

Ravens: Mysterious and bold

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Ravens are extremely smart and seem intuitive, often cawing loudly to draw your attention, trying to make you notice something they think is important.

A few years ago a gifted Native American sculptor, Charles Pratt, created an incredibly lifelike bronze raven sculpture. A man of varied talents and a recipient of many awards, Charles is the only artist to be named Indian Artist of the Year twice, and is far too modest about his talents and powers of observation.



Every time I see that bronze raven I am reminded of a journey made from Tuba City on the Arizona part of the Navajo reservation through the Hopi mesas to the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico where I had been staying with friends. Leaving Tuba City on my way toward Hopi, I noticed two ravens flying parallel next to my car.

Stopping to pick up an order from a family in Bacavi, I found two ravens perched on the hood of my car when I left the house. As I started up the road toward Second Mesa the two ravens were again flying parallel to my car about 30 feet off the road. The wind started blowing fairly hard and I lost sight of them in the sand-filled air. After leaving Second Mesa I proceeded to Walpi, a village perched high on top of First Mesa.

The road is a series of switchbacks with a steep drop-off and any cars must be left about a third of a mile from the top as the narrow passageways through the ancient stone dwellings is far too narrow to accommodate anything but foot traffic.

While visiting with a basketmaker and her family the wind grew much stronger and vision was reduced to near zero. Realizing I couldn't leave, the family invited me to stay. The storm lasted through the night and I worried that my Zuni friends would be concerned when I failed to show up as planned. The next morning when I reached my car there were the two ravens! They stayed with me for the next four hours as I made my way to Zuni leaving only when I reached the reservation border.

When I told my friends what had happened they said they weren't concerned. They had sent the two ravens to watch over me on my journey and bring me safely back.