The Night the Moon Fell

A Mayan myth retold by Pat Mora
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A myth is an old story that often explains something about nature.

Question of the Week
Why are some changes difficult?
One night long ago, Luna the moon hummed high in the night sky. Stars twinkled, and Luna’s friend the wind dozed nearby. The night was hushed and peaceful.

Suddenly, the sky shook. A loud WHOOSH! rattled the stars and startled the moon. Luna’s grandfather had shot his blowgun, and Luna jumped in surprise. She lost her balance and started to roll and roll. Luna rolled through stars, and she rolled through clouds. She rolled, rolled down to the earth and splashed into the ocean’s cold, dark waves. She broke into shimmering slivers and bits on the sandy bottom of the sea.

The huge sky became black and still as the deepest ocean. Stars shut their eyes. Flowers bowed their heads, and all the birds in the world rose looking for the moon. They flew into loud storms. They soared down black canyons. They darted into huge caves calling.

“Luna, come back, bring us your light. Shine your white light for us tonight.” Silence. Luna’s amigo, the wind, raced up mountains whispering and then roaring.

“Luna, come back, bring us your light. Shine your white light for us tonight.” All the world waited. All the world listened. Silence.
Where was the moon?
The tiny fish at the bottom of the sea knew. They saw Luna’s white glow, and they heard her lonely song.
“Where am I? Where’s the sky?
Broken, sad, lost am I.”
The fish swam around and around the broken moon. “What can we do? What can we do?” they whispered.
“We’ll be your friends,” said the tiniest fish.
“What’s your name?”
“Luna,” the moon sniffled.
“Are you the shining light that hums high in the sky?” asked the roundest fish.
Luna sniffed,
“I was the light high in the sky,
Now broken, sad, lost am I.”

The tiny fish and Luna looked up together.
They looked up through all that deep, dark water. The little fish missed seeing the moonlight high in the night sky. They missed playing in Luna’s white light.
In a sad voice, Luna sighed,
“Oh, sweet fish, how sad am I.
I miss my home high in the sky.”
The little fish felt sorry for Luna. “Watch this,” said the tiniest fish, and he and the other little fish began blowing bubbles in wonderful and funny shapes to make her laugh and smile.
“New friends, you are good for me.
You make me laugh in this cold, dark sea.”
The tiny fish began to hum, and in time Luna hummed too. She hummed herself to sleep.
When she woke, Luna looked around. She saw colors! She saw forests of coral and kelp, gold fish that glistened and blue fish that flew. Sea horses galloped gently by, and starfish waved their lavender arms.

“Yes,” said the roundest fish. “Our water world is beautiful too.”

“Ooooohhhhhh!” said Luna, gasping at all the spinning, silver whirls, and her surprised, “Ooooohhhhh!” rose into glowing bubbles.

But a large, dark shape with eyes cold as stones brushed by. Bright fish darted away. Luna stopped smiling and rolled into a nearby cave.

“He’s gone now, Luna,” called the roundest fish. “High or low, there is danger, but I know you are clever and brave.”

“Am I?” asked Luna, but deep inside she knew she was. She said, “I tell my friend the wind, ‘All you need is part of you, Ask yourself what you should do.’ ”

The roundest fish said, “Luna, ask yourself what you should do, and we’ll help.”

“Let me think,” said Luna. She thought and she thought, and the tiny fish hummed softly to help her thinking.
Luna started swaying to their music, and the fish swayed with her. Then Luna began to hum and to roll to her music, and as she rolled in the strange new land, she began to collect herself.

“How can we help?” asked the tiniest fish.

Luna sang,

“All you need is part of you.
Ask yourself what you should do.”

The tiny fish thought and thought. They whispered, “Pppzzz, pppzzz. Pppzzz, pppzzz.” And then they knew what to do.

The little fish looked inside shells and deep in cold sea caves for bits of glowing moon. With their silvery fins, they began to sweep together the slivers and bits, and on the strange sand, the moon rolled and rolled into herself.

She said,

“Pezecitos, little fish,
Smooth me whole. Please grant my wish.”

The fish swam round-round Luna, patching and smoothing.

With their silvery fins, they smoothed her roundness. Luna laughed at the tickly fins. When she studied herself, Luna knew she needed just a bit of her friends to stay together, so she said,

“Now what I need is part of you.
Will you be my silvery glue?”
The little fish looked at themselves. The tiny fish thought and thought. They whispered, “Pppzzz, pppzzz, pppzzz.” Luna smiled and hummed. The fish began to wriggle and dance. And they knew what to do. They shook themselves to loosen a few of their silvery scales, and with their fins they patched the rolling moon. As Luna rolled into herself, the sea around her glistened. Luna began to hum and glow.

Oh, how beautiful she looked when she was round and whole again! The deep ocean was filled with her white light. Waves rolled rainbows. The little fish rested.

Luna then said, “Gracias, mis amigos, thank you. Thank you for your silvery glue.”
“You’re so happy, you’re like a balloon,” said the littlest fish, watching the moon begin to float. Luna laughed, “Now round and whole am I, And can float home to my sky.” The fish watched Luna float slowly up from the bottom of the sea. They whispered, “Pppzzz, pppzzz. Pppzzz, pppzzz.”

And then they knew what to do. Holding on to one another’s tails, the tiny fish wove themselves into a silvery net around Luna. “That tickles, friends, but I agree. Come swim the sky. Accompany me.” Slowly, Luna and the tiny fish rose through the clouds and through the stars. When they were high in the night sky, Luna began to hum, and the night sky changed. Luna’s white light opened the stars’ eyes, and her friend the wind purred. Flowers lifted their heads, and birds flew high, sang one note, and then nestled in trees and on rooftops.
The moon was home, and she sang new songs of gold fish and starfish, of coral and kelp, of rolling rainbow waves.

Luna’s friends, the tiny fish, started swimming in the huge night sky. They heard her voice, sweeter than the scent of a thousand flowers, softer than the ssshhh, ssshhh, ssshhh of waves at dawn.

Luna sang,

“Please, dear friends, stay here with me. Swim my skies, my star bright sea.”

And they did.

Look up. High in the sky, Luna’s friend the wind dozes, and her amigos, the tiny fish, swim nearby. They twinkle through the night, and Luna smiles her white light.