



maria vidal

## The Birth of Venus *(El nacimiento de Venus)*

Traditional Aztec story

Marcos Carías

The good god and creator Quetzalcoatl performed two miracles for human beings. First of all, he made corn so that human beings would have food, and secondly, he sent his son, Ce Acatl Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl (Our Prince One-Reed Feathered Serpent), to govern them.

There never was a better ruler and never did the people live so happily. However, all this made Tezcatlipoca and his followers very envious. Tezcatlipoca was the brother of the good god and creator Quetzalcoatl, although a very mean brother because all he ever did was send down calamities on the humans.

Topiltzin loved peace. Tezcatlipoca and his followers loved violence and war. They wanted war so that they could steal other people's possessions and take prisoners for slaves or kill them.

So Topiltzin's enemies tricked him. They mixed a potion into his cup of chocolate that made Topiltzin fall into a deep sleep. Once he was asleep they took his clothes off and poured liquor all over his body, from his head to his toes, to make him act and smell like a drunk.

Then, they went and told the inhabitants of Tollan that the good king wanted to receive them all the next morning. And when the inhabitants went to see their king, they found him drunk, talking nonsense and

stinking of alcohol. Everyone laughed at him.

The young Topiltzin had such a good heart that he was incapable of imagining that anyone could have tricked him. He thought he had misbehaved and blamed himself. He gave up his throne and abandoned the kingdom. His enemies had triumphed and there was no more happiness in the land.

Topiltzin reached the seashore. It was past dusk and already dark. The good god and creator, Quetzalcoatl, his father, decided to offer human beings a gleam of hope by sending Topiltzin up into the sky to become the evening star.

The young Topiltzin asked his father if he could also contemplate the Earth in the morning to cheer humans up with his light when they got up. The good god and creator agreed and made him into the morning star as well. As the young prince of the feathered serpent reached the sky, the celestial body now known as Venus was born.

### Dawn and dusk

Although we cannot see the Sun in the sky in the early morning or late evening, the sky itself does not become light or dark immediately. At daybreak the light gradually increases, while it decreases at nightfall. This occurs because, even though the Sun is below the horizon, its light shines on the atmosphere and the air spreads the light.



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