

## CALIFORNIA MORNING

Under a hot white August sky  
I was sitting on my new sister-in-law's deck  
looking out over a ravine  
savoring my first cup of coffee  
and three hours time difference  
calling what I was doing "meditating"  
which meant that nobody would bother me  
when a coyote appeared  
ambling up a path out of the ravine  
in my general direction.

A rabbit popped out of the brush between us  
saw the coyote  
nothing between them but fast lane  
froze into his clump of brown grass imitation.

Coyote stopped too although he gave

no indication he had seen the rabbit.  
No it was some rare quality in  
the morning air he stayed to savor.

Over the next ten minutes coyote got interested  
in creatures and events invisible to me  
at every compass point except the rabbit's  
took maybe a dozen steps  
none of them actually *toward* his  
motionless potential breakfast special  
yet each oblique step  
narrowing the distance between them  
by a margin discernible only  
to an old geometry teacher

till suddenly  
on no trigger I could see  
maybe just some natural version  
of a three-second violation—  
*it ain't that you're too close*  
*but it's been too long*  
*since you been far enough away—*  
breakfast beat a fast break  
back into the brush  
and coyote  
never a look after him

resumed his stroll  
as if knowing all along

it was too much to hope for

but hey

it's a numbers game  
and sometimes  
after all the indirection  
sometimes  
just often enough to keep you coming back  
*you do nail something just right.*  
I lifted my cup in toast to a *poet*.