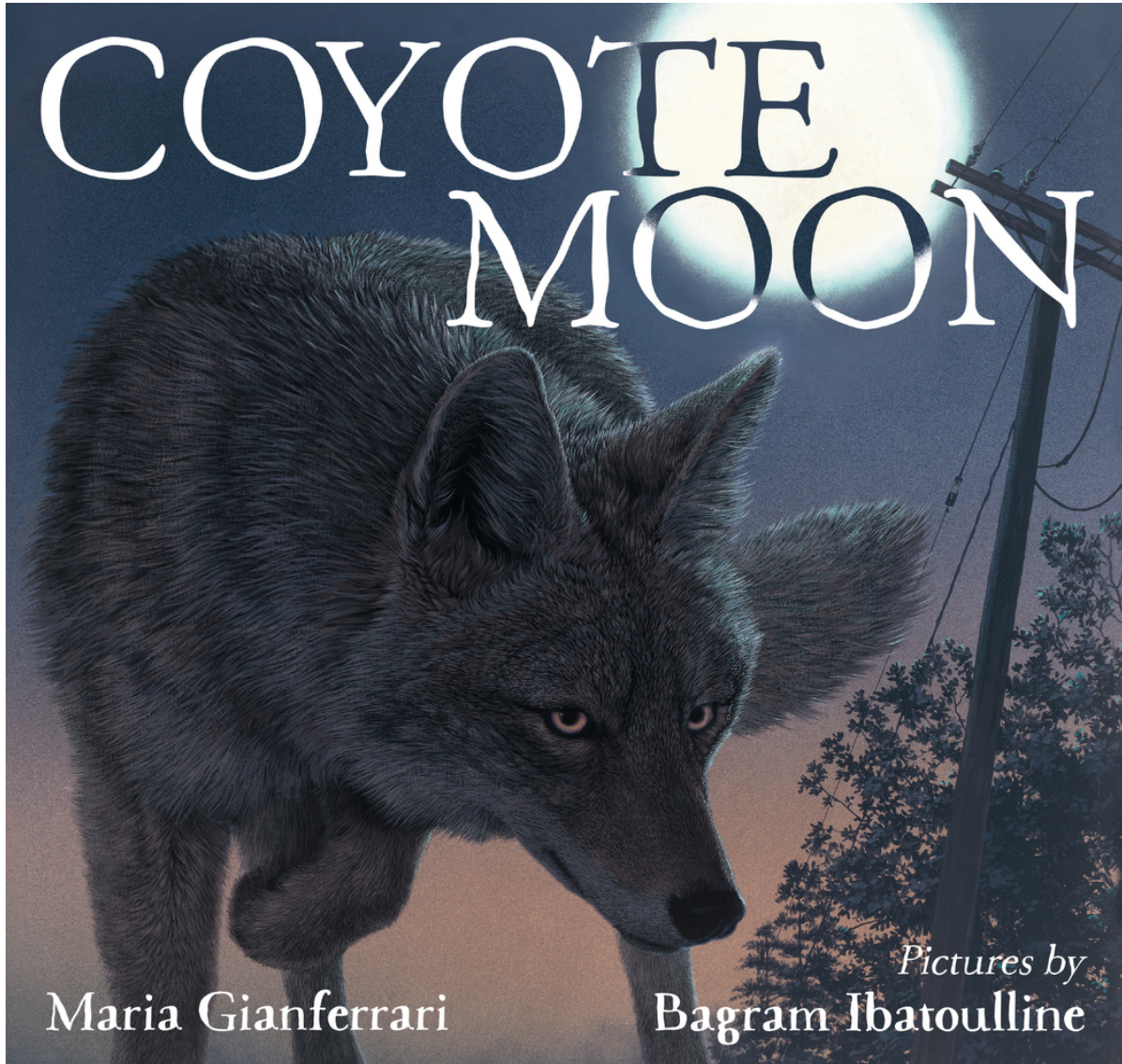


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO  
**COYOTE MOON**  
WRITTEN BY MARIA GIANFERRARI  
ILLUSTRATED BY BAGRAM IBATOULLINE



COYOTE MOON Text ©2016 by Maria Gianferrari,  
Illustrations © 2016 by Bagram Ibatoulline  
Roaring Brook Press; ISBN 9781626720411

## HONORS AND PRAISE FOR COYOTE MOON

"Yip-yip-yip-yip!" indeed, for this sympathetic portrayal of a not-often-celebrated creature who shares our world. ~*Kirkus Reviews*, starred ★

"Any picture book collection should be honored to receive this book... Beautiful work. Beautiful stuff." ~ *Betsy Bird, School Library Journal*

"Quietly poetic text and show-stopping artwork create a tense account of a coyote's nocturnal search for food." ~ *Publishers Weekly*, starred ★

A Junior Library Guild Selection for Fall 2016

## STORY SUMMARY

*A howl in the night.*

*A watchful eye in the darkness.*

*A flutter of movement among the trees.*

*Coyotes.*

In the dark of the night, a mother coyote stalks prey to feed her hungry pups. Her hunt takes her through a suburban town, where she encounters a mouse, a rabbit, a flock of angry geese, and finally an unsuspecting turkey on the library lawn.

**POUNCE!**

Perhaps Coyote's family won't go hungry today.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Maria Gianferrari** was inspired to write *Coyote Moon* after her first coywolf sighting on a moonlit night in her own Massachusetts backyard. Maria now lives in northern Virginia with her scientist husband, artist daughter, and rescue dog, Becca.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



**Bagram Ibatoulline** is a Russian-born artist who has illustrated many acclaimed books for young readers, including Kate DiCamillo's *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, Jane Yolen's *The Scarecrow's Dance*, and Lois Lowry's *Crow Call*. He lives in the Catskills region of New York.

## PRE-READING

### BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

What do coyotes look like? Where do they live? What do they eat? Ask your students what they know about coyotes and how they feel about them (frightened, fascinated, etc.). Record students' answers in a chart like the one below. After reading the book, have students take another look at the chart and revise their initial thoughts. If their opinions changed, what facts from the text led them to change their minds?

COYOTE FACTS	OPINIONS

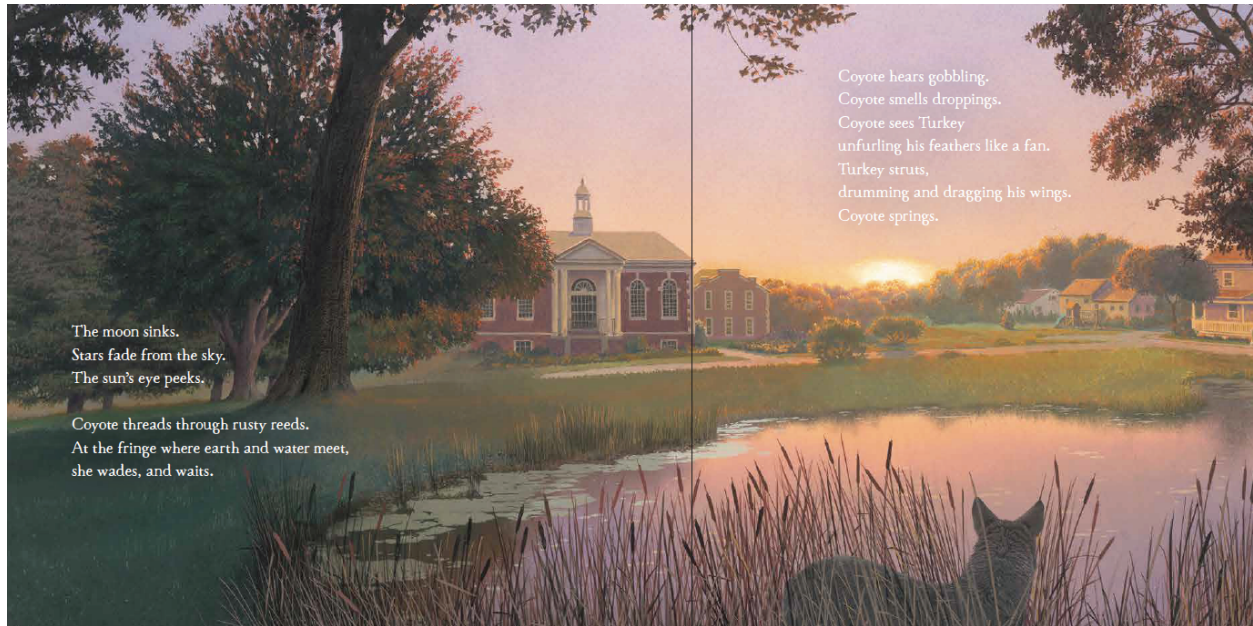
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.B Provide reasons that support the opinion.*

### TAKE A BOOK WALK

Show the illustrations on the pages leading up to the capture of the turkey (don't reveal the page-spread with the turkey yet). Begin with the title page, asking students why the coyotes' shadows are different sizes in this illustration. Invite students to revise their thinking after viewing the illustrations of the pups at the base of the tree. As you turn the pages, ask students to tell you what they think is happening in the story and what information the illustrations give about coyotes.



When you've reached the illustration of the pond and the red brick building (below), stop and ask students to predict what will happen in the rest of the story.



As you go back to the start and prepare to read the text from beginning to end, ask students to think about how their observations of the illustrations may or may not match up with what they learn from the text.

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.7 Explain how specific images contribute to and clarify a text.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.6 Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.*

## VOCABULARY

Your students may be unfamiliar with the following terms. Encourage them to use text and picture clues to infer meanings as the story is read.



- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.4 Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4.A Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.*

## POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who protects the cubs while their mother hunts? (*knowledge*)
2. Estimate how long it takes Coyote to come home with food for her family. Compare this with how long it takes your family to prepare a meal. (*comprehension*)
3. How does the mother coyote use her senses to get food for her cubs? How do we use our senses when we eat? (*application*)
4. What might the girl be thinking as she watches the coyote from her bedroom window? (*analysis*)
5. How many pups are waiting back at the den? If the mother coyote had caught one of the smaller animals instead of the turkey, how might the events in the book have changed? (*synthesis*)
6. Who were you rooting for, the coyote or the turkey? Explain your thinking. (*evaluation*)

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### STORY MAPPING

Create a map of what the coyote's neighborhood might look like. Brainstorm a list of places and living things that appear in the story, such as the chart on the following page.

<b>PLACES</b>	<b>RESIDENTS</b>
tree in cemetery	coyotes
residential street	families in houses
stone wall	mouse
golf course	Canada geese
backyard (with slide)	rabbit
pond	turkey
girl's house	girl
under the tree roots	coyote and her family

Encourage students to use their map to retell the story, or to tell story from the point of view of one of the other animals.

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.6 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters.*



## IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

In the interview at the end of this guide, illustrator Bagram Ibatoulline says that he based much of the book's setting on his own town of Phoenicia, NY and its surrounding area. Watch this short introduction of the PBS production "Meet the Coywolf:"

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/meet-the-coywolf-trailer-meet-the-coywolf/8671/> How does the scenery in the video remind you of the book?

Ask students how this story might change if it were set in a different neighborhood. Which animals might appear in an urban dwelling? A rural area?

The chart below lists plants, trees, and animals that are featured in *Coyote Moon*.

PLANTS AND TREES	ANIMALS
pine trees	hawks
boxwood	mice
alder bushes	Canada geese
grass	rabbits
reeds	turkeys

Read the "Territory" section of "Coyote Facts" in the back of the book to find out where coyotes live. Research animals and plants that are native to your area and have students rewrite the story set in their own neighborhoods.

Alternatively, if your class is studying another culture or time in history, challenge them to retell the story set in a specific time or culture.

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects.*

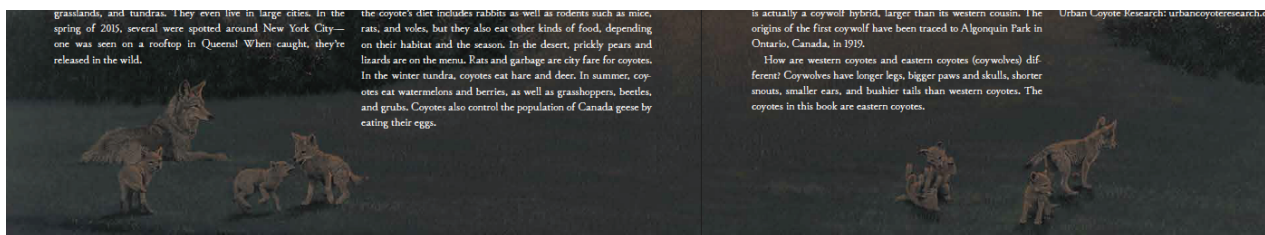
## ALL IN THE FAMILY

Revisit the page at the beginning of the story where the older pups watch over their younger siblings (image below).



©Bagram Ibatoulline

Next, look at the scene under “Coyote Facts” on the last page (image below).



©Bagram Ibatoulline

Ask students how these scenes compare with their own families' activities. Give students a paper folded in half. On one side, have students draw a picture or bring in a photo of something their families do that is similar in function to what the coyote family does. On the other half, have them draw a picture of the coyote and her family doing the same thing.

Examples may include:

MY FAMILY	COYOTE'S FAMILY
✓ Waking up in bed	✓ Waking up in the forest
✓ Grocery shopping/cooking	✓ Hunting/catching the turkey
✓ Older siblings helping with younger siblings	✓ Older pups watching young pups while the mother coyote hunts
✓ Calling each other on the phone or with a program like Face Time	✓ Yipping calls to communicate that dinner is on its way
✓ Sleeping	✓ Sleeping
✓ Playing together outside	✓ Playing on the grass (last illustration)

Have students create a scrapbook showing a day in the life of a coyote family. This might be done on paper with illustrations, or on a program such as Wixie where students can create digital illustrations or import images of coyotes doing a variety of activities that reflect daily routines.

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.6 With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.*

## ACTIVE VERBS

Author Maria Gianferrari uses a wide variety of active, descriptive verbs in *Coyote Moon*. On the following page are the verbs used in each page-spread to describe the mother coyote's actions.

sniffs creeps tracking follows lurks	hears sniffs looks slips feasts
scuttles digs	drops sings
<b>POUNCE!</b>	hears smells sees springs
listens hears slides crouches	threads wades waits
trots slips searching	looks slinks lunges
wakes crawls sniffs arches shakes	charges flees



Discuss how these verbs bring the story to life. Print out the verbs chart on cardstock. Give pairs of students one card each and let them practice acting out the actions listed on their card. Invite students to perform their actions and let the rest of the class guess which scene from the book is being acted out.

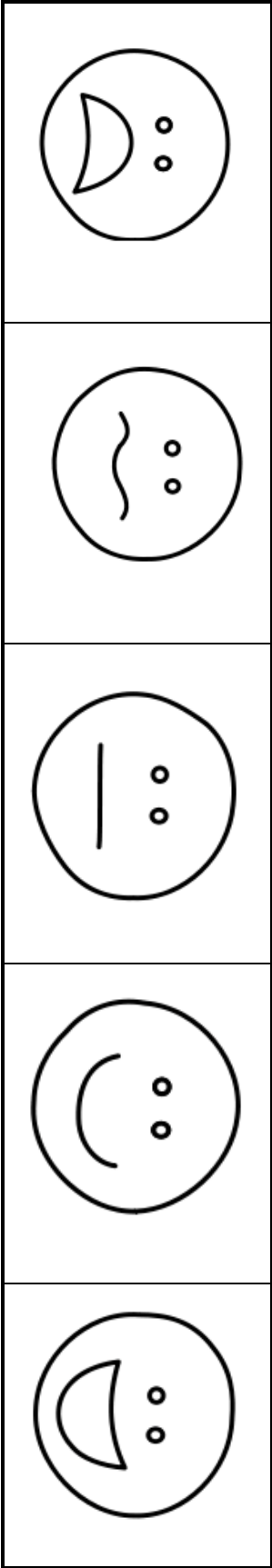
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4 Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.4 Describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.*

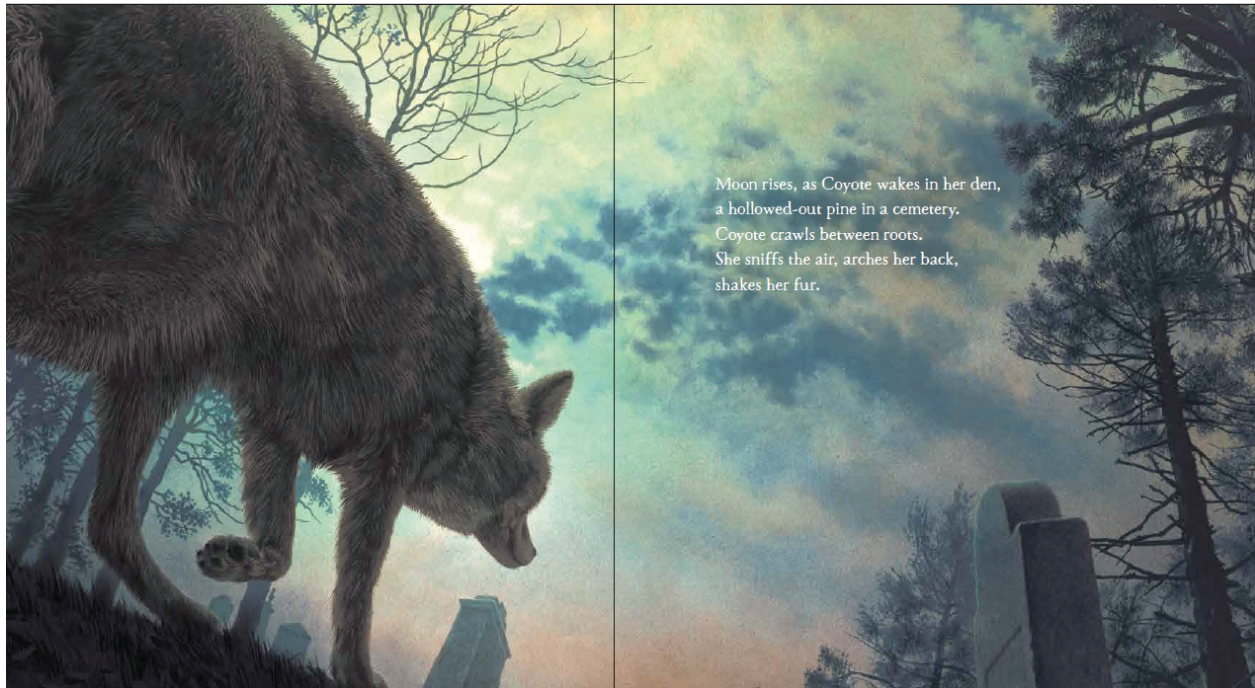
## MOOD SWINGS

Show selected illustrations from the book (shown on pages 15-17 of this guide) in chronological order. Ask students to share how the images made them feel as they heard the story. Students can share their thoughts verbally or by using the emotion strip to point or mark the face that represents how they feel.

Revisit the chart in the Pre-Reading section where students listed their opinions of coyotes before reading *Coyote Moon*. For those whose opinions changed after reading, discuss how the author and illustrator might feel about coyotes. How do their words and art encourage us to look at coyotes in a new way?

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.C Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting)*





Moon rises, as Coyote wakes in her den,  
a hollowed-out pine in a cemetery.  
Coyote crawls between roots.  
She sniffs the air, arches her back,  
shakes her fur.

©Bagram Ibatouline



©Bagram Ibatouline



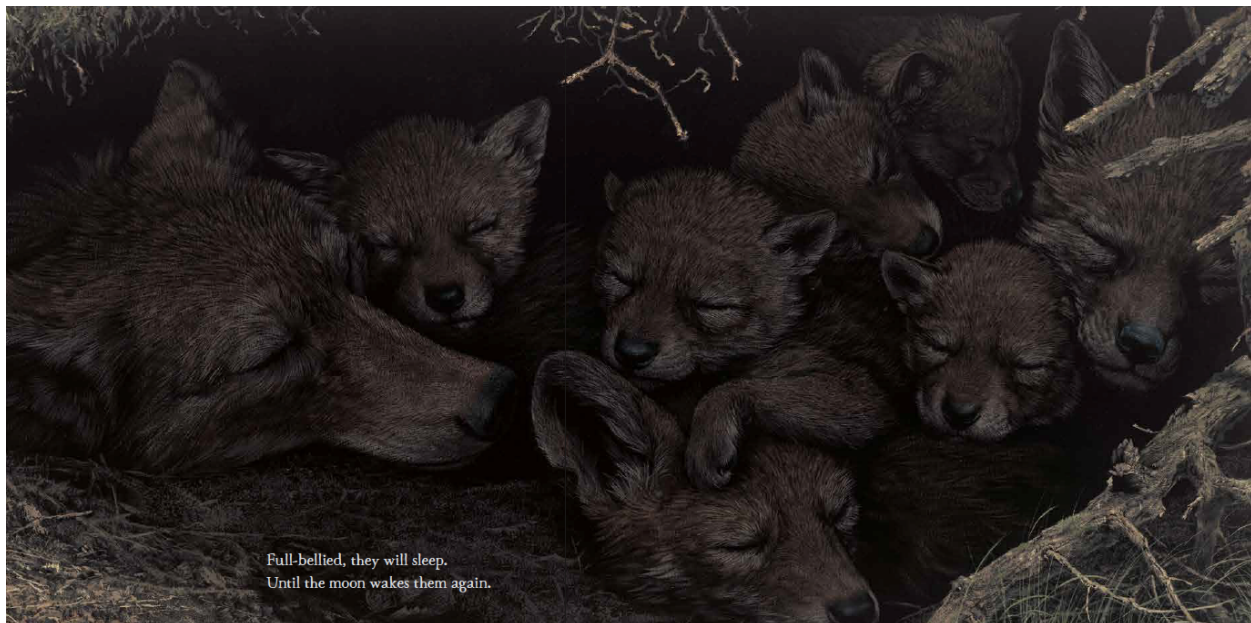
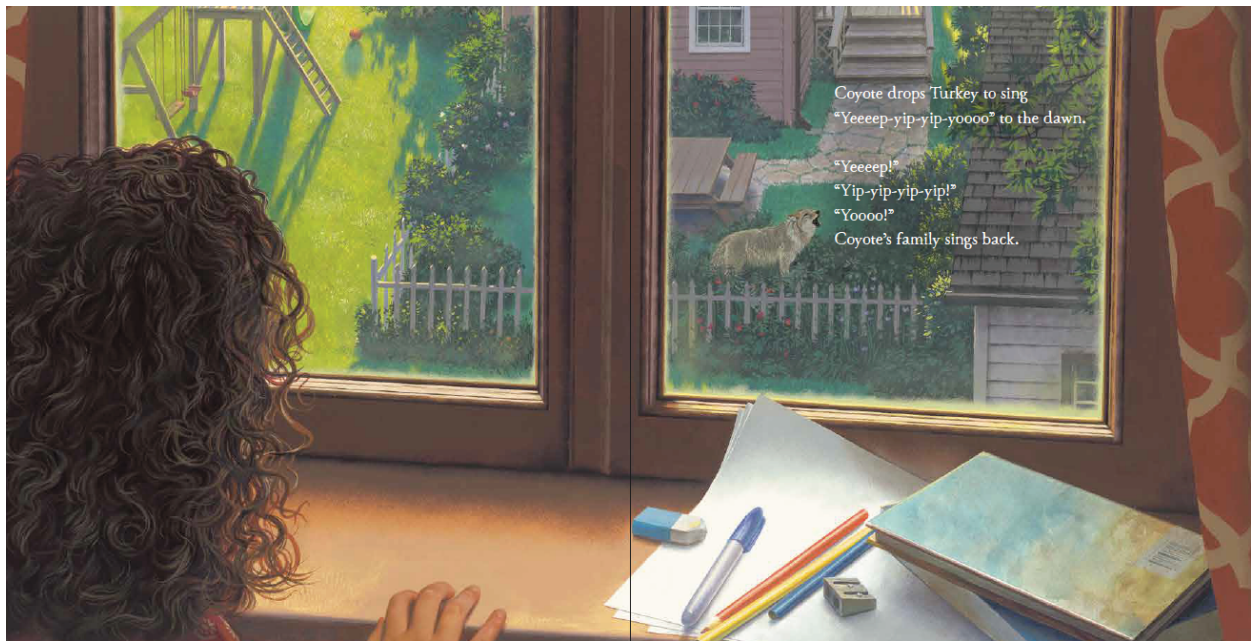


©Bagram Ibatouline



©Bagram Ibatouline





## ANIMAL COMMUNICATION

After catching the turkey, Coyote sings: “Yeeeeep-yip-yip-yoooo,” and her family sings back:

“Yeeeeep!”

“Yip-yip-yip-yip!”

“Yooooo!”

Ask students who might be singing the three lines of responses—the younger pups, the older siblings, or a combination. How might they have felt throughout the night while their mother was hunting for food? How might they feel in this scene?

Working in pairs, have students “translate” the coyotes’ songs into human dialogue on one side of an index card. On the back, write a dialogue exchange that they might have with their own parents about bringing home food for a meal.

Research how other animals communicate by exploring online databases for kids such as Pebble Go, or sources like the following:

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/nature/secret-language-of-dolphins/#dolphin-communication.jpg>

<http://www.nhptv.org/NatureWorks/nwep3.htm>

<https://youtu.be/i74RbATjBk4>

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.C Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.*
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.6 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters.*

## MORE RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

*Wild Animal Neighbors: Sharing Our Urban World* by Ann Downer

*Backyard Bear* by Anne F. Rockwell

*Hungry Coyote* by Cheryl Blackford illustrated by Laurie Caple

Check out these resources listed at the back of *Coyote Moon*:

### FURTHER READING

Mattern, Joanne. *Coyotes*. North Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2012.

Read, Tracy C. *Exploring the World of Coyotes*. Buffalo, N.Y.: Firefly Books, 2011.

Swanson, Diane. *Coyotes*. Milwaukee: Whitecap Books, 2011.  
Swinburne, Stephen R. *Coyote: North America's Dog*. Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 2007.

Winner, Cherie. *Coyotes*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1995.

### WEBSITES

Coywolf Video: [pbs.org/wnet/nature/coywolf-meetthecoywolf/8605](http://pbs.org/wnet/nature/coywolf-meetthecoywolf/8605)

Eastern Coyote/Coywolf Research: [easterncoyotereseach.com](http://easterncoyotereseach.com)

The Humane Society of the United States: [humanesociety.org/animals/coyotes](http://humanesociety.org/animals/coyotes)

Project Coyote: [projectcoyote.org](http://projectcoyote.org)

Urban Coyote Research: [urbancoyotereseach.com](http://urbancoyotereseach.com)

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.9 Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic.*

## AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR MARIA GIANFERRARI



### **How did you get the idea for *Coyote Moon*?**

I had an encounter with a large eastern coyote (coywolf) while living in Massachusetts one late winter night in January, 2007. It was an incredible experience, and my obsession with coyotes began! In

fact, at the time, I didn't even know coywolves existed!

### **Once the idea came to you, what happened next?**

I knew I had to write about coyotes, so I set out to learn all I could. I immersed myself in all things coyote. I read lots of books. I read scientific articles; I interviewed coyote scientist, Jon Way, read his book *Suburban Howls*, and went to one of his lectures. I began trying to track them in our neighborhood, observing signs of their presence, mainly through scat. Initially I wrote an article about suburban coyotes for *Highlights* magazine. When it was rejected, I knew that I couldn't give up on coyotes. After many revisions, it eventually morphed into its current poetic picture book form.

### **What was the most challenging part of writing this book?**

*Coyote Moon* was the first nonfiction picture book I attempted to write, so I was basically learning as I went along. I read hundreds of nonfiction picture books and studied them. It took numerous drafts find the right voice and a circular dusk to dawn structure, one night in a suburban coyote mother's hunt to feed her pups.

### **How is writing non-fiction different from writing fiction?**



Generally speaking, nonfiction involves more research than fiction does (though some of my fiction is research-based too). Once the research has been completed, then the first challenge becomes finding the right way to present the information. Will it be narrative, or more concept-oriented? Do I take a humorous, or more poetic/descriptive approach to the story? Another challenge can be deciding which material to include, and that's where backmatter can come in very handy—the cool items and facts that might not fit in the main text can be added there, and presented in a creative and engaging way.

**What advice do you have for young writers?**

I have the same advice for older and younger readers: writing is hard—don't give up! And read as much as you can in the genres you want to write in, and in other genres too. I think keeping a notebook or journal is also a great tool for jotting down ideas and even writing first drafts by hand. The journal format allows me to feel more relaxed and uncensored, as if what I'm writing there doesn't really count; I'm just practicing, and experimenting, which can be very liberating.

**When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?**

I love walking my dog, Becca, and observing the natural world, especially birds. I also love to read all kinds of things: literature for kids and adults in all kinds of genres, like memoirs or nature-based nonfiction, as well as fiction and nonfiction picture books and poetry. Baking cookies is fun too!

## AN INTERVIEW WITH ILLUSTRATOR

### BAGRAM IBATOULLINE

#### **When did you begin to think of yourself as an artist?**

I'm not sure there was a beginning of thinking about myself as an artist, for me it was a natural way of being. I am grateful to my non-artist parents for their wisdom and constant support of all my artistic pursuits. I started sculpting at the age of 4 or 5, attended a Children's Art School, then an Art College and later an Art Institute - these were all important stages that helped me to develop the necessary knowledge and art skills.

#### **How did you break into the illustrating profession?**

Before I met the famous illustrator Vladimir Radunsky, I didn't have an illustrating profession in mind. He asked me to collaborate on one of his books and that was the start of my career as an illustrator.

#### **What type of media do you like working with the most, and why?**

My long time favorite media is aryl-gouache, because of its flexibility, it can produce qualities of watercolor, gouache and even oil, depending on what you want to achieve. Once dry, it can't be washed out, but you can scratch, sand, and make other interesting textures.

#### **How long did it take to illustrate COYOTE MOON?**

Usually I begin thinking about the illustrations when I read the text for the first time, then I make sketches and the actual making of illustrations start within a couple of months and can take from two to four months. I worked on COYOTE MOON illustrations for almost five months.

**What was the most challenging about this project?**

Since majority of the scenes in this book happen at night, the most challenging, but very interesting at the same time, was to find the appropriate colors for each scene and also make it different from sunset to sunrise.

**What was the most rewarding aspect?**

Of course during work on these illustrations, I had to research and find interesting facts about coyotes, their habits, environment and routines, which I found most rewarding.

**Did you collaborate with the author as you did the illustrations?**

I don't usually collaborate with the authors, but sometimes the authors provide necessary references or comments. I've had a few communications with Maria Gianferrari and found that we both share a love for animals.

**How does your process differ when illustrating non-fiction vs. fiction?**

The process of illustrating non-fiction and fiction is relatively the same. Sometimes non-fiction requires extensive research on facts and other references, while fiction only needs my imagination.

**Are any of the human characters or aspects of the setting modeled on real-life people and places?**

The little girl in *COYOTE MOON* is not based on a real-life person, but the settings I used in these illustrations are somewhat visually close to the area where I live, Phoenicia, NY and its surroundings. There are coyotes around in the woods and I hear them from time to time.

**Pablo Picasso once said, "All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." Do you agree?**

Unlike adults, children are open to the world and I agree, that it is difficult to remain open when you grow up.

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**

My wife and I have a house in the mountains and in my spare time I really like to go outside and work on the landscape.