

Largest Mustelid: Wolverine, *Gulo gulo* (= glutton) and *Gulo luscus* (one-eyed glutton), common names “skunk-bear” and “carcajou”



Largest Mustelid: Wolverine, *Gulo gulo* and *Gulo luscus*, now extinct over most of its range, fur used for parkas repels ice “rime”



For the Last Wolverine

By James Dickey



FOR THE LAST WOLVERINE

They will soon be down To one,
but he still will be For a little while
still will be stopping The flakes in the air with a look,
Surrounding himself with the silence Of whitening snarls.
Let him eat The last red meal of the condemned
To extinction, tearing the guts from an elk.

Yet that is not enough For me.

I would have him eat The heart, and, from it,

have an idea Stream into his gnawing head

That he no longer has a thing To lose,

and so can walk Out into the open,

in the full Pale of the sub-Arctic sun

Where a single spruce tree is dying

Higher and higher. Let him climb it

With all his meanness and strength.

Lord, we have come to the end Of this kind of vision of heaven.
As the sky breaks open Its fans around him and shimmers
And into its northern gates he rises
Snarling complete in the joy of a weasel
With an elk's horned heart in his stomach
Looking straight into the eternal Blue, where he hauls his kind.
I would have it all My way: at the top of that tree I place
The New World's last eagle Hunched in mangy feathers
giving Up on the theory of flight.

Dear God of the wildness of poetry,
let them mate To the death in the rotten branches,
Let the tree sway and burst into flame
And mingle them, crackling with feathers, In crownfire.
Let something come Of it something gigantic legendary
Rise beyond reason over hills Of ice
SCREAMING that it cannot die, That it has come back,
this time On wings, and will spare no earthly thing:
That it will hover, made purely of northern Lights, at dusk

and fall On men building roads:

will perch On the moose' s horn like a falcon Riding into battle

into holy war against Screaming railroad crews:

will pull Whole traplines like fibers from the snow

In the long-jawed night of fur trappers.



But, small, filthy, unwinged, You will soon be crouching Alone,

with maybe some dim racial notion Of being the last,

but none of how much Your unnoticed going will mean:

How much the timid poem needs

The mindless explosion of your rage,

The glutton's internal fire
the elk's Heart in the belly, sprouting wings,
The pact of the "blind swallowing Thing," with himself,
to eat The world, and not to be driven off it
Until it is gone, even if it takes Forever.
I take you as you are And make of you what I will,
Skunk-bear, carcajou, bloodthirsty Non-survivor.

Lord, let me die but not die

Out.

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