

21. Coyote Snares the Wind

Wind blows constantly

Coyote catches Wind in trap

Coyote releases Wind on his promise not to blow all the time

At one time the wind blew hard every day. Then Coyote thought, "I'll snare the wind. It passes around the mountain so that is where I'll have to go. I'll go through the mountain."

There was a small hill between two larger ones.¹ That is where Coyote set the snare. He went home and slept. The next day he went to look. Something was caught in the snare. It had long curly hair, a wide mouth and big eyes. Coyote stood with his arrow ready and said, "You are going to die." Just as he was ready to shoot Wind spoke, "Don't I look pitiable. Don't shoot me!" "You are absolutely no good! Every day you blow around the houses and mess everything up. You're going to die. Get ready!" "Please have pity on me."

"If you promise me saying, 'I won't blow any more,' you can live." "I don't travel around for nothing." "What are you always looking for?" "What will become of me if I stay home? What will I eat?" "What do you eat now?"

"I really don't know."² "All right! If you say, 'Four days I will blow. Then I'll stop,' then I'll let you live." "All right! I promise."

Coyote pulled the string and took it off the neck of the wind. So he lives today, but he blows only sometimes, not all the time.

That is the end of the road.

The capture of the wind and his release upon promising not to blow steadily is a myth theme of wide distribution. Although there is a marked similarity in the elements of the various versions, the myth in the territory covered here is seldom found as a part of the Coyote cycle outside the limits of Coeur d'Alene mythology. A *Sanpoil* myth in which Coyote takes the measure of Blizzard, is an exception.

Coyote, aided by Fox, throws Blizzard in wrestling; Coyote decrees blizzards shall not last more than two to three days and people shall no longer freeze to death (JAFL 46:163).

A party sets out to make war on Southeast Wind; Southeast Wind slips helplessly over the backs of halibut into the war party's canoe; Southeast Wind is released upon promising to provide more pleasant weather: this is the general outline for the version found in myths of

¹ Some say it was at Tekoa Mountain, others that it was at Liberty Mountain.

² Perhaps the informant did not know.

the *Haida* of Skidegate—Raven is the leader of the party of birds and Halibut People (BBAE 29:129; MAM 8:183). Among the *Haida* of Masset and the *Kwakiutl* Chief of the Ancients leads the party; Golden Eye, Wren, makes a fire in Southeast Wind's stomach to drive him outside; Southeast Wind promises four days' good weather at a time (some summer and some winter) (MAM 12:98, 350; CUCA 2:227). Among the *Newetsee*—Kute'na decides to get good weather (IS 186); and in *Tsimshian* myth—Txämsem leads the fish against South Wind; Red Cod causes Master of the South Wind to cough; Devilfish sucks him out of his house; South Wind promises four days of good weather at a time (ARBAE 31:79).

Additional myths concerned with the trapping of the wind are found among the *Thompson*, *Shuswap*, *Chilcotin*, *Southern Puget Sound* people, *Nootka*, *Haida* and *Upper Chehalis*.

The youngest contestant snares the Wind in his noose; he releases him on his promise not to blow so hard (*Thompson* MAFLS 6:87; MAM 12:330; *Shuswap* MAM 4:702).

Cold winds blow constantly; Fox and Hare release the warm Chinook wind of the Heat people to act as a check upon the Cold People's winds (*Shuswap* MAM 11:624).

The Chief's son snares the Wind, a boy with a pot-belly and streaming hair; he releases him on his promise not to blow so hard and frequently (*Chilcotin* MAM 4:42).

The people seize the blustery South (Chinook) Wind; they stand him up; he blows only a few days at a time (*Southern Puget Sound* UWPA 3:69).

The people send Winter Robin to kill the Winds; Winter Robin sits by the Winds' fire and forgets to return to his people; Gull leads the people to Winds' house; the people conquer all but West Wind; West Wind promises to allow the tides to change twice a day (*Nootka* IS 100).

Southeast gives the people bad weather; Master Carpenter catches Southeast; Southeast gets back to his home in the sea; the people stop irritating him by their use of his sister's name as a word (*Haida* MAM 8:190).

Northeast Wind, dwelling in the sky, freezes the people; Southwest Wind leads his people against him from their ocean home; Snowbird pulls the sky down for their ascent; Southwest Wind's side is victorious; on his return from the sky Snake murders his sister Toad for mocking his cross-eyes. In a second battle Southwest Wind kills five of the seven Northeast Wind brothers by using a water-sprinkler; the southwest wind now melts snow and frost (*Upper Chehalis* MAFLS 27:75).