

CREATION STORIES

Genesis

CREATION

1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 1:4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

1:6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 1:7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so. 1:8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so. 1:10 And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good. 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good. 1:13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 1:15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 1:16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also. 1:17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 1:18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was* good. 1:19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. 1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 1:21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good. 1:22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 1:23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 1:25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

1:26 And 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 1:27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 1:30 And to every

beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so. 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

2:4 These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 2:5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground. 2:6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. 2:7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God 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 knowledge of good and evil. 2:10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. 2:11 The name of the first *is* Pison: that *is* it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold; 2:12 And the gold of that land *is* good: there *is* bdellium and the onyx stone. 2:13 And the name of the second river *is* Gihon: the same *is* it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. 2:14 And the name of the third river *is* Hiddekel: that *is* it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river *is* Euphrates. 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

2:18 And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 2:19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. 2:20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 2:22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 2:23 And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the

LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself. 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life; 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return. 3:20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

4:1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 4:6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. 4:8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

4:9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper? 4:10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 4:11 And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; 4:12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. 4:13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear. 4:14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me. 4:15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

4:16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. 4:17 And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. 4:18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

4:19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 4:20 And Adah bare Jubal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and *of such as have* cattle. 4:21 And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. 4:22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal- cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah. 4:23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken

unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. 4:24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

OF NOAH AND THE FLOOD

6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.

6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

6:9 These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God. 6:10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 6:11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

6:14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 6:15 And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it *of*: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 6:16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it. 6:17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die. 6:18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. 6:19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every *sort* shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep *them* alive with thee; they shall be male and female. 6:20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every *sort* shall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive. 6:21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather *it* to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. 6:22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

7:1 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. 7:2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female. 7:3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. 7:4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. 7:5 And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. 7:6 And Noah *was* six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

7:7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. 7:8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, 7:9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. 7:10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 7:12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 7:13 In the selfsame day entered Noah, and

Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; 7:14 They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. 7:15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life. 7:16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in. 7:17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. 7:18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. 7:19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered. 7:20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. 7:21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: 7:22 All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died. 7:23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark. 7:24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

8:1 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that *was* with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; 8:2 The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; 8:3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. 8:4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. 8:5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

8:6 And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: 8:7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. 8:8 Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; 8:9 But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. 8:10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 8:11 And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth *was* an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. 8:12 And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

8:13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. 8:14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

8:15 And God spake unto Noah, saying, 8:16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. 8:17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee, of all flesh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. 8:18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: 8:19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

8:20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

A Pima Legend

After the world was ready, Earth Doctor made all kinds of animals and creeping things. Then he made images of clay, and told them to be people. After a while there were so many people that there was not food and water enough for all.

They were never sick and none died. At last there grew to be so many they were obliged to eat each other. Then Earth Doctor, because he could not give them food and water enough, killed them all. He caught the hook of his staff into the sky and pulled it down so that it crushed all the people and all the animals, until there was nothing living on the earth. Earth Doctor made a hole through the earth with his stick, and through that he went, coming out safe, but alone, on the other side.

He called upon the sun and moon to come out of the wreck of the world and sky, and they did so. But there was no sky for them to travel through, no stars, and no Milky Way. So Earth Doctor made these all over again. Then he created another race of men and animals.

Then Coyote was born. Moon was his mother. When Coyote was large and strong he came to the land where the Pima Indians lived.

Then Elder Brother was born. Earth was his mother, and Sky his father. He was so powerful that he spoke roughly to Earth Doctor, who trembled before him. The people began to increase in numbers, just as they had done before, but Elder Brother shortened their lives, so the earth did not become so crowded. But Elder Brother did not like the people created by Earth Doctor, so he planned to destroy them again. So Elder Brother planned to create a magic baby. . . .

The screams of the baby shook the earth. They could be heard for a great distance. Then Earth Doctor called all the people together, and told them there would be a great flood. He sang a magic song and then bored a hole through the flat earth-plain through to the other side. Some of the people went into the hole to escape the flood that was coming, but not very many got through. Some of the people asked Elder Brother to help them, but he did not answer. Only Coyote he answered. He told Coyote to find a big log and sit on it, so that he would float on the surface of the water with the driftwood. Elder Brother got into a big olla which he had made, and closed it tight. So he rolled along on the ground under the olla. He sang a magic song as he climbed into his olla.

A young man went to the place where the baby was screaming. Its tears were a great torrent which cut gorges in the earth before it. The water was rising all over the earth. He bent over the child to pick it up, and immediately both became birds and flew above the flood. Only five birds were saved from the flood. One was a flicker and one a vulture. They clung by their beaks to the sky to keep themselves above the waters, but the tail of the flicker was washed by the waves and that is why it is stiff to this day. At last a god took pity on them and gave them power to make "nests of down" from their own breasts on which they floated on the water. One of these birds was the Vipisimal, and if any one injures it to this day, the flood may come again.

Now South Doctor called his people to him and told them that a flood was coming. He sang a magic song and he bored a hole in the ground with a cane so that people might go through to the other side. Others he sent to Earth Doctor, but Earth Doctor told them they were too late. So they sent the people to the top of a high mountain called Crooked Mountain. South Doctor sang a magic song and traced his cane around the mountain, but that held back the waters only for a short time. Four times he sang and traced a line around the mountain, yet the flood rose again each time. There was only one thing more to do.

He held his magic crystals in his left hand and sang a song. Then he struck it with his cane. A thunder peal rang through the mountains. He threw his staff into the water and it cracked with a loud noise. Turning, he saw a dog near him. He said, "How high is the tide?" The dog said, "It is very near the top." He looked at the people as he said it. When they heard his voice they all turned to stone. They stood just as they were, and they are there to this day in groups: some of the men talking, some of the women cooking, and some crying.

But Earth Doctor escaped by enclosing himself in his reed staff, which floated upon the water. Elder Brother rolled along in his olla until he came near the mouth of the Colorado River. The olla is now called Black Mountain. After the flood he came out and visited all parts of the land.

When he met Coyote and Earth Doctor, each claimed to have been the first to appear after the flood, but at last they admitted Elder Brother was the first, so he became ruler of the world.

An Iroquois Creation Story

In the beginning there was no world, no land, no creatures of the kind that are around us now, and there were no men. But there was a great ocean which occupied space as far as anyone could see. Above the ocean was a great void of air. And in the air lived the birds of the sea; in the ocean lived the fish and the creatures of the deep. Far above this unpeopled world, there was a Sky-World. Here lived gods who were like people—like Iroquois.

In the Sky-World there was a man who had a wife, and the wife was expecting a child. The woman became hungry for all kinds of strange delicacies, as women do when they are with child. She kept her husband busy almost to distraction finding delicious things for her to eat.

In the middle of the Sky-World there was a Great Tree which was not like any of the trees we know. It was tremendous; it had grown there forever. It had enormous roots that spread out from the floor of the Sky-World. . . . The tree was not supposed to be marked or mutilated by any of the beings who dwelt in the Sky-World. It was a sacred tree that stood at the center of the universe.

The woman decided that she wanted some bark from one of the roots of the Great Tree—perhaps as a food or as a medicine, we don't know. She told her husband this. He didn't like the idea. He knew it was wrong. But she insisted, and he gave in. So he dug a hole among the roots of this great sky tree, and he bared some of its roots. But the floor of the Sky-World wasn't very thick, and he broke a hole through it. He was terrified, for he had never expected to find empty space underneath the world.

But his wife was filled with curiosity. He wouldn't get any of the roots for her, so she set out to do it herself. She bent over and she looked down, and she saw the ocean far below. . . . No one knows just what happened next. Some say she slipped. Some say her husband, fed up with all the demands she had made on him, pushed her.

So she fell through the hole. As she fell, she frantically grabbed at its edges, but her hands slipped. However, between her fingers there clung bits of things that were growing on the floor of the Sky-World and bits of the root tips of the Great Tree. And so she began to fall toward the great ocean far below.

The birds of the sea saw the woman falling, and they immediately consulted with each other as to what they could do to help her. Flying wingtip to wingtip, they made a great feathery raft in the sky to support her, and thus they broke her fall. . . . The great sea turtle came and agreed to receive her on his back. The birds placed her gently on the shell of the turtle, and now the turtle floated about on the huge ocean with the woman safely on his back. . . .

And the woman said to herself that she would die. But the creatures of the sea came to her and said that they would try to help her and asked her what they could do. She told them that if they could find some soil, she could plant the roots stuck between her fingers, and from them plants would grow. The sea animals said perhaps there was dirt at the bottom of the ocean, but no one had ever been down there so they could not be sure. . . .

Finally, the muskrat said he would try. He dived and disappeared. All the creatures held their breath, but he did not return. After a long time, his little body floated up to the surface of the ocean, a tiny crumb of earth clutched in his paw. . . . Thus it was the muskrat, the Earth-Diver, who brought from the bottom of the ocean the soil from which the earth was to grow.

The woman took the tiny clod of dirt and placed it on the middle of the great sea turtle's back. Then the woman began to walk in a circle around it, moving in the direction that the sun goes. The earth began to grow. When the earth was big enough, she planted the roots she had clutched between her fingers when she fell from the Sky-World. Thus the plants grew on the earth.

. . . After a while, the woman's time came, and she was delivered of a daughter. The woman and her daughter kept walking in a circle around the earth, so that the earth and plants would continue to grow. They lived on the plants and roots they gathered.

The Mayan Creation Story

The Popol Vuh

Here is the story of the beginning,
when there was not one bird,
not one fish,
not one mountain.

Here is the sky, all alone.
Here is the sea, all alone.
There is nothing more
—no sound, no movement.
Only the sky and the sea.
Only Heart-of-Sky, alone.
And these are his names:

Maker and Modeler,
Kukulkan,
and Hurricane.
But there is no one to speak his names.
There is no one to praise his glory.
There is no one to nurture his
greatness.

And so Heart-of-Sky thinks,
"Who is there to speak my name?
Who is there to praise me?
How shall I make it dawn?"
Heart-of-Sky only says the word,
"Earth,"
and the earth rises,
like a mist from the sea.
He only thinks of it,
and there it is.

He thinks of mountains,
and great mountains come.
He thinks of trees,
and trees grow on the land.

And so Heart-of-Sky says,
"Our work is going well."

Now Heart-of-Sky plans the creatures
of the forest
—birds, deer, jaguars and snakes.
And each is given his home.
"You the deer, sleep here along the
rivers.
You the birds, your nests are in the
trees.
Multiply and scatter," he tells them.

Then Heart-of-Sky says to the animals,
"Speak, pray to us."

But the creatures can only squawk.
The creatures only howl.
They do not speak like humans.
They do not praise Heart-of-Sky
And so the animals are humbled.
They will serve those who will worship
Heart-of-Sky.

And Heart-of-Sky tries again.
Tries to make a giver of respect.
Tries to make a giver of praise.

Here is the new creation,
made of mud and earth.
It doesn't look very good.
It keeps crumbing and softening.
It looks lopsided and twisted.
It only speaks nonsense.
It cannot multiply.
So Heart-of-Sky lets it dissolved away.

Now Heart-of-Sky plans again.
Our Grandfather and Our Grandmother
are summoned.
They are the most wise spirits.
"Determine if we should carve people
from wood,"
commands Heart-of-Sky.

They run their hands over the kernels of
corn.
They run their hands over the coral
seeds.
"What can we make that will speak and
pray?
asks Our Grandfather.
What can we make that will nurture
and provide?"
asks Our Grandmother.
They count the days,
the lots of four,
seeking an answer for Heart-of-Sky.

Now they give the answer,
"It is good to make your people with
wood.
They will speak your name.
They will walk about and multiply."

"So it is," replies Heart-of-Sky.

And as the words are spoken, it is done.
The doll-people are made
with faces carved from wood.
But they have no blood, no sweat.

They have nothing in their minds.
They have no respect for Heart-of-Sky.
They are just walking about,
But they accomplish nothing.

"This is not what I had in mind,"
says Heart-of-Sky.
And so it is decided to destroy
these wooden people.

Hurricane makes a great rain.
It rains all day and rains all night.
There is a terrible flood
and the earth is blackened.
The creatures of the forest
come into the homes of the doll-
people.

"You have chased us from our homes
so now we will take yours,"
they growl.
And their dogs and turkeys cry out,
"You have abused us
so now we shall eat you!"
Even their pots and grinding stones
speak,
"We will burn you and pound on you
just as you have done to us!"

The wooden people scatter into the
forest.
Their faces are crushed,
and they are turned into monkeys.
And this is why monkeys look like
humans.
They are what is left of what came
before,
an experiment in human design.