What is a Corn Mother?

From Taos, New Mexico to the Hopi mesas of Arizona, the oral traditions of story continue to shape the living culture of the Pueblo peoples. Historically, one central figure in these traditions has been the Corn Mother, the giver of life. This legendary entity is important to the Pueblo cultures, as she is synonymous with Mother Earth and represents growth, life, creativity, and the feminine aspects of the world.

Although her influence diminished with the coming of the Spanish conquest and the introduction of Christianity, Pueblo communities still preserve their knowledge of the Corn Mother. Some legends say that she will return one day to bring harmony and enlightenment.

Corn Mothers can be found throughout all cultures throughout the world. This year’s JTOH theme includes Corn Mothers from near and far throughout history. We hope you will do research about Corn Mothers in your communities here at home and even in your own family.

Mexica Tiau!

-Dr. Renee Fajardo
JTOH Coordinator
At dawn on December 9, 1531, on Tepeyac Hill, Mexico Valley an aspiration appeared to Juan Diego, a recently baptized Nahuatl speaking man.

She identified herself as Virgin of Guadalupe the Mother of God. She confirmed her "divinity" in three acts: curing Juan Diego's uncle of an illness, causing Castillian roses to bloom in the dead of winter and by causing her image to appear on the tilma worn by Juan Diego.

This image is of a lone dark-skinned woman treading on a snake. She is wearing a maternity sash around her waist, her velo was jade green. Her skin was brown and she spoke Nahuatl therefore she is also called Tonantzin, the Aztec’s Mother.

She desired a shrine to be built there to bear witness to her love, her compassion, and her protection. The Archbishop of Mexico City dismissed the requests twice until the third when Juan Diego opened up his tilma before him there was the painted image along with the roses.

In the next seven years, eight million indigenous men and women were converted to Catholicism. The Spaniards continued to colonize Mexico and to extend the teachings of the church.

La Basilica del Tepeyac is one of Mexico’s most important shrines.

SECTION I: ChicanA/Latina diaspora

- In the early 1950s, she completed a teaching degree at Delta Community College, part of the University of the Pacific.
- She briefly worked as an elementary school teacher where she saw her students, many of them children of farm workers, were living in poverty without enough food to eat or other basic necessities.
- She became one of the founders of the Stockton chapter of the Community Services Organization (CSO) which helped to improve social and economic conditions for farm workers and to fight discrimination.
- She is one of the most of many prestigious Chicano studies icons having work hand in hand with Cesar Chavez.
- She was vice president of United Farm Workers, she organized the southern half of California.

- She is an American writer best known for her acclaimed first novel The House on Mango Street (1984).
- Her work experiments with literary forms and investigates emerging subject positions.
- Cisneros herself attributes growing up in a context of cultural hybridity and economic inequality that endowed her with unique stories to tell.
- She is the recipient of numerous awards including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and is regarded as a key figure in Chicana literature.
Paula Crisostomo (1949- )

- Crisostomo is a leader in the struggle for Chicano equality and against racism.
- She currently serves as the Director of Government and Community Relations for Occidental College in Los Angeles, where she provides leadership for the college’s community outreach strategies, including neighborhood relations, local and federally sponsored services programs in education and local and state government relations.
- As a 17-year-old senior at Lincoln High School in March 1968, Crisostomo was among the students from all five public high schools in East Los Angeles who walked out to protest discrimination against Mexican-Americans (or Chicanos) and the school conditions.
- They were eventually joined by students from 15 other schools. By the time the walkout ended about 10 days later, more than 20,000 students had participated, making it the largest high school student walkout in U.S. history. It also was the first such mass protest by Mexican-Americans.
- Her story is represented in the film “Walkout”

Nancy “Rusty” Barceló (1946- )

- Currently she is President of Northern New Mexico College, the first Chicana president of a college.
- Barceló is fully educated, Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from Chico State College, her Master of Arts degree in Recreational Education from the University of Iowa, and her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Higher Education Administration from the University of Iowa.
- Rusty has authored numerous articles and reports that speak to the importance of diversity in colleges and universities.
- Quote: “My dream is that diversity will one day be so deeply embedded in our institutional ethos that it will permeate everything we do, in every space we inhabit, from classrooms and research centers to faculty and administrative offices to campus services and facilities to meeting spaces in partner communities”

http://www.readperiodicals.com/201004/2027156911.html#b
**Cuba**

Ana Mendieta (1948-1985)

- Mendieta earned her Bachelor’s of Arts and later Master’s degrees in Painting and Intermedia.
- Her art themes included feminism, violence, life, death and belonging, as well as spiritual and physical connections with Mother Earth.
- Her art work also focused on using natural materials from leaves and twigs to blood, she would perform, paint, create videos, even sculptures.
- Mendieta’s career took her to Cuba, Mexico and even Italy where she was awarded the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome.
- She passed at the early age of 36.

**Dominican Republic**

The Maribal Sisters


- All 3 sisters were natives of the Dominican Republic and were fervently opposed to the cruel dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo.
- The tale of the Mirabal sisters is an on-going legacy of bravery and compassion in order to save the lives of many people in the Dominican Republic. They defied the flow of conformity and stood out as National Heroines.
- The Mirabal sisters grew up in an affluent family and were well cultured and educated women at a time when most women did not receive a good education.
- After they were killed their bodies were then put back into their Jeep, the Jeep was then pushed over the side of the cliff at La Cumbre to make it appear like an accident had taken place in the bad weather. Everyone knew it was Trujillo though that had ordered the murders.
Guatamala

Rigoberta Menchu (1959- )

- Rigoberta Menchú was born on January 9, 1959 to a poor Indian peasant family and raised in the Quiche branch of the Mayan culture.
- Rigoberta Menchú soon became involved in social reform activities through the Catholic Church, and became prominent in the women's rights movement when still only a teenager.
- Such reform work aroused considerable opposition in influential circles, especially after a guerrilla organization established itself in the area.
- The Menchú family was accused of taking part in guerrilla activities and Rigoberta's father, Vicente, was imprisoned and tortured for allegedly having participated in the execution of a local plantation owner.
- After his release, he joined the recently founded Committee of the Peasant Union (CUC).
- Nobel Peace Prize 1992

Spain

Lucía Sánchez Saornil (1895-1970)

- Lucía Sánchez Saornil (December 13, 1895 – June 2, 1970),
- Was a Spanish poet, militant anarchist and feminist.
- She is best known as one of the founders of Mujeres Libres and served in the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) and Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (SIA). In 1931,
- Lucía Sánchez Saornil, participated in a strike by the anarcho-syndicalist labor union, Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), against Telefónica.
- Mujeres Libres was an autonomous anarchist organization for women committed to a "double struggle" of women's liberation and social revolution.
- Lucía and other "Free Women" rejected the dominant view that gender equality would emerge naturally from a classless society.
- As the Spanish Civil War exploded, Mujeres Libres quickly grew to 30,000 members, organizing women's social spaces, schools, newspapers and daycare program.
**Puerto Rico**

Rosa Alicia Clemente (1972- )

- Is a Black Puerto Rican grassroots organizer, hip-hop activist, journalist, and entrepreneur.
- Founder of Know Thy Self Productions, Rosa has created two successful college/universities tours, Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win and the Speak Truth to Power.
- With an earned degree from the University of Albany and a Masters of Professional Studies from Cornell University she is committed to scholar-activism and youth organizing.
- As an activist she has traveled domestically and internationally to colleges, universities, high schools and prisons.
- She has delivered lectures on topics such as African-American and Latino/a Intercultural Relations, Hip-Hop Activism, The History of the Young Lords Party, and Organizing to Free U.S. Political Prisoners.

**Mexico**

Frida Kahlo (1907-1958)

- Artist Frida Kahlo was born on July 6, 1907, in Coyocoán, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Considered one of Mexico's greatest artists, Frida Kahlo began painting after she was severely injured in a bus accident. The bus accident was impaled by a steel handrail, which went into her hip and came out the other side.
- After a tragic injury she healed through art therapy of sessions in her home of self-portraits.
- Kahlo became politically active and married fellow communist artist Diego Rivera in 1929.
- She exhibited her paintings in Paris and Mexico before her death in 1958. She has inherited a prestigious artist title and is highly respected for her artwork.
Anna Marie Torres (1980-)

- She was born on January 25, 1980 in Neza, México and fights out of México City. She is 5'4" a bantamweight class fighter.
- She is one of the leading role models breaking ground in a sport that was thought to be only for men.
- Her first pro debut was in July 1999 and went to a recent fight in 2011 in Chiapas, Mexico.
- She made history and became WBAN (Women’s Boxing Archive Network) Fighter of the Month for August 2011 for her win over Jackie Nava.
- If it were not for women like Anna, young girls today would not even have the chance to dream of Olympic boxing. She is a proud warrior who has opened doors and stands for strength in every aspect you can think of.
- Currently, Anna Marie Torres is the World Champion of the Super Lightweight division.

Dolores Jimenez Y Muro (1848-1925)

- Dolores was a Mexican school teacher and revolutionary.
- She rose to prominence during the Mexican Revolution as a socialist activist and reformer and as a supporter and associate of General Emiliano Zapata.
- She was an editor for La Mujer Mexicana (Mexican Women) as well as the president of Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc (The Daughters of Cuauhtémoc).
- Dolores died on October 15, 1925 in Mexico City at the age of 77.
• Hermila was a Mexican Feminist and writer during the Mexican Revolution.
• Hermila was born in a small town of Lerdo on May 29, 1896 and died in 1954.
• Hermila quickly rose to become a political writer and advocate for Venustiano Carranza, she was a gifted writer and public speaker producing many political tracts.
• Hermila repeatedly prompted controversy by openly opposing the social influence of the church and describing Catholicism as one of the main barriers to female progress in Mexico.
• Although she ceased to be politically active her tactics and arguments she put forth in her journal Mujer Moderna would continue to be used by Mexican Feminists of the 20’s and 30’s.

Asian islanders Polynesian

• On October 16, 1875 the Hawaiian nation was thrilled to learn of the birth of Archie and Likelike's daughter, Princess Victoria Ka'iulani Cleghorn.
• She was trained to be the Queen of the Hawaiian Islands. she was a daughter of a double race’, half Hawaiian – half Scottish.
• Ka’iulani went to England for the first time in the summer of 1889 to go to school to become a lady.
• In England Hawaiians were being called barbarians… uncivilized... unable to rule themselves. There were degrading political cartoons about both Ka'uilani and the Queen.
• Ka’iulani was a warrior - she fought for the truth and she fought for her peoples freedom. March 6th, 1899 marked the end of an era; Hawaii's most beloved Hawaii/Scot, Princess Victoria Ka'iulani Cleghorn passed away.
Activist and author Dr. Vandana Shiva is the founder of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology.
Helped in designing food systems to protect nature and get rid of hunger.
Shiva has devoted her life to fighting for the rights of the ordinary people of India.
In 2010 she was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize for her commitment to social justice.
The founder of Navdanya (“nine seeds”), a movement promoting diversity and use of native seeds, she also set up the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Ecology in her mother’s cowshed in 1997.
SECTION II: Native American Diaspora

Anna Mae Aquash (1945 – 1976)

- She was from Mi'kmaq, an indigenous tribe of northeastern region of New England.
- Became a member of the American Indian Movement on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.
- Aquash actively participated in the 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties and the Wounded Knee Incident the following year.
- Involved in the *Teaching and Research in Bicultural Education School Project* (TRIBES)
- A co-founder of North American Indian Center of Boston which works to improve conditions for Indians in the city.
- On February 24, 1976, her body was found on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, executed by gunshot. After decades of investigation in March 2003, Arlo Looking Cloud and John Boy Patton were indicted for the murder.

Lozen
Apache Native (1840-1890)

- Was considered a shield to her people. It was believed that when she was young, the spirits blessed her with horse magic, the gift of healing and the power to see enemies at a distance.
- Because of her psychic gifts to determine where the enemy was hiding, she was the only unmarried woman allowed to ride with the warriors and fight alongside them.
- In the 1870s she joined Geronimo, the prominent leader of the Bedonkohe Apache, in the fight for expansion of Apache tribal lands. They came to rely on Lozen’s strength, wisdom, and supernatural abilities.
- Geronimo and his band of insurgents resisted the combined forces of the United States and Mexican armies, and the heavily armed civilian populations of New Mexico and Arizona Territories. They held out against a total of about nine thousand men, until their surrender in 1886.
• She is a Tongva/Ajachmem Native California Indian artist, tribal scholar, cartoonist, language advocate, singer, and self-described “decolonizationist.”
• Frank has exhibited her artwork (paintings, sculpture, weavings, photography, cartoons, regalia) in museums and galleries locally, nationally, and internationally.
• In 1992, she co-founded the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, which works to revitalize indigenous languages with trainers utilizing Total Physical Response (TPR) and motivational along with other experiential methods.
• Her conferences and workshops are not just in California but also with indigenous communities throughout the US, including Hawaii, Australia and Nunavut.
• Frank is the author of two books, Acorn Soup (1992), a collection of cartoons, and First Families: A Photographic History of California Indians (2006), both published by Heyday Books. She is a regular contributor to News From Native California.

Gladys Tantaquidgeon (b.1899 – 2005)

• She is a Mohegan, educated in tribal spirituality and herbalism by her grandmothers from a very young age.
• Later she attended grammar school before entering the University of Pennsylvania in 1919, she also studied Anthropology.
• Co-founded Tantaquidgeon Indian Museu in 1931 in Uncasville, Connecticut along with her father and brother.
• Pursued an Ivy League education as a non-white woman and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Connecticut and one from Yale in 1994.
• Throughout her long lifespan, she constantly focused on providing free community education about Indian life ways, Preserving traditional Mohegan spirituality, and environmental preservation.
Winona LaDuke (b.1960- )

- Author and Environmentalist of Anishinaabe decent.
- For the past 30 years, LaDuke has worked on the land issues concerning the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota and has influenced litigation over land rights in the 1980's.
- Received numerous of awards. In 1994, Winona was nominated by Time magazine as one of America's fifty most promising leaders under forty years of age.
- In 1997 she was awarded the Ann Bancroft Award for Women's Leadership Fellowship, and the Reebok Human Rights Award, with which she began the White Earth Land Recovery Project.
- Graduated from Harvard and Antioch Universities.
- Former board member of Greenpeace USA and serves, as co-chair of the Indigenous Women's Network, a North American and Pacific indigenous women's organization.
- Ran for Vice President with Ralh Nader

Margo Tamez (1962- )

- She was raised in San Antonio, Texas and now is citizen of Lipan Apache Band of Texas.
- Tamez is widely known for her work among traditional communities which explore social themes like: ties among Native families, personal vs. group sovereignty, and gender oppression within Native communities.
- Recent published works are The Daughter of Lightning (2007) a collection of essays relating stories of chemical, petroleum, DDT, and toxaphene exposures in indigenous communities in the south Texas borderlands, as well as those of Gila River Indian Community and others in which she lived or worked.
- Also, Raven Eye (2007) a poetry collection and testimony of internalized racism with Native communities.
Toypurina (b. 1760-1799)

- Was a Tongva/Gabrielino native woman born in the Los Angeles Basin.
- She was a medicine woman and sorceress.
- When she was 11, Mission San Gabriel was founded and in 1781 the Pueblo of Los Angeles was officially created.
- Toypurina rose to be a powerful spiritual leader, speaking the many Tongvan dialects and other indigenous languages from Santa Catalina Island through the eastern foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains to the northwestern San Fernando Valley.
- She opposed colonization and Spanish missionaries and in 1785 she became the only woman of Alta California to have led a revolt along with neophyte (baptized native) Nicolas Jose.
- Once captured and tried she was forced to convert and ended up marrying a Spaniard, moving to Monterey, having a family and finally dying at the young age of 39.
SECTION III: African American Diaspora

Maya Angelou (1928-)

- Maya Angelou born Marguerite Ann Johnson; April 4, 1928.
- She is an American author and poet, who has published six autobiographies, five books of essays, several books of poetry.
- Maya is also credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning more than fifty years; She has received dozens of awards.
- She was active in the Civil Rights movement, and worked with both Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.
- In 1993, Angelou recited her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" at President Bill Clinton's inauguration.

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-)

- Zora Neale Hurston (born January 7, 1891) in Nostasulga, Alabama. She published her findings in *Mules and Men*.
- She published her masterwork of fiction, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Zora was a writer, anthropologist, and folklorist.
- Studied at Howard University (1923–4), Barnard College and did graduate work at Columbia University.
- Spent much of her life collecting folklore of the South (1927–31, 1938) and of other places such as Haiti (1937–8), Bermuda (1937–8), and Honduras (1946–8).
- Hurston lived in New York City and held a variety of jobs, such as teacher, librarian, and assistant to Fannie Hurst.
- She was associated with the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, and would later influence such writers as Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison.
Toni Morrison (1931- )

- Born **Chloe Anthony Wofford**, in 1931 in Lorain Ohio. Studied humanities at Howard and Cornell Universities, followed by an academic career at Texas Southern University, Howard University, Yale.
- Since 1989, a chair at Princeton University.
- She has also worked as an editor for Random House, a critic, and given numerous public lectures, specializing in African-American literature.
- Chloe made her debut as a novelist in 1970, soon gaining the attention of both critics and a wider audience for her epic power, unerring ear for dialogue, and her poetically-charged and richly-expressive depictions of Black America.
- A member since 1981 of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she has been awarded a number of literary distinctions, among them the Pulitzer Prize in 1988.

Rosa Parks (1913-2005)

**(Pioneer of Civil Rights) Rosa Louise McCauley Parks**

- Rosa Parks was an African American civil rights activist whom the U.S. congress called "the first lady of civil rights", and "the mother of the freedom movement."
- Rosa attended Alabama State Teachers College.
- Worked on numerous cases with the NAACP. On December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. Parks refused to obey bus driver 's James F. Order that she give up her seat in the colored section to a white passenger, after the white section was filled. Parks' act of defiance and the Montgomery Bus Boycott became important symbols of the modern Civil Rights Movement.
- Parks became an international icon of resistance to racial segregation.
- She organized and collaborated with civil rights leaders, including Edgar Nixon, president of the local chapter of the NAACP; and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a new minister in town who gained national prominence in the civil rights movement.
Harriet Tubman- Conductor (1819-1913)

- Born Araminta Ross (1819-1913) Tubman was born a slave in Maryland's Dorchester County.
- Harriet Tubman is perhaps the most well-known of all the Underground Railroad's "conductors."
- During a ten-year span she made 19 trips into the South and escorted over 300 slaves to freedom. She never lost a single passenger.
- Around 1844 she married a free black named John Tubman and took his last name.
- In 1849, in fear that she, along with the other slaves on the plantation, was to be sold, Tubman resolved to run away. By 1856, Tubman's capture would have brought a $40,000 reward from the South. Tubman had made the perilous trip to slave country 19 times by 1860.

Sojourner Truth (Orator) (c. 1797-1883)

- Sojourner Truth (c. 1797-1883) was arguably the most famous of the 19th Century black women orators.
- Born into slavery in New York and freed in 1827 under the state’s gradual emancipation law, she dedicated her life to abolition and equal rights for women and men.
- Sojourner gave two different speech’s, the version that is most quoted was published in the 1875 edition of Truth’s Narrative (which was written by others).
- “Ain’t I a Women?” is Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s History of Woman Suffrage which appeared in 1881.
- Both versions were published 25 years after Truth spoke. However the Salem, Ohio, Anti-Slavery Bugle published its version of the speech on June 21, 1851.
Wangari Maathai (1940- )

- On 1 April 1940, Maathai was born in the village of Ihithe, Nyeri District, in the central highlands of the colony of Kenya.
- Her family was Kikuyu, the most populous ethnic group in Kenya,
- In 1971; Wangari Maathai received a Ph.D., effectively becoming the first woman in either East or Central Africa to earn a doctorate.
- She was elected to Kenya's National Assembly in 2002.
- She has written several books and scholarly articles. She won the Nobel Peace Prize for her “holistic” approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights, and women's rights in particular.

Queen Nanny of the Maroons (Leader) (c. 1686 – 1733)

- She was a well-known leader of the Jamaican Maroons in the eighteenth century.
- Historical documents refer to her as the "rebels (sic) old obeah woman," and they legally grant "Nanny and the people now residing with her and their heirs . . . a certain parcel of Land containing five hundred acres in the parish of Portland . . ." (quoted in Campbell 177, 175).
- Nanny Town was founded on this land. Much of what is known about Nanny comes from oral history as little textual evidence exists.
- She is printed in the Jamaican $500 dollar bill.
Queen Nzingha of Ndongo (16th century)

- From the late 16th century to early 17th century, Europeans were very interested in negotiating about the African slave trade. The Portuguese were especially interested in having slaves for their new colony in Brazil.
- Queen of Angola, Anna Nzinga, was born to King Ngola Kiluanji Kia Samba sometime around 1581 in the kingdom of the Ndongo in southeastern Africa.
- By the time she was born, the king had accepted limited slave trading with Portuguese.
- Then, later the Ndongo people, led by her father, began fighting against the Portuguese after their territory was raided for slaves and the Portuguese attempted to conquer territory they believed included silver mines.

Pharaoh Nefertiti (ca. 1370 BC – ca. 1330 BC)

- **Nefertiti** (ca. 1370 BC – ca. 1330 BC) was the Great Royal Wife (chief consort) of the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten.
- Nefertiti and her husband were known for a religious revolution, in which they worshiped one god only, Aten, or the sun disc.
- Nefertiti had many titles including Hereditary Princess, Great of Praises, Lady of Grace, Sweet of Love, Lady of The Two Lands, Main King’s Wife, his beloved, Great King’s Wife, his beloved, Lady of all Women, and Mistress of Upper and Lower Egypt.
- She was made famous by her bust, now in Berlin's Neues Museum, shown to the right. The bust is one of the most copied works of ancient Egypt.
- Some scholars believe that Nefertiti ruled briefly as Neferneferuaten.
Hatshepsut or Hatchepsut (1508–1458 BC)

- Hatshepsut meaning Foremost of Noble Ladies was the fifth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Ancient Egypt; generally regarded as one of the most successful female pharaohs, reigning longer than any other woman of an indigenous Egyptian dynasty.
- Hatshepsut ruled Ancient Egypt as a man. Ruled Egypt from 1479 to 1458 B.C. It is now known that Hatshepsut assumed the position of pharaoh, and her reign as king is usually given as twenty-two years.
- Her rise to power went against all the conventions of her time. She was the first wife and Queen of Thutmose II and on his death proclaimed herself Pharaoh, denying the old king's son, her nephew, his inheritance.
- To support her cause she claimed the God Amun-Ra spoke, saying "welcome my sweet daughter, my favorite, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Maatkare, Hatshepsut. Thou art the King, taking possession of the Two Lands."
- She dressed as a king, even wearing a false beard and the Egyptian people seem to have accepted this unprecedented behavior. Eventually her nephew grew into a man and took his rightful place as pharaoh. The circumstances of this event are unknown and what became of Hatshepsut is a mystery.