

Divine Twins (Flash x 4)

by Jo Thomas - Saturday, August 05, 2017

<http://journeymouse.net/wp/?p=4534>

I

They say the first beings in the world were the Weavers, although they didn't have their forms – because no story exists without a beginning, a middle and an end, and the world cannot exist without a before, a during and an after. But the first two forms were the Divine Twins made of Air and Water. No-one knows who made them or what came before. Perhaps they made themselves.

These two brothers wrapped around each other and played and fought as brothers do, until the day the Weavers whispered to them that they would be the only things to truly exist until one or the other of them was killed and the world created from their remains. The world would be created in the image of the victor and the loser would become a shadow barely remembered, used to terrify the young.

Air did not understand this and laughed, for why would he kill his brother and why would his brother kill him?

But “Why do you laugh?” asked Water, as if he had not heard the whisper of the Weavers.

Confused, Air knew doubt for the first time and replied, “Nothing.”

“You laugh at me?” asked Water and, enraged, he lashed out at Air.

And Air was cut, an arc of blood escaping from his body and forming a glistening band around them. Air firmed his body into a shape and his eyes shone with his rage.

“Why did you do that?” he asked his brother, though he also lashed out as he spoke.

The cut through Water went deeper and more blood flowed, becoming a deep pool beneath them. Water became more sinuous and coiled, winding around his brother to hold him still.

So the two brothers fought, with Water putting out Air's shining eyes so that they rolled around in all directions and could not be caught, and Air tearing pieces from Water so that he was forced to shape himself into a many headed serpent as he tried to constrict around his brother. But, when Air had reduced Water to little more than a skeleton and the lumps of him had become islands in the pooling blood beneath them and the stars of Air's blood glistened enough to light their struggle clearly, Air managed to land a killing blow.

For a time, he lay in the new world, blinded by the loss of his eyes and heart-broken over the loss of his brother, who was all he had ever known. Then he began to reshape the children of Water into his own image.

II

The Sun and Moon are twins, although it may not seem like it with Moon a dull reflection of his sister. They were born from the Sky, who fathered all that is good, when his eyes were ripped out in his fight against the evil, chaotic First Waters, who fathered all monsters. This is the story of how Moon became such a pale, wan, changeable thing.

When Sun and Moon were first torn from their father, they were thrown to the Earth and the Ocean, the children of the First Waters who had not yet been tamed by the will of the Sky, and these two children of the Great Dragon conspired to trap and kill the children of the First Hero. So the Earth made a cave, and the Ocean made such soothing sounds against the entrance that the Sun and the Moon were tempted into investigating it in the hope that it would be a good place to rest until their father needed them.

But, when their father called for them, the twins could not leave the cave, for the Ocean had turned the soothing lapping to the thundering of white horses' hooves that lashed out and wounded the two of them. The Sun fought hard, thrusting with her bright golden spear, and the Moon defended her with his shining silver shield but they could only hold the raging horses at bay, because they were both young and inexperienced. They called to their father but the Sky was busy with his own fight.

Seeing that the advantage was there, the Earth created a monstrous black bull within the cave that breathed noxious steam and rocked the ground with every touch of its great cloven hooves. The Sun did not notice but the Moon felt the noxious steam upon his neck and turned to face this new monster.

The Moon took the bull's charge on his silver shield, which was dented out of shape.

The Moon took the bull's second charge on his silver shield, which was broken.

The Moon took the bull's third charge without his silver shield, and he was broken.

The Sun screamed.

Her father, Sky, heard this cry and the terror and pain of it fuelled his own fight so that he was able to slay the First Waters. The Earth and the Ocean, scared of the victor, withdrew their horses and bull, realising that the Sky would punish them for their plans.

"Father," screamed the Sun. "My brother is slain."

And the Sky, touched by his daughter's pain, came to her side.

"Do not let him die," she begged.

The Sky, seeing her distress, said, "He must, for his life force is gone."

"Then let him have mine," said the Sun.

So the Sky took some of her divinity and gave just enough to the Moon for him to be able to live among them. But the Moon is allowed to follow his own path instead of his sister's in memory of his sacrifice.

III

The Queen of Horses was the daughter of the great River. When she was born, she tamed the horses of her grandfather, the Ocean, and the cattle of her grandmother, the Earth. Seeing the opportunity to win the favour of All-Father Sky, her family had her train four white horses to pull a chariot and sent her to the domain of the All-Father to gift them to the Sun as recompense for their crimes. When she did so, she came to the All-Father's attention and he was greatly impressed – so impressed that he asked her to stay as his footholder (for the All-Father must have his feet held from the ground if he is not at war and no-one wishes to fight the All-Father).

In time, the Queen of Horses' belly became too great to hold the All-Father's feet and another footholder was found.

In time, her children were born, two boys – although only one had the full divine glow that marked him as the All-Father's son and it was clear that the other was not despite his own subtle glow of lesser divinity. So the All-Father called his son "Oath" for his mother's oath of loyalty and called the other "Second Wave" for the First Water's nature that had corrupted the mother and lay within him.

He sent them to the care of their sister, the Sun, who raised them to be great heroes who would fight the monsters of their First Waters' blood. But when they were old enough to go out into the world, the Weavers' whispered to Oath that Second Wave was only mortal and would never survive the life the All-Father had planned for them. So Oath went before his mother and begged for some power that might make Second Wave immortal as he was.

"He is the All-Father's grandson as you are the All-Father's son," said the Queen of Horses. "He is as immortal as you."

Although, in this, she was unsure.

"Who is his father?" asked Oath.

And this she couldn't or wouldn't answer.

"But take two of your grandfather, the Ocean's, best horses with you as your mounts and you will surely beat or escape any danger," she said, for she loved them both well enough.

And so they did, being great heroes who fought the evil of the First Waters' offspring wherever they found it, until the day they fought the Great Serpent, whose noxious breath killed Second Wave when he breathed it in.

Oath screamed for his mother, but she would not come and only wailed for the death of her son.

Oath screamed for his father, but he would not come and only lamented that he did not know which of his sons had seduced his footholder.

Oath screamed for his foster-mother, and she came.

“For the sake of the act that brought my own twin back to life,” the Sun said, “I will ease your pain as best I can.”

So the Sun shared Oath’s divinity between the two and set Oath to be her companion in the early morning as a promise that chaos could be held back and Second Wave to be her companion in the evening as a reminder that all can face the darkness in themselves.

III

When Man was born, he had a Twin. These two brothers wandered the earth together, driving their cattle before them, until the day the Weavers whispered that one must die because they could not both live when they were so disfavoured by the gods.

Man did not understand this and laughed, for why would he kill his brother and why would his brother kill him?

“Why do you laugh?” asked Twin, as if he had not heard the whisper of the Weavers.

Confused, Man knew doubt for the first time and replied, “Nothing.”

“You laugh at me?” asked Twin and, enraged, he lashed out at Man.

Man avoided the strike and said softly, “Perhaps we should part ways for a while and meet back here when our emotions have cooled.”

But Twin replied, “Why should I let you steal my cattle from me? I have worked hard tending and protecting them while you have done little but watch me and gather plants.”

The falsehood angered Man where the fate-telling had not and he also lashed out, this time with a rock in hand. The rock struck Twin’s head and he fell to the ground, senseless.

“Oh, All-Father,” Man cried. “I have killed my brother and feel as if my heart has been torn from me.”

“Your sacrifice is accepted, little man,” said the All-Father. “You have finally repaid Me for all the gifts I have given you.”

“But my brother,” said Man.

“Will make a fine foundation for your settlement,” said the All-Father. “Build you your house upon his bones and My temple where his head rests.”

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