

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

The Securing of Light

Coyote slept with his head toward the south. It was cold.

He slept with his head toward the west. It was cold.

He slept with his head toward the north. It was cold.

He slept with his head toward the east. His head became warm. He dreamed.

"I shall go on a journey soon," he told his family. He set out.

"What will be my dog?," he thought. He tried many kinds without being satisfied.

He kicked a mole out of the ground. "I do not want that," he said to himself.

He kicked out some long-eared mice. "These will be my dogs," he said.

"Come, go with me. It is far. It is dark. Are you hungry I Shall I kill a squirrel for you."

"No. We do not want squirrels. We like acorns and clover."

"Come, travel along. Swim across."

They traveled on.

"I am tired. I will rest. You lie down."

He sang a song. "Come. We will go on. It must be only a short way now. Are your feet in good condition?"

They went on. He did not stop for meals. He only drank water as he traveled.

"It must be near, my dogs."

Mole and lizard were burning a tree down. Coyote saw them as he was passing.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"Lizard has a fire built under a tree," long-eared mice told him.

"We will go around them. They might see us."

"There stands a house. You stop here and I will give you directions what to do. You must chew off the straps that hold the sun that I am going to carry off. You must leave the ones I am to carry it with. When you are through, poke me with your noses. You lie here. After awhile, when it is night, you will come in behind me."

Coyote went into the house.

"I do not want food, grandmother. I will sleep."

"Yes," said the old woman. (The sun was covered with a blanket and tied down in the middle of the house.)

"Hand me that blanket, grandmother."

"Yea, take it." Covering his head in it he began to sing, "You sleep, you sleep, you sleep."

"What makes that noise? It never used to be so."

"You sleep, you sleep, you sleep."

"I am afraid of you, my grandchild."

"Oh, I was dreaming. I have traveled a long way. I am tired."

"You sleep, you sleep, you sleep."

They slept. The long-eared mice came back and poked him with their noses.

"Well, I have finished," one of them said.

"Go outside," he told them.

Coyote got up, took the sun, and carried it out.

"Come on, we will run back."

Mole saw them and began saying, "He is carrying off the sun." No one heard him, his mouth was so small.

Lizard saw them.

"He is carrying the sun off," he called. He took up a stick and beat on the house. Both the old women got up and chased Coyote. They kept following him.

"Come, run fast, my dogs."

"I am tired now."

"YelinduN is close by."

"Black-water-creek country is over there where the house is standing," he told his dogs.

He carried his load up YatcuLsaikw'ut.

"We had nearly fixed it," the women called after him.

"Yes, you had nearly fixed it. You were hiding it."

The women stopped there.

"Turn into stones right where you are sitting."

They turned into stones right there. They didn't reply because they had become stones.

Coyote carried the sun to the top of the ridge and followed along its crest until he came to the house. He went in and looked around. No one was at home. He went out again without anyone knowing what had happened.

He sliced up what he had brought. "This shall come up just before day," he said of the morning-star.

"This shall be named 'atcegegutcuk,' and shall rise afterward," he said as he cut off another.

"Sunlanc shall rise," he said to still another. Then he cut and cut.

"There shall be many stars," he said as he put the pieces in the sky. It was all gone.

Taking up the piece he had fixed first he said, "This sun shall come up in the east. It shall go down. It shall go around (to the north).

This one shall travel at night," he said of another piece.

"It shall go around. The sun shall be hot. The moon shall be cold."

"Father, something is above," said the little boy.

"Keep still," Coyote called out to him. "They may be frightened."

"Mother, something has grown out of the sky. Look there."

"Stop. Come in. Lie down again," she told him.

"Look, something," he said.

The mother ran out. The father lay still.

"Say, mother, it is getting red."

"So it is. Yes. Get up."

"Look, mother."

"So it is. I see a mountain. Over there is another. It is beautiful. It is getting red. It has become beautiful."

"Mother, something is coming up."

"Mother, the mountain is afire."

"It is getting larger."

"It moves."

"Mother, we can see."

"What is that yonder, father!"

"It is the sun."

"It is going down."

"It has gone into the water."

It was like it had been previously.

"We will go to sleep, my boys."

"Wake up. Something is rising. Look."

"Father, what is coming up Look."

"No. That is the moon."

"Oh, yes, it moves."

"Father, it (star) is coming up."

"Father, it is getting red again."

"Father, day is breaking."

"It is daylight. The moon is up there."

"Father, it moves so slowly."

"It is going down, father."

"Yes, it will go down. I arranged for the moon to go down."

Coyote lay in bed two days.