

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Sky Woman

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6kf0d102>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 39(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Wood, Karenne

Publication Date

2015

DOI

10.17953/aicr.39.1.j162668p116w7113

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



Sky Woman

Karenne Wood

Long ago, this world was water without land.
All the people lived in the sky. Some say
a great chief's daughter fell. Others say she
was ill, or that she carried life in her womb.
Somehow she fell from the heavens. Some say she
chased a bear. Some say the tree of life was uprooted
or that people dug it up because someone dreamed it,
and she fell through the hole left behind. Some say
a man kicked her through the hole. They call her
Ataensic, Sky Woman. She fell for a long time.

On the surface, water birds floated. They watched
the woman fall from afar. Some joined together,
so that she could fall onto them. She couldn't swim
like a water bird. They did not know what to do.
The great Turtle spoke up. "I can carry her,"
he said. She crawled onto his back. Some say
Muskrat dove to the bottom of the world.
Others say it was Frog. Someone swam down
and returned with a handful of mud. Together
they spread it across Turtle's shell to form earth.

KARENNE WOOD (Monacan) directs Virginia Indian Programs at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and is a PhD candidate and Ford Fellow in anthropology at the University of Virginia. Her first book, *Markings on Earth*, won the North American Native Authors' First Book award. Her poems have appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *Shenandoah*, and previous issues of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*.

Sky Woman gave birth to a daughter, who in turn bore twin boys. Some say one was good and one evil. Some say the evil one killed their mother. One twin made sun, moon, and stars. He made mountains and trees, new animals, plants. The other made darkness, storms, dangerous creatures. When they were finished creating, the twins fought. Some say one died. Some say this story is the beginning of everything. Some say it's not about good or evil but balance.