MYTHS

The following list accompanies the stories from the Myths chapter to be found in the *Allyn & Bacon Anthology of Traditional Literature* edited by Judith V. Lechner, Allyn & Bacon, 2003.

“Isis and Osiris”
*A picture book for older children that captures the art style of ancient Egypt is:*


“Ganesha, the Elephant Headed God”
*Two enjoyable collections of Indian myths and legends which include variants of the story of “The Elephant Headed God” are:*


“Minerva (Athena)”
*A good summary of the gods and their attributes for children are the following:*


“Thrym Steals Mjollnir”
*Collections of Norse myths for children usually include this story. Some of these collections are:*

- *Osborne, Mary Pope. Favorite Norse Myths. Illustrated by Troy Howell, Scholastic, 1996.*

  A picture book version is:


“The Death of Balder”

Besides the children’s collections of Norse myths listed under the previous story “Thrym Steals Mjollnir,” the following collection of creation myths also includes the “Death of Balder:”


“Why the Sun Rises When the Rooster Crows”

Two picture books that tell similar versions are


  The following collection also includes the story:


“The Great Deeds of King Yü”

The following is a picture book that relates the myths of the five mythical emperors:


“Echo and Narcissus”

Several contemporary collections for children between grades four and eight, the prime age for reading about myths, are:


**“Demeter (Ceres)”**

Picture book versions of the story that provide interesting contrasts in interpretation are:


**“The Council Tree,” “Hah-nu-nah, the Turtle,” “The Two Brothers”**


**“The Creation or Age of Beginning”**

The two picture books below tell of how snail helped bring fresh water to the land and how the rivers were formed.


Bruchac retells a more accessible version than O’Bryan’s ethnographic recording in:

- Caduto, Michael J. and Joseph Bruchac. *Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children*. Illustrated by John Kahionhes Fadden and Carol Wood. Fulcrum Press, 1989. This version provides a more direct account of the emergence into the fourth (not fifth) world, it does not emphasize the sexual tension
between males and females among the First People, and the creative force is represented by Begochidi instead of Coyote.

“Ga-do-was, His Star Belt – The Milky Way”

Two books for children that include Native American myths about the Milky Way are:

- **Bruchac, Joseph and Gayle Ross.** *The Story of the Milky Way: A Cherokee Tale.* Illustrated by Virginia A. Stroud. Dial, 1995. This Cherokee version focuses on how the Milky Way was formed when a Spirit Dog from the sky, who kept stealing cornmeal from an elderly couple, was frightened back into the sky and while escaping spilled the cornmeal, forming the Milky Way.


“Hunting the Great Bear”


- **Goble, Paul.** *Her Seven Brothers.* Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993. This Cheyenne story of the formation of the Big Dipper is significantly different from the Iroquois myth. This myth is widespread among the Plains Indians.


“Prometheus”

One of the newer collections to include “Prometheus” is:


“Orpheus”


- **Mikolaycak, Charles.** *Orpheus.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. This is a visually stunning version, according to *Kirkus Review.* They recommend it for older students.
because of the “heroic nudes” and Orpheus’s tragic death by dismemberment, which, however, is not presented in a sensationalist manner, but rather underscores the emotional power of the myth. Grades 7 and up.


“Psyche”
Several picture books and collection of myths include this romantic tale:

“Icarus and Daedalus”
Picture book versions have taken both approaches as well as the approach that Icarus’s fall was a warning for children to obey their parents:
- Petras, Kathryn and Ross Petras. *Mythology*. Workman Publishing, 1998. Fifty myths on die-cut cards include “Icarus and Daedalus.” Laura Hummel of Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database reviews says, “Educators and students will delight in the unique format of knowledge at their fingertips. Both sides of the cards contain text that is illustrated richly with images of mosaics, frescoes, pottery, reliefs, paintings, and statues, making this a source difficult to resist.”
• Yolen, Jane. *Wings.* Illustrated by Dennis Nolan. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991. Yolen emphasizes the concept of hubris and Daedalus’s failing in this regard. She begins the story further back than most versions for children do, providing an explanation for why Daedalus and Icarus were imprisoned on the Island of Crete. This was an IRA “Children’s Choice” book. Ages 6 and up.

“The Spirit Chief Names the Animal People”

• *Hay-en-doh-nees (Leo Cooper), Seneca Indian Stories,* Greenfield Review Press, 1995. This is a Seneca variant of the same story.


“The Theft of Fire” (Hatchiti – Native American)

Two collections that include Southeastern versions of the theft of fire and of the sun are

• *Virginia Pound Brown and Laurella Owens, Southeastern Indian Myths and Legends.* Beechwood Books, 1985, in which two versions of the ‘theft of fire’ are combined, and

• *Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children.* Fulcrum Pub. (1989) Bruchac retells a Muskogee story in which Grandmother Spider weaves a web, to be able to bring back the sun and buzzard places it in the sky.

Both themes are also popular in picture book form:

• *London, Jonathan. The Fire Race: A Karuk Coyote Tale.* Illustrated by Sylvia Long Chronicle Books, 1993. This is a Modoc (California) version in which Coyote steals fire from the Yellow Jacket Sisters and all the animals work together to carry it off.


“The Obtaining of Fire”
• Dorson, Mercedes & Jeanne Wilmot. *Tales From the Rain Forest: Myths and Legends From the Amazonian Indians of Brazil*. Ecco Press, 1997. This includes another version of this story that more clearly explains why today Jaguar is dangerous to humans.


“**The Theft of Fire**” (Tonga)

Children’s versions of stories about Maui and other Hawaiian myths include:


• Tune, Suelyn Ching and Robin Yoko Burningham’s *How Maui Slowed the Sun*, University of Hawaii Press, 1988.

Three books of myths from New Zealand are:


• Te Kanawa, Kiri. *Land of the Long White Cloud: Maori Myths, Tales, and Legends*, Illustrated by Michael Foreman, Arcade Pub., 1989. This is a lovely retelling by the Maori opera singer.