

# Dust

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Perhaps it is rooted in arrogance, a desire to prove ourselves central, important, perhaps it is a necessity of the curious mind that conceived Clovis point from stone, flour from water, microchip from silicon. Who is your father? Who is your mother? From this most immediate level the human obsession with creation begins. What is your family and from whence did they come? And once the mists of time have been probed to the point where all family lines blur to obscurity, the question becomes broader, deeper, and it is no longer an issue of "I" or "you" it is the question of "us," "we." Where do we come from? For time immemorial, every civilization has sought, found, and refined the answer to this question; the creation myth is as fundamental a part of society as the citizens. The myth that begins where what we "know" stops, the story that takes all the imponderables and ties them together in a bundle. Packaged for easy consumption that we might not feel too small in the face of the world around us. From the raven who flew the world out of night on his wings to the God of the Old Testament who toiled for 6 days, humans and their world have, for millennia, sprung, fully featured, from the womb of a creator.

Perhaps it is religion's very strength, the immovable rock on which we can stand as the storms of life buffet us, that is also its terminal weakness. Its inability to change will ultimately render it unable to meet the needs of those it serves, for religion is indeed a servant. A servant tasked with explaining the unexplainable, warding off the unavoidable. And so old Gods are left behind, hovering over crumbling altars as the wind makes hollow music in the abandoned organs of their empty cathedrals. The human mind is gone, leaping ahead, leaving them behind and demanding explanation of greater unknowns. For it is on the fringe of unknown that myth grows. And often, the edge of knowledge is diffuse, coalescing and dissolving like clouds in a hot summer sky, pulsing like the very blood in our veins.

And so the mind has leapt forward, to the edges of the universe, where creation and myth are not a matter of human bodies but of infinitesimal particles. Pieces so small that they filter to nothing. As we travel down a subatomic spiral we reach the point where it is impossible to discern whether matter is present or not, and here the seed of myth, the seed of creation, grows again. A myth is a story and the story of our creation is an awe-inspiring journey from nothing, an infinitesimally small point, containing all the matter in the universe, to now. A myth so fantastic that embracing it, understanding it, dwarfs us and we must rise to this story, this knowledge. Our search for understanding of creation, rooted in the arrogance of proving ourselves to be "someone," central, important, places us nowhere near the center. Instead we occupy a planetary backwater. A one horse town with our, now, eight planets ranged four on either side of the street, false fronts sagging forward, leaning skyward with false bravado. Terrestrial, rocky faced against gaseous -- Pluto the red light district on the wrong side of the tracks, outcast. We look out of our windows at night and see the thousands of

burning lights, the same lights that countless civilizations have looked to for answers. The same lights that have made countless civilizations feel small, and our myth, our story, makes us feel smaller still. It takes some time to grow into smallness, though the magnificence is undeniable. Glacier capped peaks against a molten evening sky we are not, our planet, our solar system, is the exquisitely intricate interior of an orchid.

From that rapidly expanding point of matter our dust coalesced. Our dust spun in the cold emptiness of space. Spinning, coalescing, joining with others to fight back the cold and the darkness. Joining to form heat, light, to fill the void. As our dust coalesced it changed. Compacting, filtering, altering its state, differentiating. Soft, hard, light heavy, our dust was all and became all and from cold we were born into fire. And through fire we filtered still. Settling, rising, separating, combining, tempering, *creating*. Until at last our dust spun, quenched at the surface, molten beneath, solid beyond, bathed in the rays of our sun, shielded by an electromagnetic shroud. Rotating around our central star. Rotating in the limb of our galaxy. Circles within circles within circles our dust spun. And the particles we can't see, the particles we think we know are there, continued to change and one day changed themselves. And changed themselves further, and in doing so, changed our planet, our dust, and life rose from the dust and covered our planet. Growing, changing. Spinning from one cell to many, from plant to animal, spinning individual threads, spinning threads to yarn, to cloth, spinning, weaving our dust into a cloak for the surface of the planet, each thread layered upon the one before, supporting the one beyond. And still the planet spun, and it rubbed the cloak, and, threadbare in spots, the cloak mended itself. Adding new colors, new textures, new warps and weaves as needed. And so today we spin, shining, a jewel, a drop of dew on a flower petal burnished in the rays of a second rate star. A miracle, spinning in obscurity, gazing out at a million brilliant lights, wondering from whence they came and who it was that wove this cloak when, in the end, it was the dust.