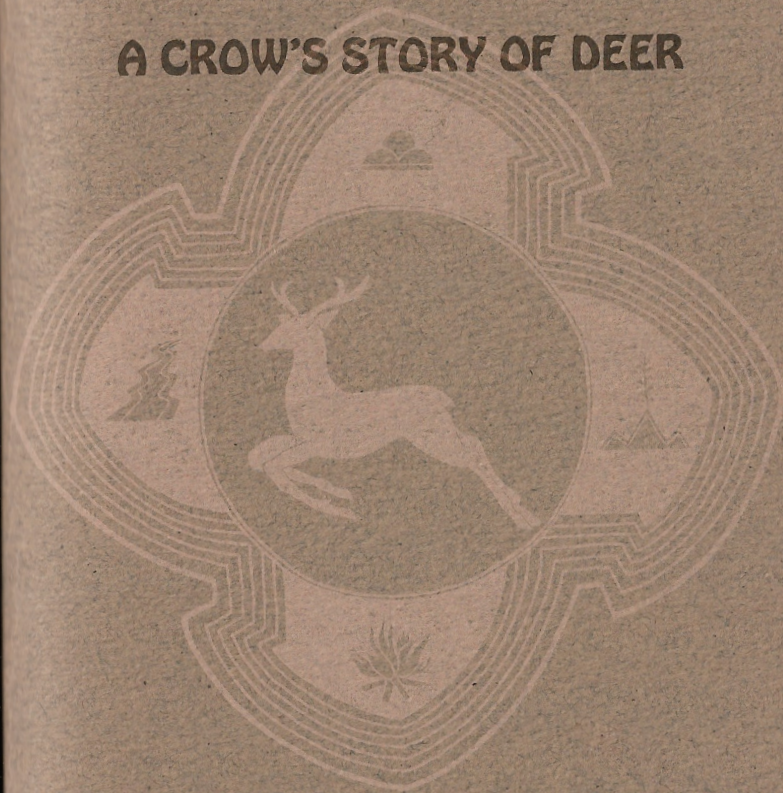




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A CROW'S STORY OF DEER



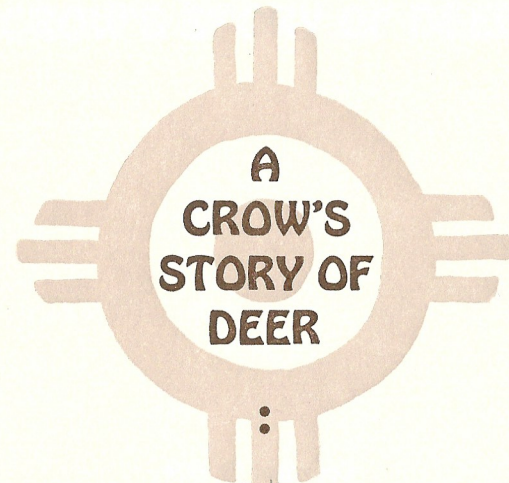
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James L
Jim White
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For my mother

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by James L. White

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A CROW'S STORY OF DEER

When I do not look
she sings of the young gentleman
on his blue horse
in her eyes . . .
. . . and because he could not say "HOLY"
he drew this on the rock:



which was enough.



FOUR HORSE SONGS

I.

Their names are of wind.
These horses of snow.
Blue dances sideways lifting her head of bright terror.
She screams at my touching.
Her voice is silver lightning the way.

Come to me. I am calling.
Come to me. I am calling.
Come to me. I have said it.

II.

Yellow is strong in his long pace of sun.
His songs are the comfort of day.
He is corn.

Come to me. I am calling.
Come to me. I am calling.
Come to me. I have said it.

III.

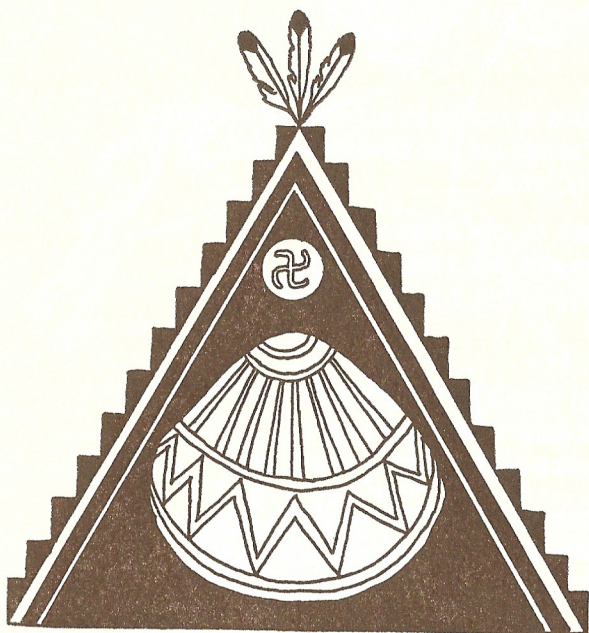
I am saved by black horse.
Her darkness is my mirror.
She is a rope of night about me.

Come to me. I am calling.
Come to me. I am calling.
Come to me. I have said it.

IV.

White is in peace.
He walks the snow.
His songs are silent.
Now he is snow upon the mountain.

These are horses from the sky.
I have seen them and this is true.
I have said this.
It is finished.



NEAR SHEEP SPRING

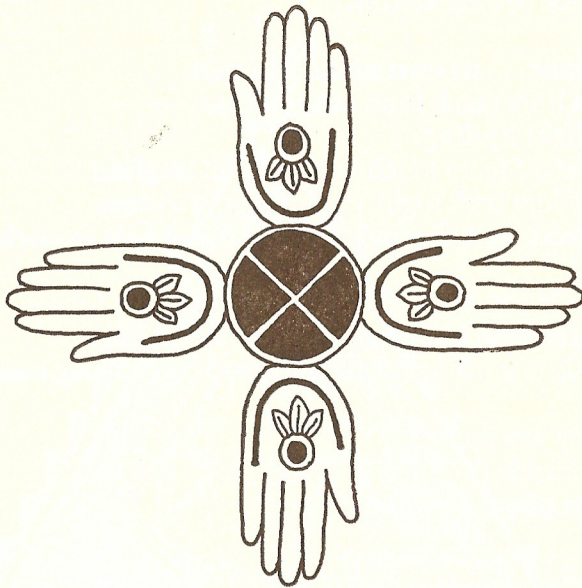
Silence . . . its own sound of desert.
Sun lines crack from canyon rims
in light healing.
Mustard faces touch wind's small laughter
and dogs bark night visions by the traders.
Prayers start through velveteen and hair to circles.

Sam Pinto sleeps near the moon of white horses.
Eagles bless Mary Benally in her sacred age.
Paula is too long drunk in Gallup . . . too long away.

They are the sun
of chants and corn to space.
I am pinon and light.

To take measures against the wind
and Trujillo's hay for winter.
To see the blue horse again near Burnt Water
and strong turquoise.

Not here,
but my morning piss by the corral
would be grace enough.



TAOS SACRED CLOWNS OF SORROW CHANT
(Sung with Roma, taped up boot, and hangover)

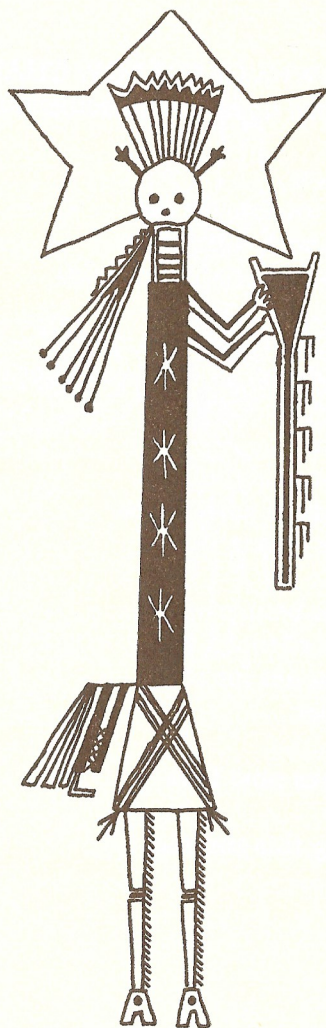
Black clowns of sorrow,
this desert is known too long in me.
Come your darkness with silent eyes.
Pine branches and fox tale about my pain.

I chanted back from Mexican bars.
Your peace did not come . . . only owls near the cafe.

Today cats are silent.
Wolves snicker among themselves.
My uncle's visions are of dark water.
The pueblo is in the wrong sun.

Hold the child of me before winter.
Chant long into my silence.
We need this year stones for songs.
Feathers to remember.

Even my father's eyes now fade
like my work coat,
and the well we dug this summer
yielded sand.



To the reader:

The coyote stories may
be told only in the winter
months while snow is on the
mountains, else spiders climb
down from the sky and spin
webs around your children's eyes.

COYOTE'S WIFE

to Diane di Prima

It has snowed and this is the first tale:

Her coat is matted with blood.
Eyes terrible and still she sings traveling songs.
The new litter with wrong colors . . . sick.
One she ate and growls constantly when I near.

Soon she will leave them by the arroyo,
then sleep with every dog.
Her packs are half-bloods and have been for years.

Last night she moved with the wind in that personal way.
Tied her swollen tits with silver cords.
Stole a dead child's turquoise.
Returned near dawn from Gallup,
dancing she said and sick from sweet wine,
and I fear her more this winter than others.



A CROW'S STORY OF DEER

for Molly LaBerge

Gaw-gee's broken dust wing
caws the Laguna widow hunting deer.

: 16 :

Beyond the Sandias
she hunts with insane hair
washing out chests in sleep.

Deer fly in our breath.
Gaw-gee tells among them
speaking turquoise.

"Her eyes burn night flowers.
Yucca blooms bleed dust.
She drinks with owls."

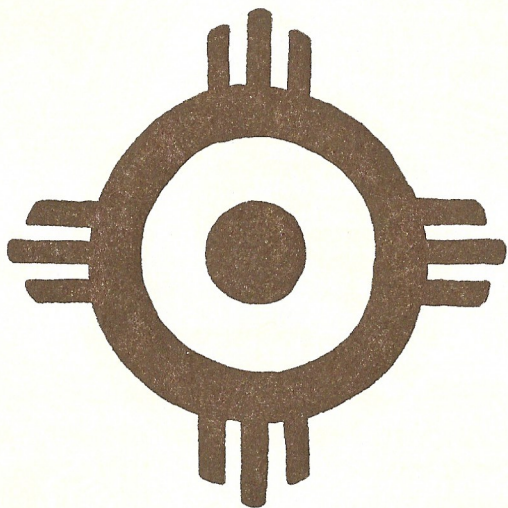
Though we are silence we fear her rifle and knife,
the thighs lifting at stallion's hoofs in lightning,
the mustard slope of her belly.

The deer did not come because her voice is burnt pine.
Gaw-gee's wing marks dust in sorrow and flight.
No buck's urine or prayer antlers
will see us through the city of winter bars.

The widow is not full yet
and opens the mountains with rage.
Her clay door is death
so we huddle by desert moss.

The deer will never lose our names.
They speak of our clothes and walk.
Before their morning meal
they pray for us with corn
and tell our faces to the sun.

: 17 :



THE TRADER

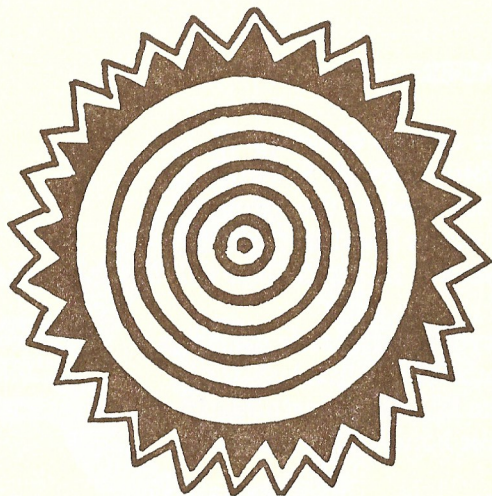
The trader dreams of horses
piloting ships through Sawmill.
Wanting seaweed by the arroyo
he weeps under his sleep
for the sheets of Indian Village will never be sails.

His pale eyes search cattle crossings
for sea crabs and barnacles.
To find the lament of deathness in the sun
and saddest bones of cactus soul.

Irma Yazzie will never sail at the beginning of ships.
Her corn heart is tied to yucca
and blood feet soak to white sand summer.

The trader dreams of gulls
while Ben Manygoats gouges silver Thunderbirds
against his welfare check and flour bill.
Against his Garden Deluxe nights and ditched pick-up.

And the trader hates them,
their blackbird hair and dust skin.
He sells their rugs and eyes and hands
to join the sea he will never know.



COYOTE'S LONELINESS

This is the second winter tale:

Mah-ee

The ditch by Yah-ta-hey Trading Post.
His growls enough to remember owls.
Turquoise eyes in fur of amber cages.
Sons of the new litter eaten by the bitch.

Mah-ee

His pain burnt by fire of tar pitch to hold water.
Managing laughter despite you by Eddie's Club
in fabulous poverty beyond the Bureau's newest program

Mah-ee

In Definct sheep herders Bailey at the
Yei-be-chai near Lukachukai,
fur hidden under an uncle's Pendelton,
took corners of Sam Pinto's Roma
remembering the bitch's eyes,
songs as she fingered her *joge*
looking towards the shitty desert towns.

Mah-ee

Whimpered on his sons, his bitch's traveling songs.
"This is sincerely alone," he said,
to the retired aide in finest Bureau issue,
thumbing by the Wingate Depot to Church Rock,
then turned towards the First World,
whined, fluttered into himself,
and placed stars on a navy blanket
stretching above us to the Zuni Drive-in.



WITCHING

The darker parts of caves
where land is sick
or living in old bodies thumbing to Chuska.
Never really there
like an owl's cry in a story.

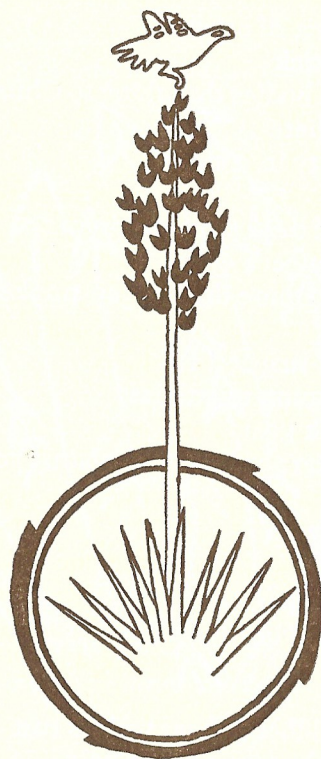
Too the dust of dead twin children
thrown in stranger's eyes
'till they are no more than hogan smoke.

Large dogs are suspect!
The wind stopping to stillness
or even a black goat.
Sometimes a stare or brushing against you.

Even turquoise
in wrong color
found by the road.
Its paleness makes you sick
'till that's all.

Under my childhood these wolves run
with fire and the terror of cut hair
over our sleeping skin
by silent dorms.

We awake to the horrible caw of crows
and news of drunken pick-ups flying into canyons.



Forgive the time of busses,
sun line and canyon rim to El Paso
where we never spoke again.

Forgive spring winds by the arroyo,
my falling hair,
that I sleep away from you,
my energy given to dreams of desserts.

Forgive the First Street bars Maria Sevilla,
your hair of devil heart and drunken roads
where fields spread their pregnant legs
beneath blue rooms.

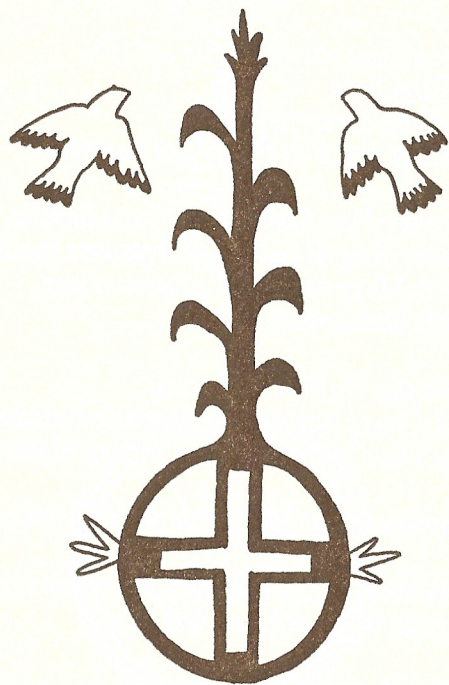
Forgive the chillies and corn.
Trujillo, your horses sing of white summer
through this memory as sad as clay plates!

The little morning boy who pees by the corral.

Forgive the Sandias at peace upon my eyes,
your gods upon my sleeping skin.

Navajos thumbing to Grants,
army coats and taped up boots
that have the pity of children's hair.

Forgive the eagles I have not seen
in their long line of air,
that I will never join them
but remain in the sand without their love.



HOW THE COYOTES MAKE LOVE

This is the last winter tale:

By clear water and willow she lays for him.
Stars wad and blackness above her coat.
Hair washed in yucca root as spring wind
hangs silver about her neck.

Mah-ee is sober,
quiet around her . . . unafraid.
His yellow eyes are campfires along the road.

Shadows about them in love.
Juniper along the highways.
The spring winds cease.
Nags, necks arched, trot as colts.
Someone plays the Tennessee Waltz at Eddie's Club

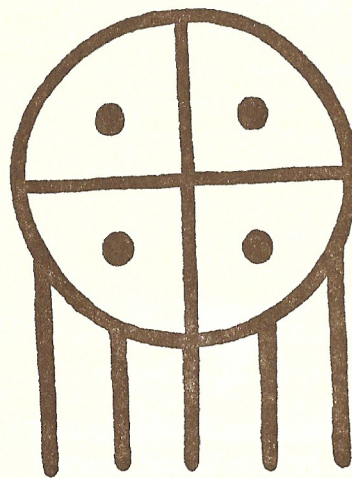
Jeff and Rose in fire light circles near Tohatchi,
Beneath army blankets and Roma.
One, two, one, two . . . ah-yah, ah-yah.
Old Emerson Charlie, his fine red robe,
the fastest black horse,
his evening song through blue canyons.
The buckboard that will never be again.

There is fried bread and mutton stew.
There are summer camps.
Sheep graze easily among the hills.

The coyotes float above a thousand hogans
where children play their last string game.
Chit-shey speaks no more of coyotes
to stop the spiders of the sky.

A horse neighs near Burnt Water.
She growls without intent,
nestles deeper into *Mah-ee's* mane
and falls back into flying sleep.

This is how the coyotes of god make love.
Before and after us.
Like canyons.
Like canyons.
I have said it.
It is so.
It is finished.



AN EAGLE AT THE SAINT PAUL ZOO

Medicine bag beneath long feathers.
His arrow eyes look beyond us
to the sun.

He recognizes my necklace and screams.
I knew him once before:
old Joe Loloma along the road
back to Third Mesa.



*This chapbook series, edited by
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*Seventy-five copies,
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were handbound by Emily Paine.*

Jim White is a non-Indian who grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana. After school he began long years of travel through Europe and America. His pilgrimage ended in the 60's on the Navajo where he was the invited guest of tribal people, their student, and lived for years on the desert. In August of '69, through the kindness of medicine people, he was made a member of Turtle Island.

He is now 38, and lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota where he writes and teaches creative writing to Chippewa children in a Native American writing project designed by their Poets in the Schools Program. He is still close to his friends on the Navajo and will one day return there to live permanently.



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