Field Dressed

Patrick McKeon

The bison crossing signs were the first indication that Lou Selvert was actually lost. From the Google Map directions he had chosen in the North Rim Lodge it should only be five hours from the Grand Canyon to Las Vegas. But somewhere before Jacob Lake the GPS signal was lost and it never came back. The road was not big to begin with, but in the last hour as darkness approached it became slenderer with each mile, and there was still no GPS signal and no cell phone signal. Just taller and taller Ponderosa Pines closing in on his car. Little twinges of panic were just beginning to afflict his bowels when a rustic but large log house was lit by late afternoon sun rays beaming between two copses of aspen. Lou followed the beams down a gravelly driveway some hundred yards to the front of the house, until sudden twilight draped his car and the path as the sun rolled behind a distant peak.

“Anyone home?” Lou called as he stepped out of the car and looked at the antler encrusted front of the building. Caribou, elk, pronghorn, moose and buffalo horns grew like warts all over the wall except on the front door which was adorned with fang filled skulls of puma, wolf, bear, wolverine and even rattlesnake.

“That’s an impressive beard. Is it dyed?”

Lou whirled around, looking for the mouth from the voice which he heard from every direction outside and inside his head. His hand grabbed his carrot orange beard. “I can’t see you.”

A walking scarecrow with thick lensed spectacles and covered with blood stepped out of the shadow of a huge tree. “Such a bright red. Take off your hat.”

Lou’s hand slid up the side of his face from his beard to his head, then slid back down with his lumberjack’s hat in its fingers. “I’m sorry. I was lost.”

“Beautiful,” The man said after an appreciative whistle, “Never seen a color like that on any creature.”