



Excerpt from “Skywoman Falling”

In the Western tradition there is a recognized hierarchy of beings, with, of course, the human being on top—the pinnacle of evolution, the darling of Creation—and the plants at the bottom. But in Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as “the younger brothers of Creation.” We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn—we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way that they live. They teach us by example. They’ve been on earth far longer than we have been, and have had time to figure things out. They live both above and below ground, joining Skyworld to the earth. Plants know how to make food and medicine from light and water, and then they give it away.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. Excerpt from “Skywoman Falling.” In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, 9–10. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013.



Artist unknown; *Millet Fields under Sun and Moon*; 17th century; pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper; 65 1/8 × 144 1/8 in (165.3 × 366 cm), each. The Art Institute of Chicago, Restricted Gift of the Rice Foundation (1989.625a-b).