Laura Hager  
Prof. Grollmus  
English 131   
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 *Canis latrans*  
 It took some time for the truck to warm up. His breath, illuminated by the buzzing yellow of streetlamps, rose in short plumes as he pulled out of the garage. Stanley Gehrt drove slowly through the thin layer of snow—there was no rush, and he figured that no one else would be driving to a cemetery in the middle of the night in Chicago. Things got a little sketchy at times— but hey, occupational hazard.  
 Stanley parked as close as he could, in the usual spot. Thirty or so pounds isn't much but it's a bother if you have to carry it a ways. He stepped out of the car and listened to the city sounds submerged in the snow. After the wail of a distant ambulance subsided, the silence sank into all the cracks. Stanley grabbed his bag and headed towards the cast iron cemetery gate. *Damn. Locked.* It always was locked at night, but he always checked anyway out of what used to be optimism. Now it was just habit.  Readying himself for a moment, he half-climbed and half-leaped over the fence and scanned the grass between the graves for the trap. Not for himself, of course. For a coyote.  
He remembered where he had set it, and headed over to one of the more forgotten areas in this calm field of stones and bodies. Stanley rummaged in his bag with gloved (albeit still numb) fingers for his flashlight and switched it on. A few yards ahead, a pair of glowing yellow eyes flickered in response. He walked on and watched those eyes moving as agitatedly as their captured owner was.   
 After the coyote was drugged, Stanley reset the trap and made his way out of his dark corner of the cemetery. The coyote peacefully lolled in his arms with each stride. *Young male, maybe a bit less than thirty pounds... needs a radio collar.* Another source of information and samples. Stanley turned his flashlight off as he came nearer to the cemetery's entrance. There was no need for it. The streetlights caught each wisp of the coyote's outer layer of fur— coarse, pale guard hairs that darkened to black at the ends. Beneath the outer layer was the heat-trapping fuzz of the under-layer. The animal's warmth was noticeable, even through the thick material of Stanley's jacket. The slow breathing of the drugged coyote was still faster than that of a human's, but this was all normal to Stanley. He had been doing this twice a week for what felt like a lifetime. His life's work.  
 The silhouette of the cemetery fence loomed ahead, all bars and cold metal. Stanley stopped. *What's that noise?* Some footsteps and hushed voices, while dampened by the snow, put Stanley on alert-mode. *It's probably nothing. It's probably nothing.* He held the coyote securely and leaped over the fence as one blinding light swiveled towards him, held by a dark figure. Two dark figures across a white lawn, bathed in streetlight. They began to scream.   
  
News articles/other sources used:  
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/cities-are-brimming-wildlife-worth-studying>  
http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/11/141121-coyotes-animals-science-chicago-cities-urban-nation/  
http://urbancoyoteresearch.com/about-program

Laura:

This was expertly done! You really do have a knack for narrative. Your descriptions are so beautiful, from the cityscape—the sights and sounds—to the coyote. You do a great job of building suspense and anticipation. It has a sinister, nefarious feel to it that keeps us reading, only to find out that things are not always what they seem.

I was intrigued by your main character. I wanted to know why he was doing this with the coyotes. And why so late at night in a cemetery? Also: who are the shadowy figures that appear at the end and why are they screaming? At first, I thought it was a guard, but then, when it’s two people and they scream, I was confused.

I really have no suggestions for editing, only to add to your story, to develop it further, if you are interested. I think you have the start of a compelling piece of creative nonfiction on your hands—something you could elaborate on, expand on and potentially submit to a literary magazine if you were interested.

Nicely done!