

AZTEC CREATION

Before the earth had form, there was Coatlicue, the Earth Mother. She swam in the chaotic waters in the darkness before time.

She created the moon and the stars, called the Centzon Huitznahua.

She had a daughter, the earth goddess Coyolxauhqui. Her children ascended to the heavens to live and rule the sky.

One day Coatlicue found a ball of hummingbird feathers. She tucked them into her dress for safe-keeping.

After a while she discovered that she was pregnant.

Her children in heaven were ashamed of their mother.

“Who is the father of this child?” they demanded.

“It was a ball of hummingbird feathers!”

But no one believed her story. Her children decided to slay their mother, for the great shame and dishonor she brought them.

Coatlicue heard the news that her children were coming to slay her- she was terrified and tried to run.

She could already see them advancing towards her over the hills.

“Do not be afraid. I am ready. “ Came a voice from the unborn child.

It was then that she gave birth to fiery sun god Huitzilopochtli; he emerged fully armed, bearing his burning sword Xihcoatl.

With one stroke he slew the angry earth goddess Coyolxauhqui, and sent her body tumbling towards the chaotic seas.

The top half of her body went into the heavens and the lower half crashed into the seas, forming the earth.

After this, Huitzilopochtli went up to the heavens to rule over the moon and the stars, and Coatlicue descended below the earth, to ensure that the earth bore fruit.

It was one of her sons, Quetzacoatl the Feathered Serpent, who created the first humans.

He created a race of men from grey ash.

At first, the earth gave its riches freely for the new race of men. Their lives were easy and they lived without pain and suffering.

After a while however, these men became greedy. They forgot to honor their creators and took the earth's riches for granted.

Quetzacoatl became enraged and decided to wash them all away in a great flood.

Only one couple was not greedy; a husband and wife named Teta and Nena. Quetzacoatl decided to spare these two and gave them instructions.

“Find the tallest and strongest hollow tree. Hide in it and you shall live. Take only one cob of corn with you, and no more.”

Teta and Nena did as they were told.

Quetzacoatl sent the waters crashing down over his creations. The greedy men and women turned into fish, and are still fish today.

Teta and Nena survived as Quetzacoatl promised. They repopulated the world with a new race of men, humble and always aware of the gods who created them.

But Coatlicue the Earth Mother was no longer as generous with this earth's riches as before.

She became known as "The Grandmother"; wearing a skirt made of serpents, a necklace made from human hands and hearts and adorned with a skull. Her hands and feet were decorated with animal claws.

She became insatiably hungry for human blood and demanded regular human sacrifice.

Thus humans had to give her one living human heart each year. If they didn't Coatlicue would withdraw the earth's gifts and everyone on earth would die of starvation.

