



# Exploring Contemporary Canadian Voices

the spoken word

# Ivan Coyote



# Bio

Ivan Coyote

- Born and raised in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.
- Award-winning author of five collections of short stories, one novel, two CD's, four short films.
- A renowned performer, Coyote's first love is live storytelling, and over the last thirteen years she has become an audience favourite at music, poetry, spoken word and writer's festivals from Anchorage to Amsterdam.
- The Globe and Mail called Coyote 'a natural-born storyteller.'
- Quill's Magazine says Coyote has a 'distinctive and persuasive voice, a flawless sense of pacing, and an impeccable sense of story.'
- Check out [Ivan Coyote's website](#).



# Before Viewing

Ivan Coyote

Before viewing *You are Here (A Story in Four Parts)*:

- Note that storytelling is considered Spoken Word and review its origin:
  - ▶ Before the written word, stories and history were told orally. Young people memorized huge chunks of oral culture.
  - ▶ Spoken word as an art form evolved from the oral tradition – with its roots in pre-print literature.
  - ▶ In Western literature, these roots originated in works such as Homer's “The Iliad” and “The Odyssey”, and in African culture to the role of the [Griot](#), a praise singer and wandering musician.
- Is there a storyteller in your family or group of friends?
- What makes them a good storyteller?



# Background

Ivan Coyote

- Note that in her story, Coyote refers to Jack London, an American author who wrote “The Call of the Wild”, “White Fang”, and “The Sea Wolf”, along with many other popular books.



View *You Are Here (Part 1 of 4)*

9 minutes, 25 seconds



# After Viewing

Ivan Coyote

After viewing *You are Here (Part 1)*:

- How does Ivan use her description of town signage to show the character of the townspeople? Based on her comments about the Two Mile Hill, how would you describe the local people?
- What does Ivan's father think about the government? What happened that he should think this?
- How does Ivan describe her home?



View *You Are Here (Part 2 of 4)*

8 minutes, 50 seconds



# After Viewing

Ivan Coyote

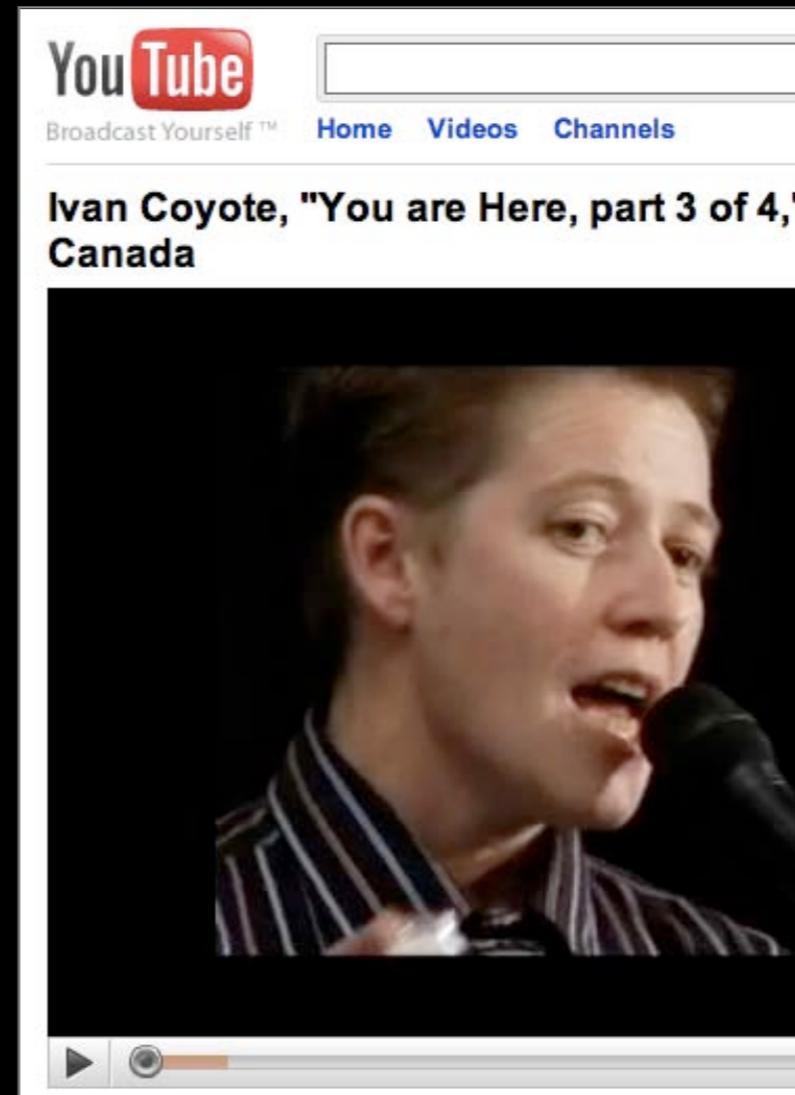
After viewing *You Are Here (Part 2 of 4)*:

- Describe Ivan's grandmother Flo (her attitude, actions, viewpoint, physical description, origins). What was she best known for?
- Why did Ivan's grandmother Pat decide to go back to the Yukon?
- Describe big Pat. What was she like, what was her view on life?
- How are Ivan's two grandmothers similar. How are they different?



# View *You Are Here (Part 3 of 4)*

9 minutes, 38 seconds



# After Viewing

Ivan Coyote

After viewing *You Are Here (Part 3 of 4)*:

- What 'long' things aren't Yukoners afraid of?
- How does Ivan describe Yukoners? How does she say they are different from other people? What sets them apart?
- Ivan has been called a natural born storyteller. What techniques and devices does she use to capture your attention?
- Describe the Midnight Light that Ivan talks about? Why is it special, and why can't anything replicate it?
- What do you think it would be like to 'chase the light'?



# View *You Are Here (Part 4 of 4)*

1 minute, 24 seconds



After viewing *You Are Here (Part 4 of 4)*:

- Why don't Ivan's grandmothers want to move away from the Yukon? Why did they tell their stories?
- How does Ivan use her voice to change up, keep the story interesting and engaging? (e.g., accents, character voices, speed, timing, pauses, gestures). Give examples.



# Activities

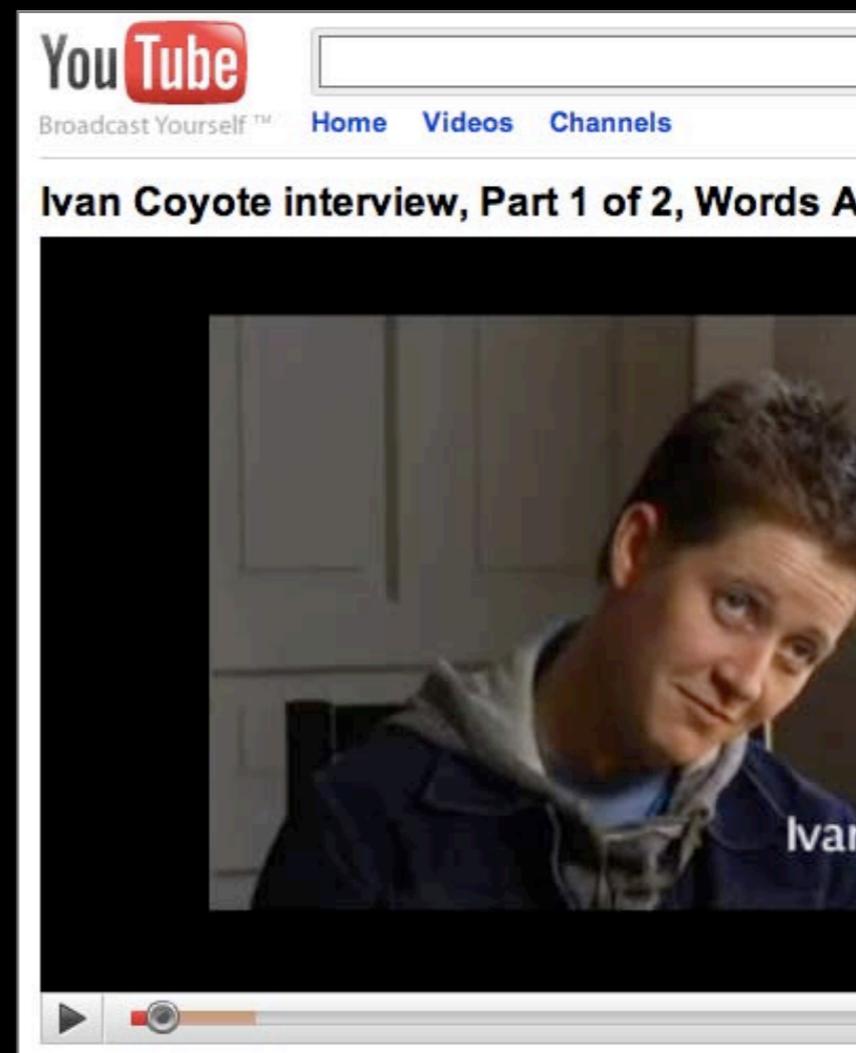
Ivan Coyote

- WRITE a short character sketch based on yourself or a real person that you know. Use Coyote's methods of developing characters, such as telling funny anecdotes about them and describing them physically. Perform it using some of Ivan's techniques.
- WRITE a poem or short story (or draw a picture) about your own home town or school. Start with a physical feature of the town, like Coyote did with the Two Mile Hill. Add a couple of interesting characters.
- WRITE a poem or short story, or draw a picture, about the Yukon, based on what you learned from Ivan. Look at descriptions that Ivan gave to help you.
- WRITE a journal entry responding to Coyote's story.



# View *Interview with Ivan Coyote (Part 1)*

9 minutes, 53 seconds



# After Viewing

Ivan Coyote

After viewing *Interview with Ivan Coyote (Part 1)*:

- What are the benefits and disadvantages of touring?
- What does Ivan like and dislike about being a performer?
- What is the job of a storyteller?
- What different types of things does Coyote have to do to make a living as a storyteller?
- When did Coyote know she wanted to be a writer? What advice did her father give?
- What advice does Ivan give to aspiring writers and filmmakers?



# View *Interview with Ivan Coyote (Part 2)*

9 minutes, 1 second



# After Viewing

Ivan Coyote

After viewing *Interview with Ivan Coyote (Part 2)*:

- What are the good things about being an artist, according to Coyote?
- Why doesn't she get bored as a performer?
- What was Coyote's worst audience?
- How does Coyote tailor her performance to her audience?



# Credits

**Videos** – Filmed at the 2007 Words Aloud 4 Spoken Word Festival based in Durham, ON. The videos were produced/directed by Liz Zetlin and Myke Dyer.

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