

## **In the Beginning**

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In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep. A wind from God swept over the face of the waters... And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome... God called the dome Sky... And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

In the beginning, the Great Sky God looked down and saw the water below. He called to his daughter and dropped her gently, sending her to the water below to give birth to humanity on the earth. The animals saw a light falling and soon realized that it was a woman. One at a time they swam deep under the water to bring up dirt that she might have a solid place to land. First the beaver went down and soon he floated up dead. Next the loon went down and was gone a long time. He too floated up dead. Then muskrat went down and was gone a very long time. He finally came gasping to the surface and he died – but in his paw he clutched a small handful of earth. The other animals called to turtle and turtle came and they placed the earth on turtles back and turtle grew and grew until there was a whole continent for the woman to land on...

From the deep, dark, watery depths of chaos, from the primordial ooze came the first forms of life. Swimming and floating in the waves of the great oceans. The first single cell life forms reproduced and evolved and changed and grew, becoming more and more complex. Eventually the first life forms crawled from the water to the shores and took a breath of sweet, clean air. These life forms evolved again, and again until the creatures of the earth and the air came forth as we now know them.

We were not present when God created the heavens and the earth. We were not present when the Great Sky God's Daughter landed and gave birth to the first humans. We were not present when life on earth when life moved through the stages of evolution to create the diversity of life on earth. We were not there. We know from the many myths and stories passed down to us and from the myths and stories that we have created that all life on earth began with water and all life on earth requires water to survive. We know these myths and stories shape our understanding of history, of the world and of the future.

Those who came before us shaped the world we live in.

Those who came before us developed tools, and wove carpets and baskets. They gave us beautiful, inspired art in painting, sculpture and music.

Those who came before us learned to herd animals and tame them and ride them. They learned to grow and cultivate plants. They developed rituals to recognize and greet the seasons.

Those who came before us built cities and roads and built carts to move things across the earth. They designed aqueducts and cathedrals and sacred places for worship.

Those who came before us developed language, writing, math and science. They developed rituals to honor the transitions of birth, coming of age, marriage and death.

Those who came before us dug artesian wells to drink from and they dug wells of thought from which we drink their collected knowledge.

The river of our spirit, of our soul runs deep with the wisdom of those who have come before us. We, each of us, can drink deeply from that stream. Dipping in and savoring the cool, clear water as if flows past us, through us reminding us of our connection to all life to all that has come before us. We reach our hand into the water and hear the voices of our ancestors singing of the beauty of the trees in the forest. We move our hand and feel the rhythm of the ancients drumming the dance of the hunt. We breath deeply and catch the sweet sent of the cook fires burning in the banks of the river. We reach in and see the tiny creatures floating freely in the current and we are reminded of our own humble beginnings.

We know all of this. Even in our modern life, distant as we are from the physical waters. If we take the time to quiet ourselves, we know that we are only a small drop in the river. One droplet among many creating a vast and deep current. If we take the time to quiet ourselves, we see our lives reflected in the river. We know that we are not alone as we move over the rapids and waterfalls as we fill the pools and hollows. Like small brooks and streams flowing toward the sea, our lives meet and merge and combine with others creating new waterways filling them with our ever-expanding knowledge of the world and experience of the sacred.

Those who come after us will live in a world that we have shaped.

Those who come after us will live with the tools that the marvels of technology have provided us. They will experience the art and music that we have created.

Those who come after us will live with the repercussions of genetically engineered livestock and plants. They will question our definition of the sacred.

Those who come after us will know of our great architectural structures of steel, concrete and glass in the cities we have built.

Those who come after us will understand how we used language, writing, math and science. They will learn from the experimentation and the rituals we leave behind.

Those who come after us will drink from the wells and the water treatment plants that we have built. They will wonder about our understanding of reverence for the earth and for all life.

Those who come after us will drink from the wells of thought which have collected our knowledge and combine it with the knowledge of our ancestors.

We are not alone in the current. We reach down deep into the cold clear waters of the river of our soul and know our small, but important place in the vastness of the flowing current. Together we hold the wisdom of the sacred. The wisdom of the past and the hope for the future. Together we fill the banks, working to keep the waters clean and sweet for those who will come after us. Together we come, sharing our waters, our wisdom, our lives. Welcome, drink deeply from this river- it is vast. Its history is the well worn stones found sitting on the bed. It's power is felt in the energy of the swiftly flowing current. It's healing peace is found in the silence of the pools and hollows.