

Tsukuyomi Walks in the Night Sea The Poem The Poem

Before the world learned to measure time
by shadows on stone or the leaning of stars
against the dark edge of the unknown,
There was a quiet god born from water and shadow.

Tsukuyomi rose from the wash of Izanagi's right eye,
a soft radiance forming as the last traces of the underworld
slid from his father's skin.
he opened his eyes and found the world half-lit,
half-unfinished, waiting for someone to read its rhythms.

He was not loud like Susanoo,
nor blazing like Amaterasu.
He carried his power differently
not in heat, but in reflection,
not in fire, but in clarity.
Even the wind seemed to hesitate
as if unsure whether he was physical
Or the outline of his imagination

When Amaterasu summoned him
to represent her at Ukemochi's feast,
he bowed without hesitation.
Respect came naturally to him,
even when he did not feel warmth.
The journey was long, but Tsukuyomi did not tire.
Night unfolded for him like a scroll of ink and silver.

Ukemochi greeted him with hands that shaped abundance.
Her breath carried the scent of forests and rice fields.
She turned toward the sea and fish rose from her lips;
toward mountains, and game tumbled forth
as if sculpted from mist.
She coughed gently
and a bowl of rice formed, steaming,
as pure as the full moon's, glistening
As it had been wet from a late dew.

But Tsukuyomi, who had walked only in purity of reflection,
saw in her miracle a violation he could not accept.
He looked not at the gift, but at its origin,
something in him hardened, the seed turned into a stem
With thorns where silence and delicacy had once lived.

He moved before thought could stop him.
The god's blade left no echo in the hall,
Not a single sound but that of blood
The moment was quick. As the snap of a whip

almost delicate. The goddess fell,
and from her broken body
sprang cattle, grain, horses, silkworms—
life multiplying through death.
Even then, the world did not judge him.
Only the sun did.

Ever since, Tsukuyomi has ruled the realm of night.
He moves quietly through the dark plains of heaven,
carrying the memory of his sister's anger,
like a shadow that refuses to detach
no matter how far or fast you move.
Yet the ocean still follows him.
The tides still rise to meet his face,
Caressing his cheek, with a cold yet warm touch
forgiving him.

Some nights he stands over the sea,
watching his reflection blur
in the restless water.
He sees what humans see in him—
cycles of fullness and absence,
a light that grows and dies
and grows again. He wonders
how a god made of stillness
became the measure of time
for kingdoms and fishermen,
for lovers and travelers,
for anyone who counts days
by the roundness of his face.

He has learned that separation
creates its own kind of order.
Day will not touch him,
Yet day depends on him.
The moon's path shapes the tides,
and the tides shape the shorelines,
and the shorelines shape the stories
people tell about their lives.

When the moon is darkest,
when he is new and unseen,
he is closest to Amaterasu,
passing quietly beside the sun
one more time.
They do not speak.
Yet for a brief moment
day and night touch edges,
like two siblings
remembering what they shared
before the heavens divided.

Artist Statement

For my final project, I wrote a long poem about Tsukuyomi, the Japanese moon god. His story explains how the sun and moon became separated into day and night. I was first drawn to this myth because of the anime "Naruto," which uses a lot of ideas from Japanese mythology, including the three gods I mention in the poem. What really interested me wasn't just the myth itself, but how Tsukuyomi could be imagined from the inside. Instead of retelling the myth exactly as it's written, I wanted to explore his inner life and how someone today might interpret his character. He's quiet and reflective, but also capable of making a world changing mistake. Myths often give emotional meaning to natural patterns, and that's what I tried to convey with my poem. The way people have always used stories to make sense of something as steady and scientific as the cycle of the moon.

I focused on the most important parts of Tsukuyomi's story. I start with his birth from Izanagi's purification, with the goal of connecting him to the ideas of clarity and stillness. Showing him as a calm, observant figure helped me set up a contrast with the violent act he commits later. Early in the poem, I tried to build a sense of tension that pulls the reader in. The names of the gods also carry a lot of weight, so I used them in a way that highlights how crazy they sound and encourages curiosity about who they are.

The main scene I centered on is the moment with Ukemochi. In the myth, she creates food by producing it from her mouth. I didn't want to describe that literally, so I wrote it through imagery that feels symbolic rather than graphic. I tried to make her power seem mysterious and almost sacred. That choice keeps the focus on Tsukuyomi's reaction. His disgust in my poem doesn't come across as simple anger, it feels more like his sense of purity suddenly clashing with a kind of creation he can't understand. This let me keep the emotional truth of the myth without relying on the more unsettling parts of the literal version.

When Tsukuyomi kills Ukemochi, the poem shifts into a quieter, heavier tone. That mirrors how the myth moves from dramatic action to the consequences that follow. Amaterasu's anger and the siblings' final separation are written in plain lines. I wanted this moment to feel like the universe was slowly remaking itself. Their separation explains why day and night are never together. I showed the emotional break and let the imagery hint at the cosmic change, instead of describing it literally.

The last third of the poem leans into Tsukuyomi's connection to astronomy. I used real concepts from class moon phases, its alignment with the sun, and the gravitational forces that affect Earth's tides. I didn't state any of that directly, but it shaped the images I used. For example, describing the tides "rising to meet his face" reflects the moon's pull on the oceans. Mentioning that he passes "quietly beside" Amaterasu during the new moon mirrors their actual alignment when the moon moves between Earth and the sun. These scientific ideas gave structure to the metaphors and kept the poem grounded in real astronomy even while using mythic language.

A really important choice I made was writing from a distant, almost all-knowing perspective. That felt right for a character who rules the night sky. A close, personal voice would have made the poem feel too small for a myth about the creation of day and night. The long lines and steady pacing try to copy the moon's slow movement across the sky. When the story becomes intense, like during Ukemochi's death, the rhythm is changed for a moment before letting it broaden again. That pattern felt a lot like tidal motion, which made it a good fit for Tsukuyomi's domain.

Overall, I wanted the poem to bring myth and astronomy together through tone, imagery, and structure. Even though it uses symbolic language, the poem is built around real lunar motion and the relationship between the moon and sun. Writing it helped me appreciate how people in the past used emotion to explain natural cycles, and how science explains the same

things through observation and physics. My poem sits between those two approaches, showing how both the emotional and the physical can offer a way to understand the sky.

References:

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Claude.Ai was used to help with the wording of the poem and the flow.