

IV: OTHER SIDE CAMP



Margaret Von Biesen

L to R: COYOTE (Darrell Larson), TRICKSTER (Norbert Weisser), and SPIDER WOMAN (Christine Avila) in two-legged walk from *Other Side Camp*.

The CLOWN gathers the Audience, wordlessly encouraging them to follow her. Still mute, she hand signs, gesticulates, writes notes, blows a horn, etc.

CLOWN: Come along! I think we got a chance to see some gods appear!... Follow me, there may be some divinities down there! I'm not kidding!... I heard people say that some gods might come down over there! Let's go see!... Who knows? We might see some gods together! Wouldn't that be terrific? Down there!... I don't know for sure, but I think gods might show up over there! Spread the word!

(She escorts the Audience to the space: a stockaded area in an open field. Upstage are what may be the ruins of an ancient ceremonial city — a set composed of found objects, sandbags, bricks, cement blocks, stones, etc. A few feet below the set, left, stand the bones of a tall, dried-out saguaro tree. Behind it, motionless, stands TRICKSTER, wrapped in a blanket, facing upstage. Across from him, right, is a kind of pylon—wood or metal—perhaps a dolmen we can no longer decipher. Behind it is COYOTE, motionless, wrapped in a blanket. He also faces away from the Audience.)

(The Audience in place, CLOWN enjoins willing members to step forward and say out these speeches, which are hand-lettered on scrolls.)

SCROLL 1: Coyote was supposed to bring the waterfall to earth but he got into a fight with himself and Old Spider Woman had to scare him off. Now everybody's thirsty. If I see him I'm gonna kick him in the knees!

SCROLL 2: Coyote went running around the whole planet. He could see wonderful things but he preferred to fool around with women!

SCROLL 3: Trickster went to the center of the earth on an important mission, but when he got there he couldn't remember what the mission was. And that is why we are all here like this today!

SCROLL 4: I'll tell you another thing Coyote did. He ruined the practice of returning from the Land of the Dead — just because he couldn't control one silly impulse!

SCROLL 5: The thing I can't get over is the time he turned himself into a woman and gave birth to twelve strange spider-people! That was a pisser!

SCROLL 6: I hear that Mr. Coyote/Trickster is behaving very badly now. He is going around like a drunken Indian. He must have a lot of pain in his liver or he wouldn't act like that!

SCROLL 7: Well, that's because Old Spider Woman got mad at him. He doesn't know whether he's "here" or "there" anymore! Let's hope she takes pity on him soon!

(That concluded, CLOWN takes her place — just offstage down right, but in plain view of the Audience — and blows a whistle. COYOTE and TRICKSTER start moving slowly toward one another. They've done some hard traveling.)

COYOTE: Are there any MEN here? *(Pause)*

TRICKSTER: I see a two-legged walker! *(Pause)*

COYOTE: Ha! *(Pause)* I see one who thinks he is a fear-inspiring object! *(Pause)*

TRICKSTER: Ha! *(Pause)* I think you should stay with your Grandmother! *(Pause)*

COYOTE: Ha! *(Pause)* I see one who has slept with too many women of dubious health and uncertain origin! *(Pause)*

TRICKSTER: Ha! *(Pause)* I have in my eyes a two-legged whose pecker has crawled with snakes! *(Pause)*

COYOTE: Ha! *(Pause)* I hear a windpipe which has swallowed all the two-legged substances for the seeing and feeling and warping of reality! *(Pause)*

(They continue hurling ad-lib insults as they approach one another, until, their momentum nearly exhausted, they turn abruptly together to face downstage. A pause.)

COYOTE: Oh! This is something new entirely! *(Pause)*

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: I am Coyote/Trickster and I want to get back to my own tribe! *(A pause; they begin to move slowly downstage towards the Audience.)*

COYOTE: My skin is burning in this place. My hair is burning. My eyes are burning. My head-bone is burning. I feel that there has been a terrible mistake. I was a happy fellow once, on my home planet, with my own tribe, but then I got on the wrong train.

TRICKSTER: I'm looking for the bones... I'm looking for the bones... I'm looking for the bones in the ground... for the gaps between the bones... the spaces in the bones... the lines and markings, the contours of the bones... I'm looking for the life on earth... the life moving around in the ground, in the earth...

COYOTE: I took the Coney Island Local but I ended up in Seagate. Hundreds of us dumped at the planet's edge, beach and causeways in an orange haze. I heard the SLAP of the ocean. I lay down in the sun.

TRICKSTER: My feet are burning. The stones are burning. The seeds are burning. The stones under the stones are burning. The gravel is burning. The sand is burning. The water in the marrow of my bones is burning.

COYOTE: My body got brown and warm. I ate a hot dog. I had no identification. My bowels were burning. I could see Sheepshead. I could see England. I could see the back of my skull.

TRICKSTER: The wind is burning. The trees are burning. My voice is burning. The sound is burning. The air is burning. My blanket is burning.

COYOTE: The sun was growing black and the fish were mutating. The ferris wheel was burning. The algae were burning. The sun was turning black.

TRICKSTER: My throat is burning. My breath is burning. My heartbeat is burning.

COYOTE: I wrapped myself in a blanket. I wanted to do a Christ. My blanket was burning. I was eaten alive.

TRICKSTER: My blood is burning. My cells are burning. My atoms are burning.

COYOTE: Night came and the people went away. I built a fire, attracting teenage gangs. I would have killed to protect my fire. The ocean whacked the filthy beach. Vengeance — got to clean up the mess —

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: IT IS PILING UP BODIES. (*They stop in front of the Audience. Pause.*)

TRICKSTER: What is this here... "happy"?

COYOTE: I didn't do nothin'. I just woke up with it in the morning.

TRICKSTER: Could you say more about that?

COYOTE: I'm trying to remember. I think I had a softball game in the afternoon and a date that night. (*Pause*)

TRICKSTER: What is this here... "local"?

COYOTE: It's a subway.

TRICKSTER: What is this here... "subway"?

COYOTE: It is a very fine sensation. A person can sit still and be moving at the same time.

TRICKSTER: Ha! What is this here... "beach"?

COYOTE: Brighton. Bay One. (*With a fixed stare*) I see a boat out there weighing anchor. It has made no sound. There is no sign on it. Some of the inhabitants have turned against each other. Some are wading out into the water. Some are busy with masts and sails and a flag...

TRICKSTER: Ha!

COYOTE: Ha, what?!

TRICKSTER: That experience is very familiar to me.

COYOTE: So?

TRICKSTER: That experience is more than familiar to me. You stole that experience. That was MY experience.

COYOTE: Don't be an idiot.

TRICKSTER: I am not an idiot! I am a deep person! I am a god! I am Mudhead!

COYOTE: Okay, Mudhead.

TRICKSTER: Right! And I don't want no shallow asshole stealing my deep experiences!

COYOTE: Fine. I don't want no trouble. All I'm trying to do is find my way back to my own tribe.

TRICKSTER: So am I! *(Pause)*

COYOTE: I'll tell you a secret, Mudhead.

TRICKSTER: Yeah? *(Pause)*

COYOTE: I am Coyote!

TRICKSTER: Ha!

COYOTE: Is that all you can think of saying?

TRICKSTER: What?

COYOTE: Ha!

TRICKSTER: Ha! *(TRICKSTER is confused. COYOTE sees a way out.)*

COYOTE: Let's settle up on this thing, Mudhead, so we can go on to something new.

TRICKSTER: What thing?

COYOTE: What will you take in exchange for your experience?

TRICKSTER: *(Thinks it over)* I'll take your blanket. Even Stephen. I'll take your blanket for my experience.

COYOTE: (*Considers*) That sounds fair enough, on the face of it. (*Pause*) So, the first thing is for you to give me an experience. And then I'll give you my blanket.

TRICKSTER: Wait one minute! I already gave you an experience!

COYOTE: I'm sorry, but that doesn't count.

TRICKSTER: Why not? It was a true, bona fide experience!

COYOTE: I don't remember it anymore. Do you?

TRICKSTER: (*Trying*) Something about a boat?

COYOTE: If we don't remember it, then it never happened. We have to start all over again. Certainly you can appreciate that.

TRICKSTER: Of course, I appreciate it!

COYOTE: All right, then. (*Waits*) Come on, we gotta get movin'!

TRICKSTER: Uh, in my dreams, the cloud upon which I walk is full of holes: one for every step I take. (*Pause*)

COYOTE: That's not an experience.

TRICKSTER: What is it then? I thought that was very deep!

COYOTE: It was deep all right, but it wasn't an experience. It was a psychological state.

TRICKSTER: (*Angrily*) Does it have to be in New York City to qualify?

COYOTE: (*Magnanimous*) No. (*Trickster is stumped.*) I have an idea.

TRICKSTER: (*Eagerly*) You do?

COYOTE: Yeah. One blanket equals one experience. All we have to do is exchange blankets. Then we'll be even Stephen.

TRICKSTER: Even Stephen?

COYOTE: You bet.

TRICKSTER: (*Cautiously*) It makes sense...

COYOTE: Then let's exchange blankets. (*An impasse*) I have another idea.

TRICKSTER: Shoot.

COYOTE: Since we already have our blankets, let's not waste our time with exchanging them, and if anyone asks later, we'll just say that we did.

TRICKSTER: What?

COYOTE: Exchanged blankets! (*Pause*)

TRICKSTER: I'll have to think about it. (*Turns away*)

COYOTE: Sure thing. (*Turns away also*)

(*SPIDER WOMAN enters upstage center, from the other side of "camp." She is dressed outlandishly and carries a large kettle strapped to her waist. She halts atop the ruins, and sings.*)

SPIDER WOMAN: I am Kokyonwuhti!
I receive light and nourish life!
I am Mother of all that shall ever come!

(*Taking note of COYOTE and TRICKSTER, she becomes HOMELESS CRAZY WOMAN and steps down into the space.*)

SPIDER WOMAN: It's hard to find a place to make camp these days!
Time was, for a quarter, you could pull right up to a parking meter and have a nice space of your own for an hour! Now, there was a comfort! (*She stops, sings*)

Now let the things
That move
In the thought of my Lord
Appear!

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: (*Menacing*) What's that you say?

SPIDER WOMAN: The Chinaman died seventeen years ago. I went to the morgue to see him and he was under a sheet. There was this stitch on his neck where they put the embalming fluid in. I gave the mortician twenty dollars for flowers but I could tell by the way he looked at me that he put the money into his own pocket. The Chinaman had a good laundry business over there, but all those buildings disappeared a long time ago. We used to have a lot of postmen come in with shirts. The Chinaman got jealous of one of the postmen. I left him twice. I said, "Postmen get lonely just like Chinamen!" I said I was leaving and never coming back. He asked a lady in the lobby where I was, but she didn't know, so he left me a note and it said, "PLEASE COME BACK, I'M SORRY." (*She has moved off behind the tree, left.*)

COYOTE: Who was that?

TRICKSTER: I don't know. But I think she was a good-looking woman.

COYOTE: Do I know her?

TRICKSTER: Who cares? I'd like to fuck her. Do you have any money?

COYOTE: Not for you, I don't.

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Re-enters, singing*)

The crosspoles are made
of sky and earth cords,
the warp-sticks of sun rays,
the healds of rock crystal and sheet lightning.
the batten was a sun halo,
white shell made the comb.

(*Speaking matter-of-factly, she turns center stage and starts majestically down towards the Audience. COYOTE and TRICKSTER, entranced, follow on either side of her.*)

SPIDER WOMAN: There were four spindles:
 one a stick of zigzag lightning
 with a whorl of cannel coal;
 one a stick of flash lightning
 with a whorl of turquoise;
 a third had a stick of sheet lightning
 with a whorl of abalone;
 a rain streamer formed
 the stick of the fourth,
 and its whorl was a white shell.
 The dark blue, yellow and white winds
 quickened the spindles according
 to their color and enabled them
 to travel around the world.

TRICKSTER: That story was very familiar to me, but I can't quite place it in my mind...

SPIDER WOMAN: That was my loom, Sonny. My loom.

COYOTE: (*Alerted*) Your loom?

SPIDER WOMAN: (*As HOMELESS CRAZY WOMAN*) Then, when he was in the hospital with a cancer of the rectum, he said, "Please hang around till I can get up again." I went to visit him but they took him to the convalescent home. He said, "Honey, I don't know what's wrong with me." He kept saying that. I told him, "You'll be all right. You'll be up and walking in your pajamas in a few days." I told him I'd come back. I went back three days later and he was dead. (*To Audience*) Shhh... The Chinese will never be civilized like white people. You can send them to college — Harvard, Oxford, Cal State, whatever— but they're still Chinese! (*Pause*) I sleep real good at night, but it's so hard to get up in the morning. (*She puts down her kettle.*)

TRICKSTER: (*Approaching*) Uh, Lady? You know, I couldn't help but be moved by that experience of yours. I was quite touched by it. And you know, it was a very familiar experience. It reminded me of a time, years ago, while I was on a important mission for Old Spider Woman. I was —

SPIDER WOMAN: What would people do if they didn't gather things all day? Play shuffleboard?

TRICKSTER: (*As if shocked into recognition*) HI!

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Ignoring him*) The most important thing in life is making a good soup. I use last night's stock and the events of the day. I try to be discriminating, but some things are out of my hands. Beggars can't be choosers. I got the mating cry of a wild bus this morning, and one very unusual grimace. Never seen it before on this earth — lust, hunger, and revenge — all mixed up in one face. (*She puts this into her "Soup."*)

COYOTE: Is that what you're doing? Making soup?

SPIDER WOMAN: This is a soup that'll make you wish you had stayed with your *Abuelita*, you *CHANGO*.

COYOTE: What do you put in it?

SPIDER WOMAN: The songs and the dreams of the gods!

TRICKSTER: What about my experience? I was about to say an experience back there! I, Mudhead, claim ownership of that experience!

COYOTE: (*Taking him aside*) Don't talk to a person when they're busy!

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Making the "Soup"*) Three lizard grins... Eleven dead motorcycle exhaust pipes... Four ounces adipose tissue from a forty-two-year-old Mexican junkie... Seven denials... One forty-nine Chevy back seat... A well-scratched-up pew... Two vials of distilled right-wing religious hysteria... Twenty years of advice.... Ten years of waiting for MY check... Twenty five years of feeling guilty for no damn reason... Etc.

COYOTE: Don't take this personally lady, but that is an absolutely disgusting soup!

TRICKSTER: I agree. Nobody in his right mind would eat such a soup!

SPIDER WOMAN: That's where we live, *Chicos*.

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: (*Charging her*) Where?

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Holding them off*) Now I'll show you something really entertaining! (*She lifts the kettle to reveal an illuminated spidery design inside, then puts it down, sits on it, beams. COYOTE, TRICKSTER and CLOWN applaud politely.*)

TRICKSTER: I'd like to refer back, if I may, to the question of stolen experiences. (*SPIDER WOMAN stands and puts the kettle over her head.*)

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: (*Startled*) Oh.

COYOTE: (*Venturing*) VIVA CERCA DE AQUI?

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Contemptuous*) MONDE USTED? I don't live here. I live on the other side of town, and my acupuncturist is a complete asshole. I get disability payments. This whole camp is full of crazy people. They can't see reality. As for me, I don't give a rat's ass.

TRICKSTER: You don't?

SPIDER WOMAN: Nope. I don't wanna see reality. Every day I make a new soup and that takes care of that. I put everything into it but the kitchen sink. On the other hand, there are people going hungry in this world.

COYOTE: (*To Trickster*) Maybe now we're getting somewhere.

SPIDER WOMAN: I'm not happy with my soup of the day.

TRICKSTER: (*Discouraged*) Another day, another soup.

SPIDER WOMAN: There's a missing ingredient. A certain substance... I'll make you an offer—you supply the missing ingredient for my soup, and I'll show you the way back to the real world and your own tribe.

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: What is this here ingredient?

SPIDER WOMAN: It is a watery substance with little fish things in it.

COYOTE: What is this here substance called?

SPIDER WOMAN: Sex. (*An Impasse. COYOTE and TRICKSTER are perplexed.*) Now you have the opportunity to accomplish an interesting experience.

TRICKSTER: (*Pushing COYOTE out of the way*) I'm ready then! (*TRICKSTER is lost. No one moves. Meekly:*) The least you can do is take that kettle off your head.

SPIDER WOMAN: Oh. I'm sorry.

(*She shyly takes off the kettle. CLOWN indicates where the kettle should be and SPIDER WOMAN puts it down. Music. TRICKSTER following, she looks for a nice spot and gracefully bends over. TRICKSTER looks at her. He is at a loss. Finally, he decides to do as she does. He bends over facing the opposite direction and backs in so that their buttocks touch. SPIDER WOMAN is amazed. Meanwhile, CLOWN sneaks onstage and pours water and a fish into the kettle. COYOTE notices the new condition of the kettle and rushes over.*)

COYOTE: Holy Toledo! A fish! I'll catch that fish! (*He thrashes in the kettle with no success, decides to drink the water. He drinks some of the water and catches the fish in his mouth.*) Aha! I got you! (*He spits the fish away.*) Phooey! This fish is dead! (*Now TRICKSTER and SPIDER WOMAN are "stuck," rump to rump, like dogs.*)

TRICKSTER: Hey , Coyote! This has been a lot of fun, but it's over now! It's time to go on to something else now!

COYOTE: So what do you want from me?

SPIDER WOMAN: We're stuck, stupid!

COYOTE: Oh no! But don't worry! Help is on the way! (*He throws the rest of the water from the kettle on them and they come unstuck.*) There!

TRICKSTER: Thank you very much. That was an interesting experience. For a moment there, I—

COYOTE: Tell us another time! (*A drumbeat, as SPIDER WOMAN majestically shows the four directions. COYOTE, on his knees, addresses the sky.*) That's where I come from! And that is Earthmaker's tent! The sky is the home of thunder, the palace of Taiowa! He comes down here to gather snakes! And if you see fire up there, that means his wings are beating! And if there's a big tumult up there, that means he's brought his kids along!

TRICKSTER: If you want to steal my experiences, then you have to include the people, the life of the people! Let's try and be humble for a change.

COYOTE: I have an idea.

TRICKSTER: What's that?

COYOTE: Let's try and be humble for a change. (*A sneer from TRICKSTER. To SPIDER WOMAN, very fast:*) Is it a question of economics — the value of a dollar — Dictatorship of the Proletariat — too many people on earth — population control — what do I mean? — I mean, being a regular guy, regular, a member of the community, a guy who pays his bills, a guy with money in his pocket, a success! (*SPIDER WOMAN points and a beam of light comes out of the ground at COYOTE's feet. He whirls away.*)

TRICKSTER: (*Fast*) What about this here? — the love of a woman — someone to do my shirts — marriage and a home — a hot meal — a house in the country and three little kids — friendship! One man I can trust — someone who won't stomp me into the ground when I'm losing, when I'm going under! (*SPIDER WOMAN points— A beam of light comes up from the earth at his feet — TRICKSTER whirls away.*)

COYOTE: (*Fast*) Is it a question of acting natural? — not too forward, one step back, but not above it — when people say bad things about me, I don't get upset — it goes right by me — The respect of my peers! Fame and glory — I can get laid anytime I want to, and when Coyote's name is mentioned, people nod sagely and allow themselves a little smile! (*SPIDER WOMAN points— A light comes on in the earth. COYOTE whirls.*)

TRICKSTER: (*Fast*) The guilty party! — Psychoanalysis! — How my father stood by idly while my mother ruined my life! — Yes! It's not too late! — I can still win! — I can triumph! — I can make them pay through the nose! I can make it! (*SPIDER WOMAN points. A beam of light appears under TRICKSTER. There are now four beams of light shining out of the ground.*)

COYOTE: Wait! The double helix! The genetic code! Mutation! Power!

SPIDER WOMAN: Only Earthmaker knows the code.

TRICKSTER: (*Discouraged*) I guess that's it, then. No code. (*Enraged*) It's a trick! I will boil you in your kettle! I will make you into soup! I will send you back to your loony bin in a hundred thousand parts!

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Stopping him with a wave of her hand*) No. Try to concentrate your mind.

COYOTE: (*Distracted*) Why have all these lights come on in the earth?

SPIDER WOMAN: That is my power talking!

COYOTE: (*Admiring*) Great! (*The lights in the earth go out as SPIDER WOMAN sadly becomes HOMELESS CRAZY WOMAN again.*)

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: Wait! Come back from the Homeless Crazy Woman and be Spider Woman again! Please!

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Giving them another chance*) Spider Woman is gone now, but she can speak through me. (*Listens*) She says, first, "How did white people come to be made on this earth?"

COYOTE: It was me who did it, and it wasn't easy. Outside Alamogordo the sand is only white — many people sitting on the ground, on the white sand. Then all at once they TURN. SNAP. And they put their hands up as a shield to the LIGHT — and they see through their hands. To the white bone shining. And they see the SOUND coming. And the sound is burning. (*Pause*) So I took this band of people and I put them in a box. I carried them into the mountains, to one of my high places, and I washed them in the snow until they were as white as the sand of Alamogordo. It wasn't easy.

Their skin was steaming. I burned my hands in the boiling snow. And they were bleeding. From the nose, from the ears, from the eyes, from the anus, from the sex organs. And the children also. It wasn't easy, but that is how white people came to be made on earth.

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Listening*) Spider Grandmother says, "Okay. I liked your story very much. But if you want an answer to your question, you have to ask it four times. If you can ask four times, it will mean that your mind is a little concentrated. But I warn you, you'd better be prepared for the consequences if something goes wrong. You might get stuck."

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: I want to get back to my own tribe and see the real world!

SPIDER WOMAN: I tell you — try to understand what I say, or all the two-legged walking beings on earth, the five colors and five directions, all the people, born and unborn, now and forever, will have to work for a living!

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: Don't worry!

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Listening*) And one more thing.

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: Yes?

SPIDER WOMAN: You will have to pay for her advice.

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER : How much?

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Listens*) One blanket each.

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: Oh.

SPIDER WOMAN: Now— Ask four times!

COYOTE AND TRICKSTER: How can I get back to my own world and see the real tribe? No...

COYOTE: How can I get back to my own blanket and see the real world?

TRICKSTER: No. How can I get back to my own world and see the real problem?

COYOTE: No. How can I get back to my own life and see the real tribe?

TRICKSTER: No. How can I get back to my own problems and live a real life?

COYOTE: Shut up! I almost had it!

TRICKSTER: WHAT?

COYOTE: How can I...?

TRICKSTER: How can I...?

COYOTE: RETURN!

TRICKSTER: NO!

COYOTE: How can I return my blanket and get a new one?

TRICKSTER: NO!

COYOTE: A refund!

TRICKSTER: I feel that we have gotten far away now and that the original experience has lost its meaning.

COYOTE: Get back!

TRICKSTER: Forever.

COYOTE: How can I get back...?

TRICKSTER: How can I get back to my own tribe and see the real world?

SPIDER WOMAN: (*Banging the kettle*) One! One! One!

TRICKSTER: One?

(They go on like this, getting the words mixed up, going off on tangents, telling stories, accusing each other, driving themselves into a frenzy. SPIDER WOMAN bangs her kettle and counts out each success. Finally, they startle themselves by inadvertently and at last asking for the fourth time.)

SPIDER WOMAN: Four! Four! Four! *PENDEJOS!* This is what Spider Grandmother says: "Coyote/Trickster, if you want to get back to your own tribe and see the real world — you have to give up being crazy! You have to get out of your old skin and get into a new one!"

(Hurling curses, she strips them of their blankets and withdraws. COYOTE and TRICKSTER stand naked except for outlandish bathing suits. But they soon adjust to the new situation with macho bravado, addressing each other a la Gary Cooper and Robert Redford.)

COYOTE: You know, Mr. Smith, your salvation is not of this world.

TRICKSTER: Where is it then, Mr. Brown?

COYOTE: In the next world, Mr. Smith. Our people are probably having a nice life there, where their cells aren't burning in the climate.

TRICKSTER: Actually, I think the problem was my mother, who started me worrying at an early age.

COYOTE: Well, don't think about it now. Now is the time for exchanging blankets.

TRICKSTER: Blankets? But we gave our blankets to the Homeless Crazy Woman.

COYOTE: Don't you understand? Underneath one blanket is another, a second blanket.

TRICKSTER: Where is it?

COYOTE: It's our skins! Now we can exchange blankets and get out of our old skins and into a new one!

TRICKSTER: Oh.

COYOTE: And not only that, but one blanket equals one experience.
That way, you also get to say an experience.

TRICKSTER: I see.

COYOTE: And that experience can be your Death Song!

TRICKSTER: Makes perfect sense!

(They race behind the saguaro, up left. TRICKSTER quickly takes off his shoes and re-enters, COYOTE following in his tracks.)

TRICKSTER: In my dream, the cloud upon which I walk is full of holes: one for every step I take. *(He arrives centerstage and turns downstage.)* A boat is weighing anchor off the continent. It has made no sound. There is no sign on it. Some of the inhabitants have turned against each other. Some are wading out into the water. Some are busy with masts and sails and a flag.

COYOTE: Divine is sunlight
 Divine is Earthmaker's tent
 Divine is the Spider Lady's posture

(They stop, down center.)

TRICKSTER: My name is Mudhead!
 I am born of Earth!
 My Father's name is Taiowa!
 And I cannot die!

(He falls to his knees. COYOTE draws a circle around him with white sand.)

COYOTE: Divine is thunder
 Divine is lightning
 Divine is Coyote's Journey
 From beginning to end

TRICKSTER: Once I was a newborn child
 And Coyote/Trickster was my name.
 I knew nothing,

And nothing had been named.
 Then I was awakened.
 "Now you have to learn about life,"
 My mother said,
 "Now you have to learn about Man."
 I became a human being
 And walked among the two-leggeds
 I saw the new colors in the sky
 I tasted the new flavors in the earth
 It was not pleasant to me
 It was not agreeable to me

(COYOTE takes a posture behind him. TRICKSTER paints a red line down the center of his own body, from the top of his head to his navel.)

TRICKSTER: My death song
 Is:
 SHUT YOUR STARS.

(CLOWN blows a shrill whistle as COYOTE "skins" TRICKSTER and holds the skin aloft in triumph. A pause before CLOWN rushes on stage and chases them off in a cloud of dust. She approaches the Audience and stutters.)

CLOWN: There are thousands of these Trickster/Coyotes! Their robes are everywhere!

(She starts off. A Drumbeat. CLOWN stops and points upstage. The gods appear, rising up slowly behind the ruins. They are—masked—COYOTE, MUDHEAD, and SPIDER WOMAN. To the slow cadence of the drum, they walk down toward the Audience.)

END