

... Out of Chaos

Shirley Kinney
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CHALICE: In the stillness, we hear in every blade
of grass
In every speck of dust, in ourselves,
In visible and invisible worlds,
In planets, the sun and stars in joyous dance of atoms
And the laughter of the heavens rippling through the universe.
In this spirit we light our chalice.

QUOTE: Pg 15, bottom or Pg 65 #2

The world of myth is a world of actions, of forces, of
conflicting powers. The sky is filled with stars and planets who
were once on earth, human loves fated to chase each other
across the evening sky into eternity.

Legends, of course, vary according to a people's way of life, the
geography and the climate in which they live, the food they eat
and the way they obtain it.

The nomadic buffalo hunters of the Plains tell stories very
different from those of Eastern forest dwellers.

To the Southwestern planters and harvesters, the coming of
corn and the changing of the seasons were of importance, while
people of the Northwest or island nations—people who make
their living from the sea, fill their tales with sea monsters, swift
harpooners and powerful boatbuilders. Tribes of the North tell
stories where ice and snow are the enemy.

People who live in the desert picture paradise as a lush garden filled with flowers and trees and animals. People who live in the ice and snow picture paradise as a place where warm fires burn and food is abundant.

In the end, however, these legends are not told merely for enjoyment or for education, or for amusement. They are believed. “Myth in its living, primitive form is not merely a story told, but a reality lived.”

Creation myths deal with both how the physical world came to be and how the many features of specific cultures began. The stories grapple with vexing questions—

How did gods and men become separated?

Where did corn or deer or fish come from?

Why are man and woman different?

Where did the different races come from?

How did evil enter the world?

What is death?

Let me tell you a few stories.

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This is a story about how the world began, according to Chinese mythology. It comes from an anthology of stories collected in the first century BCE. The stories were nearly as ancient then as the anthology seems to us today.

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Long, long ago, when heaven and earth were still one, the entire universe was contained in an egg-shaped cloud. All the matter of the universe swirled chaotically in that egg. Deep within the swirling matter was Pan Gu, a huge giant who grew in the chaos.

For 18,000 years he developed and slept in the egg. Finally, one day Pan Gu woke up and stretched. The egg broke to release the matter of the universe. The lighter purer elements drifted upwards to make the sky and heavens. The heavier impure elements settled downwards to make the earth.

In the midst of this new world, Pan Gu worried that heaven and earth might mix again. So he decided he would hold them apart. With the heavens on his head and the earth under his feet, Pan Gu stood. As the two continued to grow farther apart, Pan Gu grew also, to hold them apart.

For 18,000 years he continued to grow, until the heavens were 30,000 miles above the earth. For much longer he continued to hold the two apart, fearing the return of the chaos of his youth. Finally Pan Gu realized that heaven and earth were stable.

Soon after that he died.

With the huge giant's death, the earth took on a new character. Pan Gu's arms and legs became the four directions and the mountains.

- His blood became the rivers, and his sweat became the rain and dew.
- His voice became the thunder and his breath became the winds.
- His hair became the grass, and his veins became the roads and paths.
- His teeth and bones became the minerals and rocks, and his flesh became the soil of the fields.

- Up above, his left eye became the sun, and his right eye became the moon.

Thus, in his death, as in life, Pan Gu made the world as it is today.

Many centuries later, there was a goddess named Nu Wa who roamed this wild world that Pan Gu had left behind. She became lonely in her solitude.

Stopping by a pond to rest, Nu Wa saw her reflection and realized that there was nothing like herself in the whole world. She resolved to make something like herself for company.

From the edge of the pond, she took some mud and shaped it in the form of a human being. At first her creation was lifeless, and she set it down. It took life as soon as it touched the soil, however, and soon the human was dancing and celebrating its new life.

Pleased with her creation, Nu Wa made more of them, and soon her loneliness disappeared in the crowd of little humans around her.

For two days she made them, and still she wanted to make more.

Finally, she pulled down a long vine and dragged it through the mud, and then she swung the vine through the air. Droplets of mud flew everywhere and, when they fell, they became more humans that were nearly as perfect as the ones she had made by hand.

Soon she had spread humans over the whole world. The ones she made by hand became the aristocrats, and the ones she made with the vine became the poor common people.

This was a simple story. It's a lovely story. It's as good a story
as any other. Perhaps it's true. Perhaps it's just a story.

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Here is another story. It comes from the Wakaranga people of what is today Zimbabwe.

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Before there was any life on earth, God made a man and named him Moon. He sent Moon to live on the bottom of the sea. But Moon wanted to live on the land. In spite of God's warnings of how hard life would be, Moon went to live on land.

Eventually, the lifelessness of the land made Moon so unhappy that he wept. God took pity on Moon and sent him a wife named Morningstar to keep him company. But only for two years. When Morningstar came from heaven to live with Moon, she brought fire with her, for it had not existed on earth before.

She built a fire in the middle of Moon's hut and slept on the side opposite him. In the night, however, he crossed over and made love to her.

By the next morning, she was swollen, and she gave birth to the grasses and trees and other plants, and soon the world was green with life. The trees grew until they touched the sky, and then the first rain fell from the clouds that the trees touched.

Thus, life on the land flourished, and Moon and Morningstar led a bountiful life in their new paradise.

At the end of her two years, Morningstar returned to the heavens to live there forever. Again Moon wept in his loneliness. God offered him another wife, but he warned Moon that this time it would be the husband who would die after two years.

And so, Eveningstar came to live with Moon. When they first made love, she gave birth to goats and sheep and cows. The day after that, she gave birth to the antelopes and birds. On the third day, boys and girls were born.

Moon wanted to sleep again with Eveningstar, but God warned him that he should not. He did so anyway, and on the next day, Eveningstar gave birth to the lions, the leopards, the snakes, and the scorpions that plague humankind because Moon ignored God's warning.

Moon and Eveningstar lived for many years in their new paradise on Earth. When Moon died, he went to the skies to seek his first wife Morningstar, in hopes of reliving their life in the paradise they had made.

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Coyote Oldman – cut 1 Dawn Procession -- 1 min. 20 sec.

This is a story told by the Potawatomi Indians. Potawatomi's are Native American people from Wisconsin. This is a story of the beginning of humans.

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Earthmaker made the world with trees and fields, with rivers, lakes, and springs, and with hills and valleys. It was beautiful. It was beautiful, but there were no people. So, one day, Earthmaker decided to make some.

He scooped out a hole in a stream bank and lined the hole with stones to make a hearth. He built a fire there. Then he took some clay and made a small figure. He put the figure in the hearth. When the figure was ready, Earthmaker pulled the figure out of the fire. He had to let it cool. Then he moved its limbs and breathed life into it, and the little figure walked away.

Earthmaker, however, realized that the little figure was only half-baked. That figure became the white people.

Earthmaker decided to try again. So, he made another figure and put it on the hearth to bake. This time, he took a nap under a tree while the figure baked. He slept longer than he intended.

When he pulled the second figure out of the fire and had let it cool, he moved its limbs and breathed life into it. The little figure walked away. Earthmaker realized that this time the figure had baked too long, and it became the black people.

Earthmaker decided to try one more time. He cleaned the ashes out of the hearth and built a new fire. Then he scooped up some clay and cleaned off any twigs or leaves, so that it was pure clay. He made a little figure and put it on the hearth.

This time he sat by the hearth and watched carefully as the figure baked. Finally, it was done. Earthmaker pulled it out of the fire and let it cool. Then, he moved its arms and legs and breathed life into it. The little figure walked away. This figure was baked just right, and it became the red people.

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Divine Grandeur - track 1 -- Eil Nora Alilah

This is a story told by the ancient Hebrew people. It was story told for many many years and finally written down in their sacred book, the Bible. It is the story of the first man and woman.

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On the day that Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the land was dry and barren until a mist came up from the earth and wet the land. Then Yahweh took dust from the earth and shaped it into the form of a man. Yahweh breathed life into that form, and it came to life.

Yahweh created a garden in a place called Eden. In this garden, Yahweh placed all the trees that bear fruit, including the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden and watered the garden, and there it divided to become four rivers that flow to the four corners of the world.

Yahweh put the man there and instructed him how to cultivate the garden and how to eat of whatever fruit he liked. But Yahweh told the man he must never eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Then Yahweh decided that the man should not be alone, and that he should have a helper. So, Yahweh made the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, and the man gave a name to each of them. However, none were fit to be his helper, so

Yahweh made the man fall into a deep sleep and took one of the man's ribs, and he made it into a woman. This made was Adam, which was the ancient Hebrew work for "Man", or perhaps "clay". And the woman was called Eve, the word for "life".

In the garden was a snake, and the snake persuaded Eve that she could eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil without dying. It said that eating the fruit would give her Yahweh's knowledge of good and evil. Eve ate the fruit, and she gave some to Adam as well. For the first time, they were ashamed of being naked, and so they made aprons for themselves.

When the man and woman heard Yahweh in the garden, they hid from him, but Yahweh called them out and asked why they had hidden. Adam explained that they hid because of their scanty clothing. Yahweh asked Adam how they knew to be ashamed of nudity. He asked if they had eaten of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Adam explained that the woman had eaten of the fruit and given him some too. When Yahweh asked Eve, she explained that the snake had beguiled her into eating the fruit.

Yahweh said to the snake, "Because of what you have done, you are cursed more than any other animal, and you will have to crawl on your belly in the dust, and you will be beaten by the offspring of this woman."

To Eve, Yahweh said, "You will be cursed with great pain in giving birth to children, yet you will have the desire to reproduce, and your husband will rule you."

Finally, to Adam, Yahweh said, "Because of what you have done, the ground is cursed and you will never eat of this fruit again. You will grow plants and eat bread until you die, until you become the dust from which you were made."

Then Yahweh said, “This man has become like us, knowing good and evil—next he will seek the tree of life and try to live forever.” Therefore, Yahweh made the man and the woman clothing and drove them out of the Garden of Eden. And so, Adam and Eve became the first people on our Earth.

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Also Sprach Zarathustra -- Richard Strauss -- track 1 -- 1
min 38 sec

The last story is the story of how the earth began. It is told by people who look closely at the skies and at the earth and are called scientists.

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Once upon a time, four billion years ago, the infant Earth was a seething caldron of erupting volcanoes. Meteors rained down on her. Hot noxious gases were swirling and boiling in her skies. Churning thick liquid boiled in her seas. There was no life anywhere.

And then, just by chance, for no reason we know of, out of the organic goop on the young Earth's surface, some of the tiny particles lying about, being swept around in the caldron, these particles came together. No one knows how. No one knows why.

A long time passed. These joined particles split in two, creating two particles exactly like each other. Before long, many many of these particles were formed.

More time passed, as it always does in stories like these. And, as time passed, these particles changed again. And again. And again. They became more complex—able to survive better as a group.

Eventually, as this life grew more and more different from the teeny specks that began this story, some of these creatures—for they were alive now—some of these creatures were able to leave the oceans and crawl out onto dry land.

When they broke free from the waves and the oceans, they were all alone on an uninhabited planet. No other creatures walked or crawled on the land, or flew in the skies.

These first lonely little creatures evolved quickly, learning to find food and shelter in a tumultuous world. Some say this is how life began on Earth.

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Also Sprach Zarathustra -- track 1