

Diné bahane'

The Navajo Creation Story

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Paul G. Zolbrod

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PRONUNCIATION KEY*

1. There are four basic vowels in Navajo:

a as in *art*

e as in *met*

i as in *sit*

o as in *note*

2. Vowels may be short or long, length being indicated by a doubling of the letter. The quality of the vowel is not affected by length except that long "i" is pronounced as in *seen* or *machine*.

3. Vowels may also be nasalized. The nasalized pronunciation is indicated by a hook underneath the affected vowel, as in *Mq'ii*.

4. A tone marker over a vowel, as in *Tó* or *dine'é* indicates a rise in pitch. Long and short vowels alike can be high tone or low.

5. Navajo has the following diphthongs that require special mention:

ai as in *kite*

ei as in *day*

oi as in *buoy*

6. While many Navajo consonants are unfamiliar, they can be reasonably well approximated by a casual reader. There are two characters in the Navajo alphabet, however, which do not appear in the standard English alphabet. They include the glottal stop ('), as in *Mq'ii* or *dine'é*, and the voiceless glide (ł), as in *Níłch'i*. The former is pronounced like the break between the two elements of the familiar English expression, "oh, oh." The latter is pronounced by unvoicing the "l" familiar to speakers of English. Or it can be roughly approximated by pronouncing it as if it were "sh" in a word like *push* or *shoot*.

*This is a simplified guide for readers of this volume who wish to approximate the Navajo terms used here. For a more detailed guide, see Goosen, Young and Morgan 1943; or Young and Morgan 1980.

One

Of a time long, long ago these things are said.

It is said¹ that at *Tó bił dahisk'id* white arose in the east and was considered day. We now call that spot Place Where the Waters Crossed.

Blue arose in the south. It too was considered day. So the *Níłch'i dine'é*, who already lived there, moved around.² We would call them Air-Spirit People in the language spoken today by those who are given the name *Bilagáana*, which means White Man.

In the west yellow arose and showed that evening had come. Then in the north black arose.³ So the Air-Spirit People lay down and slept.

• • • •

At *Tó bił dahisk'id* where the streams came together water flowed in all directions. One stream flowed to the east. One stream flowed to the south. One stream flowed to the west. One stream flowed to the north.⁴

Along three of those streams there were dwelling places. There were dwelling places along the stream that flowed east. There were dwelling places along the stream that flowed south. There were dwelling places along the stream that flowed west. But along the stream that flowed north there were no dwellings.

• • • •

To the east there was a place called *Dáá'*. In the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man that name means food. To the south

there was a place called *Nahodoolá*. It is unknown what that name means. And to the west there was a place called *Lók'aatsoh sikaad*. In the White Man's language that name means Standing Reed. Nothing is said about a place to the north.

Also to the east there was a place called *Ásaa'láá'ii*, which means One Dish. And also to the south there was a place called *Tó hadzilti*, which means A Big Amount of Water Coming Out in the language of *Bilagáana*. And also to the west there was a place called *Dzil'ichíi' bee hooghan*. That name means House of Red Mountain. To the north there are no places that have been given names.

Then there was a place called *Leeyaa hooghan* to the east. In his language the White Man would give it the name Underground House. And there was another place called *Chiilchintah* to the south. In the language he speaks *Bilagáana* would give it the name Among Aromatic Sumac. And there was another place called *Tsé'ichíi' bee hooghan* to the west. In the language of his people the White Man would give it the name House of Red Rock. We hear of no places with names to the north.

• • • •

In those early times dark ants dwelled there. Red ants dwelled there. Dragonflies dwelled there. Yellow beetles dwelled there.

Hard beetles lived there. Stone-carrier beetles lived there. Black beetles lived there. Coyote-dung beetles lived there.

Bats made their homes there. Whitefaced beetles made their homes there. Locusts made their homes there. White locusts made their homes there.⁵

Those are the twelve groups who started life there. We call them *Nilch'idine'é*. In the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man that name means Air-Spirit People. For they are people unlike the five-fingered earth-surface people who come into the world today, live on the ground for a while, die at a ripe old age, and then leave the world. They are people who travel in the air and fly swiftly like the wind and dwell nowhere else but here.

• • • •

Far to the east there was an ocean. Far to the south there was an ocean. Far to the west there was an ocean. And far to the north there was an ocean.

In the ocean to the east dwelled *Tééhoołtsódii*, who was chief of the people there. In the White Man's language he can be called The One That Grabs Things In the Water. In the ocean to the south lived *Tákt'ááh alééh*. His name means Blue Heron. In the ocean to the west *Ch'ał* made his home and was chief of those people. In the language of the White Man he would be called Frog. And in the ocean to the north dwelled *Ii'ni' jilgaii*. In the White Man's language that name means Winter Thunder. He was chief among whoever those people were who lived there, it is said.⁶

Two

It is also said that the Air-Spirit People fought among themselves. And this is how it happened. They committed adultery, one with another.⁷ Many of the men were to blame, but so were many of the women.

They tried to stop, but they could not help themselves.⁸

Tééhoołtsódii The One That Grabs Things In the Water, who was chief in the east, complained, saying this:

"They must not like it here," he said.

And *Tákt'ááh alééh* the Blue Heron, who was chief in the south, also complained:

"What they do is wrong," he complained.

Ch'ał the Frog, who was chief in the west, also complained. But he took his complaint directly to the Air-Spirit people, having this to say to them:

"You shall no longer be welcome here where I am chief," is what he said.

"That is what I think of you."

And from his home in the north where he was chief, *Ii'ni' jilgaii* the Winter Thunder spoke to them also.⁹

"Nor are you welcome here!" he, too, said to them.

"Go away from this land.

"Leave at once!"

• • • •

But the people still could not help it: one with another they continued to commit adultery. And when they did it yet another time and then argued with each other again, *Tééhoołtsódii* The One That Grabs Things In the Water would no longer speak to them. *Táłt'ááh álééh* the Blue Heron would no longer speak to them. Likewise *Ch'ał* the Frog would say nothing to them. And *li'ni' jilgaii* the Winter Thunder refused to say anything.

Four days and four nights passed.

Then the same thing happened. Those who lived in the south repeated their sins: the men with the women and the women with the men. They committed adultery. And again they quarreled afterward.

One woman and one man sought *Tééhoołtsódii* The One That Grabs Things In the Water in the east to try to straighten things out. But they were driven away. Then they went to *Táłt'ááh álééh* the Blue Heron in the south. But they were again driven away. And they looked for *Ch'ał* the Frog in the west. But they were driven away again. Finally they went to the north to speak with *li'ni' jilgaii* the Winter Thunder. He, too, drove them away, breaking his silence to say this to them:

"None of you shall enter here," he said to them.

"I do not wish to listen to you.

"Go away, and keep on going!"

• • • •

That night the people held a council at *Nahodoolá* in the south. But they could not agree on anything. On and on they quarreled, until white arose in the east and it was again day. *Tééhoołtsódii* The One That Grabs Things In the Water then spoke to them:

"Everywhere in this world you bring disorder," he said to them.

"So we do not want you here.

"Find some other place to live."

But the people did not leave right away. For four nights the women talked and squabbled, each blaming the other for what had happened. And for four nights the men squabbled and talked. They, too, blamed one another.

At the end of the fourth night as they were at last about to end their meeting, they all noticed something white in the east. They

also saw it in the south. It appeared in the west, too. And in the north it also appeared.

It looked like an endless chain of white mountains. They saw it on all sides. It surrounded them, and they noticed that it was closing in on them rapidly. It was a high, insurmountable wall of water! And it was flowing in on them from all directions, so that they could escape neither to the east nor to the west; neither to the south nor to the north could they escape.

So, having nowhere else to go, they took flight. Into the air they went. Higher and higher they soared, it is said.

Three

It is also said that they circled upward until they reached the smooth, hard shell of the sky overhead.¹⁰ When they could go no higher they looked down and saw that water now covered everything. They had nowhere to land either above or below.

Suddenly someone with a blue head appeared and called to them:

"Here," he called to them.

"Come this way.

"Here to the east there is a hole!"

They found that hole and entered. One by one they filed through to the other side of the sky. And that is how they reached the surface of the second world.

• • • •

The blue-headed creature was a member of the Swallow People. It was they who lived up there.

While the first world had been red, this world was blue. The swallows lived in blue houses, which lay scattered across a broad, blue plain. Each blue house was cone-shaped; each tapered toward the top where there was a blue entry hole.

At first the Swallow People gathered around the newcomers and watched them silently. Nobody from either group said anything to any member of the other. Finally, when darkness came and the

exiled Air-Spirit People made camp for the night, the blue swallows left.

In the morning the insect people from the world below decided that someone should explore this new world. So they sent a plain locust and a white locust to the east, instructing them to look for people like themselves.

Two days came and went before the locusts returned. They said that they had traveled for a full day. And as darkness fell they reached what must have been the end of the world. For they came upon the rim of a great cliff that rose out of an abyss whose bottom could not be seen. Both coming and going, they said, they found no people, no plants, no rivers, no mountains. They found nothing but bare, blue, level ground.

Next the two messengers were sent south to explore. Again, two days came and went while they were gone. And they again reported that after traveling for a full day they reached the end of the world. And they reported again that neither in going nor in coming back could they find people or plants, mountains or rivers.

They were then sent to the west. And after that they were sent to the north. Both times they were gone for two days, and they reported each time that they reached the end of the world after traveling for a full day. They also reported that again they could find neither people nor plants and neither mountains nor rivers.

To the others they had only this to say:

"It seems that we are in the center of a vast, blue plain," was all that they could say.

"Wherever we went in this world we could find neither company nor food, neither rivers nor mountains could we find."

After the scouts had returned from their fourth trip, the Swallow People visited the camp of the newcomers. And they asked why they had sent someone to the east to explore.

This is what the insect people from the lower world replied:

"We sent them out to see what was in the land," they replied.

"We sent them out to see if there were people here like ourselves."

Then the swallows asked this:

"What did your scouts tell you?" they asked.

To which the newcomers replied this way:

"They told us that they reached the end of the world after traveling for a full day," they replied.

"They told us that wherever they went in this world they could

find neither people nor plants. Neither rivers nor mountains could they find."

The swallows then asked why the insect people had sent their scouts to the south. And they were told that the locusts were sent south to see what was in the land. And when the swallows asked why scouts were sent to the west, they were told again that the locusts were to see what they could find in this blue world. Which is what they were told when they asked why scouts were sent to the north.

To all of which the Swallow People then had this to say:

"Your couriers spoke the truth," they then said.

"But their trips were not necessary.

"Had you asked us what the land contained, we would have told you.

"Had you asked us where this world ended, we would have told you.

"We could have saved you all that time and all that trouble.

"Until you arrived here, no one besides us has ever lived in this world. We are the only ones living here."

The newcomers then had this suggestion to make to the swallows:

"You are like us in many ways," they suggested.

"You understand our language.

"Like us you have legs; like us you have bodies; like us you have wings; like us you have heads.

"Why can't we become friends?"

To which the swallows replied:

"Let it be as you say," they replied.

"You are welcome here among us."

So it was that both sets of people began to treat each other as members of one tribe. They mingled one among the other and called each other by the familiar names. They called each other grandparent and grandchild, brother and sister; they called each other father and son, mother and daughter.

For twenty-three days they all lived together in harmony. But on the night of the twenty-fourth day, one of the strangers became too free with the wife of the swallow chief.

Next morning, when he found out what had happened the night before, the chief had this to say to the strangers:

"We welcomed you here among us," was what he had to say to them.

"We treated you as friends and as kin.

"And this is how you return our kindness!

"No doubt you were driven from the world below for just such disorderly acts.

"Well, you must leave this world, too; we will have you here no longer.

"Anyhow, this is a bad land. There is not enough food for all of us.

"People are dying here every day from hunger. Even if we allowed you to stay, you could not live here very long."

When they heard the swallow chief's words, the locusts took flight. And all the others followed. Having nowhere else to go, they flew skyward.

Into the air they went. Higher and higher they soared. They circled upward until they reached the smooth, hard shell of the sky overhead, it is said.

Four

It is also said that like the sky of the world below, this sky had a smooth, hard shell. And like the sky of the world below this one seemed to have no opening. When the insect people reached it they flew around and around, having nowhere to land either above or below.

But as they circled, they noticed a white face peering at them. This was the face of *Níłch'i*. In the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man he would be called Wind. And they heard him cry to them:

"Here!" he cried.

"Here to the south you will find an opening.

"Come this way."

So off they flew to the south, and soon they found a slit in the sky slanting upward in a southerly direction. One by one they flew through it to the other side. And that is how they reached the surface of the third world.

• • • •

While the second world had been blue, this world was yellow. Here the exiles found no one but Yellow Grasshopper People, who lived in yellow holes in the ground along the banks of a river which flowed east through their yellow land.

At first the Yellow Grasshopper People said nothing. They gathered silently around the newcomers and stared at them. Nobody from either group spoke to anyone from the other. And when darkness finally came and the people from the world below made their camp, the grasshoppers left.

In the morning the wanderers sent out the same two locusts who had explored the second world.

First they flew to the east where they were gone for two days altogether. Then they flew to the south where they were gone for two more days. Then they flew to the west, where they were gone for another two days. And they flew to the north where for two additional days they were gone. Each time they returned with the same report.

For a full day they had journeyed, until by nightfall they arrived at the rim of a cliff that rose from some unseen place far, far below. And neither in going forth nor in coming back could they find people or plants, mountains or waters. The river along whose banks the Grasshopper People lived soon tapered off toward the east until it was a dry, narrow gully. Otherwise there was nothing to see in this world except flat, yellow countryside and the yellow grasshoppers who lived on it.

When the messengers returned from their fourth journey the two great chiefs of the Grasshopper People came to visit. And they asked the newcomers why they had someone fly to the east and to the west, to the south and to the north.

To which the insect people from the world below replied:

"We sent them to see what was in the land," they replied.

"We sent them to see if they could find people like ourselves."

Then the grasshopper chiefs asked:

"And what did they find?" they asked.

Answered the newcomers:

"They found nothing but the bare land," they answered.

"They found nothing but the cliffs that marked the edge of this world.

"They found no plants and no people. They found no mountains and no rivers.

"Even the river along whose banks your people live here in the center of this world tapers off until it is only a dry, narrow gully."

Replied the grasshopper chiefs then:

"You might have first asked us what the land contains," they replied.

"We could have saved your messengers all that trouble.

"We could have told you that there is nothing in this land but what you see right here.

"We have lived here for a long time, but we have seen nothing that you have not seen. And we have seen no other people until you came."

The insect people from the world below then spoke to the grasshopper chiefs as they had spoken to the Swallow People in the second world, saying these things to them:

"Come to think of it, you are somewhat like us," they said to them.

"Like us you have heads. Like us you have wings. Like us you have bodies. Like us you have legs.

"You even speak the way we speak.

"Perhaps we can join you here."

The grasshoppers consented, and the two groups quickly began to mingle. They embraced each other, and soon they were using the names of family and kin together. They called each other mother and daughter, father and son, brother and sister, grandparent and grandchild. It was as if they were all of the same tribe.

As before, all went well for twenty-three days. But as before, on the night of the twenty-fourth, one of the newcomers treated the chief of the grasshoppers exactly as the swallow chief had been treated in the second world.

When he discovered how he had been wronged, the grasshopper chief spoke this way to the insect people:

"No doubt you were sent away from the world below for such transgressions!" is how he spoke.

"No doubt you bring disorder wherever you go. No doubt you lack intelligence.

"Well, here too you shall drink no more of our water. Here too you shall eat no more of our food. Here too you shall breathe no more of our air.

"Get out of here!"

So the insect people took flight again. And again they circled round and round into the sky until they arrived at the smooth, hard shell of its outer crust, it is said.¹¹

Five

It is also said that they again had to circle around for quite some time, looking in vain for some way to get through the sky overhead. Finally they heard a voice bidding them fly to the west and look there. And they noticed a red head peering at them. The voice they heard and the head they saw belonged to *Níłch'i Kichíí'*. In the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man he would bear the name Red Wind.

Doing as they were told they found a passage which twisted around through the sky's other surface like the tendril of a vine. It had been made this way by the wind. They flew into it and wound their way to the other side. And that is how they reached the surface of the fourth world.

Four of the grasshoppers had come with them. One was white. One was blue. One was yellow. And one was black. To this very day, in fact, we have grasshoppers of those four colors among us.

• • • •

The surface of the fourth world was unlike the surface of any of the lower worlds. For it was a mixture of black and white. The sky above was alternately white, blue, yellow, and black, just as it had been in the worlds below. But here the colors were of a different duration.

In the first world each color lasted for about the same length of time each day. In the second world the blue and the black lasted just a little longer than the white and the yellow. But here in the fourth world there was white and yellow for scarcely any time, so long did the blue and black remain in the sky. As yet there was no sun and no moon, as yet there were no stars.

When they arrived on the surface of the fourth world, the exiles from the lower worlds saw no living thing. But they did observe four great snow-covered peaks along the horizon around them. One peak lay to the east. One peak lay to the south. One peak lay likewise to the west. And to the north there was one peak.

The insect people sent two scouts to the east, who returned at the end of two days. Those two said that they had not been able to reach the eastern mountain after an entire day's flight. And although they had traveled far indeed they could see no living creature. Neither track nor trail could they see, not one sight of life were they able to detect.

Two scouts were then sent to the south. And when these two returned at the end of two full days they reported that after an entire day's flight they managed to reach a low range of mountains on this side of the great peak which lay in that direction.

They too had traveled very far. They too could see no living creature. But they did observe two different kinds of tracks the likes of which they had never seen before. They described them carefully, and from that description the tracks seemed to resemble those made these days in our own world by deer and turkey.

Two scouts were sent next to the west. And after two full days they returned, reporting that they could by no means reach the great peak which lay in that direction, no matter how fast they could fly in a single day and no matter how far. Neither in going forth nor in returning could they see any living creature. Not one sign of life were they able to see.

Finally, two scouts were sent to explore the land that lay to the north. And when they returned they had a different story to tell. For they reported that they had found a strange race unlike any other. These were people who cut their hair square in front. They were people who lived in houses in the ground. They were people who cultivated the soil so that things grew therein. They were now harvesting what they had planted, and they gave the couriers food to eat.¹²

It was now evident to the newcomers that the fourth world was larger than any of the worlds below.

• • • •

On the very next day, two members of the newly found race came to the camp of the exiles. They were called *Kiis'áanii*, they

said, which in the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man means People Who Live in Upright Houses. And they wished to invite the exiles to visit their village.

On the way they came to a stream which was red. The *Kiis'áanii* warned their guests not to wade through it. Otherwise the water would injure the feet of the newcomers. Instead they showed the insect people a square raft made of four logs. One log was of white pine. One log was of blue spruce. One log was of yellow pine. And one log was of black spruce. On this raft they all crossed to the opposite bank, where the people who had arrived from the third world visited the homes of the people who dwelled here in the fourth world.

The exiles were given corn and pumpkins to eat. And they were asked by their new friends to stay. For quite some time, in fact, they stayed in the village of the upright houses. There they lived well on the food that the *Kiis'áanii* gave them. eventually they all lived together like the people of one tribe. Soon the two groups were using the names of family and kin between themselves. They called each other father and son, mother and daughter, grandparent and grandchild, brother and sister.

The land of the *Kiis'áanii* was a dry land. It had neither rain nor snow and there was little water to be found. But the people who had been dwelling there knew how to irrigate the soil to make things grow, and they taught the newcomers to do so.

Twenty-three days came and went, and twenty-three nights passed and all was well. And on the twenty-fourth night the exiles held a council meeting. They talked quietly among themselves, and they resolved to mend their ways and to do nothing unintelligent that would create disorder. This was a good world, and the wandering insect people meant to stay here, it is said.

Six

It is also said that late in the autumn of that year the newcomers heard a distant voice calling to them from far in the east.

They listened and waited, listened and waited. Until soon they

heard the voice again, nearer and louder than before. They continued to listen and wait, listen and wait, until they heard the voice a third time, all the nearer and all the louder.

Continuing to listen, they heard the voice again, even louder than the last time, and so close now that it seemed directly upon them.

A moment later they found themselves standing among four mysterious beings. They had never seen such creatures anywhere before. For they were looking at those who would eventually become known as *Haashch'ééh dine'é*.¹³

In the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man, that name means Holy People. For they are people unlike the earth-surface people who come into the world today, live on the ground for a while, die at a ripe old age, and then move on. These are intelligent people who can perform magic. They do not know the pain of being mortal. They are people who can travel far by following the path of the rainbow. And they can travel swiftly by following the path of the sunray. They can make the winds and the thunderbolts work for them so that the earth is theirs to control when they so wish.

The people who were then living on the surface of the fourth world were looking upon *Bits'íís ligaii*, which name means White Body. He is the one that the Navajo people who live in our own world would eventually call *Haashch'éélti'í*, which in today's language means Talking God.

And they were looking upon *Bits'íís doot'íizh*. That name means Blue Body. He is the one that the Navajo people in our own world would eventually come to know as *Tó neinilí*, which means Water Sprinkler.

And they were looking upon *Bits'íís litsoi*, or Yellow Body. He is the one that the Navajo people today call *Hashch'éoghan*. Nobody can be sure what that name means in today's language. Some say it means Calling God; some say that it means House God; and some say that it means Growling God.

And they were looking upon *Bits'íís lizhin*. In the White Man's language that name means Black Body. He is the one that the Navajo people living in this world would eventually come to know as *Haashch'ééshzhini*, which means Black God. Sometimes he is also called the God of Fire.

Without speaking the Holy People made signs to those who were gathered there, as if to give them instructions. But the exiles could

not understand their gestures. So they stood by helplessly and watched.

And after the gods had left, the people talked about that mysterious visit for the rest of that day and all night long, trying to determine what it meant.

• • • •

As for the gods, they repeated their visit four days in a row. But on the fourth day, *Bits'íís lizhin* the Black Body remained after the other three departed. And when he was alone with the onlookers, he spoke to them in their own language. This is what he said:

"You do not seem to understand the Holy People," he said.

"So I will explain what they want you to know.

"They want more people to be created in this world. But they want intelligent people, created in their likeness, not in yours.

"You have bodies like theirs, true enough.

"But you have the teeth of beasts! You have the mouths of beasts! You have the feet of beasts! You have the claws of beasts!

"The new creatures are to have hands like ours. They are to have feet like ours. They are to have mouths like ours and teeth like ours. They must learn to think ahead, as we do.

"What is more, you are unclean!

"You smell bad.

"So you are instructed to cleanse yourselves before we return twelve days from now."

That is what *Bits'íís lizhin* the Black Body said to the insect people who had emerged from the first world to the second, from the second world to the third, and from the third world to the fourth world where they now lived.

• • • •

Accordingly, on the morning of the twelfth day the people bathed carefully. The women dried themselves with yellow corn meal. The men dried themselves with white corn meal.

Soon after they had bathed, they again heard the distant voice coming from far in the east.

They listened and waited as before, listened and waited. Until soon they heard the voice as before, nearer and louder this time.

They continued to listen and wait, listen and wait, until they heard the voice a third time as before, all the nearer and all the louder.

Continuing to listen as before, they heard the voice again, even louder than the last time, and so close now that it seemed directly upon them, exactly as it had seemed before. And as before they found themselves standing among the same four *Haashch'ééh dine'é*, or Holy People as *Bilagáana* the White Man might wish to call them.

Bits'íís doot'ízh the Blue Body and *Bits'íís kizhin* the Black Body each carried a sacred buckskin.¹⁴ *Bits'íís ligaii* the White Body carried two ears of corn.

One ear of corn was yellow. The other ear was white. Each ear was completely covered at the end with grains, just as sacred ears of corn are covered in our own world now.

Proceeding silently, the gods laid one buckskin on the ground, careful that its head faced the west. Upon this skin they placed the two ears of corn, being just as careful that the tips of each pointed east. Over the corn they spread the other buckskin, making sure that its head faced east.

Under the white ear they put the feather of a white eagle.

And under the yellow ear they put the feather of a yellow eagle.

Then they told the onlooking people to stand at a distance.

So that the wind could enter.

Then from the east *Níłch'i ligai* the White Wind blew between the buckskins. And while the wind thus blew, each of the Holy People came and walked four times around the objects they had placed so carefully on the ground.

As they walked, the eagle feathers, whose tips protruded slightly from between the two buckskins, moved slightly.

Just slightly.

So that only those who watched carefully were able to notice.

And when the Holy People had finished walking, they lifted the topmost buckskin.

And lo! the ears of corn had disappeared.

In their place there lay a man and there lay a woman.¹⁵

• • • •

The white ear of corn had been transformed into our most ancient male ancestor. And the yellow ear of corn had been transformed into our most ancient female ancestor.

It was the wind that had given them life: the very wind that

gives us our breath as we go about our daily affairs here in the world we ourselves live in!

When this wind ceases to blow inside of us, we become speechless. Then we die.

In the skin at the tips of our fingers we can see the trail of that life-giving wind.

Look carefully at your own fingertips.

There you will see where the wind blew when it created your most ancient ancestors out of two ears of corn, it is said.¹⁶

Seven

It is also said that the two people created thus were *Áłtsé hastiin* and *Áłtsé asdzáq*. In the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man they would be called First Man and First Woman.

The gods told the people to build a shelter of brushwood for the couple. And as soon as their home was ready, *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman entered their home. And the Holy People had this to say to them:

"Live here together," they said to them.

"Live here as husband and wife."

At the end of four days, *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman gave birth to twins.¹⁷ But they were neither entirely male nor entirely female. They were what the Navajo people call *nádlee*, which in the language of *Bilagáana* means hermaphrodite.

Four days later a second set of twins was born. But this time one of them was entirely male, while the other was entirely female. These two reached full maturity in four additional days, and from then on they lived with one another as husband and wife.

Four more days passed, and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman bore yet another set of twins. Like the set born just before them, they too were either entirely female or entirely male. And they too reached maturity in four days and then resolved to live together as husband and wife.

Two additional sets of twins were born to *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First

Woman, so that she and her husband *Áłtsé hastiin* had five pairs of twins all told. Among those five pairs, only the first were neither entirely male nor entirely female. Only the first did not resolve to live together as husband and wife after becoming fully mature in four days.

Four days after the last pair of twins was born, *Haashch'ééh dine'é* the Holy People came again. They took *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman and *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man away with them to their own dwelling place on the eastern mountain and kept them there for four days. Then they returned the couple to the brushwood shelter which was their home. In turn each set of twins was likewise taken by the Holy People to their dwelling place on the eastern mountain and kept there for four days.¹⁸

• • • •

Soon after *Áłtsé hastiin* and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Man and the First Woman and all of their children had gone to the eastern mountain and returned, it was observed that they occasionally wore masks something like the masks worn by *Haashch'ééłti'í* the Talking God and by *Hashch'éoghan* who is sometimes called House God and sometimes given the name Calling God or Growling God.

Whenever these masks were worn, those who wore them prayed for the good things and the necessary things. They prayed for such things as the steady rain, or for things like abundant crops.

But it also seems that during their visit to the eastern mountain the people learned terrible secrets, too. For witches also possess masks like these, and they too marry their close relatives.

As for the four sets of brothers and sisters who had at first chosen to live together as husband and wife, when they returned from the eastern mountain they separated. They were now ashamed, it seems, of their incest.

However, they kept their shameful marriages a secret and then remarried. The brothers married women of the *Hadahoniye'dine'é* or Mirage People as they would now be called. And the sisters married men of the same people. They also chose to keep secret the mysteries they had learned on the eastern mountain.

• • • •

Áłtsé asdzáq the First Woman was glad that her children had married among *Hadahoniye'dine'é* the Mirage People. For now their incest would stop. But she grew worried when she realized how easily they had renounced their first marriages, even if those marriages were shameful.

Marriage is useful, thought she. For there is a lot of work to be done. The people must hunt. They must plant food and they must harvest it. They must gather wood. They must prepare what they eat. It is best that they marry and divide the work between them.¹⁹

By marrying, thought *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman, the people can also be assured of having children. But their marriages should last, so that harmony can prevail. It had been all too easy for a man or a woman to commit adultery. A woman could leave her husband all too easily; all too easily a husband could leave his wife.

As she thought of it, she resolved that she would take these matters into her own hands. It ought to be more difficult for a man to leave his wife once he has married her. It should also be difficult for a woman to forsake her husband once she has married him. There should be a bond between man and woman. There should be a bond between woman and man. That bond should be strong; it should endure.

So thought *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman. And so she would continue to think until she could determine what might be done.

• • • •

Meanwhile, the descendants of *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman established a great farm. They built a dam and dug a wide irrigation canal. They feared that the *Kiis'áanii* might destroy their dam, though, or that they might injure the crops. So they put one of the nonchildbearing *nádleeh* in charge of the dam. And they bid the other twin guard the lower end of the field.

With nothing else to do, the hermaphrodite twin who watched the dam invented pottery. First he made a plate. Then he made a bowl. Then he made a ladle. And the people all admired the work he had done. They knew at once how useful those implements would be.²⁰

As for the twin who stood guard over the lower field, he too had time enough and skill enough to design something useful. So he

invented the wicker bottle. The people all admired what he had done, too, for they could see immediately how useful that implement would be.

Others among the people made scythes out of split cottonwood boards which they used to clear the land. Still others made hoes from the shoulder blades of deer. And others made axes out of stone. From the *Kiis'áanii* the people got seeds. And so they flourished as people who farmed the earth.

Once they killed a young deer, and somebody among them had the idea of making a mask out of the skin of its head. Then they could approach a live deer disguised as one of them when they hunted. That way they could catch a full supply of game. But when they tried to make such a mask they failed. Somehow they could not get it to fit their own faces.

They argued about how that might properly be done. For four days, it seems, they could do nothing else or discuss anything else. Try as they might, they could not succeed. Try as they might, they could not agree.

Then, on the morning of the fifth day they heard a voice calling to them in the distance. From far to the east it came.

They listened and waited, listened and waited. Until they heard the voice again, just as they had heard it before. They continued to listen and wait, listen and wait, until they heard the voice a third time, all the nearer and all the louder.

Continuing to listen, they heard the voice again, even louder than the last time, and so close now that it seemed directly upon them.

It was the *Haashch'ééh dine'é* who had been calling. It was *Bits'íis ligaii* the White Body. It was *Bits'íis dootl'izh* the Blue Body. It was *Bits'íis itsoii* the Yellow Body. And it was *Bits'íis kizhin* the Black Body. And when they appeared they were seen carrying heads of deer and antelope along with them.

Then they showed the people how to make the masks they wished to have. They showed the people how to fit them. They showed them how to cut the eye holes and how to imitate the motions of deer. To the people they explained all the mysteries of those fine animals.²¹

Next day the hunters went out and killed a few deer. From these they made more masks. And with the newly made masks they were able to add several more men to the party of hunters. From then on the people had plenty of meat. Moreover, they cured the

hides and made garments out of them. So everyone had warm clothing to wear, it is said.

Eight

It is also said that while all of those things were happening, *Áltsé asdzáá* the First Woman had continued to think about how she might strengthen the bond between men and women. And after considering the matter carefully, she came up with a plan.²²

Men and women should have the power to attract each other for a lifetime, thought she. So she fashioned a penis of turquoise. Then she rubbed loose cuticle from a woman's breast and mixed it with yucca fruit, which she put inside the turquoise penis. And she named the organ '*aziz*.

Next she made a vagina of white shell. Into the vagina she placed a clitoris of red shell. Then she rubbed loose cuticle from a man's breast and mixed it with yucca fruit, which she placed in the clitoris. And she combined herbs with various kinds of water and placed that mixture deep inside the vagina. That way pregnancy would occur. She then named the organ *ajóózh*.

She placed the vagina on the ground. Next to it she placed the penis. Then she blew medicine upon both of them from her mouth. And she spoke these words to the penis:

"Now think!" she said to it.

"Think about the one to your left."

The penis did as it was told, and its mind extended a great distance. Whereupon *Áltsé asdzáá* the First Woman said this to the vagina:

"You think, too!" she said to it.

"Think about the one to your right."

The vagina also extended. But it extended only half the distance the penis had gone. Then it returned to the place where it first lay. That is why a woman's longing does not travel as far as a man's.

And to both of them *Áltsé asdzáá* the First Woman said these words:

"Now shout!" she said to the two of them together.

"Shout, both of you.

"Penis, shout so that your partner can feel the might of your voice.

"Vagina, shout so that your partner can feel the touch of your voice."

Penis shouted very loud. But vagina had only a weak voice. So *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman spoke to them again:

"Do it once more," she said to them.

"Touch one another and shout once more.

"Penis, shout again so that your partner can feel it.

"Vagina, shout again so that your partner can feel it."

So they both tried again. This time, though, penis could not shout as loudly as he had the first time. Vagina, however, had a good voice this time.

Áłtsé asdzáq the First Woman was satisfied with her work. Now men and women would learn to care for each other. They would be eager to have children. They would share the labor evenly. And they would each more willingly tend to the other's needs.

She commanded that upon reaching a certain age, every girl and every boy should be given such a vagina and such a penis as those she had fashioned: a penis for the male and a vagina for the female.

• • • •

One day soon thereafter, while the elders were giving a penis to a boy who had come of age, and while they were giving a vagina to a girl who had come of age, the people saw the sky swooping down. It seemed to want to embrace the earth. And they saw the earth likewise looming up as if to meet the sky.

For a moment they came in contact. The sky touched the earth and the earth touched the sky. And just then, at exactly the spot where the sky and the earth had met, *Mq'ii* the Coyote sprung out of the ground.²³ And *Nahashch'id* the Badger sprung out of the ground.

It is our belief that *Mq'ii* the Coyote and *Nahashch'id* the Badger are children of the sky. Coyote came forth first, which leads us to suppose that he is Badger's older brother.

Nahashch'id the Badger began sniffing around the top of the hole that led down to the lower world. He finally disappeared into it and was not seen again for a long time.

Mq'ii the Coyote saw at once that people lived nearby. So he

came immediately to their village. He arrived among them just as the boy was receiving his penis, and just as the girl was acquiring her vagina.

As the male organ was being placed, *Mq'ii* the Coyote pulled some of his beard away from his face and blew on it. Then he placed it between the legs of the boy.²⁴ And this is what he had to say:

"It looks pretty nice there between that boy's legs," he said.

"But I can make it look nicer."

And as the female organ was being placed, *Mq'ii* the Coyote pulled more of his whiskers out of his chin and blew on them. Then he put them between the legs of the girl. And this is what he said:

"As nice as it looks there between that girl's legs, it can be made to look even nicer," he said.

"Watch and see if you don't think so."

Everyone agreed. Coyote had made the boy and the girl more attractive. But *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman now feared that women and men would be too easily drawn to one another.

So she ordered the boy to cover himself at once. And she ordered the girl to cover herself also. She ordered them to dress that way in the company of others.

Likewise, she ordered all the people to cover themselves in the company of others. Which is why the people have clad themselves modestly ever since, it is said.

Nine

It is also said that eight winters passed since the people had migrated from the third world. And for eight years they prospered, acting intelligently and doing nothing to create disorder.

Áłtsé hastiin the First Man had become chief of all who lived in that world, except for the *Kiis'áanii*. As their chief he taught the people the names of the four mountains which rose in the distance and marked the four cardinal points.²⁵

Sisnaajini lay to the east, he taught them. Exactly what that

name means is unknown, but now the mountain is called Sierra Blanca Peak. *Tsoodzil* lay to the south, he taught them. In the language of *Bilagáana* that peak is called Mount Taylor. To the west lay *Dook'o'oskíid*, he taught them, which means, Never Has Thawed on Top, but that mountain is now called San Francisco Peak by the White Man. And to the north lay *Dibé nitsaa*, which in English means Big Mountain Sheep.

Those four names have been kept in the present Navajo world, too. And *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man taught the people that *Haashch'ééh dine'é* the Holy People lived in those mountains. He explained to them that they were a different sort of people. For they were intelligent people who could perform magic. They could travel swiftly and they could travel far. They know how to ride the sunbeam and the light ray, and they knew how to follow the path of the rainbow. They felt no pain, and nothing in any world could change the way they were.

So it was that *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man taught the people the names of things and the ways of the gods. So it was that he taught them what to do and what not to do. So it was that the people grew to respect him. And so it was that they came to obey him.

• • • •

Áłtsé hastiin the First Man became a great hunter in the fourth world. So he was able to provide his wife *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman with plenty to eat.

As a result, she grew very fat.

Now one day he brought home a fine, fleshy deer.

His wife boiled some of it, and together they had themselves a hearty meal. When she had finished eating, *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman wiped her greasy hands on her sheath.

She belched deeply. And she had this to say:

"Thank you *shijóózh* my vagina," she said.

"Thank you for that delicious dinner."

To which *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man replied this way:

"Why do you say that?" he replied.

"Why not thank me?"

"Was it not I who killed the deer whose flesh you have just feasted on?"

"Was it not I who carried it here for you to eat?"

"Was it not I who skinned it?"

"Who made it ready for you to boil?"

"Is *nijóózh* your vagina the great hunter, that you should thank it and not me?"

To which *Áłtsé asdzáq* offered this answer:

"As a matter of fact, she is," offered she.

"In a manner of speaking it is *jóósh* the vagina who hunts.

"Were it not for *jóósh* you would not have killed that deer.

"Were it not for her you would not have carried it here.

"You would not have skinned it.

"You lazy men would do nothing around here were it not for *jóósh*.

"In truth, *jóósh* the vagina does all the work around here."

To which *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man had this to say:

"Then perhaps you women think you can live without us men," he said.

"Maybe you need only *nihijóózh* your vaginas.

"*Nihijóózh* your great huntresses.

"*Nihijóózh* your tireless workers."

Quickly came this reply from *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman:

"All things do not exist thanks alone to you," she replied quickly. "We could live alone if we wanted to.

"We are the ones who till the fields, after all.

"We are the ones who gather the food, after all.

"We can live on the crops that we grow. We can live on the seeds that we gather. We can live on the berries that we find and on the fruits that we bring."²⁶

"Things exist thanks as much to us as to you. We have no need of you men."

On and on they argued that way, *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man permitting himself to grow angrier and angrier with each reply his wife made, *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman permitting herself to grow more and more vexing with each reply she offered.

Until at length he stalked out of the shelter where they had lived together as man and wife. Out he stalked and jumped across the fire in front of their home, where he remained all that night with only his anger to keep him company.²⁷

• • • •

Early next morning he walked to the center of the village and called loudly so that everyone could hear:²⁸

"All you men!" he called.

"Gather round me.

"I wish to speak to you.

"I wish to instruct you.

"As for the women, let them stay where they are.

"Not one woman do I wish to see.

"I have nothing to say to any woman around here."

Soon all the males were assembled around *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man. And he repeated to them what his wife had said the previous night. Then he told the men this:

"The women think they can live without us," he told the men.

"They think that things can continue to exist thanks as much to them as to us.

"Well, let us see if all that is true.

"Let us see if they can hunt and till the fields, with only *jóósh* the vagina to help them. Let us see what sort of living they can make, with only *jóósh* to assist them.

"We will cross the stream and live apart from them. And from *jóósh*.

"We will keep the raft with us on our side of the water, so that even when they long for us they may not have us.

"If they seek companionship, let them seek it with *jóósh* the vagina.

"And if *jóósh* wishes to shout, let her shout to herself.

"Let us see what *jóósh* the vagina brings forth when she hears the sound of her own voice. We will see what happens when they try to sustain life without help from us."

• • • •

So it was that all the men gathered at the river.

Áłtsé hastiin even summoned the twins *nádleeḥ*, who were neither entirely male nor entirely female. They were covered with meal when they arrived, for they had been grinding corn.

This is what *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man asked them:

"What do you have that you have made all by yourselves?" he asked them.

"What is there that you have made without the help of any woman?"

Answered the twins *nádleeḥ*, who were no more female than they were male:

"We each have a set of grinding stones that we have made," they answered.

"We have cups and bowls. We have baskets and other utensils.

"We have made those things by ourselves with the help of no woman."²⁹

To which *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man had this to say:

"Go fetch those things and bring them here; for you must come with us," he said.

"You are as much men as you are women. And you have made those things with no woman's help.

"Let the women learn what it means to live without the help of any man.

"Let them learn to live without anything that has been made by someone who is even part of a man."

• • • •

So the men ferried across the river, taking the nonchildbearing twins *nádleeḥ* with them. They crossed over to the north bank. And with them they carried their stone axes, their wooden scythes, their hoes of bone, and the utensils that the twins had invented. In fact, they took anything that they had made themselves.

After they had crossed, they sent the raft downstream, inviting the men of the *Kiis'áanii* to join them, from whom six clans did join. They too had allowed their women to anger them.

As some of the young men rode across the stream they wept at having to part with their wives.³⁰ They had not been angered by anything the women had said. But they had become used to doing whatever *Áłtsé hastiin* had told them to do.

The men left behind everything the women had made by themselves. And they left behind everything the women had helped them to make or to raise. They took only what they had produced without the help of any woman.

• • • •

Once they reached the north bank of the river, some of the men set out to hunt. For the young boys needed food. Others set to work cutting willows for huts. For the young boys also needed shelter.

It seems that they managed very well. Within four days they had

plenty of food, and they built strong homes for themselves and the boys. Within four days they were sure that they could get along without women.

They were sure they would thrive without women to make them angry. And their spirits were high, at least at first, it is said.

Ten

It is also said that the women, too, were in high spirits at first. That winter they had plenty of food. They worked and they ate. They sang songs and they told stories. Often they came down to the bank of the river where the men could hear them and see them. And there they taunted them.

One of them would pull her sheath over her head and shake her bare body. Another would do likewise, then she would turn her back toward the men, and bend forward, and wiggle her buttocks.

"Hey you men," called yet another meanwhile. "Look over here. Look at that!"

"Don't you see what you're missing?" shouted still another.

Others would then similarly bare themselves to the men. All together they would laugh and cry out. Thus they teased the men, alternately calling them obscene names and coaxing them suggestively. They used their bodies to tempt the men until they were sure that the men longed for them as much as they longed for the men.³¹

• • •

In the spring the men prepared a few small fields and managed to raise a little bit of corn. Still, they did not have much of it to eat, and they had to depend on hunting for most of their food.³²

Meanwhile, the women cultivated their entire farm. But without hoes they could not work the soil properly. And without scythes they were unable to harvest well. So that during their second winter alone they were forced to live on a smaller crop. They did

not sing as much or tell as many stories as they had done the previous winter.

The women planted less the second spring, while the men cleared more land than they had cleared the year before. So the crops of the men increased while those of the women decreased. And during the winter that followed, the women began to suffer for want of food. Some of them had to gather the seeds of wild plants to get enough to eat.

During the autumn of the third year of the separation many women jumped into the river and tried to swim over to the north shore where the men lived. But they were carried away by the current and were never seen again.

By the end of the fourth year the men had more food than they could eat. Corn and pumpkins lay untouched in the fields while the women starved.

But the separation was still having a bad effect on the men, even if they had raised enough crops for themselves. For during the entire time that they lived apart, the men longed for the women just as badly as the women longed for them. That longing grew, in fact, on both sides of the stream.

So strong did it become that members of both sexes indulged in the practice of masturbation. The women sought to satisfy themselves with long stones and thick quills. They attempted intercourse with cactus or with bone. The men, meanwhile, tried to relieve their longing with mud, or else they used the flesh of freshly slain game.

There was one in particular called *K'íideesdizi*, whose name means Man With Wrappings On in the White Man's language. One morning he went out hunting alone and found a place far from the village where nobody would see him. Once out there he killed a deer just as the light of day began to wane.

He then made a brush circle and lit a fire therein, according to the manner of doing such things in those times. Into the fire he placed a piece of venison from his quarry, meaning to eat a little of it and then to spend the night there, satisfying his longing for the companionship of his wife. He would return the next morning with the rest of his game and share it with the others.

As darkness fell, he ate the meat. And while he watched the sky darken, he began thinking about his wife on the opposite bank of the river.

The more he thought of her, the more he longed for her. The

greater his longing, the more he desired her, especially as the sky in the west darkened and gave way to black night.

"It was not I who was angered by a woman," thought he. "It was not my wife who said she could get along without us men."

And as he reflected on such things, he found himself longing all the more. In the darkness he pictured the women standing on the far shore of the river beckoning to the men. He pictured them cupping their hands under their breasts suggestively. He pictured them as they shook their naked bodies to tease the men. He imagined he could see them wiggling their buttocks at them.

Surely his own wife was among the women who desired the company of their husbands.

Full of such thoughts, and longing so for her, he took the liver from the body of the slain deer and cut a slit into it. then he placed it by the fire to warm.

"So be it," said he when the liver felt as warm as his wife had felt whenever he and she would lie close together. "I have no quarrel with my wife or any woman.

"No quarrel whatsoever."

Upon saying which, he placed the liver carefully below himself where his legs joined.

But just then *Né'eshjaa'* the Owl cried out. He had come unseen upon Man With Wrappings On.

"Wu'hu'hu'hu'," cried he from somewhere just outside the brush circle.

"Wu'hu'hu'hu'," he was heard to cry.

"Stop, *K'íideesdizi!* Stop that.

"Do nothing with that liver if you do not intend eating it!"

Startled, Man With Wrappings On returned the liver to the fire. Then he stepped outside the brush circle and walked around, looking in vain for whomever had just spoken.

Finding no one, he came back to the fireside, lay down, and tried to sleep, attempting at first to put his wife out of his mind and to forget his longing.

Well into the night he lay there unable to sleep. Try as he might, he could not stop thinking of her, and the more he thought of her the more he missed her. The more he missed her the more he desired her. Until he finally reached for the liver again, which still lay warm by the fire. Taking it into his hands again, he listened carefully for the cry he had heard earlier. But he could hear nothing.

"Ah," thought he. "Now's the time."

"Come, wife-liver.

"Come to me now!"

Upon thinking which, he again positioned the liver below himself.

But hardly had he done so when again he heard the cry of *Né'eshjaa'* the Owl.

"Wu'hu'hu'hu'," he heard him cry.

"Stop, *K'íideesdizi!* Stop that.

"Eat that liver; do not have intercourse with it!"

Startled again, Man With Wrappings On quickly returned the liver. Then he curled up and tried again to sleep, doing what he could to forget that he missed his wife. But he was unable to do so. On into the night he lay there, missing her. The more he missed her, the more he desired her. The more he desired her, the more easily he imagined that she lay there close to him. Thus he waited, listening for any sound that might break the silence and stop him. Hearing nothing, however, he once more longed for the warm liver.

"Now perhaps that meddling fool is gone," he thought as he took it in his hands and once again placed it against himself.

"Now," he whispered hoarsely.

"Let it be now, no matter who's out there."

His having hardly said so, the voice again broke the silence.

"Wu'hu'hu'hu'," cried the voice.

"*K'íideesdizi*, stop! Stop that.

"If you do not intend to eat that liver, keep it away from yourself."

With a start, *K'íideesdizi* replaced the liver by the fire. Again he tried to rid himself of his desire and sleep. Unable to do that, though, he lay there until the eastern sky began to show the gray light of the oncoming dawn. He lay there desiring his wife, longing for her all the more as he thought of her, all the more anxiously imagining that she lay close beside him, nestling her warmth against the full length of his great longing. He lay there in the silence until he could contain himself no longer, and until he cried out, scarcely in control of himself.

"I don't care," he gasped.

"I don't care who's out there. I don't care where he may be. It's got to be now. It must be now." And he grabbed the liver and thrust it against his penis.

No sooner than which the voice of *Né'ëshjaa'* the Owl rang out.

"*K'íideesdizi!* you must stop that. Stop!

"Do not have intercourse with that liver; leave it alone."

Man With Wrappings On then threw the liver back to the fire and sprang to his feet. "Who are you, anyway?" he demanded. He faced one way, then another. He stalked to the outer edge of the brush circle and paced around it, first one way, then the next twice around, then back again the way he originally went. "Where are you?" he asked.

"Can't you leave a person alone?

"Or can't you at least face a man and explain yourself as someone ought to do?"

Whereupon *Né'ëshjaa'* the Owl suddenly appeared. And he softly spoke these words.

"I really mean you no harm, grandchild," spoke he.

"But I also insist on what I am telling you.

"What you are trying to do is altogether out of place. You cannot make things normal by treating the liver of a slain deer as if it were your wife."

K'íideesdizi took a moment to consider.

Indeed, the liver was not his wife.

Nothing he might do with it would bring her to him. Nothing he did with it would take him to her.

"Wait right there, granduncle," he said to *Né'ëshjaa'* after a short pause. Then he returned to the center of the brush circle and built a fresh fire. From the carcass of the slain deer he cut a choice tenderloin. He sliced it thin and cooked it together with the liver. Taking that for himself to eat, he offered the steak to Owl.

"Here, granduncle," he said, handing it to *Né'ëshjaa'*.

"You eat this while I eat the liver."

"Thank you, my grandchild," said he. "But turn your back to me. I do not eat in anyone's plain sight."

Thus he ate behind the back of *K'íideesdizi* the Man With Wrappings On, promising that after he finished he would explain himself, which indeed is as much as anyone ought to do.

• • • •

"It has been nearly four years, now," explained *Né'ëshjaa'* the Owl, "since you men left the women over there on the other shore, as you yourself certainly know.

"Whether the women are to blame or the men, no good can come of the separation.

"Fewer of the women now remain than you menfolk left behind. Many of them have plunged into the water and disappeared. As for those who remain, they are abusing themselves any way they can in the absence of you men. They have intercourse with long stones. They seek to satisfy themselves with thick quills. Some insert cactus into themselves. Some handle the bones of animals as if they were their husbands.

"What is more, they grow hungry for want of food.

"Suppose that those who remain eventually threw themselves into the water because they are in such misery? That will leave only you men living on the surface of this world. Do you think you can sustain life by yourselves? Will the liver of a slain deer bear your children?

"I do not know how long they can endure over there, meanwhile. Just yesterday I overheard *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman lament to her followers. She grieved for those who had disappeared into the water, and she pitied those who have survived only to long for their husbands on empty stomachs. She even confessed that she wished to hear the voice of her husband *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man once more.

"I mention all of that for your sake, grandson. And for the sake of the others.

"Somehow you must contrive to have the women brought across the river so that they can rejoin the men. Otherwise this disorder will continue until the world we now know comes to an end. Even the sky will disappear, and with it all the work that has been done so far. Life can go on only if the women and the men reunite.

"Now I must go, grandson," concluded *Né'ëshjaa'* the Owl to *K'íideesdizi* the Man With Wrappings On. "I have nothing more to say.

"Except that I leave it to you to devise a way to bring the men and the women together again."

• • • •

K'íideesdizi thought carefully about what he had been told, and then he returned to the village. Once there he started straight toward *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man to repeat outright what *Né'ëshjaa'* had said. But he thought the better of that,

remembering how angry he had been after his quarrel with *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman.

Instead, he assembled several of the older men and began to reason with them.

"Think about it," he reasoned, after he had explained what he had heard. "Over there our women are starving. What good is our food over here if they have little to eat?"

"One by one they plunge into the water. Or else they abuse themselves with long stones and thick quills, or with cactus and the bones of animals. Suppose that they were all to perish while we survived? Could we possibly sustain life without them? Can mud bear our children? Can the livers of slain deer nurture our offspring?"

"If life is to go on, we and the women must rejoin each other. Otherwise this disorder will continue until the world as we know it disappears.

"Who knows?"

"Even the sky could come to an end, together with all the work that has so far been done."

Thus he spoke to various men, getting them all to agree. And together they decided to induce *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man to change his mind and initiate a reunion.

One by one they managed to get him to reconsider.

"Did you hear plaintive voices over there on the other shore last night?" someone would ask him early one morning.

"Unless I'm mistaken I believe that yet another woman jumped into the river," someone else might say. "Over there across the water. Where they struggle to survive."

"How terrible it must be on the opposite bank," said still another. "No food to eat. No men for companionship."

Said yet another: "Perhaps I was dreaming, but all night long I thought I heard a woman pleading. I cannot be sure—after all, I have not heard her voice up close for four years now—but it sounded like *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman. But then why should that matter to me? She insisted that the women can get along just fine without us men, after all."

• • • •

By the end of the fourth year of the separation, *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man did indeed wonder whether he had acted wisely. So he

called the men together and asked them what they thought. And this is what one of them said:

"Over there our women are starving," he said.

Added another:

"What good is our food on this side of the river if our women starve on the other side?" he added.

And another spoke these words:

"One by one they leap into the water. Meanwhile, those who remain abuse themselves with long stones and thick quills, or with cactus and the bones of animals," were his words.

And asked still another:

"Suppose we survived while they all perished?" he asked.

"Could we possibly sustain life without them? Can mud bear our children? Can the livers of slain deer raise our offspring?"

"If this present disorder continues, the world as we know it will come to an end.

"Who knows?"

"Even the sky would disappear, along with everything else that has so far been created."

• • • •

Áłtsé hastiin the First Man thought carefully about what the men were saying. And he finally sent one of them down to the river. He instructed him to call across the stream and ask if *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman was still there. If so, would she be willing to come to the water's edge and hear something her husband had to say?

When she received that message she gladly came to the river. Whereupon *Áłtsé hastiin* asked her this question:

"Do you still think you can live alone?" he asked her.

To which she gave this response:

"I no longer believe that I can," she responded.

"I do not think that any woman here can live alone.

"And I now regret the things I said to you."

That is what she told him.

And this is what he replied to her:

"And I am sorry that I let the things you said make me angry," he replied.

• • • •

So it was that the men and the women put their quarrel to an end. *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman instructed her followers to gather at the bank of the river on their side. And *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man instructed his to gather at the bank on their side.

He then sent the raft over to the women's side, where they were ferried across to the opposite shore. There they were told to bathe and to dry their bodies with meal.³³ The two sexes would remain separated until nightfall. Then they would rejoin each other and resume their lives together, it is said.³⁴

Eleven

It is also said that soon after the women rejoined the men three of them were found to be missing. A mother was missing and so were two of her daughters.

By that time the day was nearly over.

After darkness fell the people heard the voices of the missing three, crying out from the opposite bank. Left behind somehow, they now begged to be carried across the stream. They too wanted to rejoin the men and the boys.

It was now too dark to cross, the men explained to them. They would have to wait until morning. Then the raft could be sent and someone would fetch them.

The three did not want to wait, however. So they jumped into the river and tried to swim over in the dark. The mother managed to reach the north shore, where she found her husband. But the two girls were seized by *Tééhooltsódii* the Big Water Creature, who dragged them down into the water where they disappeared.³⁵

For three nights and for three days the people searched for the two maidens. But they found no trace of them and gave them up for lost.

Then, on the morning of the fourth day, they heard a voice calling to them from far to the east. They listened and waited until they heard it again, nearer and louder. They continued to listen and

to wait until they heard it a third time, all the closer and all the louder. Continuing to listen and to wait they heard the voice again, so close upon them that it seemed to come from where they now stood.

And after the fourth call *Bits'íis ligaii* the White Body appeared, holding up two fingers and pointing to the river. It seemed to the people that he was trying to tell them something about the missing girls. So some of the men took the raft across the stream and looked for the tracks of the maidens.

They traced their footprints to the water's edge but no further. While the men continued to search, *Bits'íis ligaii* the White Body went away. But he soon returned with *Bits'íis doot'izh* the Blue Body. He carried a large bowl made of white shell, and his companion carried a large bowl made of blue shell. They beckoned for a man and a woman to follow them and then went down to the river.

At the water's edge the two gods placed both bowls on the surface and caused them to spin around. And where the bowls spun the water opened.

The opening made by the spinning bowls led to a large house underground that contained four rooms. The room in the east was made of dark waters. The room in the south was made of blue waters. The room in the west was made of yellow waters. And the room in the north consisted of waters of all colors.

The man and the woman who had followed *Bits'íis ligaii* the White Body and *Bits'íis doot'izh* the Blue Body climbed through the hole in the water and entered the large house. They did not realize that *Mq'ii* the Coyote had been following them all this time; unseen by everyone he too had entered the underwater house.

First they went into the east room, but they found nothing there. Then they went into the south room, but they found nothing there, either. Then they went into the west room where they again found nothing. And finally they went into the north room, where they found *Tééhooltsódii* the Big Water Creature.

There he sat.

Next to him on one side sat two infant children of his own. And next to him on the other side sat the two girls he had stolen.

The man and the woman demanded their two girls. And since *Tééhooltsódii* the Big Water Creature said nothing in reply, they took the two and walked away. But while all four of them were

leaving, *Mq'ii* the Coyote seized the two water babies. And unnoticed by everyone he carried them off under his robe.

Coyote always wore his robe folded close around him. He even slept with it folded against his body that way. So nobody was surprised to see him wearing his coat folded like that as he came out of the water with the others. Least of all did anyone suspect that he had just stolen the children of *Tééhoołtsódii* the Big Water Creature, it is said.

Twelve

It is also said that on the very next day something took the people by surprise. For they saw *Bijh* the Deer pass right in front of them. And they saw *Tqzhii* the Turkey pass quickly before them. And they saw *Jádi* the Antelope rushing past. They saw all three fleeing headlong from the east to the west.

Meanwhile, other animals came running into their village seeking refuge. *Atseektsoii* the Yellowtail Hawk came, along with his mate and their offspring. *Hazéétsoh* the Squirrel came with his mate and their offspring. *Dah yitíhí* the Hummingbird came with his brood. And so came *Jaa'abaní* the Bat.

For the rest of the day, and during the three days which followed, other animals either came running through the village or stopped there and begged for shelter. Something had frightened them all.

On the morning of the fourth day, when the white light of dawn made its way up the wall of the eastern sky, the people noticed a strange white glimmer along the horizon. So they sent the locust couriers to find out what was happening.

Before dark the locusts returned and told the people that a great tide of water was rushing in on them from the east.

When they heard this news the people all assembled in a great crowd, including the *Kiis'áanii*. Some of them cried out. Some wept. Some tried to run away and then returned soon afterwards, realizing that there was no where to go. For a great tide of water was also coming in on them from the west. And water was now coming in from the south, and likewise from the north. Some of the people ran off in panic and were never seen again.

All night long the people who remained cried and moaned, argued and talked. No one among them slept that night, so fearful were they, it is said.

Thirteen

It is also said that the next morning the white light of dawn arose in the east as it had done in mornings past. But now it arose with a steady roar that sounded distant at first and then grew louder. And the people soon saw water high as mountains encircling them across the horizon all around.

It came upon them from the east. It came at them from the south. It also came upon them from the west. And from the north it came at them. Only in the west was there a small break in that tidal wall. But it was too small to allow them all to escape.

As fast as they were able, the people packed up all their goods and took refuge high on a nearby hill. But they knew that they were only temporarily safe there.

On that knoll they held a council to try to decide what they should do next. Someone then suggested that perhaps *Hazéétsoh* the Squirrel and his wife might somehow help. Said they:

"We will try," they said.

"We will do what we can."

Whereupon one of them planted a pinyon seed while the other planted a seed of juniper. Both seeds grew so fast that the people could actually see them getting taller.

They grew so fast, in fact, that some of the people hoped they might rise beyond reach of the floodwater. But they grew upward only a little way further. And then they branched out and got no higher.

Then the frightened people called on *Dlq'ii* the Weasel and his mate to help somehow. Said they:

"We will try," they said.

"Whatever we can do we will do."

Whereupon one of them planted a spruce seed while the other

planted a seed of pine. Both seeds grew as before: both grew so fast that the people could see them becoming taller.

In fact, they grew so fast that some of the people believed that the newly grown trees might actually rise beyond the reach of the flood. But as with the pinyon and the juniper that *Hazéétsoh* the Squirrel and his mate had planted, they grew only a little way more. Then they branched out and became wide rather than tall.

Now the people were more frightened than they had ever been. For the waters had continued to rush in on them from east and from west, from north and from south. They all believed that they would soon perish. Then suddenly two men appeared on the hill on which the people all stood, it is said.

Fourteen

It is also said that one of the two men who suddenly appeared was old and grayhaired. The other, who walked in advance of the elderly one, was young and limber. His hair shone and little rays of light sparkled from his eyes.³⁶

The two spoke to no one as they climbed the hill. They passed quietly through the crowd and made directly for the summit. Once they had reached the very peak, the young man sat down. Then the old man took a seat directly behind him. And for no reason that anyone could understand, *Wóóneeshch'íí'dii* the Locust sat directly behind him. All three of them faced the east.

Then the old man took seven bags from under his robe and opened them. Each contained a small amount of soil. This soil, he then proclaimed, had been gathered from the sacred mountains that marked the limits of the fourth world. Whereupon a few of the people spoke words like these:

"Ah, perhaps something can yet be done," spoke one.

"Perhaps our grandfather can help us," said another.

"Perhaps we can find another world to live in," another said.

To which the old man replied:

"I myself can do nothing more than what I have done," replied he.

"But maybe my son here can help you."

Whereupon the people begged the young man with the shiny hair and the sparkling eyes to do something. And this is what he said to them:

"I can do something to help you, yes," he said to them.

"But there are two things that you must do, too. Likewise, there are two things you must not do.

"You must all move away from where you stand. And you must all face the west.

"But you must not look at me until I call for you. And you must not ask me any questions.

"Nobody is to see me working. And nobody is to know what I have done or how I have done it."

The people all agreed to do what he told them to do. And they agreed not to do what he said they must not do.

They moved away from where they stood. They all faced the east. None of them looked at him. And no one asked him a question. And in a few minutes he called for them to return to the place where they had all been standing.

When they returned, they saw that the youth had spread the sacred soil on the ground. And they saw that in it he had planted thirty-two reeds, each of which had thirty-two joints.

They looked at the reeds, and as they gazed at them they saw that they took root in the ground and that the roots spread downward rapidly. They also saw that the reeds themselves grew upward rapidly. And in another moment all thirty-two joined together to form one giant stalk with an opening in its eastern side, it is said.³⁷

Fifteen

It is also said that the young man then told the people to enter the reed through the opening. When they were all safely inside, the opening disappeared. And none too soon, for scarcely had it closed before the people inside heard the terrible sound of the surging water outside: "Yin! yin! Yin! yin!"

The water rose rapidly. But the reed grew faster. It grew so high, though, that the people inside feared that under their weight it might break and topple into the water.

Luckily, though, *Bits'íís ǵigaii* the White Body and *Bits'íís doot'ízh* the Blue Body were in the reed with them. *Bits'íís ǵizhin* the Black Body was also inside, and he blew a great breath out through a hole in the top of the reed, and a heavy dark cloud formed around it and kept it steady.

And still the reed grew. Higher and higher it grew, higher and higher. Until it began to sway again, and until the people were again seized with fear. But then *Bits'íís ǵizhin* the Black Body blew a second great puff of breath, making another cloud to steady the towering reed.

By the time that darkness was about to fall, the reed had grown clear up to the crown of the sky. It swayed and bowed so much that the people could not steady it. Until finally *Bits'íís ǵizhin* the Black Body, who was now uppermost inside the reed, took the plume out of his headband. And he stuck it through the top of the cane and fastened it to the sky. Which is why that reed is plumed to this very day, it is said.

Sixteen

It is also said that the people stayed inside the reed all night long. And when the white light of day filled the sky next morning they looked outside. But they could see no hole in the sky.

So the people sent *Atseełtsoii* the Hawk to look for a way through to the other side. Out he flew and immediately began to scratch at the sky with his claws.

He scratched and scratched until he was lost from sight. And sometime later he returned to say that he had dug his way into the sky overhead to see some light shining through from the other side. But he was tired now and could dig no more.

Next they sent *Wóóneeshch'ǵidii* the Locust to dig. He too was gone for a long time. But he finally came back, and when he did he had this story to tell.

• • • •

He had dug through to the upper world on the other side of the sky. There he emerged on a small island in the middle of a large lake. When he set foot on that soil he saw a black loon approaching him from the west. And he saw a yellow loon approaching from the east.

"Who are you and where have you come from?" one of the loons asked him. Whereupon *Wóóneeshch'ǵidii* made no reply.

"Between us two," the other loon then said, "we own half of this world.

"The east belongs to me. And the west belongs to my cousin here.

"So listen to this.

"If you can do what we do, we will give you the other half of this world. We will give you the north and the south.

"But if you cannot do what we do, you will die."

Each loon had an arrow made of the black wind. And each passed his arrow through his body. Each passed it from one side to the other, piercing it straight through his heart.

And after he had finished, each of the two loons flung his arrow down at the feet of *Wóóneeshch'ǵidii* the Locust.

He in turn picked up one of the arrows. And he ran it through his own body. He ran it from side to side and pierced his own heart, just as he had seen the loons do.

Then he picked up the other arrow and ran it through his body. It too he ran from side to side so that it pierced his heart. And when the loons saw him perform this task so easily they dove into the water and swam away from the island. One swam to the east and the other swam to the west. And they troubled *Wóóneeshch'ǵidii* the Locust no more.

When they had gone, two more loons appeared. A blue one came out of the water from the direction of the south. And a shining one came out of the water from the direction of the north.

They spoke to *Wóóneeshch'ǵidii* the Locust exactly as the other two had spoken to him. And they confronted him with the very same challenge.

Again he passed two arrows through his body from side to side so that each pierced his heart. And again no harm came to him. Whereupon the two loons swam away as the others had done,

troubling *Wóóneeshch'íídi* the Locust no more. They left the land entirely to him.³⁸

To this day, incidentally, you can see holes in the side of a locust if you look carefully at him. Those are the holes made by the arrows which he passed from one side of his body to the other.

As for the opening that had been made in the sky, it was still too small for many of the larger people to climb through. So *Nahashch'id* the Badger was sent to make it larger.

When he came back from doing his work, his legs were stained black with the mud that fills the inside of the dome of the sky that covers the fourth world. And that is why all badgers have had black legs ever since.

Finally, *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man and his wife, *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman were able to lead the people through the hole. One by one they all followed the pair. And the people, safe at last, climbed through the hole to the surface of this the fifth world, it is said.³⁹

All these things happened a long, long time ago, it is said.

One

Of a time long, long ago these things too are said.¹

It is said that high cliffs bordered the lake that surrounded the island. And great plains extended out in every direction from the tops of those cliffs. Mountains tower above that lake now, but they were not yet there when the people emerged into the fifth world.

At first the people could find no way to get across the water from the island to the other shore. So they called on *Bits'íís doot'ízh* the Blue Body to help them.

It seems that he had brought four stones with him from the world below. And he now threw one of them toward the east. Then he threw one toward the south. And he threw one toward the west. And toward the north he threw one.

When a stone landed against each of the cliffs it made a hole in the rock. And through each of the holes the water flowed off in four different directions.

But the lake did not drain entirely. Enough water flowed off, though, so that in one place the bottom showed. And there was now a lane that connected the island with the land on the other side.

At first the people were afraid to walk over that land because it was muddy and because the mud looked so deep. So they asked *Níłch'i díłkqòh* the Smooth Wind to help them.

So he blew steadily all day long. And before darkness fell the mud dried. So that on the very next day the people easily walked over to the other shore.

While they had waited for the mud to dry, the *Kiis'áanii* camped on the east side of the island. There they built a stone wall that stands to this very day. They wished to have something to lean

against and to shelter them from the wind. The others built shelters of brushwood. These were build on the west side of the island.

While the people all waited the women erected four poles. Over the poles they stretched a deerskin. And under the skin they played *tsindił*. In the language of *Bilagáana* that game would be called stick dice.² The women brought it with them from the world below. To this very day women like to play that game while they are waiting around.

• • • •

When everyone at last reached the mainland, the people all wanted to know what would become of them. So someone threw a hide scraper into the water and had this to say.

"If it sinks we will eventually perish. But if it floats we shall all go on living."

It floated, and everyone was glad.

But then *Mq'ii* the Coyote stood up. And he had this to say:

"Wait a minute here. Let me do this," he said.

And before anybody could object he picked up a stone and spoke this way:

"If it floats, we will all live forever. But if it sinks, everybody will die sooner or later."

Of course the stone sank, and everyone grew angry. They called *Mq'ii* names and they cursed him. Some of the people even threatened to throw him in the water. But he cried out, and this is what he said.

"Wait!" he said.

"Listen to me."

"If we all go on living, and if the women keep having babies, there will be too many people. There won't be any room. Nobody will be able to move around. There will be no space to plant corn.

"Isn't it better that each one of us should live here for just a while, until old age slows us down?

Not just until we can't hunt. Not just until we can't plant and harvest. But until we can't think. Until we can no longer speak.

"Then we ought to move on. Leave everything behind for the young. Make room for the next generation."³

When the people heard what *Mq'ii* the Coyote had to say, they

recognized the wisdom of his words. Grudgingly they agreed that he was right. And one by one they grew silent.⁴

• • • •

Later that day, the people had two visitors. *Náshdóitsoh* the Mountain Lion visited them. And *Mq'iitsoh* the Big Wolf visited them.

They had this to say:

"We have heard that some new people have come here," they said.

"We have heard that they came out of the ground over there on that island.

"We are here now to see them," they said.

And they looked at the newcomers. For a long time they looked them all over. And from among the unmarried women *Náshdóitsoh* the Mountain Lion took himself a bride, it is said.

Two

It is also said that four days passed. The white light of day arose in the east four times. And four times the black darkness of night fell. Then, on their fifth day in this new world, one of the people crossed back over to the island where they had all emerged.

He went to the hole through which the people had escaped from the flooded fourth world. And, looking into it, he noticed water welling and churning inside. It rose steadily he noticed. Already it was nearly to the top of the hole. And with each moment it seemed to get higher!

The man ran back to tell the others what he had seen. And at once a council was called, so that the people could discuss this new danger.

For a while the people talked and argued, but they were unable to decide what should be done. But then *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man got up to speak. Before he said anything he looked around until he saw *Mq'ii* the Coyote. And as First Man's eyes met his own, Coyote looked down at his feet.

Whereupon *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man pointed to *Mq'ii* the Coyote and had this to say:

"There!" said he.

"There's the rascal who's to blame!

"Something is wrong with the way he's been behaving.

"He never takes off his robe. Even when he lies down. I have been watching him ever since we arrived here. And now I am sure that he has something hidden under that cloak of his.

"Something that he has stolen, maybe?

"Let's search him!"

So they all fell upon *Mq'ii* the Coyote and tore the robe from his shoulders.

Sure enough! two strange looking creatures dropped to the ground. They looked something like tiny buffalo calves, except that they were covered over with spots of different colors. They were the babies of *Tééhoołtsódii* the Big Water Creature: his very own children, stolen by *Mq'ii* the Coyote.

At once the people ran over to the island and threw the infants into the hole from which they had emerged. And in an instant the waters inside stopped welling and surging. With a deafening roar they were drawn back to the lower world.

• • • •

Late the next day, after darkness had fallen, one of the nonchildbearing twins, *Nádleeh*, stopped breathing. Afraid, the people left her alone all the night. And when morning came *Mq'ii* the Coyote proposed that they lay her to rest among the rocks.

This they set out to do. But when they returned to the spot where they had left the twin, they could not find her body.

Wondering what had become of her, they all started to look.

They searched in all directions. They looked to the east. To the south they looked. They looked in the west, also. And they also looked in the north. But they could find no trace of the vanished twin *Nádleeh*.

Finally, two men wandered nearby the hole through which they had escaped from the fourth world. And it occurred to one of them to peer inside.

He leaned forward as far as possible and gazed down into the fourth world. And there, far below, he spied the dead one sitting by the side of the river combing her hair.

He called for his companion to come and look. Together the two of them gazed down. Then they returned to their people to tell them what they had seen.

But four days later, these two men also died.

From then on the people refused to look at a corpse. Never again would they seek the dead. And that is why the Navajo people have always been afraid to stare at a ghost ever since then, it is said.⁵

Three

It is also said that the *Kiis'áani* built their camp close by. And word soon got around that they had an ear of corn. It seems that they had brought it with them from the lower world to use for seeds.

Some of the younger, more unruly men proposed going over to the *Kiis'áani* camp and taking the corn. But the older, more moderate men insisted that taking it would be wrong.

After all, the *Kiis'áani* had suffered as much hardship as the wind-spirit people had. If they had the foresight to bring seeds of corn with them, so much the better for them.⁶

In spite of that advice, however, a band of the young roughnecks went to the *Kiis'áani* camp and demanded the ear of corn. After some angry talk on both sides, the *Kiis'áani* made an offer. One of them had this to say:

"We will break the ear in two," he said.

"We will give you whichever half you choose. That way, both groups will have seeds."

The young men agreed to this bargain. So the woman who had owned the ear in the first place split it in the middle and laid the pieces on the ground for the others to choose.

The young men looked carefully at the two half-ears. They looked first at one piece and then at the other. Then they huddled together to discuss their choice.

Meanwhile, *Mq'ii* the Coyote, who unseen by everyone had followed the young men to the place where the *Kiis'áani* were

encamped, grew impatient. While the others were carefully choosing their piece of corn, he simply picked up the tip end and made off with it.

Whereupon the *Kiis'áani* insisted that the choice was now made. The people had picked the more meager end with its small, uneven kernels. And they, the *Kiis'áani*, were to have the butt end, with its larger, more evenly spaced kernels. Which is why the Pueblo Indians have always grown better corn than the Navajos to this very day.

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As for the *Kiis'áani*, they were offended by the threats and curses of the young men who had come to demand the corn in the first place. What would stop them from coming back some other time and demanding something else?

So they moved away from their neighbors and built their village further off. Which is why the Navajos and Pueblos have lived far apart from one another to this very day, it is said.

Four

It is also said that soon after the *Kiis'áani* moved away *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman decided to embellish this new world.⁷

So together with *Bits'íis hìzhin* the Black Body, and with *Bits'íis dootl'izh* the Blue Body, they first set out to build the seven mountains sacred to the Navajo people to this very day. They built those mountains out of things they had brought with them: things they had taken from similar mountains in the fourth world below.

In the east they made *Sisnaajini*, or Sierra Blanca Peak as *Bilagáana* now calls it. In the south they made *Tsoodzil*, or Mount Taylor. In the west they made *Dook'o'oskíid*, or San Francisco Peak as it is now called. And in the north they fashioned *Dibé nitsaa*, or Big Mountain Sheep.

Those four mountains they build at the four cardinal points. They placed them where the water flowing from the fourth world gathered after it seeped up through the holes *Áłtsé hastiin* had made when he threw four stones in the four directions.

Also they made three mountains in the middle of the land. They made *Dzil ná'oodilii*, or the mountain that *Bilagáana* would call Travelers Circle. They made *Ch'ól'í'í* or the mountain that some would now call Giant Spruce while others claim that the meaning is obscure. And they made *Ak'i dah nást'ání*, or the mountain that the White Man calls Butte Piled on a Butte in his language.

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Through *Sisnaajini* in the east they ran a bolt of lightning to fasten it to the firmament.⁸ Then they decorated it with white shells. They decorated it with white lightning. They decorated it with white corn. They decorated it with the dark clouds that produce the harsh and sudden male rain.

On the summit of *Sisnaajini* in the east they placed a bowl of shells. In that bowl they placed two eggs belonging to *Hasbídi* the Gray Dove, for they wanted feathers on the mountain. They then covered those eggs with a sacred buckskin so that they would hatch. Which explains why there are so many wild pigeons on that mountain to this day.

All that they had placed on *Sisnaajini* in the east they now covered with a sheet of daylight. And from small stone images which they had carried with them from the world below they fashioned *Tséghádi'nídínii ashkii* the Rock Crystal Boy and *Tséghádi'nídínii at'ééd* the Rock Crystal Girl.⁹ These two they stationed there to dwell forever as the male god and as the female god of *Sisnaajini*, or Sierra Blanca Peak as it would be called today in the language that *Bilagáana* the White Man speaks.

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From top to bottom through *Tsoodzil* in the south they ran a great stone knife to fasten it to the firmament.¹⁰ Then they adorned it with turquoise. They adorned it with dark mist. They adorned it with many different animals. They adorned it with the heavy mist that brings the slow, gentle female rain.

On the peak of *Tsoodził* in the south they placed a large bowl of turquoise. In that bowl they put two eggs of the *Dólii* the Bluebird, for they also wanted feathers on that mountain. They next covered those eggs with a sacred buckskin to make them hatch. Which explains why so many bluebirds dwell there to this very day.

All that they had placed on *Tsoodził* in the south they now covered with blue sky. And from a portion of substance which they had brought with them from the world below they fashioned *Dootł'izhii náyoo'áki ashkii*, the Boy Who Is Bringing Back Turquoise. And they fashioned *Naadqá'iq'i náyoo'áki at'ééd*, the Girl Who Is Bringing Back Many Ears of Corn. These two they stationed there to dwell forever as the male god and as the female god of *Tsoodził*, or Mount Taylor as it is called in the language that *Bilagáana* speaks.

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They used a sunbeam to fasten *Dook'o'ooskíid* in the west to the firmament. Then they decorated it with haliotis shell. They decorated it with a variety of animals. It too they decorated it with the black clouds that produce the harsh, sudden male rain.

On the top of *Dook'o'ooskíid* in the west they placed a large bowl of haliotis shell. Into that bowl they placed two eggs of *Tsidiiltsooi* the Yellow Warbler, for they also wanted plenty of feathers on this mountain. Then they covered those eggs with a sacred buckskin to be sure that they would hatch. Which explains why so many yellow warblers live on that mountain to this day.

All that they had placed on *Dook'o'ooskíid* in the west they covered with a yellow cloud. And from material which they had obtained before they left the world below they fashioned *Naadqálgaii ashkii* the White Corn Boy and *Naadqáltsoii at'ééd* the Yellow Corn Girl. These two they stationed to dwell there forever as the male god and as the female god of *Dook'o'ooskíid*, or San Francisco Peak as it would now be called in the language that the White Man speaks.

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They fastened *Dibé nitsaa* in the north to the firmament with a rainbow.¹¹ Then they adorned that mountain with black beads.

They adorned it with many different kinds of plants. They adorned it with many different animals. And it too they adorned with the gray mist that brings the slow, gentle female rain.

On the highest point of *Dibé nitsaa* in the north they placed a large bowl of black beads. Into that bowl they placed two eggs of *Ch'agii* the Blackbird, for they believed that there should also be feathers up there. Which explains why so many blackbirds fly around on that mountain to this very day.

All that they had placed on *Dibé nitsaa* in the north they covered with a blanket of darkness. And from a bundle of things that they had gathered while they were living in the world below they fashioned *Tádídíin ashkii*, the Pollen Boy and *Nahachagii at'ééd* the Grasshopper Girl. These two they stationed to dwell there forever as the male god and as the female god of *Dibé nitsaa*, or the Place of Big Mountain Sheep as it would today be called in the language spoken by *Bilagáana* the White Man.

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After they had secured the mountains that marked the four cardinal points, they built the three central mountains.¹²

Dził ná'oodikii they fastened to the firmament with a sunbeam. They decorated it with all kinds of things, including the dark clouds that bring the male rain. They put nothing on the summit, for they wished to keep it empty so that warriors might be able to fight there. But they placed *Yódí neidiitsi ashkii* the Boy Who Produces Goods there, and they placed *Yódí neidiitsi at'ééd* the Girl Who Produces Goods there to dwell forever as gods.

Ch'óol'í'í they fastened to the firmament with a streak of falling rain. Then they decorated it with pollen and with the dark mist that brings female rain. On its summit they placed *Choozhgháákii* the Bullock Oriole, which is like those that are plentiful there to this day. And there they also put *Nitł'iz neidiitsi ashkii* the Boy Who Produces Jewels and *Nitł'iz neidiitsi at'ééd* the Girl Who Produces Jewels to dwell forever as male god and female god.

And finally they fastened *Ak'i dah nást'áni* to the firmament with a sacred mirage stone.¹³ It they decorated with many different plants, and with the black clouds that bring the male rain. On its summit they placed *Nahachagii* the Grasshopper, whose descendants are abundant there to this day. And there they also placed *Tsé*

hadahoniye' ashkii the Mirage Stone Boy and *Yoo'tichí'í at'ééd* the Carnelian Girl to dwell there forever as gods, it is said.¹⁴

Five

It is also said that the darkness overhead alternated with three feeble shades of light, just as it did in the four lower worlds. So *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman decided to make the fifth world brighter than any of the four lower worlds had been.

They thought about it for a while. And for a long time they talked about what kind of light they wanted.¹⁵ Until they finally decided to make a sun and a moon.

First they fashioned the sun.¹⁶ They made an object round and flat, something like a dish, out of a clear stone called *tséghádi'nidínii* or rock crystal, as *Bilagáana* would call it today.

They set turquoise around the edge of this dish. And just beyond the turquoise they placed rays of red rain. Beyond that they placed bars of lightning. And beyond those they placed shimmering swirls.

At first they thought that they might put four points on it, as they later did with the stars when they made them. But at the last minute they changed their minds and decided that the sun should be round.

Then they fashioned the moon. They made another object round and flat, something like a dish but smaller than the first one they had made. This they made out of *tsésq'*, or rock-star mica as the White Man would call it.

They bordered it with white shells. And on its face they placed sheet lightning, along with a holy mixture of spring water, rain water, snow water, and hail water. Into this mixture they added water they had fetched from the east, from the south, from the west, and from the north.

They looked at what they had done so far. And they thought about it some more and continued to talk about it. For they needed to decide where the sun ought to rise and how it should set.

Níłch'i ha'a'aahdęę'go the East Wind begged to have it brought to his land so that it could begin its journey there. So the people carried it to the edge of the world where he made his home.

Now they needed to give life to the sun that they had made. And they needed to give it a purpose, so that it would serve *Nihookáá' dine'é*, the Earth Surface People who would eventually be created. Likewise they needed to give life to the moon they had made. And likewise they wished to make it useful, also.

So they decided to place the sun in the keeping of the limber young man with the shiny hair and the rays of light sparkling in his eyes. This was the youth who had spread sacred soil on the ground in the fourth world below: the same young man who had planted thirty-two reeds in the ground so that the people could escape the flood and make their way up to this world. And they said that henceforth he should be the carrier of the sun.

Similarly, they placed the moon in the keeping of the grayhaired old man who had appeared with the youth in the world below. This was the man who had brought the soil which the younger man was to scatter. And the people said that henceforth this old man would be the carrier of the moon.

Until now these two men had no names. But now, said *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman and *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man, the carrier of the sun would be known as *Jóhonaa'éí*. In the language of *Bilagáana* that name means The One Who Rules the Day.

And now, said *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman, the carrier of the moon would be called *Tl'éhonaa'éí*. In the White Man's language that name means The One Who Rules the Night.¹⁷

When *Jóhonaa'éí* the Sun and *Tl'éhonaa'éí* the Moon were ready to depart to begin the work that would always be theirs, the people grieved. For everyone had come to love these two. But *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man consoled them, having this to say:

"Do not mourn for them," he said.

"For they will not really be gone from us. You will see *Jóhonaa'éí* the Sun in the sky each day. And on many nights you will see *Tl'éhonaa'éí* the Moon.

"Nor is that all.

"Everyone who dies will eventually be placed in the keeping of these two as a fair exchange for the work done here in this world."¹⁸

That is what *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man said.

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In those earliest of times this world we now live in was much smaller than we find it today. The mountains that marked the limits of our world were not as far apart then as they are today. And when *Jóhonaa'éei* the Sun followed his path in the sky overhead he passed nearer to the earth's surface than he does today.¹⁹

So that on the first day of its travels the sun was intolerably hot. In fact the people nearly burned to death. So they prayed to the four winds that each should pull his mountain further from the center of the world.

Accordingly, *Níłch'i ha'a'aahdég'go* the East Wind pulled. And *Níłch'i shádi'aahdég'go* the South Wind pulled. Likewise *Níłch'i e'e'aahdég'go* the West Wind pulled. And so did *Níłch'i náhookqsdég'go* the North Wind pull.

They all pulled at the same time, as the people prayed they might do. And the seas that bounded the land receded before the mountains. The next day came, and when *Jóhonaa'éei* the Sun followed his path through the sky the earth was still too hot, even if the people did not nearly burn to death as they had done the day before.

Again the people prayed to the four winds. And again each of the four pulled his mountain further from the center of the earth. So that on the third day the world was somewhat cooler. Still, the people were a little hotter than they wanted to be.

As before, the people prayed to the four winds. And as before each of the four pulled his mountain further from the center. So that at last, on the fourth day, the people found the weather pleasant. They did not have to ask again to have the face of the earth changed.

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After four nights had come and gone, *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman and *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man saw that the sky was too dark. More lights were needed up there for those who wished to travel by night, especially when the moon did not shine.²⁰

So they gathered as many fragments of rock-star mica as they could find. For those could be made to shine in the sky and give extra light. Then *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man sketched a design on the ground, so that he could work out a plan for lighting up the heavens. Once he was satisfied with his scheme, he began to carry it out.

Working very slowly and very carefully, he placed one fragment of mica in the north. There he wished to have a star that would never move. By it those who journeyed at night could set their course.

Then he placed seven more pieces of rock-star mica. Those became the seven stars we now see in the north.

Next he placed a bright piece of mica in the south. Likewise, he placed one in the sky to the east. And he put another one in the sky to the west. He did so very carefully and very thoughtfully.

So it was that he slowly built several constellations. For he wanted the results of this work to be perfect. But while he was laboring, along came *Mq'ii* the Coyote.

For a while he watched *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man as he worked. Then he looked down at the pieces of mica that had been gathered. There he found three red fragments. And when he noticed them he had this to say:

"I will take these for my very own stars," he said.

"And I shall place them where I please."

So saying, he put them exactly where we now see three large red stars among the white ones that shine above us in the darkness every night.²¹

Meanwhile, *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man continued his work as carefully as before. One by one he positioned each star according to his original plan. And *Mq'ii* the Coyote watched him, observing the results of First Man's slow progress.

Until at last he grew impatient and cried out, having this to say:

"Never mind doing it that way!" he said.

"Why must I wait this long for your work to be done?"

"Let the stars sit wherever they will."

So saying, he gathered all of *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man's pieces of rock-star mica in his paw. Then he threw them up into the air, blowing a strong breath at them as they flew. Instantly they stuck to the sky helter-skelter in random bunches.²²

At least those stars which *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man had

already placed remained in their proper positions. So some constellations were carefully fixed. Otherwise the stars were scattered across the sky in uneven clusters.

To this very day, those who look at the sky on a dark night can see the unevenly placed stars. And by looking at them they can observe the everlasting disorder created by *Mq'ii* the Coyote in his impatience, it is said.

Six

It is also said that with more room in the fifth world the people began to travel. First they journeyed east. And after one day's walk they reached *Ni'hahoogai* or White Spot on the Earth as *Bilagáana* the White Man would call it.

There they camped. And during that night a young woman gave birth.

She was a beautiful maiden who, during the separation of the men and the women in the world below, had reached the age where she longed for the company of a man.

So early one morning she had torn off an antelope horn, which was fuzzy at the time as growing antelope horns usually are. And after warming it all day long in the light, she had inserted it into herself as darkness fell. With it she spent the whole night trying to make *bijóózh* her vagina shout.

Now she was bringing forth the fruit of that self-abuse: an offspring that looked nothing like an ordinary child. Instead, this infant was a round, misshapen creature with no head.

When the people saw, they were frightened and ashamed. So they held a council and decided that this baby should be abandoned. They threw it into a gully and left it there to die.

Nonetheless it lived, as they were to learn. It would grow up and become a terrible creature *Déélgééd* the Horned Monster. And eventually he would destroy many of the people.²³

The very next day they traveled farther to the east. And as the yellow light of dusk filled the sky they made camp at *Tset'qq'yisgah*, or Rock Bending Back as *Bilagáana* would call it.

There they rested. And during that night another young woman brought forth a child.

She was a comely maiden who, during the separation of the men and the women in the world below, was among those who wanted a man.

So early one morning she had plucked a feather from an eagle's wing. Its stem was thick and coarse at the time, as a newly grown eagle's feather would be. And after warming it all day long in the light, she had inserted it into herself as darkness fell. With it she spent the entire night getting *bijóózh* her vagina to shout.

Now she was experiencing the result of that self-abuse: a child that did not look as an offspring should look. This infant was a round, headless, misshaped creature with broad, feathered shoulders.

The people were more frightened and more ashamed than they had been the day before. They held a council and decided that this baby too should be abandoned. They threw it into a nearby alkali pit and left it there, thinking that it would die.

But nonetheless it lived, as they were to learn. It would grow up and become the fearsome creature *Tsé nináhálééh* the Monster Eagle. Eventually he carried away many people who would never again be seen.

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The following day the people continued traveling east. And when the sky grew yellow with the light of dusk they stopped to camp at *Tsé bináhooteel*, or Broad Flat Area Surrounds the Rock as it would be translated into the White Man's language.

There they slept. And during the night to a third young woman a child was born.

She was a pretty maiden who had found, during the separation of the men and the women in the world below, that she longed to have a man close beside her.

So early one morning she grabbed a smooth, elongated stone. It was crusty and hard as such a stone should be. And after warming it all day in the light, she had inserted it into herself when darkness fell. With it she spent the entire night evoking the shout of *bijóózh* her vagina.

Now she was learning the effect of that self-abuse: a child that looked nothing like ordinary offspring. This infant was a long, headless creature with hard skin whose neck tapered to a crusty, flinty point.

The people were even more greatly frightened and more deeply ashamed. They met in council and decided that this baby should also be abandoned. They threw it into a fissure among the jagged edges of the cliff, and they sealed the fissure with rocks, hoping that the child would die there.

But nonetheless it lived, as they were to learn. It would grow up and become the merciless creature *Tsé dah hodziilákii* The Monster Who Kicks People Down the Cliff. Eventually he would cause many people to be crushed among the rocks in the deep canyons.

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On the day that followed they continued their travels eastward. And when the yellow light of dusk was upon them they stopped and camped at *Tséghálzhinií*, or Black Hole Rock as it would be called in the language of *Bilagáana* the White Man.

There they spent the night. And while they did so for the fourth time a young woman gave birth.

She was a lovely maiden who had found herself torn with desire for the closeness of a man's body during the separation of the men and the women in the world below.

So early one morning during that time she had uprooted a sour cactus and whittled it to a point. It was moist and solid as a fully grown cactus would be. And after warming it all day long in the light, she had inserted it into herself when darkness fell. With it she spent the entire night heeding the shouting voice of *bijóózh* her vagina.

Now she was discovering the consequences of that self-abuse: children that looked nothing like ordinary offspring. These infants were twin mutants instead. They were roundish, headless creatures whose one end tapered to a point, who had no limbs, and who bore two depressions near their topmost extremity that looked somewhat like eyes.

The people grew panicky with fear and were overcome with shame. They gathered and declared that these infants had to be abandoned. So they threw them as far as they could and left them in the dust of the bare earth to die.

But the terrible twin babies did not die. Somehow they took shelter in a nearby pile of brush and lived. They would grow up and become the relentless *Bináá' yee aghání* the Monsters That Kill with Their Eyes. Eventually they would paralyze many of the people with their deadly stare.

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Which explains how monsters came to exist in this world, bringing disorder wherever they went. Such creatures were the fruit of the transgressions that took place in the fourth world, where the men and the women were separated.

Like the men, the women could not endure living apart. And for as long as they lived separately on opposite banks of the same stream, both groups had made a mockery of marriage by masturbating.

As the march to the east continued, other monsters were likewise born. They too were the result of the foolish quarrel that had taken place between *Áłtsé hastiin* the First Man and *Áłtsé asdzáq* the First Woman.

Still other monsters sprang from the blood that was shed during the birth of the first four. And all of them would likewise grow up, as the people were soon to learn.

They would all become enemies and destroyers. Soon they would begin to lurk under rocks and along cliff-paths. They would spring upon passersby and kill them. Then they would devour them. And because of all those monsters the people would live in daily fear, it is said.