

2. Spindle Side

Oh Woman who awakens in the morning
When the moon is slowly turning
From the coming of the dawn
Upon the star wheel, your hands will bind and heal:
They'll spin the sorrow into song

For once, we were the keepers of the soul
Back inside the old forgotten days
Like Fates, we tuned the harmonies of space
That hold the stars in place
And spun the thread that guides the human race

Then somehow, the spindle ceased to spin
The memory of the wheel grew dim
The people wait – and with them waits the land –
For woman to awake
And take the spindle back in hand

I wake into the darkness of the storm
Giant cedars bent and torn in the southeast wind
It won't be long; I'll rise up to the wheel
And before the day is come
Spin all my sorrow into song

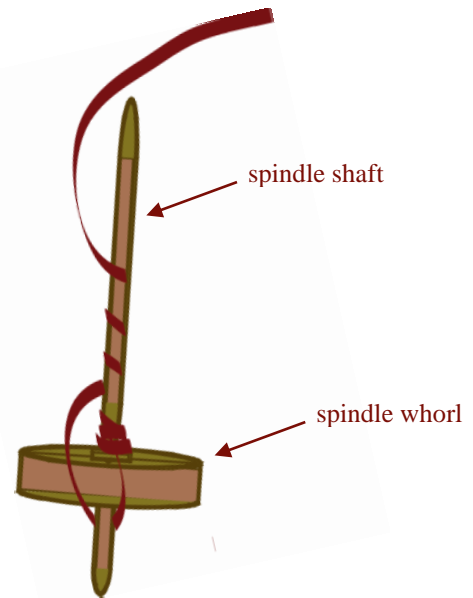
So woman, should you waken in the morning
When the moon is slowly turning
From the coming of the dawn
Upon the star wheel, your hands will bind and heal:
They'll spin the sorrow into song
The world awaits the gift you bring
The star wheel turns because we sing.



This song explores the spindle as a symbol of the connection between women's creativity and the harmony of the cosmos. In the recording, a spinning wheel sets the rhythm of the song.

In the *Republic*, Plato describes the revolution of the cosmos as being accomplished by the goddess Necessity, who twists it like a spindle, while the three Fates (also goddesses) spin, measure, and cut the thread of each human life. 'Spindle side' means the 'female line' of a family, reflecting the fact that, for traditional cultures, spinning was, quintessentially, women's work. But spinning was more than just a household task – it was a magical act. Often, traditional cultures imagined a link between earthly events and those in the heavens. With regards to spinning, this belief was so strong that, even into the 20th century, some folk cultures forbade the use of spindles on certain days of the year – because it was thought that spinning on those days would create chaos in the heavens.

In keeping with this tradition, I like to imagine that we do, in fact, affect the world around us: our individual acts of harmony and creativity help maintain the order of the universe.



Coast Salish Spindle Whorl

The Coast Salish spinner, in watching the carving on the whorl, entered into a trance that was thought to give the textiles created special powers.

