



Legend of Death (Northern Lights)

Long ago we were told that we didn't die or pass away, we kept living on this earth. But eventually it got to the point where there were too many of us and all the food and space were being all used up.

All the grandfathers got together and decided there needed to be a change, so everyone on the council got together to come up with ideas on what to do about this overpopulation. What they came up with was maybe if people left this world to be in spirit form and then come back later.

Coyote stood up and said, "Wait a minute, I think people should just leave and not come back so we always have enough food!" The other grandfathers objected instantly! What they finally decided was they were going to build a huge sweat lodge, where the people who are in spirit form after some time can come back and return to their physical form.

They decided to give it a try, but the Coyote didn't like this one bit. He thought to himself, "This is wrong, we should just get rid of them." So Coyote stormed off.

That's how it was for some time. The grandfathers decided the older people could turn into spirit form and travel around the earth without having to eat or sustain their bodies.

They'd still be able to see the other people and the people could still see them as dancing lights and wind tornadoes.

After 4 years they would return to the big lodge and come out as their physical form and walk the earth as a person again. After another 4 years passed, they'd return to the lodge and go back into their spirit form.

Coyote returned and thought, "I've had enough, there has to be a better way to do this!" He waited until there were no grandfathers around, then he ran to the lodge and closed the door. When the spirits came to return to their physical form, they couldn't get into the lodge because they couldn't move anything in their spirit form. Coyote smiled to himself because he thought he just solved the problem but he was wrong. Spirits from all over started to return to the lodge and couldn't get in and it started to cause more and more problems!

The other grandfathers called a meeting as soon as they heard what Coyote did and they called upon the Creator and asked, "Creator, please we need to solve this problem." So Creator said, "Okay, I don't usually get involved with the people, but I will this time!"

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Creator made a world where the spirits can go once they leave the earth, but he also made a road in the sky that connects the earth and the spirit world and once they cross they can't come back.

Eventually, everyone will be together in the spirit world. When he was done he called upon Coyote and scolded him for causing more problems and said, "From now on, for what you did you can only come out at night and you must hang your head close to the ground in shame for what you did even though in the end everything works out!"

We are told that Creator made it so when the spirits cross that road they will wait for everyone to follow that road in the sky and everyone can be together again. Our elders tell us that on clear nights we can see that spirit road in the sky and see our loved ones as they walk and dance down the spirit road on their way to the land of spirits. Today we call that road the Northern Lights.

Ekosi Maka