

CREATION MYTHS



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Creation Myth: Whales

I. Gray Whale

She rises
with a "hump"
a misty exhalation
over Magdalena Bay.
Her back encrusted
with barnacles and amphipods
as if carrying a dark arc of sky
full of star clusters and dust,
nebulae and comets,
planets and moons,
an untold creation myth,
a seafaring galaxy.
Her long spine
ridged with knuckles,
this storied sea serpent
or "devil fish"
has come to calve
in sheltered lagoons.
Surfacing and submerging,
lifting her fluke,
and plunging into the deep
leaving a massive oval footprint,
a black hole in her wake.

From mystic aquariums
belugas surface and dive
carrying daylight
on their backs,
their flanks,
denizens from
the top of our world,
measuring time
like pale hands
ticking along
our spherical clock.
Is it these cycles
that spin our planet?
Rising as the sun,
plunging into the deep,
pale ghosts
bleeding luminescence.

II. Beluga

Who better to story our myths,
having journeyed from oceans
to amphibious shores
conquered the earth,
only to return to the sea
threading our oceans with light.

Her hair was strung with diamonds

that glistened in the night
and around her neck a pendant
gathered and reflected light.

Her luster took on phases
from brilliant to tarnished silver,
emerging from his shadow
her radiance made him quiver.

At first sight they fell in love
could it be any other way
she as dark as mysterious night
he as bright as day.

As they circled together
his dreadlocks spun like rays
her hair spread in a sparkling web
as they wheeled the passing days.

A mythic joining of forces
lost in each other's trance
day and night together
the sun, the moon, the dance.

The Milky Way

The Bushmen call it
"the backbone of night,"
Native Americans believe it's
a "spirit trail" to the afterlife.
Here, in this time and place,
we hardly notice it.
I've pointed it out
on clear nights
when the sky rings
like a silent bell.
"Look," I say, "you can see
the Milky Way tonight
trailing Cygnus the swan."
My son looks up
where the sweeping arc of my arm points
to that ghostly rainbow of night.
"Cool," he says.

The ancients had myths to tell its story,
the structure that holds up the night,
or where spirits rest in the night,
while we know it
as the delicate fiber of our galaxy,
around which we spin
like bright schooling fish.

Would it have more impact
if he could imagine it
within the framework of a local legend?
But I can't do that for him,
so I stay within the ethos of science
and tell him
"to think of a city in the night
spread over a hundred thousand light years."
"Just neighboring lights," I say,
"seen from a distance."

Creation Myth

There was a dark skinned man
always dressed in white,
he wore a golden pendant
for the Sun, for its light.

He braided his long blond hair
in dreadlocks beaded bright,
on his hands he wore nine rings
four on the left, five on the right.
Venus was a ruby,
Mercury an amethyst,
a sapphire for the Earth
with a swirling blue-white twist.

Saturn and Jupiter were opals,
with a topaz you couldn't miss
for the indigo of Neptune,
and a pearl was Uranus,
with Pluto as an onyx
lost in the darkened mist.

He met a pale skinned woman
always dressed in black,
her tresses hung in a shroud
to her shoulders and down her back.