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John Nizalowski

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Black God Walks

by John Nizalowski

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Black god,
god of languages,
god of death—
from whom
coyote steals fire.

Just north of Kayenta
a dark volcanic neck
faces a red stone spire,
its finger pointing
the way to the sun.

Some of the hogans
have dish antennae—
flash of welding arc,
power lines,
coyote's fire,
highway down the middle.

A massive water tower
with big black letters
that spell KAYENTA.

Two boys
with a black dog,
pregnant, teats bulging.
Behind them,
a pair of shadow men—
walking doppelgangers.

West of Kayenta—
reefs of sandstone limbs,
wrinkled like a reptile's skin,
rise from the great earth.

Scattered junipers,
black goats,
grandfather on horseback.
New electric railway,
old windmills,
water tanks,
and a rainstorm.

Long blue line of the Kaibito Plateau.

In a dust storm,
a black stallion mounts
a white mare.

Cinnamon dust
cutting across
shale desert,
painted ground
and hoodoos.

A maze of arroyos—
glittering broken glass,
empty wooden shelters,
and arrayed jewelry
line the highway.

San Francisco Peak,
home of the gods,
emerges from rain and clouds.

The place where Black God walks.

