

5-1-1991

## Mourning the Coon

Marti Miles

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces>



Part of the [Ceramic Arts Commons](#), [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Painting Commons](#), [Photography Commons](#), and the [Sculpture Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Miles, Marti (1991) "Mourning the Coon," *Forces*: Vol. 1991 , Article 16.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol1991/iss1/16>

This Poem is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Collin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forces by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Collin. For more information, please contact [mtomlin@collin.edu](mailto:mtomlin@collin.edu).

**Marti Miles**

## **Mourning the Coon**

Until the night dissipates,  
until God agrees to smile,  
until new life is born,  
until there's not an until,  
I will remain in mourning.

When Boots died, nothing was the same  
until the new cat came.  
New union, new life,  
new joy ended my grief.

That year I wrote on the Guadalupe River,  
removed from the fumes of the city,  
I listened to the laughter of the rafters,  
watched the moon swell  
month after month,  
Swollen with new light, I too laughed,  
made friends with the bugs, the birds, the plants,  
watched roly polies crawl over the hairs on my arm,  
admired the tenacity of the fire ants  
who moved twigs and pieces of leaves three times their size,  
took care of their own, built a sense of community,  
hurt only those who got in their way.  
My best friend was a coon.  
We talked daily. Tamed by ritual feedings,  
he nodded or swished his tail.  
He heard about the Sicilian lover in San Francisco,  
the book on holistic healing I'd started to write  
years ago, hidden in a drawer,  
that West Texas grandmother I barely knew,  
the pains of saying good night  
to a borrowed dog named Dawg,  
then hugging life into a feather down pillow.

"Sunrise, Sunset" plays in my head.

"Is this the little girl...."

Looking closely in the mirror, I see gray hairs  
winding in and out of my once-young mane.

Soon I'll spend days with  
Dr. Seuss, Curious George and Willy Wonka,  
yet I long for those weekends spent with  
Lady Chatterly, Madame Bovary, and of course Blake,  
bowls of popcorn sitting around,  
empty coke cans and yogurt containers,  
crackling pine knots and the occasional wet oak  
that refused to burn. I think of the Guadalupe,  
how she, like a mother, coaxed me, nudged gently,  
then slapped at my collar of dreams.  
She pushed me into the rocks,  
threw me into the crevices, lured me down,  
downstream into the vortex of my future.

I returned to the world of concrete  
where people envy my affair with the Word.  
Her love flowed freely, nourished me,  
pushed me away,  
yet the coon remains.  
Still, I mourn his absence.  
I mourn for the coon and pray Kyrie Eleison,  
Yes, for me, for the coon, for that magical time  
when books were alive, the words and I danced.  
I gaze at a star, the bright one in the west sky,  
Lord have mercy.  
Lord have mercy on me.

"Sunrise, Sunset" plays in the background,  
violins of endings and of beginnings...  
the gray Persian replaced the calico cat  
that replaced the Siamese.  
There can only be one coon.