coyote did,
he turned back into a person,
he turned back into himself.

And then he saw,
there they were having a puberty dance.
So he joined the "flower dancing",
he carried the girl around,
the menstruant girl.

And then she became pregnant.

And then Coyote ran away.

And then they chased him,
they said,

"He's the one that did that mischief."

And then he ran,
they were about to catch him.

And then he peeled back his foreskin in a hollow tree,
he said,

"You people come out, come out!"

And then ants came out,
winged ants,

that's why they call them that,

"Coyote-peeling-back-his-foreskin."

And they stopped,
the ones who were chasing him,
they looked,

they said, "What's that?"

And by this time Coyote was far away.

And then they were about to catch him again.

And then he urinated in a hollow tree.

And then some came out,
they flew out,

those birds,

And then the ones chasing him stopped,
they looked,

they said, "What's that?"—

that's why they're called "little-Coyote-urine",
wild canaries.

And then he ran downstream to a place uphill from Requa.

And there was a big mountain sitting there.

THE CENTER OF THE
WORLD. Coyote and
the Flower-Dancers.

Kári xás uppiip,
 "Ipnîinamicpi, ipnîinamicpi!"
 Kári xás áppapkam ukvíripuni.
 Kári xás iinâak uvôonfuruk,
 ikmahácraam.
 Kári xás kunihmáravarak,
 pa'îin kun'áharamuti.
 Kári xás kunitfúnnukva,
 peekmahácraam.
 Kári xás kunpiip,
 "Hôoy kíc immáheen,
 áraar?"
 Kári xás uppiip Pihnêefic,
 "Ellek'w."
 Kári xás kunpiip,
 "Naa nixúti upíti,
 tá yúrukheen."
 Kári xás Pihnêefic u'árihrupuk.
 Kári xás sâam ukvíripuni,
 páahak úskaakramni,
 xás izyáruk uvíitkar.
 Kári xás uppiip,
 "Síit kiivyihuki!
 "Kiikzárupriini,
 páppaah."
 Kári xás kunzárupriin,
 páppaah.
 Kári xás kunpiip,
 pa'îin kun'áharamuti,
 "Naa nippêes vaa,
 pa'ípa ikmahácraam kúkreenhat."
 Kári xás kunpíhmaravrin,
 yánava izyarukiráastiip xás úkrii.
 Kári xás páppaah pakunpûukar,
 ta'íttam u'arankúriheen,
 ayâac pássiit tákunzárupriin.

 Pihnêefic káan vúra tuvúrayvikeezun,
 yánava káan ikmahácraam u'íikra.
 Xás utvâamnaz,
 yánava púra karáxxay vúra.
 Xás uvôoruvraz Pihnêefic.

And then he said,
"Get little, get little!"
And then he ran down the other side.
And then he crawled indoors,
into a sweathouse.
And then they ran down from upstream,
the ones chasing him.
And then they looked inside,
into the sweathouse.
And then they said,
"Did you see him anywhere,
a person?"
And then Coyote said,
"Me no savvy."⁶
And then they said,
"I think he's saying,
Coyote's already downstream."
And then Coyote jumped out.
And then he ran downhill,
he jumped into a boat,
and he paddled acrossriver.
And then he said,
"Mice, come here!
"Gnaw holes in them,
those boats."
And then they gnawed holes in them,
the boats.
And then they said,
the ones chasing him said,
"I bet that was him,
the one sitting in the sweathouse."
And then they ran back the other way,
there he was on the opposite shore.
And then they launched the boats,
but they sank,
because the mice had gnawed them.

Coyote wandered around there,
there was a sweathouse standing.
And he looked inside,
he saw nobody at all.
And Coyote crawled in.

THE MOUTH OF THE
RIVER. Coyote and
the Ducks.

Xás sú' pó'uum,
 pootvárayva,
 pamukun'ikrívkir koovúra azkuritmúrax vúra,
 pamukunpatúmkir káru vúra azkúrit,
 káru pamukunpiykiríkkir vaa káru vúra azkúrit.

Xás vúra tooxúriha Pihnêefic.

Xás uxúti,
 "Tii kanpakatkâati,
 papatúmkir."

Xás poopakâtkat,
 amayaa'íssara.

Cavúra koovúra uzáffip,
 pamukunpiykiríkkir vaa káru vúra uzáffip.

Xás axmá y fâat kúnis uzíttiv.

Xás uxxus,
 "Cími kan'iccunvi."

Xás vaa káan ahup'iyvoorámmaam káan u'áasis.

Kás ikxúrar pakunpavyíhivraz,
 iz'áraar ník kúna toopvôoruvraz,
 kuniziyúnniihvuti.

Kári xás kunpiip,
 "Naa nixúti,
 Pihnêefic ôokninay uvúrayvuti.

Vaa pávaa tá kupavêenahan,
 koovúra tuzáffip,
 panunupatúmkir."

Vúra vaa uzzáaniv,
 uzíttiimti,
 pakuncuphúruzunati.

Kári xás kunpiip,
 "Cími nupákmuvanvi,
 Uknamxánnahic."

Kári xás uxúti,
 Pihnêefic,
 "Nanizívzaanneen tákuncuphúruzun."

Xás u'árihrisuk—
 "Isávaas, nanisavásiiva,
 nipzivkéewis!"

Xás kunpiip, "Cémmi,
 kúna vúra xáyfaat iyúupha."
 "Cémmi, vaa ník níkuphees,

And when he got inside,
when he looked around,
all the chairs were made of pure grease,
their headrests too were of grease,
and their stepladder too was of grease.

And Coyote was hungry.

And he thought,
"I'll just taste them,
those headrests."

And when he took a taste,
they were very delicious.

Finally he ate them all up,
he ate up their stepladder too.

Then suddenly he sort of heard something.

And he thought,
"I'd better hide."

And he lay down there behind the woodpile.

And when the men came back in the sweathouse in the evening,
as each man crawled in,
he fell down.⁷

And they said,
"I'm thinking,
Coyote's wandering around here.

"That's who did it,
he ate them all up,
our headrests."

He just lay there,
he heard them,
when they were talking about him.

And then they said,
"Let's spend the night away from home,
at Long Pond."

And then he thought,
Coyote thought,
"They're talking about my country."

And he jumped out—
"Nephew, my nephews,
I'll go along!"

And they said, "All right,
but don't open your eyes."

"All right, I'll do that,

Vúra punáyuupheesara."

Xás kunippêer,

"Cími páahak váramni.

"Súva ník asámyiz uxákkees,
ixxusêes tánupávyiihma."

"Púyava ík kári xasík iyúuphees.

"Kúna vúra peeyuuphâak,
pukinpávyiihmeesara.

"Vaa vúra ôok nupzivruhukes."

—"Cémmi, vaa ník níkuphees."

Kári xás ta'íttam kunípviiitsuraheen,

Pihñêefic páahak kunippêer,

"Sú'izxuuprámnih!"

Ta'íttam Pihñêefic úz xuupramni.

Ta'íttam kunípviiitsuraheen.

Cavúra tu'ûuri,

Pihñêefic,

póooz xuupramni.

Xás uxxús,

Pihñêefic,

"Tîi kanitníssuk!"

Víri pootníssuk,

víri uumyâac kunipzivruhíis,

úuz yurástiim.

Xás kunippeenti,

Pihñêefic,

"Payêem pukinípkookanpeesara."

Xás Pihñêefic uppiip,

"Payêem ník vúra isávaas vaa puneepkuphêesara."

—"Cémmi, côora."

Kári xás Pihñêefic ta'íttam kúkkuum tuzívkee.

Púyava cavúra tá yíiv vúrava u'ásímcaakti.

Axmáy vúra kunvítis.

Kári xás kunpiip,

"Tánuvyíhuk."

Kári xás u'árihsip,

papihñêefic.

Kári xás uppiip,

"Ninisívsaneen!"

I won't open my eyes."
And they told him,
"Get in the boat.
"You'll hear gravel sounding,
you'll know we've arrived.
"Then you can open your eyes.
"But if you open them before,
we won't get there.
"We'll float right back here."
—"All right, I'll do that."

And so they paddled off,
they told Coyote,
"Lie face down in the boat!"

So Coyote lay face down.
So they paddled off.
Finally he got tired,
Coyote did,
lying face down.

And he thought,
Coyote thought,
"I'm going to peek out!"

Then when he peeked out,
right then they floated ashore,
at the shore of the ocean.

Then they told him,
Coyote,
"Now you won't go with us again."

And Coyote said,
"This time I won't do it again, Nephew."
—"All right, let's go."

So Coyote went with them again.
And finally he had kept his eyes closed for a long ways.
Suddenly they paddled ashore.

And they said,
"We've arrived."

And then he jumped up,
Coyote did.

And then he said,
"My country!"

THE JOURNEY HOME.
Coyote and the Ducks.

THE CENTER OF THE
WORLD. Coyote.

Xás úuz upíytuuykar.
 Kári xás tisaníh'úuz upíytuuykar,
 katiphirák'úuz upíytuuykar,
 tuyvúk'úuz upíytuuykar,
 Pihnêefic kóova tu'aacícha,
 patu'íppak,
 pamusívsaaneeh.
 Viri vaa kumá'i patupiytúykaanva.

Kupánnakanakana!
 Céemyaac ik vúra ataycúkkinac,
 i'uunúpravees,
 náyaavheesik!
 Céemyaac ik vúra isyâat,
 imsírihraavis,
 náyaavheesik!
 Ninivássi vúra vitkiniyâac ta,
 kóova tu'áxxaska,
 tóoxúriha.

* * *

NOTES

1. The Karok tribe, speaking a language of the Hokan family, live along the middle course of the Klamath River in northwestern California (Humboldt and Siskiyou Counties). Their aboriginal culture, which was very similar to that of the neighboring Yurok, has been sketched in Bright 1978. A grammar of their language, with dictionary and texts, is published as Bright 1957. A large and important collection of previously unpublished Karok texts, collected in English versions by A. L. Kroeber and E. W. Gifford, is now being prepared for publication by the University of California Press.

2. The parts of this narrative were told to me in 1949-50 by Nettie Reuben, Julia Starritt, Chester Pepper, and Mamie Offield; the present publication is dedicated to their memories. The original Karok texts, with linguistically-oriented translations, were published in Bright 1975:162-85. A comparison of the different incidents and versions associated with Coyote's Journey, with ethnographic commentary, was published as Bright 1954.

And he kicked dirt out into the river.
 And he kicked it out from Camp Creek,
 he kicked it out from Kattiphirak,
 he kicked it out from Ullathorne Creek,
 Coyote was so happy,
 when he returned,
 back to his country.
 That's why he kicked it out.

*Kupannakanakana!*⁸

PRAYER.

Young brodiaea plant,
 you must come up quickly,
 hurry to me!

Spring salmon,
 shine upriver quickly,
 hurry to me!

My back has become like a mountain ridge,
 so thin,
 so hungry.

* * *

The spelling system used here for Karok has been simplified slightly, for practical purposes, from that used in Bright 1957. The vowels are a e i o u, pronounced much as in Spanish; double aa ee etc. have twice the duration. Among the consonants, ç is like English "ch" in "church"; ɽ is like that in Spanish "toro"; ʂ is retroflex, close to English "sh"; ɸ is bilabial, between English ɸ and w; x is like German "ch" in "Bach"; z is like English "th" in "thin". The apostrophe is a glottal stop, i.e. the brief closure of the vocal cords that occurs in the middle of English "oh-oh!" The acute accent is associated with high pitch, the circumflex accent with falling pitch. Capital letters and punctuation marks are used as in English.

3. Roasted grasshoppers increase thirst, like salted peanuts.
4. A man on a quest for money is supposed to practice self-denial.
5. Drinking river-water was taboo at all times.
6. Here Coyote speaks broken Yurok.
7. Sweathouses were subterranean, and entered by a ladder—which, in this case, Coyote had eaten.
8. This is a traditional ending for myths, since they were properly told only in the winter, when food was scarce.

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