

A Wolf Among the Cattle

By John Steiner

Alongside stampeding herds of glass and steel I pad. They rumble their way down asphalt migration trails. I don't pick out prey, for surely the crazed ranchers long for an excuse to open fire. Instead, I watch. I practice spotting weaknesses in their attention span, but don't act on it. Just in time for the tetranual culling of the electorate.

Surely... at least one hopes, they know they're just meat on the hoof. wallets fattened up just enough but not too much, lest they have reserve enough to seek new pastures. Rather, they subsist to the next brief spring paycheck.

It's a long winter for the wolf also, but the usual benefits of winter are denied. Scratching at snow and earth for what little prey are left available, the big game of old are but a distant memory. At most, the wolf can show other wildlife how best to use their eyes, their ears, their nose.

However, heightened sense are their own bane. The glare of urban deserts becomes more acute. Square upgrowths in suburban plains turns sharper. Electric moos of automotive herds more grating. Their emissions pack more sting and burn. The wolf snorts forcefully to clear his nostrils with a shake of his mane.

Long adapted to heat and cold, the wolf thinks nothing of new extremes felt on his skin. Cooled by inner calmness and warmed by insight alight, the wolf sees the old patterns in this new wilderness.

Digital/financial sharks swim stock market oceans.

Writhing leeches offer themselves to be your public relations face; trading their own hideousness for that of their hosts.

Hackling hyenas of real estate wait on the nearly-dead for their next meal, though actively take down those fighting to take one breath past their last.

Yet, the Great Bear, teacher of man, slumbers on, knowing his time is long afar.

And the wolf, brother to man, gazes on with a deceptively fierce brightness of his yellow eyes. He knows this isn't a time to howl.

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