



## The Parting Shot

Italian wildlife photographer and *Anima Mundi - Adventures in Wildlife Photography* contributor Luca Giordano writes with sincere, deeply touching emotion about a truly unique encounter with wolves in Val Chisone, Piedmont (Northern Italy): "Dawn is still far away when I start my climb. The path climbs steeply and crosses a large clearing. The faint light of the moon guides me across the meadow, while I try not to stumble during my walk. Having reached the edge of the forest, I take a break to calm my heavy breathing, then I go into the thick. A maze of bushes, brambles and gnarled

roots makes my progress difficult. Clumps of fur entangled among the branches and small piles of excrement indicate that I am following the right track. Finally I reach the location where I will spend the next few hours, waiting for nature to be revealed once again. For almost an hour I observe a light, off-white fog touching the slope in front of me, changing its shape and dancing on the tops of the pines. All around me, the typical astonishing silence of the mountain: only a crisp noise of broken branches, occasionally coming out from the thick of the bush, reveals the existence of animal life in this

apparently uninhabited environment. Suddenly, without any kind of warning, the ghosts emerge from the woods. Not one, not two, not three. Four young wolves are staring at me, from almost 300 meters away. I hold my breath. I think of the people I shared days and nights with, on the trail of the most elusive predators, I think about the fatigue and the beauty of this long search, and above all I think about my childhood dreams, soaked with nature and wild gazes. A dream comes true before my eyes, in the form of a gray and proud spirit, in an instant impossible to forget". ●