

Freshman



Mythology Anthology

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CREATION

"I was made for battle..." - Retold by Olivia Coolidge

Ages ago, the Norsemen said, there was a time when heaven, earth, and sea did not exist. In all the universe there was nothing but a region of boiling flame and a region of cold with a great gap lying between. Rivers of ice pushed out into this gap, and the red heat of the fires from the other side beat fiercely upon them. Steam arose, and the whole space was filled with swirling mist.

At last these clouds took shape, and out of them Ymer, the first frost giant, was born. Next, the shifting particles formed a great cow, by whose milk Ymer was nourished. Thereupon he grew greatly in vigor, and his vague outline became clear and firm. In this way the frost giant was given life, and in time sons and daughters were born to him out of the mist.

In the meantime the cow who had nurtured the frost giant found no nourishment herself. Eventually she began to lick at the ice blocks which were pushed out of the region of cold. As the ice melted under her rough tongue, it shaped itself into the outline of a huge head. The cow licked further, and features became distinct. She licked again, and blue eyes opened. At last this other huge creature was formed, and he rose up and looked at the misty gap in which the vast shapes of the frost giants could be vaguely seen.

This was Bure, who was ancestor of the gods, and great power was in him. The moment he beheld the frost giants, he knew they were evil and resolved to destroy them. He cried aloud upon his son and his grandson who were yet unborn, until the whole gap thundered and rolled with the echoes of his mighty voice. Out of his warm breath and the power of his magic, his descendants were born. Then the gods lifted up their arms and rushed against the frost giants. The mists of the gap swirled in confusion as the two races battled in their midst.

Bure was slain in the mighty struggle, but the gods destroyed Ymer at last and routed their enemies. The remaining frost giants fled into the outer regions of the great gap, where they made themselves a land of mountains and mist to dwell in.

As the thunder of combat died away, Bure's grandson, Allfather Odin, looked down on Ymer's vast body which sprawled across

the center of the gap. "The frost giant was made out of mist," said he, "and his form is still fluid. Let us shape it into a new world for us to dwell in."

The other gods gladly agreed. "Ymer's body shall be earth," they declared, and they formed it into land, round and flat like a wheel. In the center they piled mountains, for there they planned to build Asgard, which was to be their home and strong citadel. Next they took Ymer's misty skull for the great arch of heaven. They changed his blood into blue ocean water, which they poured around the outer edge of the earth as a barrier between themselves and Giantland. They stole sparks from the fiery regions to light the stars, and build chariots in which they set sun and moon spirits to ride over the earth.

In this way the world was created, but though Ymer was dead, his body was divine and life of a kind was still in it. Grass began to grow on the earth. Forests sprang up and animals appeared. "We must make rulers for these things," said Odin at last. "Let us shape beings like ourselves who shall watch over the earth and make it prosper."

Under the ground and on the earth's surface small, creeping things had come to life. The Gods made these like themselves, and in this way the light elves and the dark dwarfs were born. Neither race pleased the gods entirely. The dwarfs were wonderful craftsmen, but their nature was evil, and they fled into the caverns of the earth to live in darkness out of sight of the gods. The elves blessed the animals and crops, but they built their own home of Elfland up in the air.

"These races are not truly our creation," said Odin. "They had life of themselves and we only gave them shape. Let us make a new master on earth." This time the gods took trees from the forest, breathed life into them, and formed them into woman and man.

Man and woman looked to the gods for protection, but the power of the gods was limited. Many things appeared in the world which were not created by the gods and opposed them. Beyond earth there still dwelt the frost giants. Hel, the monstrous daughter of a god and a giantess, built a kingdom of darkness under the earth, where she ruled over the spirits of the dead. The great world serpent encircled the earth at the bottom of the sea. Dark wolves pursued the chariots of the terrified sun and moon. Far above the earth, demons were born in the regions of boiling fire. All these great forces of evil threatened the world, and none knew whether they or the gods would prevail.

Odin was the master of the gods, and he was infinitely wise, for he had paid with the sight of one keen, blue eye for a drink from the waters of wisdom. It now seemed to him time to talk to the maidens in

whose hands the future lay. These were the Norns, or Fates, some of whom were said to be elves, some dwarfs. In any case, they lived in the heavens near the upper end of the rainbow, which was the bridge between sky and earth.

The Norns sat by a many-colored fountain whose spray rose behind them like a rainbow in the air. The veils before their faces were thick and mysterious as clouds stirring and twisting in the wind. It seemed as though these would blow aside and reveal the face of the future, yet behind each fold lay always another, for none could pierce the mystery of the Norns.

"Greeting to you, Odin, Allfather," said the eldest slowly.
"Greeting, Creator of the earth, and ruler until the Day of Doom."

Odin leaned on his spear and stood watching, while wind blew out his sky-blue mantle and fluttered his white cloud of hair. "Tell me of the Day of Doom," he said at last. "How long shall my rule endure?"

The hand of the Norn was yellow and old. She raised it to draw her veil closer. "Ages of human lives," was all she said.

"How shall I fall?"

"In battle."

"Tell me what shall happen on that day."

"All evil shall assemble against you," answered the slow, deep voice of the Norn. "The serpent shall arise from the ocean with poison dripping from his jaw. The wolves of evil and darkness will come ravening to the fray. Heimdall, your watchman, shall trumpet his warning as fire demons pour down from above across the rainbow bridge. The giants will wade the ocean to battle. Hel shall arise from the land of the dead."

"Who will fight on my side?" demanded Odin.

"The spirits of the mighty dead," said she. "You will choose Valkyries, warrior maidens, and mount them on horses of cloud to ride over the battlefields of men. They will snatch up the souls of dying heroes and carry them to Valhalla, your lofty, shield-roofed hall. There they shall feast and practice their weapons, for they are to be your army in the battles of the Day of Doom."

"If I must perish on that day," said Allfather Odin, "tell me at least what shall endure."

"Nothing that now exists," said the aged Norn. "Thor, your mighty son, shall be slain by the serpent. Bright Frey will be destroyed by the fire spirits. Earth shall be burned to ashes. Wolves shall swallow the sun and moon."

"All them will be lost."

"No, not all," she answered. "Sons of your sons shall survive, and though you fall, the giants and the demons shall be utterly destroyed. Then the new race of gods will make a new, pure heaven and earth, from which all evil will have passed away."

The old Norn lifted her hand once more to her veil. Through it Odin gazed deep into sunken eyes blue and piercing as his own. "That is good," he said slowly. "I was made for battle, and mine will be the age of the fighter. Let other gods rule when the struggle is over. I will ride the howling tempest and perish in the last great storm."

The Norn turned away with a slow movement, but Odin looked long at her, her companions, and the shifting colors of the water behind. "Asgard, our citadel, is on earth," he said at last. "Here, near the wise ones, our judgment seat shall be. We will set Heimdall, our watchman, to guard the rainbow bridge, over which we will mount daily to heaven and give laws for the ruling of the world."

The Beginning of Things - A Greek myth retold by W. H. D. Rouse

In the beginning there was Chaos, a great hollow Void, in which the seeds or beginning of all things were mixed up together in a shapeless mass, all moving about in all directions. By degrees these beginnings slowly sorted themselves out; the heavier parts gathered together and became Earth; the lighter parts flew up and became the sky, with air between; and under the earth was a dark place called Tartarus. In the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars appeared one by one; on earth, the land separated from the sea; rain fell, and the rivers ran down from the hills; trees grew up, and the world became something like what we know, and it had the shape of a great round ball, or a disk, like a large plate.

From Chaos, the great Void, came forth many and strange children; but first and most wonderful of all was Eros, or love, who came no one knows how, and was quite different from all the others; he outlived them all, and still lives, the most mighty of all divine powers. From Chaos came forth also Erebus and black Night; and their child was the Day.

From Chaos, lastly, came into being Father Uranus, or Heavens; and Pontus, the Sea; and Mother Earth. Heaven and Earth were parents of a great brood of children. These were called, in general, the Titans. The brood began with monsters, but they improved as they went on. Among the monsters were three, with fifty heads apiece and a hundred hands; their names were Cottus, Gyges, and Briareus. Three others were named the Cyclops; Cyclops means "goggle-eyed," and each Cyclops had one huge eye in the middle of his forehead, with one huge and bushy eyebrow above it. There were others, some of whom we shall meet later; and then came a superior brood of children. I will not tell you the names of all these now, but one was Oceanus, the ocean streams, which runs like a great river all around the earth; and one was Hyperion, who took charge of the light by night and day. He was the son of Eos, the Dawn, and Helios, the Sun, and Selene, the Moon. And the youngest of the children of Heaven and Earth was named Cronus; the youngest but the most terrible of them all.

Now Uranus hated his children and feared them; and as they were born, he hid them in secret places of the earth and kept them prisoners in darkness. But Mother Earth was angry to see her children so badly treated; so she persuaded them to rebel, and they did so, and cast down Uranus from the sky. They cast him down into Tartarus, the dark region below the earth. In the fight he was wounded by Cronus; drops of his blood fell on the sea, and from these drops sprang up Aphrodite, who became the goddess of beauty and love. Her name means "daughter of the foam," because she came up out of the sea. Other drops of his blood fell

on the earth, and from these sprang up the Giants and the furies. We shall hear of these later, for the Giants made war on the gods long afterward; and the Furies used to range about the world, when men were created, chasing and punishing those men who shed blood.

Cronus was leader of this rebellion, and he became king of Heaven in his father's place. When he became king, he cast down his brothers and his sisters into Tartarus, except one, Rhea, whom he married. But he was not so careful about their children. Some of them were useful, like Dawn, Sun, and Moon, so he left them alone. Another of the Titans had five sons. Atlas was one of those sons, and he was made to stand by the gate of Tartarus and to hold up the sky on his shoulders. Two others of his family were very famous afterward. Their names were Prometheus and Epimetheus, that is to say, Forethought and Afterthought. Prometheus was the cleverest of all the Titans, and he went to live on the earth. There he used to wander about making models out of mud to amuse himself.

Now at that time things were not quite sorted out from Chaos, and there were bits of life still in the mud or clay of the earth. So when Prometheus made this clay into all sorts of odd shapes, the shapes came alive as he made them, and became worms, and snakes and all sorts of strange creatures, which you can see in museums. As he grew more skillful, he made birds and animals, and at least he thought he could make something in the shape of immortals. His first attempt went on four legs, like the other animals, and had a tail like them; it was a monkey in fact. He tried all sorts of monkeys, big and small, until he found out how to make his model stand upright. Then he cut off the tail and lengthened the thumbs of the hand and twisted them inward. That may seem a very little thing, but it makes all the difference between a monkey's hand and a man's; just try and see how many things you cannot do if you tie your thumb fast to your first finger. And if you look at the skeleton of a man in a museum, you will see that you have a tiny tail in the right place, or at least the bones of it, all that was left after Prometheus cut it off.

Thousands of years afterward, the Greeks used to show in one of their temples lumps of clay, which they said were left over after Prometheus had made the first man. This clay was the color of mud and smelled a little like human flesh.

Prometheus was very much pleased with his new pet. He used to watch men hunting for food and living in caves and holes, like ants or badgers. He determined to educate men as well as he could, and he was always their friend. Cronus did not take notice of what he was doing; and now we must turn to Cronus and see what he was doing himself.

Cronus had married one of the Titans, named Rhea; and he was determined that his children should not rebel against him, as he had rebelled against his father, so as soon as one was born, he swallowed it whole. Five he swallowed up in this way; but then Rhea grew tired of this,

as she wanted babies to play with, so when the sixth was born, she determined to save him. She took a big stone of the same size as a baby and wrapped it in swaddling clothes and presented it to Cronus as the last baby. Cronus promptly swallowed the stone, and was quite contented. This was really a thing easy to manage, because no doubt the gods used to do with their babies just as the Greek mothers used to do: they wrapped them round with a long narrow cloth, until they looked like a chrysalis, or a long plum, with the baby's head sticking out of the end. Then Rhea took the real baby, whose name was Zeus, and hid him in the island of Crete, in a cave which you can still see to this day. He was put in the charge of two nymphs, who fed him on goat's milk, and the cave was watched by armed guards; whenever the baby cried, the guards made such a din by clashing their spears on their shields that Cronus heard nothing of its cries.

Rhea bided her time; and when Zeus grew up, she told him how Cronus had swallowed his brothers and sisters, and how she had saved Zeus himself; and they made a plot against Cronus, as Cronus had done against his father. Together they managed to give Cronus a strong dose of medicine. This made Cronus very sick, and he disgorged all the children, one after the other. First came the stone which Rhea had made him swallow; and Cronus was very much surprised to see that. You may see the stone, if you wish, for it was placed in the sacred place of Delphi, and it is still there, in the museum. Then came the five others in order. I must tell you their names now, because they all come into the story; they were Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. Strange to say, they had all grown up quite well inside their father, and now they were as big as Zeus, and ready to join in the plot. Then they all made war upon Cronus, and the war went on for ten years, but neither party could win.

Cronus got friends to help him, as far as he could, and one of them was the wise Prometheus. As the war went on, Prometheus said, "Sir, I advise you to bring up your brothers from Tartarus." But Cronus was afraid of his brothers; he said, "No, thank you, no brothers for me." When Prometheus found that Cronus was too stupid to take good advice, he went over to the other side. To Zeus he gave the same advice, and although Zeus was not very wise, he was wise enough to take this advice. So he set free the three Cyclopes named Thunderer, Lightener, and Shiner; and they were so grateful that they gave Zeus a gift each - the thunder and the lightning and the thunderbolt. They also gave Hades a cap which made him invisible when he put it on; and they gave Poseidon a trident, or three-pronged spear. Next Zeus set free the three monsters with fifty heads and a hundred hands. You can see what an advantage that gave to Zeus. Each of them was like a quick-firing gun, and could throw a hundred stones for Cronus' one.

Now Zeus made a feast for his friends. He gave them nectar, the drink of the gods, and ambrosia, the food of the gods, which was the

food of immortality; and he said, "Now let us fight, and make an end of this long war."

Then there was a terrible battle. The three monsters caught up a rock in each of their three hundred hands, and cast them in volleys at Cronus. Zeus thundered and lightened and launched his thunderbolts. The earth shook, the sea boiled, the forests caught fire and burned, blustering winds made confusion all round. In the end, they conquered Cronus and bound him in chains and shut him up in dark Tartarus.

As far as heaven is high above the earth, so deep is Tartarus below the earth. Nine days and nine nights a stone would fall from heaven to earth; nine days and nine nights it would fall from earth to deep Tartarus. A brazen wall runs round it, and brazen gates close it in; there Cronus was in prison, guarded by the Cyclopes and the three hundred-handed monsters. In front of the gate stands Atlas, immovable, bearing the heavens upon his shoulders. A fearful watchdog guards the gates, Cerberus, with three heads and three gaping mouths. When anyone goes in, Cerberus fawns upon him and licks his hands with his three tongues; but if anyone tries to go out, Cerberus devours him up. There Night and Day meet together and greet one another, as one passes in and the other passes out. Within dwell Sleep and Death, brothers, the children of Night. Sleep can wander over the earth at will, seizing men and letting them go; but Death, once he gets hold of a man, never lets him go again, for there is no pity in his heart.

And there dwells Styx, the lady of the black river of Hate, eldest daughter of Oceanus. When quarrels arise among the immortal gods, then Zeus sends his messenger Iris with a golden jug to bring some of the waters of Styx, which falls from a high and beetling rock. The gods must swear an oath by this water. If any of them breaks the oath, for one year he lies breathless, and cannot partake of sweet nectar and ambrosia; after that year he is cut off from the meeting of the gods for nine years more, and then only may he come back and join their company.

In that dark place the banished Titans dwell, guarded by the monsters. And the Cyclops are always busy, forging the thunderbolts of Zeus.

After the victory, Zeus and his two brothers were ready to fight each other to decide which should be king; but the wise Prometheus persuaded them to cast lots and to share the sovereignty among them. So lots were cast. Zeus became King of Heaven, and Poseidon King of the Sea, and Hades King of dark Tartarus; but the earth belonged to them all.

Genesis - the Bible

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according

to their kinds. And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and every thing that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up - for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground - then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him. So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and

brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Morning Has Broken - Elenor Farjeon

Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing, Praise for the morning,
Praise for them springing fresh from the word.

Sweet the rain's new fall sun-lit from heaven,
Like the first dew-fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight, Mine is the morning,
Born of the one light Eden saw play.
Praise with elation, Praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day.

I think you God for most this amazing - e. e. cummings

I think you God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(I who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any - lifted from the no
of all nothing - human merely being
doubt unimaginable you?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

The Diary of Adam and Eve - Mark Twain

Part I - Extracts from Adam's Diary

Monday - This new creature with the long hair is a good deal in the way. It is always hanging around and following me about. I don't like this; I am not used to company. I wish it would stay with the other animals. ...Cloudy today, wind in the east; think we shall have rain...We? Where did I get that word? - I remember now - the new creature uses it.

Tuesday - Been examining the great waterfall. It is the finest thing on the estate, I think. The new creature calls it Niagara Falls - why, I am sure, I do not know. Says it looks like Niagara Falls. That is not a reason, it is mere waywardness and imbecility. I get no chance to name anything myself. The new creature names everything that comes along, before I can get in a protest. And always that same pretext is offered - it looks like the thing. There is the dodo, for instance. Says the moment one looks at it one sees at a glance that it "looks like a dodo." It will have to keep that name, no doubt. It worries me to fret about it, and it does no good, anyway. Dodo! It looks no more like dodo than I do.

Wednesday - Built me a shelter against the rain, but could not have it to myself in peace. The new creature intruded. When I tried to put it out it shed water out of the holes it looks with, and wiped it away with the back of its paws, and made a noise such as some of the other animals make when they are in distress. I wish it would not talk; it is always talking. That sounds like a cheap fling at the poor creature, a slur; but I do not mean it so. I have never heard a human voice before, and any new and strange sound intruding itself here upon the solemn hush of these dreaming solitudes offends my ear and seems a false note. And this new sound is so close to me; it is right at my shoulder, right at my ear, first on one side and then on the other, and I am used only to sounds that are more or less distant from me.

Friday - The naming goes recklessly on, in spite of anything I can do. I had a very good name for the estate, and it was musical and pretty - GARDEN OF EDEN. Privately, I continued to call it that, but not any longer publicly. The new creature says it is all woods and rocks and scenery, and therefore has no resemblance to a garden. Says it looks like a park, and does not look like anything but a park. Consequently, without consulting me, it has been new-named - NIAGARA FALLS PARK. This is sufficiently high-handed, it seems to me. And already there is a sign up:

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

My life is not as happy as it was.

Saturday - The new creature eats too much fruit. We are going to run short, most likely. "We" again - that is its word; mine, too, now, from hearing it so much. Good deal of fog this morning. I do not go out in the fog myself. The new creature does. It goes out in all weathers, and stumps right in with its muddy feet. And talks. It used to be so pleasant and quiet here.

Sunday - Pulled through. This day is getting to be more and more trying. It was selected and set apart last November as a day of rest. I had already six of them per week before. This morning found the new creature trying to clod apples out of that forbidden tree.

Monday - The new creature says its name is Eve., That is all right, I have no objections,. Says it is to call it by when I want it to come. I said it was superfluous, then. The word evidently raised me in its respect; and indeed it is a large, good word and will bear repetition. It says it is not an It; it is a She. This is probably doubtful; yet it is all one to me; what she is were nothing to me if she would but go by herself and not talk.

Tuesday - She has littered the whole estate with execrable names and offensive signs:

THIS WAY TO THE WHIRLPOOL

THIS WAY TO GOAT ISLAND

CAVE OF THE WINDS THIS WAY

She says this park would make a tidy summer resort if there was any custom for it. Summer resort - another invention of hers - just words, without any meaning. What is a summer resort? But it is best not to ask her; she has such a rage for explaining.

Friday - She has taken to beseeching me to stop going over the Falls. What harm does it do? Says it makes her shudder. I wonder why; I have always done it - always liked the plunge, the coolness. I supposed it was what the Falls were made for. They have no other use that I can see, and they must

have been made for something. She says they were only made for scenery - like the rhinoceros and the mastodon. I went over the Falls in a barrel - not satisfactory to her. Went over in a tub - still not satisfactory. Swam the Whirlpool and the Rapids in a fig-leaf suit. It got much damaged. Hence, tedious complaints about my extravagance. I am too much hampered here. What I need is a change of scene.

Saturday - I escaped last Tuesday night, and traveled two days, and built me another shelter in a secluded place, and obliterated my tracks as well as I could, but she hunted me out by means of a beast which she has tamed and calls a wolf, and came making that pitiful noise again, and shedding that water out of the places she looks with. I was obliged to return with her, but will presently emigrate again when occasion offers. She engages herself in many foolish things; among others, to study out why the animals called lions and tigers live on grass and flowers, when, as she says, the sort of teeth they wear would indicate that they were intended to eat each other. This is foolish, because to do that would be to kill each other. And that would introduce what, as I understand it, is called death; and death, as I have been told, has not yet entered the Park. Which is a pity, on some accounts.

Sunday - Pulled through.

Monday - I believe I see what the week is for; it is to give time to rest up from the weariness of Sunday. It seems a good idea... She has been climbing that tree again. Clodded her out of it. She said nobody was looking. Seems to consider that a sufficient justification for chancing any dangerous thing. Told her that. The word justification moved her admiration - and envy, too, I thought. It is a good word.

Tuesday - She told me she was made out of a rib taken from my body. This is at least doubtful, if not more than that. I have not missed any rib... She is in much trouble about the buzzard; says grass does not agree with it; is afraid she can't raise it; thinks it was intended to live on decayed flesh. The buzzard must get along the best it can with what it is provided. We cannot overturn the whole structure to accommodate the buzzard.

Saturday - She fell in the pond yesterday when she was looking at herself in it, which she is always doing. She nearly strangled, and said it was most uncomfortable. This made her sorry for the creatures which live in there, which she calls fish, for she continues to fasten names onto things that don't need them and don't come when they are called by them, which is a matter of no consequence to her, she is such a numskull, anyway; so she got a lot of them out and brought them in last night and put them in my bed to keep warm, but I have noticed them now and then all day and I don't see that they are any happier there than they were before, only quieter. When

night comes I shall throw them outdoors. I will not sleep with them again, for I find them clammy and unpleasant to lie among when a person hasn't anything on.

Sunday - Pulled through.

Tuesday - She has taken up with a snake now. The other animals are glad, for she was always experimenting with them and bothering them and bothering them; and I am glad because the snake talks, and this enables me to get a rest.

Old Man and the Beginning of the World - Told by the Blackfeet Indians

Old Man came from the south, making the mountains, the prairies, and the forests as he passed along, making the birds and the animals also. He traveled northward, making things as he went, putting red paint in the ground here and there - arranging the world as we see it today.

He made the Milk River and crossed it; being tired, he went up on a little hill and lay down to rest. As he lay on his back, stretched out on the grass with his arms extended, he marked his figure with stones. You can see those rocks today; they show the shape of his body, legs, arms, and head.

Going on north after he had rested, he stumbled over a knoll and fell down on his knees. He said aloud, "You are a bad thing to make me stumble so." Then he raised up two large buttes there and named them the Knees. They are called the Knees to this day. He went on farther north, and with some of the rocks he carried with him he built the Sweet Grass Hills.

Old Man covered the plains with grass for the animals to feed on. He marked off a piece of ground and in it made all kinds of roots and berries to grow- camas, carrots, turnips, bitterroot, serviceberries, bullberries, cherries, plums, and rosebuds. He planted trees, and he put all kinds of animals on the ground.

When he created the bighorn sheep with his big head and horns, he made it out on the prairie. But it did not travel easily on the prairie; it was awkward and could not go fast. So Old Man took it by its horns, led it up into the mountains, and turned it loose. There the bighorn, skipped about among the rocks and went up fearful places with ease. So Old Man said to it, "This is the kind of place that suits you; this is what you are fitted for, the rocks and the mountains."

While he was in the mountains, he made the antelope out of dirt and turned it loose, to see how it would go. It ran so fast that it fell over some rocks and hurt itself. Seeing that the mountains were not the place for it Old Man took the antelope down to the prairie and turned it loose. When he saw it running away fast and gracefully, he said, "This is what you are suited to, the broad prairie."

One day Old Man decided that he would make a woman and a child. So he formed them both of clay, the woman and the child, her son. After he had molded the clay in human shape, he said to it, "You must be people." And then he covered it up and went away. The next morning he went to the place, took off the covering, and saw that the shapes had changed a little. The second morning he saw more change, and the third morning he saw still more. The fourth morning he went to the place, took off the covering, looked at the images, and said, "Arise and walk." They did so. They walked down to the river with their maker, and then he told them that his name was Napi, Old Man.

That is how we came to be people. It is he who made us.

The first people were poor and naked, and they did not know how to do anything for themselves. Old Man showed them the roots and berries and said, "You can eat these." Then he pointed out certain trees. "When the bark of these trees is young and tender, it is good. Then you can peel it off and eat it."

He told the people that the animals also should be their food. "These are your herds," he said. "All these little animals that live on the ground - squirrels, rabbits, skunks, beavers - are good to eat. You need not fear to eat their flesh. All the birds that fly - these, too, I have made for you, so that you can eat of their flesh."

Old Man took the first people over the prairies and through the forests and the swamps, to show them the different plants he had created. He told them what herbs were good for sicknesses, saying often, "The root of this herb or the leaf

Old Man and the Beginning of the World

of this herb, if gathered in a certain month of the year, is good for a certain sickness." In that way the people learned the power of all herbs.

Then he showed them, how to make weapons with which to kill the animals for their food. First he went out and cut some serviceberry shoots, brought them in, and peeled the bark off them. He took one of the larger shoots, flattened it, tied a string to it, and thus made a bow. Then he caught one of the birds he had made, took feathers from its wing, split them, and tied them to a shaft of wood.

At first he tied four feathers along the shaft, and with his bow sent the arrow toward its mark. But he found that it did not fly well. When he used only three feathers, it went straight to the mark. Then he went out and began to break sharp pieces off stones. When he tried them at the ends of his arrows, he found that the black flint stones, and some white flint, made the best arrow points.

When the people had learned how to make bows and arrows, Old Man taught them how to shoot animals and birds. Because it is not healthful to eat animal flesh raw, he showed the first people how to make fire. He gathered soft, dry, rotten driftwood and made a punk of it. Then he found a piece of hard wood and drilled a hole in it with an arrow point. He gave the first man a pointed piece of hard wood and showed him how to roll it between his hands until sparks came out and the punk caught fire. Then he showed the people how to cook the meat of the animals they had killed and how to eat it.

He told them to get a certain kind of stone that was in the land, while he found a harder stone. With the harder stone he had them hollow out the softer one and so make a kettle. Thus they made their dishes.

Old Man told the first people how to get spirit power: "Go away by yourself and go to sleep. Something will come to you in your dream that will help you. It may be some animal. Whatever this animal tells you in your sleep, you must do. Obey it. Be guided by it. If later you want help, if you are traveling alone and cry aloud for help, your prayer will be answered. It may be by an eagle, perhaps by a buffalo, perhaps by a bear. Whatever animal hears your prayer, you must listen to it."

That is how the first people got along in the world, by the power given to them in their dreams.

After this, Old Man kept on traveling north. Many of the animals that he had created followed him. They understood when he spoke to them, and they were his servants. When he got to the north point of the Porcupine Mountains, he made some more mud images of people, blew his breath upon them, and they became people, men and women. They asked him, "What are we to eat?"

By way of answer, Old Man made many images of clay in the form of buffaloes. Then he blew breath upon them and they stood up. When he made signs to them, they started to run. Then he said to the people, "Those animals - buffalo - are your food."

"But how can we kill them?" the people asked.

"I will show you," he answered.

He took them to a cliff and told them to build rock piles: "Now hide behind these piles of rocks," he said. "I will lead the buffalo this way. When they are opposite you, rise up."

After telling them what to do, he started toward the herd of buffalo. When he called the animals, they started to run toward him, and they followed him until they were inside the piles of rock. Then Old Man dropped back. As the people rose up, the "buffalo ran in a straight line and jumped over the cliff.

"Go down and take the flesh of those animals," said Old Man.

The people tried to tear the limbs apart, but they could not. Old Man went to the edge of the cliff, broke off some pieces with sharp edges, and told the people to cut the flesh with these rocks. They obeyed him. When they had skinned the buffalo, they set up some poles and put the hides on them. Thus they made a shelter to sleep under.

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After Old Man had taught the people all these things, he started off again, traveling north until he came to where the Bow and the Elbow rivers meet. There he made some more people and taught them the same things. From there he went farther north. When he had gone almost to the Red Deer River, he was so tired that he lay down on a hill. The form of his body can be seen there yet, on the top of the hill where he rested.

When he awoke from this sleep, he traveled farther north until he came to a high hill. He climbed to the top of it and there sat down to rest. As he gazed over the country, he was greatly pleased by it. Looking at the steep hill below him, he said to himself, "This is a fine place for sliding. I will have some fun.." And he began to slide down the hill. The marks where he slid are to be seen yet, and the place is known to all the Blackfeet tribes as "Old Man's Sliding Ground."

Old Man can never die. Long ago he left the Blackfeet and went away toward the west, disappearing in the mountains. Before he started, he said to the people, "I will always take care of you, and some day I will return."

Even today some people think that he spoke the truth and that when he comes back he will bring with him the buffalo, which they believe the white men have hidden. Others remember that before he left them he said that when he returned he would find them a different people. They would be living in a different world, he said, from that which he had created for them and had taught them to live in.

Told by Chewing Blackbones

FIT TO LIVE

This is part of the creation myth of the Jicarilla Apache Indians.

In the beginning there was nothing at all but darkness, water, and cyclones. There was no earth, no people, no animals, no fish in the water.

Only the spirits were here, the great spirits and powers who existed before time began. They made the earth first, and then the sky. But that did not seem to be enough.

Creator was the chief of them all. He was the first one to make an animal. He knew how to do it. So he made an animal out of clay. He put four legs on it, and then he made a tail.

"Walk on the four feet," he said. The animal walked.

"That's pretty good," said the Creator. "You are all right. Now run along."

Then he made all the rest of the animals. He made some with horns and some without horns; he made bears, deer, horses, sheep, cows, wildcats, birds, everything. As soon as they were made they asked Creator what they should eat. So he told them.

He told each animal what kind of food it should eat, and where to live. Some went into the mountains, some to the desert, some to the plains, some to the forests. Some went into the lakes and rivers; some dug little holes in the ground. They spread out all over the earth in their own special places.

All this time Dog was going around with Creator. Everywhere he went, Dog went, and watched all that he did. When Creator finished one job and moved on to another, the dog went too.

"Are you going to stay around here all the time?" said the dog. "Or will you have to go away?"

"Well, perhaps someday I shall have to live far away," said Creator.

"Then, Grandfather, will you make me a companion?"

So Creator lay down on the ground.

"Draw a line around me with your paw," he said.

So Dog scratched an outline in the earth all around the great Creator. Creator got up and looked at it.

"Go a little ways off and don't look," he said.

The dog went off a little way. In a few minutes he looked.

"Oh, someone is lying where you were lying, Grandfather."

"Go along and don't look," said Creator.

The dog went a little farther. In a few minutes he looked.

"Someone is sitting there, Grandfather," he said.

"Turn around and walk farther off," said Creator.

The dog obeyed.

At last Creator called the dog. "Now you can look," he said.

"Oh, Grandfather, he moves," cried the dog in delight.

So they stood by the man and looked him over.

"Pretty good," said Creator.

"He's wonderful," said the dog.

Creator went behind the man and lifted him to his feet.

"Put out your foot," he said. "Walk. Do this." So the man walked.

"Now run," Creator said.

He took hold of the man and showed him how to run. The man ran.

"Talk," said Creator. But the man said nothing. Four times Creator told the man to talk. "Say words," he said. Finally the man said words. He spoke.

"Now shout," said Creator. He gave a big yell himself and showed the man how.

The man shouted. "What else?" he said.

Creator thought a minute.

"Laugh," he said. "Laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh."

Then the man laughed.

The dog was very happy when the man laughed. He jumped up on him and ran off a little, and ran back and jumped up on him. He kept jumping up on him the way dogs do today when they are full of love and delight.

The man laughed and laughed.

"NOW YOU ARE FIT TO LIVE," said Creator.

So the man went off with his dog.

Retold by Maria Leach

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

A myth of Uganda - retold by Charlotte and Wolf Leslau

Kabezya-Mpungu, the highest god, had created the sky and the earth and two human beings, a man and a woman, endowed with Reason. However, these two human beings did not, as yet, possess Mutima, or Heart.

Kabezya-Mpungu had four children, the Sun, the Moon, Darkness, and Rain. He called them all together and said to them, "I want to withdraw now, so that Man can no longer see me. I will send down Mutima in my place, but before I take leave I want to know what you, Rain, are going to do." "Oh," replied Rain, "I think I'll pour down without cease and put everything under water." "No," answered the god, "don't do that! Look at these two," and he pointed to the man and the woman; "do you think they can live under water? You'd better take turns with the Sun. After you have sufficiently watered the earth, let the Sun go to work and dry it."

"And how are you going to conduct yourself?" the god asked the Sun. "I intend to shine hotly and burn everything under me," said his second child.

"No," replied Kabezya-Mpungu. "That cannot be. How do you expect the people I created to get food? When you have warmed the earth for a while, give Rain a chance to refresh it and make the fruit grow."

"And you, Darkness, what are your plans?"

"I intend to rule forever!" was the answer.

"Have pity," cried the god. "Do you want to condemn my creatures, the lions, the tigers, and the serpents, to see nothing of the world I made? Listen to me: give the Moon time to shine on the earth, and when you see the Moon in its last quarter, then you may again rule. But I have lingered too long; now I must go." And he disappeared.

Somewhat later, Mutima, Heart, came along in a small container no bigger than a hand.

Heart was crying, and asked Sun, Moon, Darkness, and Rain, "Where is Kabezya-Mpungu, our father?"

"Father is gone," they said, "and we do not know where."

"Oh, how great is my desire," replied Heart, "to commune with him. But since I cannot find him I will enter into Man, and through him I will seek God from generation to generation."

And that is what happened. Ever since, all children born of Man contain Mutima, a longing for God.

The universe expands and contracts like a great heart.
It is expanding, the farthest nebulae
Rush with the speed of light into empty space.
It will contract, the immense navies of stars and galaxies,
dust-clouds and nebulae

- 5 Are recalled home, they crush against each other in one harbor,
they stick in one lump
And then explode it, nothing can hold them down; there is no way
to express that explosion; all that exists
Roars into flame, the tortured fragments rush away from each other
into all the sky, new universes
Jewel the black breast of night; and far off the outer nebulae like
charging spearmen again
Invade emptiness.

- No wonder we are so fascinated with fire-works
10 And our huge bombs; it is a kind of homesickness perhaps for the
howling fire-blast that we were born from.

- But the whole sum of the energies
That made and contained the giant atom survives. It will gather
again and pile up, the power and the glory -
And no doubt it will burst again: diastole and systole: the whole
universe beats like a heart.
Peace in our time was never one of God's promises; but back and
forth, die and live, burn and be damned,
15 The great heart beating, pumping into our arteries His
terrible life.

- He is beautiful beyond belief.
And we, God's apes - or tragic children - share in the beauty. We see
it above our torment, that's what life's for.
He is no God of love, no justice of a little city like Dante's
Florence, no anthropoid God
Making commandments: this is the God who does not care and will
never cease. Look at the seas there
Flashing against this rock in the darkness - look at the tide-stream
stars - and the fall of nations - and dawn
20 Wandering with wet white feet down the Carmel Valley to meet the
sea. These are real and we see their beauty.
The great explosion is probably only a metaphor - I know not - of
faceless violence, the root of all things.

Kumulipo or Beginning-in-deep-darkness

("Kumulipo" or "Beginning-in-deep-darkness" is an ancient Polynesian myth about the mysterious origins of all things. It takes the form of a prayer chant)

There was a time when there was only night and darkness, darkness that gave forth black darkness, night that gave forth deeper night.

In this time the earth became hot; the heavens swirled and turned. The Pleiades rose in the night. And slime was the source of the earth.

In the night Kumulipo was born, a male, Kumulipo, the Source-of-deep-darkness; and Poele was born, a female, Poele whose name was Darkness. These were the parents of all hard-shelled things that came into being in the sea in the darkness and of all plant life. The coral was the first living creature, and the first stone. The grub came forth that digs and heaps up little mounds of dirt; and his child, the earthworm, was born. The starfish came forth, and his child, the little starfish, was born.

The barnacle was born, and the oyster; the mussel was born; the hermit crab came forth. The big limpet was born and his child the small limpet. The shellfish, the rock oyster, the clam, the sea snail, the conch, and the small conch child were born in the night.

Moss was born, living in the sea; ferns grew, living in the land. Earth and water were food for the plants, for the seagrass, the seaweeds, for the landgrass, for the mints which came forth from the land.

The god might enter this vast time and place, but not yet man. Darkness slipped into light, but it was still night.

The man with the water gourd was a god, Kane-i-ka-wai-ola. He gave water to the plants; the withered vine grew green. The long night was fruitful; the long night passed, but still it was night.

Pouliuli, the male, was born, Pouliuli, deep-profound-darkness; born was the female, Powehiwehi, whose name means Darkness-streaked-with-glimmering-light. These two were parents of all the fish and creatures of the ocean.

The waters floated. The fish were born; porpoises were swimming in the sea. The child of the hilu fish swam and rested and spread his tail-fin. The shark swam forth and the sturgeon; the eel and the ray and the octopus were swimming here and there. The albacore, the mackerel, and the squid, were born to swim in the sea water. The pickerel was living in the sea. The gourd vine, the taro, and the yam flourished on the land. Rushes abounded; the sandalwood and hibiscus lived and grew. The fish were swarming in the waters. They swam, rising, jerking, diving, each one swallowing, swallowing as he went. Dark was the ocean. It was still night.

Darkness hung over the sea and the land; darkness shadowed the streams and the mountains. Darkness still covered the dimly brightening night.

Poelele, the male, was born. Poelele, Dark-night; born was Pohaha, the female, whose name means Night-just-breaking-into-dawn. These two were parents of all tiny frail and flitting things which came to being in the ever-lessening light. The rootstalk sprouted nine leaves; the taro grew.

The wood-borer was born and its child was a flying thing. The caterpillar was born and its child, the moth, flew forth. The ant was born; the dragonfly flew over land and stream; the grasshopper leaped about; out came fly, the child of the worm.

The egg was born and its child was a bird: the snipe, the plover, the flycatcher, the crow came forth from the eggs and flew about. The little brown creeper flew; the curlew and its child, the stilt, were born. The frigate-bird and the albatross flew out.

The heron came into the world and flew about the seashore in great flocks and settled down on the beaches. The duck of the islands lived beside the sea; the wild duck and the goose and the owl lived on the land.

The earth was covered with young birds in the night that was just breaking into dawn. It was time for the dawn but it was still night.

Popanopano, the male, was born; born was Polalowehe, the female. This was the time when the crawlers came out of the sea and took to the land. This was the time of the egg-layers. The sea crept up upon the land, slipped back, rushed forward; the crawlers advanced and produced eggs.

So were born in the night the rough-backed turtles, the dark-red turtles, the horn-billed turtles, and the little lobsters. The slow and slippery geckos were born, and other creatures, fat and mud-dwelling, leaving tracks upon the ground, creeping and crawling and poking about.

The time came at last for Po-kanokano, the male, the Nightdigger, and Po-lalo-uli, the female to produce.

Then in the night world the pigchild, Kamapuaa, was born and went to live inland in the bush. Dark was the skin of the new generation. The nose of the beautiful dark pig dug into the land and heaped it up; he cultivated the taro patches and the increase of the land was tenfold; the land sprang into bloom. The ancient line of the pig scattered and multiplied, and left their footprints on the rocks.

Po-hiolo, the male, was born, Po-hiolo, Night-falling-away; born was Po-nea-aku, the female, whose name meant Night-creeping-away. These were the parents of Piloi, the rat child. This was the time of the nibblers, brown-coated, the rats, with whiskers. They hid here and there in the world. They dug holes to live in, scratched in the wet earth. They ate in the uplands; they ate the new shoots of the taro, pilfered the fruits and nibbled the rinds. They were born in the dark, while the dark slipped away. But it was still night.

Po-nee-aku, the male, was born, Po-nee-aku, Night-receding; born was Po-neie-mai, the female, whose name meant Pregnant-night. These were the parents of a new, mysterious birth. The night grew less. The dark lightened. The dog was born, dark-red, brindled, hairless, pitiful in the cold without a coat, in the heat without cover. The wind was his companion.

Out of the slime came new rootlets; the leaves branched. Birth spread through the world. The dog was born while it was still night. But men were not far.

Po-kinikini and Po-heenalu-mamao were parents of the next life. The night was passing and a child was born, well-formed. This was the time when men were born by the hundreds: man was born for the narrow stream; woman was born for the broad stream. They stood together; they slept together, in that calm time long ago, called Calmness. A great stillness lay about, awaiting the gods and man.

La'ilaa was born, a woman; a man was born, named Kii. The god was Kane. The face of the god was ruddy; dark was the face of man.

Here was the ocean edge, here the damp forests, the cold mountains. This was the time when men were born, little helpless ones, then children growing older, ever increasing.

Man spread over the land, Man was here.
It was day.


(Retold by Maria Leach)

The Archer and the Moon Goddess

BY SHIU L. KONG AND
ELIZABETH K. WONG

These stories explain how the sun and moon became the way they are today.

I. The Downing of the Nine Suns

 **W**hen the world began, Dijun the Sun God and his wife had ten sons. These sons were winged birds of fire and served as suns in the sky.

Dijun worked out a schedule so that only one of his sons would be perched on the Fusong Tree each day, giving off just the right amount of heat and light to the earth. When it was not their turn, the nine other sons rested in the sea.

One day, having had enough of the monotony of sitting alone in the tree all the time, the ten sons rebelled against their parents and flew up into the tree together. This brought disaster to the earth, as the combined rays of the ten suns seared and scorched its surface.

The heat and light were so intense that the earth's inhabitants had to hide in deep, dark holes. Even the rocks and metals were slowly melting away. Nothing could escape the burning rays.

The people of earth prayed to the gods for help. The Sun God and Goddess tried to persuade their children to stop their nonsense, but to no avail.

However, there was a god by the name of Yi who was very concerned about the plight of the people. He asked Dijun if he might have permission

to shoot the rebels down.

At first, Dijun was extremely reluctant to allow his sons to be treated in this way. However, when nothing else worked, he finally consented. He gave Yi a magic bow and a quiver of red arrows. "Do what you must," he told Yi, "but please do not hurt my children any more than is necessary."

Yi was the best archer of the universe. He was also a compassionate god, and proposed shooting down the sun birds only because it was the last resort to stop the suffering on earth.

Yi went down to earth and climbed the highest mountain. He showed the sunbirds his magic bow, but they ignored his warning as they had ignored all the others.

Left with no alternative, Yi fitted an arrow to his bow. He took aim and let the bolt fly.

An instant later, a ball of fire hurtled down to the ground. The sunlight was dimmed slightly, and the heat was less overwhelming. When people went to examine the fallen bird, they saw a huge, three-footed raven lying in a crumpled heap on the ground.

Yi shot down two more suns before he paused. Even though three of their brothers had been rendered useless, the other firebirds refused to give up.

Yi was angered by their stubbornness, and fired arrow after arrow at the dazzling sources of light in the sky.

When his fury had subsided, the people on earth counted nine dead ravens on the ground. Yi had one more arrow in his quiver. If he had used all ten arrows, the people realized, there would have been no suns left, and no more light or warmth. What a close call that had been.

The last sun left in the sky learned his lesson from this unnerving event. From then on he never disobeyed his parents.

II. Chang O's Flight to the Moon

After shooting down the nine suns and thus saving earth's inhabitants from death, the Great Archer Yi returned to heaven. He found that Dijun was very angry with him, even though Dijun himself had given the order for his sons to be punished.

"Why did you shoot down nine of our sons all at once?" he asked Yi, in a rage. "How could you inflict such a great loss on myself and my wife? If you love earth and its people so much, you and your wife must go to live

there. I cannot bear to have you in my sight. Your presence will always remind me of my grief for my boys."

Thus Yi and his wife, Chang O, were banished from heaven.

Even though humans loved Yi very much and admired his beautiful wife, the immortal couple did not find it easy to adjust to life on earth. Chang O, especially, was unhappy.

"What have I done to deserve this?" she complained bitterly to her husband. "Why should I, a goddess by birth and brought up in heavenly comfort, be blamed for your misdeeds?"

As time went on, she continued to complain and bemoan the fate that had coupled her with a disgraced god. The domestic difficulties with his wife added to Yi's disappointment at being exiled for his successful and benevolent mission.

But he worked hard to establish as normal a life as possible on earth. He roamed the mountain forests all day, searching for game. He helped people to defend themselves against the attacks of wild beasts and monsters. Gradually, he began to adapt himself to his new life. But, however much he tried to make their life comfortable, his wife refused to become accustomed to living on earth. In fact, she never stopped reproaching him.

"To think that we gods should have to become mortal like humans and, one day, to die like them," she lamented. "I cannot bear the thought of going down to the underworld and being in the company of those terrible ghosts. Oh, if only you had not shot down the nine suns!"

Though the Great Archer had no regrets for what he had done to help the suffering of the people, he tried to work out a way that would spare his wife and himself the horrible fate of living in hell. Chang O realized her husband's concern.

One day, she said to Yi in a softer voice, "My dear husband, I was told that the Queen Mother of the West, who lives in the magnificent Jade Palace on the highest peak of the Kunlun Mountains, has a special magical elixir. Would you go and see if you can charm her into giving us enough potion to render us immortal? Though we are no longer gods, this wretched human existence is at least better than becoming gruesome ghosts in hell."

"I will get the elixir for you, my dear wife, no matter how difficult it may be," Yi promised.

The Kunlun Mountains, the legendary home of the Chinese race, are located to the west of China. The mountain where the Jade Palace was situated was surrounded by a moat filled with "weak water," upon which even the lightest bird feather could not float. This moat was encircled by a desert so hot and barren that flames burned in it, day and night. It was known that no mortal could cross these two barriers alive.

The Queen Mother of the West was reputed to be a monster. She was thought to have the face of a woman, the body of a beast, and the tail of a leopard. Her palace was guarded by giant three-headed bluebirds that hovered in the sky above the palace. Any intruder that was sighted would be pecked to death.

By sheer determination, aided by some supernatural power he still possessed, Yi managed to reach the impenetrable Jade Palace. The Queen Mother granted him audience in her magnificent jade hall. Yi related his unhappy story, and asked the Queen Mother to have mercy on himself and his wife by giving them some of her elixir so that they could escape the miseries of hell. The goddess was moved by Yi's courage and his unfair treatment by the Sun God. She went to her chamber and returned with a small bottle. Handing it to Yi, she said, "This is the Elixir of Immortality. If you and your wife each share half of it, you will live forever on earth. However, if one of you were to drink all of it at once, he or she would become a god again in heaven.

"Guard this potion well, for it is the essence of a magic peach tree. This tree flowers only once every three thousand years. Its fruit takes another three thousand years to ripen. Even then, the harvest is scanty. All the elixir I have is here in this bottle. Take it, and use it wisely."

Yi was greatly touched by the Queen Mother's extreme generosity. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he did not utter a word but slowly knelt before his benefactor in gratitude.

Chang O was jubilant when she saw that Yi had returned with the bottle of elixir. She was even more elated when he told her that a person could actually attain godly status by drinking the entire contents of the bottle. She immediately contrived a secret plan.

The next morning, Yi rose early to go hunting. Before he left, he told Chang O to guard the elixir very carefully. He said cheerfully, "My dear wife, I will hunt enough food for a feast tonight. This elixir warrants a

special celebration. After dinner we shall share this precious potion, and then we shall be able to live together forever on this beautiful planet, earth."

Chang O anxiously watched her husband through the window when he left for the hills. As soon as he disappeared into the distance, she took hold of the little bottle. Then she paused for a moment. Did she really want to forsake Yi forever on earth? She knew that if she drank the entire potion, she would probably never see her husband again. But after a few moments' thought she decided to return to her former godly self. Since Yi loved earth so much, she reasoned, he would be able to find happiness even without her. With this thought in mind, she emptied the entire contents of the bottle into her mouth.

The magic potion took effect instantly. Chang O felt her body gradually drifting upwards, pulled by a celestial force. She had not realized that the potion would work so suddenly, and was taken by surprise. She thought with regret of her husband, to whom she had not had a chance to say goodbye.

Since no one was around to help her, she quickly found herself levitated to a great altitude. Around her, the stars were shining and the moon was not far away.

The farther she drifted away from earth, the more remorse Chang O felt for her selfishness. She began to realize that a great many of her friends both in heaven and on earth might not forgive her for leaving Yi behind. So she decided to land on the moon instead of going back to her old home in heaven.

But the moon is far from being the romantic place that people imagine it to be. The terrain was desolate and grey, and the air was freezing cold. Except for a single cassia tree and a small rabbit, there was no other sign of life on the moon. Disillusioned, Chang O began to realize the full consequence of her selfishness. It had caused her to forsake an immortal life with a loving husband for an immortal life of infinite loneliness.

Introducing **The Creation of the Universe and Japan**

The Japanese were not the original occupants of the islands that now comprise Japan. Mongoloid peoples crossed the Korea Strait and invaded these islands during the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. and brought their Shinto religion with them. This religion included the worship of nature, ancestors, and heroes. It assumed that every aspect of nature had a divine spirit within it.

The Japanese did not record their religious beliefs for hundreds of years; by then, the influence of China on Japanese culture was widespread. The year A.D. 552 marks the beginning of the great Chinese influence on Japan in the areas of religion, literature, and art. But it was not until the early 8th century that the Japanese recorded anything of their religion.

The *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*), written in A.D. 712, and the *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*), written in 720, are the two major sources of Japanese mythology. They were written at a time when the Japanese accepted their traditional myths as fact. The authors of these books made an effort to minimize the Chinese and Indian influences on their earliest religious beliefs.

The creation myth is particularly Japanese in that it quickly moves from the creation of the earth to an explanation of how the islands that comprise Japan were created. The fact that the creators are a pair of male and female gods may be a Chinese influence.

As is the case with most cultures, the Japanese gods are anthropomorphic. They are human in appearance, thought, speech, and deed. In the course of explaining the origin of local natural phenomena—such as islands, mountains, forests, and streams—the creation myth also presents a pattern of birth, marriage, and death in the lives of the two major gods that reflects that pattern in the lives of human beings.

A provocative aspect of this myth is the subservient role of the female. Every one of the many versions of the myth states that it is proper for the male to speak first. If the female speaks first, her behavior is worse than socially unacceptable; dreadful consequences, in the form of abnormal children, result. Yet the principal Japanese deity is female. The sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami rules all of the gods and the entire universe. She is also a

Great Goddess or Mother Goddess figure, for she is responsible for fertility.

The subservient role of the female in this myth is also unusual in terms of early Japanese society. The oral tradition of the Ainu, who were among the earliest peoples living on Japanese soil, reveals that women were very powerful figures in their society. They were the shamans, or seers. They fought side by side with the greatest of

noblemen on the battlefield, where they displayed equal courage, strength, and skill.

Until late in the 8th century, women often ruled the small political states in Japan. They did not become completely subservient to men until the 16th century. Therefore, it is particularly interesting that a myth recorded early in the 8th century should have such a masculine bias.

The Creation of the Universe and Japan

In the beginning, heaven and earth were one unformed mass, similar to a shapeless egg. The lighter, clearer part remained above and, in time, became heaven. More slowly, the heavier, denser part sank below and became earth. At first, pieces of land floated about in the void as a fish floats on the surface of the sea. A detached object, shaped like a reed-shoot when it first emerges from the mud, floated in the void between heaven and earth as a cloud floats over the sea. This became the first god. Other gods followed, the two youngest being Izanagi no Mikoto and Izanami no Mikoto.

Izanagi and Izanami stood side by side upon the floating bridge of heaven, which we call the rainbow, and looked down from the heights. "Can you see anything below us?" Izanagi asked.

"Nothing but water," Izanami replied. "I wonder if there is any land."

"That is something we can determine!" Izanagi replied. "Let us take the jewel-spear of heaven and thrust it into the depths. If land exists, this spear will surely reveal it."

The two gods moved the jewel-spear around in the depths and then pulled it up to see if any material had collected on its tip. Salty water dripped from the point of their spear and fell as a salty mass into the sea below, forming an island.

"Now we can live on the waters below us!" Izanami exclaimed. "We have land to rest on."

So Izanagi and Izanami left heaven and went to live upon the island they had created in the middle of the sea. They built a large palace there and placed the jewel-spear in its center as a supporting pillar. Then they married. They hoped to have many island-children, who would join together to become a country.

Once they had established their home, Izanagi said to Izanami, "Let us separate and investigate our island. You go in one direction and I will go in the other, and we will meet."

Izanagi turned to the left of the palace, Izanami turned to the right, and they walked around the island. When they came together again, Izanami exclaimed, "How wonderful! I have met a handsome young man!"

In time, Izanami gave birth to their first child. Instead of being an island, it was a disgusting leech-child, who could not stand up even at the age of three years. They had no desire to keep such a child, so they sent it floating upon the sea in a reed boat and let the winds determine its destiny.

The two gods then returned to heaven and asked the older gods, "Why did Izanami give birth to an abnormal child? Is there anything we can do to prevent her from having another one?"

The gods replied, "Izanami gave birth to a useless child because she does not appear to know her proper place. A woman should let the man be the first to speak, for that is his right. When a woman speaks first, she brings bad luck. If you wish to have proper children, then you must begin all over again. Return to your island, walk your separate ways, and try meeting and greeting each other once more."

Izanagi and Izanami obeyed the advice of the gods, and this time when they met, Izanami let Izanagi speak first. "How wonderful!" he exclaimed. "I have met a lovely young woman!"

Izanami smiled and replied, "How wonderful! I have met a handsome young man!"

In the course of time, Izanami gave birth to eight lovely children, each of whom became an island. Together the eight islands formed one country.

Izanagi then said to his wife, "The country we have created is covered with sweet morning mists, but what good are islands if no one can see them? I shall solve the problem by creating a child who will be the god of the wind."

He took a deep breath and exhaled their next child. The newborn god cloaked himself in a great blast of air. Then he flew over his sisters and brothers, scattering the mists that concealed them.

Izanami said to her husband, "Now that you have revealed the country we created, we must make our islands beautiful. We must create lofty mountains and peaceful valleys, cool forests and lush meadows, sparkling waterfalls and bubbling streams." So Izanagi and Izanami created the gods of the sea, the gods of the mountains, the gods of the rivers, and the gods of the trees.

When they saw that their country was truly beautiful, Izanagi said, "Now let us create the god who will rule the universe."

Together they produced the goddess of the sun, Amaterasu Omikami. From the time of her birth, Amaterasu shone with a brilliance that illumined the entire world. Izanagi and Izanami were delighted with their youngest child. "We have many children," Izanagi said, "but not one of them can compare with our beautiful Amaterasu! Clearly our country is no place for such a great goddess. She belongs in heaven where she can shine down upon the earth! As soon as she can, let her climb the ladder of heaven."

Amaterasu was in heaven when Izanami gave birth to the god of the moon. His beauty and brilliance were almost as great as Amaterasu's. He too climbed

the ladder of heaven, for in time he would become Amaterasu's husband and would rule the universe with her.

Izanagi and Izanami's next child, Susano-o-no-Mikoto, had a disposition that brought no joy to anyone. Whenever he was not creating havoc with his temper tantrums, he was crying. His parents gave him the power to rule the earth, but he misused that power. He caused the forests to wither, and he brought early deaths to many people.

Finally Izanagi and Izanami said to him, "Your love of destruction gives us no choice but to banish you. You are so cruel that it is unfair to let you rule the earth! We are sending you down to rule the netherland, where you can do less damage."

Izanagi and Izanami's next child was the god of fire. In the process of being born, he burned his mother, and Izanami died. As she was dying, she gave birth to the earth goddess and the water goddess. The god of fire married the goddess of the earth, and their daughter produced the mulberry tree and the silkworm from the hair on her head, and five kinds of grain from her navel.

Meanwhile, as Izanami lay dying, Izanagi cried, "How grieved I am!" In anger and resentment, he drew his sword and sliced the god of fire into three pieces, each of which became a god.

Overcome with sorrow and loneliness, Izanagi then followed Izanami, traveling the long path into Yomi, the dark land of death. When he found her he said, "I have come to you here in this dreadful place, Izanami, because I love you, and I cannot bear to live without you!"

To his surprise, Izanami did not welcome his words. "Izanagi, my husband and my lord, why did you take so long in coming?" she complained. "I have already eaten Yomi's food! Now I cannot go with you. If you love me, please let the darkness be a blessing, and do not look upon me. Instead, you must return the way you came, for my death has put an end to our marriage."

But Izanagi truly loved Izanami. He could not leave his beloved wife so easily, nor could he refrain from looking at her one last time. Secretly, he broke off an end tooth from the many-toothed comb that he wore in his hair and created a torch by igniting it. Then he confidently held the blazing torch toward his beautiful wife.

As the glow illuminated her figure, Izanagi recoiled with shock and revulsion. Izanami's body was now in a state of decay, and a host of maggots were voraciously feeding upon her rotting flesh. "The land of the dead is indeed a dreadful place!" he exclaimed in a whisper.

Izanami heard him and rose in a fury. "Why did you not leave as I wished?" she asked. "Now you have shamed me, and I will punish you for it!" Izanami called forth the eight ugly females of Yomi, who relentlessly pursued Izanagi.

To delay them, Izanagi removed his black headdress and tossed it on the ground. It immediately turned into a large bunch of grapes, which the pursuing females stopped and ate. When they had finished eating, they resumed their chase.

Izanagi removed his many-toothed comb from his hair and tossed it on the ground. It immediately turned into bamboo shoots, which the pursuing females stopped and ate. When they had finished eating, they resumed their chase.

By the time they caught up with Izanagi, he had reached Yomi Pass, the border between the dark land of the dead and the bright land of the living. There he blocked the path with a huge rock that it would take 1,000 men to move. From his safe position behind the rock, Izanagi remained to talk with his wife.

"Izanagi!" she exclaimed. "You have so shamed me that I am prepared to kill every one of your subjects! I can strangle 1,000 each day. In no time at all, you will rule over an empty kingdom."

"If you do so, Izanami," Izanagi replied, "I will see to it that 1,500 people are born each day!"

"Izanagi, my husband and my lord, you must accept my death," Izanami said soothingly. "We have loved one another long and well. Together we have created a beautiful country and many gods. Is this not enough? My time on earth has come to an end, and it is too late for me to return. So let us come to peaceful terms with each other."

"All right, Izanami," Izanagi replied. "I know that it was weak of me to follow you into the land of death. I know that bad luck follows those who visit the land of Yomi while the wind of life blows through their bodies. Our marriage is hereby severed. As you wish, I will leave you to your life with Yomi in his dreadful land. I will return to the land of the living and will not bother you again."

True to his word, Izanagi never did.

Introducing Amaterasu

The myth of Amaterasu and the Japanese creation myth are so closely related that the introduction to the creation myth applies here as well. Like the Japanese creation myth, the myth of Amaterasu is told in the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) and in the *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*).

The Amaterasu myth is also part of the Shinto religious tradition, which assumes that every aspect of nature contains a divine spirit. Amaterasu Omikami is the principal Japanese deity. She is the sun goddess, the Great Goddess or Mother Goddess who is responsible for fertility, and she is the ruler of the gods and the universe. Moreover, she has the personality and skill to remain in power. In her multiple divine roles, Amaterasu reflects the important role of women in early

Japanese life, where they were warriors, rulers, and seers.

The myth of Amaterasu reflects the Shinto interest in fertility and rituals associated with it. The myth explains the separation between the sun and the moon, the origin of food on earth, and the beginning of agriculture and the silkworm industry.

Although in many other cultures, two different deities are responsible for the shining of the sun and for fertility, a logical connection exists between the two. Without the sun no plants would grow, and without plants human beings would starve for lack of food. The gods would also starve, for they eat the same food that humans do, either directly or in the form of sacrifices offered to them. Thus, when Amaterasu locks herself in the cave,

her action brings the ultimate catastrophe upon both gods and humans.

Presumably, as long as Amaterasu was treated with respect, the sun would continue to shine and human

beings would prosper. This optimistic view of nature was supported by the abundance of plant life, wild animals, and fish in Japan at the time the myth was created.

Amaterasu

Amaterasu Omikami, goddess of the sun and of the universe, was reigning in heaven when she sent her brother and husband, the god of the moon, down to the reed plains to serve the goddess of food. As soon as the goddess saw him, she turned toward the land and spit boiled rice from her mouth. Next she turned toward the sea and spit all kinds of fish from her mouth. Finally, she turned toward the mountains and spit a variety of fur-coated animals from her mouth. She then prepared all of these as food and placed them upon 100 tables for the moon god to eat.

When the moon god saw what she had done, he was furious. "How dare you feed me with food that you have spit from your mouth!" he exclaimed, "You have made the food filthy and disgusting!" He drew his sword and killed the goddess. Then he returned to Amaterasu and told her of his deed.

To his surprise, Amaterasu exclaimed, "You are an evil god! I can no longer stand the sight of your face. Take yourself from my presence, and see to it that we do not meet face to face again!" So the sun and the moon lived apart from one another, separated by day and by night.

Amaterasu sent her messenger, the cloud spirit, down to the goddess of food. He found that the goddess was indeed dead. However, he also found that the ox and the horse had issued forth from her head, grain had grown from her forehead, silkworms had come forth from her eyebrows, cereal had emerged from her eyes, rice had grown from her stomach, and wheat and beans had grown from her abdomen. The cloud spirit collected all of these and returned to Amaterasu with them.

The goddess of the sun was delighted with the variety of foods. "You have given me great cause for rejoicing!" she exclaimed to her messenger. "Human beings will be able to eat these foods and survive."

Amaterasu extracted the seeds from the various grains and beans and planted them in the dry fields. She took the rice seed and planted it in the water fields. She then appointed a heavenly village chief and let him supervise the sowing of these seeds. The first harvest that autumn was a pleasure to behold. Meanwhile, Amaterasu placed the silkworms in her mouth and collected silken thread from them. Thus, the sun goddess initiated the art of raising silkworms.

Not long thereafter, Izanagi and Izanami gave their son Susano-o-no-Mikoto the netherland to rule and banished him there. Before he took his place in the netherland, he decided to visit his shining sister. He was such a violent god that the mountains and hills groaned aloud and the sea frothed in tempestuous tumult as he made his way up to heaven.

When she saw him coming, Amaterasu thought, "Surely my wicked brother is coming to visit me with no good purpose in mind. He must want my kingdom, the plain of heaven. Yet our parents assigned a particular realm to each of us. Susano-o-no-Mikoto should be satisfied with the kingdom they have given him. I had better prepare for the worst!"

The goddess bound up her hair in knots and tied her skirts into trousers as if she were a male. She placed two quivers upon her back, one containing 1,000 arrows and one containing 500. At her side she placed three long swords. In one hand, she carried her bow upright in shooting position, with an arrow ready on the bowstring; in her other hand, she firmly grasped one of her swords.

When the two gods came face to face, Amaterasu felt confident that her appearance would intimidate her brother. "Why have you come to me?" she calmly asked him.

"You look as if you are expecting trouble!" Susano-o-no-Mikoto replied. "Certainly you should have no fear of me. I have never had a black heart, although our parents dislike me and have condemned me to rule the netherland. I simply wanted to see you before I left the world of light. I do not intend to stay long."

Amaterasu, wishing to believe the best of her brother, put away her weapons. She welcomed him among the heavenly gods and hoped that his visit would be as brief as he had said.

But Susano-o-no-Mikoto stayed longer than he was wanted, and his behavior was very rude. He and Amaterasu each had three rice fields of their own. Whereas Amaterasu's fields thrived in spite of excessive rains or prolonged drought, Susano-o-no-Mikoto's rice fields were always barren. In times of drought, the soil was parched and cracked; in heavy rainfall, the soil washed away. Finally Susano-o-no-Mikoto became possessed by jealous anger. When the rice seeds were sown in the spring, he removed the divisions between the fields, filled up the channels, and destroyed the troughs and pipes. Amaterasu, wishing to believe the best of her brother, remained calm and tolerant.

In the autumn, when the grain was mature, Susano-o-no-Mikoto freed the heavenly colts and caused them to lie down in the middle of the rice fields. Again Amaterasu remained calm and tolerant.

Then Susano-o-no-Mikoto spoiled the harvest feast of first-fruits by defiling the purity of the palace with disgusting filth. Again Amaterasu remained calm and tolerant.

Finally, while Amaterasu sat weaving cloth for the clothing of the gods in her sacred weaving hall, her evil brother silently removed some roof tiles in order to create a hole in the ceiling. Then he threw a colt of heaven into the room. Amaterasu was so startled that she pricked herself with her shuttle.

This time the sun goddess could not forgive Susano-o-no-Mikoto. In great rage, she left the palace and entered the rock cave of heaven. She locked the door and remained there in isolation. Now that her brilliance no longer

illuminated heaven and earth, day became as black as night. The universe was forced to exist in total, continuous darkness. Without the sun, plants could not grow. People everywhere stopped their activities, watching and waiting to see how long the deprivation would last.

All of the gods gathered along the banks of the Peaceful River of Heaven and discussed how to placate Amaterasu's wrath. They placed a statue of the sun goddess outside the rock cave and offered prayers to it. They also made many special offerings—including fine cloth, rich jewels, combs, and a mirror—which they hung upon a sakaki tree—and goddesses danced and chanted by the door.

Amaterasu heard the music and said to herself, "I hear both beautiful prayers of supplication addressed to me and the sounds of music and dance. Why are the gods so happy when my seclusion in this rock cave has brought constant darkness to the central land of fertile reed plains?" Her curiosity overcame her anger, and she opened the door a crack to look outside.

This was just what the gods had hoped Amaterasu would do. Rejoicing in the return of the sun's brilliant rays, they took Amaterasu by the hand, had her among them, and convinced her to rejoin them.

The gods punished Susano-o-no-Mikoto by demanding from him 1,000 tables of offerings. They also plucked out his hair and the nails on his fingers and toes. Finally they said to him, "Your behavior has been intolerably rude and improper. From this time forth, you are banished from heaven and from the central reed plains as well. Go forth with all speed to the netherland. We have had enough of your wicked ways!"

So Susano-o-no-Mikoto left heaven forever and began his journey to the netherland.