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## Near Shiprock

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# Near Shiprock

by John Nizalowski

Four ravens chase down a  
red-tailed hawk. Spinning  
in the silver-grey air, the  
ravens do not let up—a bite  
to the tail, a claw tangled  
in a wing, they turn and  
dive, darting off into the air.

Below, the adobe hills are  
nearly barren, covered only  
in saltbush, shadscale, and  
Mormon tea. Here and there  
deer mice hide in the tiny  
hollows carved in low bluffs.

The wind from the west is  
merciless, and dust devils  
devour souls in the sage.

At last, the hawk flees west  
toward the dark volcanic  
spire of Shiprock, called  
Winged Rock by the Diné,  
seeking new prey. The mice  
emerge, the ravens call out  
their triumph to the hot sun.

The deep roots of karma  
in the struggle for survival.