

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

Coyote Recovers Kangaroo Rat's Remains

(This is a line-by-line translation (within the limits of English readability))

Kangaroo Rat made arrows, they say.

He was making many of them, they say.

He made a bow, they say.

He shot about, they say.

He shot at the ground, they say.

Then he shot on both sides (of the stream), they say.

He shot along to the north, they say.

He came there shooting, they say.

He was killed at Blue Rock, they say.

He shot at everything, they say.

He shot at the ground, they say.

They brought it (corpse) to Red Mountain, they say.

They took it inside for a Scalp Dance, they say.

They danced with it, they say.

Then they took it off, they say.

They took his head off, they say.

They pulled him in two, they say.

Coyote dreamed about his cousin, they say.

"I dreamed, I dreamed about him, my nephew, my nephew, my nephew."

He started to follow his tracks, they say.

He went along tracking, they say.

To the north, they say.

He cried along, they say.

He came, they say, to the of the Red Mountain dance-house place.

He picked up the bones, they say.

He tied them up with beads at the place he walked to in the north, they say.

He went way up north, they say.

He tied otter-fur around his head, (returning) from the north, they say.

He came to the dance-house, they say.

When it was evening they cooked food, they say.

He went into the dance-house, they say.

"You can dance anyway."

"I always do that when I get a person's head."

It was a dance, they say.

Two danced in the middle, they say.

They danced, they say.

Two danced in the middle, they say.

They danced, they say.

"Let me dance with the scalp."

He ran out with it, they say.

He ran back, they say.

They chased him, they say.

He ran along with it, they say.

He ran back to the bones, they say.

He had put them in the beads, they say.

He came back, they say.

He came back to the bones way over there, they say.

He took them down, they say.

He carried them back, they say.

He carried them back in it, they say.

He carried them in it with the beads, they say.

"When they do that to me I come back to life.

Ok, I jumped across the creek, my cousin."

He jumped down, they say.

He carried him along from here in the north, they say.

He ran back with his cousin, they say.

They cried, they say.

He cried along about him because he was tied up, they say.

"My nephew, my nephew, my nephew."

He brought him back to his home, they say.

That is all.

Professor Goddard's Translation

Kangaroo Rat made many arrows. He kept making them. He made also a bow. He shot about. He shot at the ground. He shot along on both sides of the stream toward the north until he came to Blue Rock, where he was killed.

"This fellow, they say, shoots at everything. He shoots at the ground," said those who killed him. They carried him to Red Mountain that they might dance with his scalp. They took the corpse into the dance-house and danced with it. Then they cut the head off and pulled him in two.

Coyote dreamed about his cousin. "I dreamed, I dreamed, my nephew, my nephew, my nephew," he sang. He started out following the tracks. As he tracked him along toward the north he cried. He came to the dance-house at Red Mountain. He gathered up the bones and walked away with them toward the north. He tied them up with strings of beads. He walked way on toward the north and then returned with a piece of otter skin tied in his hair." He came to the dance-house.

When it was evening they cooked a meal. Coyote went in. "You dance in the dance-house anyway," said the chief. "I always do that when I take a person's head," said Coyote. They danced with two dancing in the middle.

"Let me dance with the scalp," said Coyote. He ran out with it. He ran back with it and the others chased him. He came to the place where he had left the bones tied up with the beads. He took them down and started home with them. He carried them using the beads for a carrying-strap."

"When they do that to me I come alive again. Come, I jump across the creeks, my cousin." Kangaroo Rat jumped down.

They came back from the north. He ran along with his cousin. He cried about him as he went along, because he was tied (leaving a scar). "My nephew, my nephew, my nephew," he lamented. He brought him home.

That is all.

(Based on Cahto oral traditions and beliefs)