

# The *Theogony* of Hesiod

## Lines 126-210 – Earth and Sky

Thank you for supporting The Classics Cave.

You'll find books, readings, workouts, and more at [www.theclassicscave.com](http://www.theclassicscave.com). Do you want to support the Cave's mission? Let's talk! Contact Tim Young at [tim@theclassicscave.com](mailto:tim@theclassicscave.com) to sponsor or donate to the Cave.

"Let him hear the advice of Hesiod. . . . The advice of Hesiod is good." —Aristotle

"Lampon . . . greatly honors the sayings of Hesiod, the one he declares and recommends to his sons."  
—Pindar

The Classics Cave • [www.theclassicscave.com](http://www.theclassicscave.com)

## Earth and Sky

### Lines 126-210

**A**ND EARTH FIRST gave birth to starry Sky, equal to herself, so that he would cover her all around. In this way, she would forever be the immovable abode for the blessed gods.

129-136 *Alone, "without affectionate love," Earth gives birth to the mountains, the Nymphs, and Sea (Pontos). Then, after laying with Sky, she gives birth to five of the six male Titans—Ocean, Koios, Kreios, Hyperion, and Iapetos, and their six Titaness sisters, Theia, Rhea, Themis, Memory (Mnemosyne), Phoebe, and Tethys.*

137-138 After these, the youngest one Kronos was born, the one whose counsels are crooked, the most terrible of their children. He hated his expansive father.

139-155 *With Sky, Earth gives birth to the single-eyed, violent-hearted, though god-like in others ways, Cyclopes Thunderer (Brontēs), Lightning-flash (Steropēs), and Bright (Argēs). These are the same ones who will eventually give lightning and the thunderbolt to Zeus. And from Earth and Sky together come the fifty-headed hundred-handers,*

*the arrogant children called Kottos, Briareos, and Gyges, whose names are better left unspoken. From the beginning, Sky hated all of his children—but the Cyclopes and the hundred-handers most of all.*<sup>1</sup>

156-210 As soon as each one was born, Sky used to hide them away in a hole in Earth and not allow them to come up into the light. And Sky delighted in his wicked deed. But huge Earth, stuffed, groaned within [160] and devised a treacherous, lowdown trick.

Quickly, she fashioned another child, the hardest of metals, gray adamant, and she made a big sickle with it and showed it to her dear children. And she spoke to them, emboldening them even though she was troubled in her own dear heart.

"My children, born of an arrogant, reckless father, obey me if you wish. We will make your father pay for this wicked outrage since he was the first to plan a shameful deed."

That's how she spoke. Yet fear seized them all, and none of them uttered a sound.

But after a moment, great Kronos, the one whose counsels are crooked, took courage and answered his cherished mother with these words:

[170] “Mother, I will undertake and accomplish this task since I do not care for our hateful father because he was the first to plan a shameful deed.”

That’s how he spoke. And huge Earth rejoiced in her great heart. She then hid him away to lie in wait for an ambush. Then she gave him the sickle with sharp, jagged teeth and revealed to him every detail of her plan—the way they would lure him in and trick him.

And great Sky came to Earth, bringing night with him. Longing for love, he embraced Earth and stretched himself out until he covered her on every side.

Then, from the place of ambush, the son reached out with his left hand, and with his right he seized the gigantic, [180] long sickle with sharp, jagged teeth, and he eagerly sawed off his dear father’s genitals. Once done, he tossed them behind him to get rid of them.

They didn’t fall from his hand in vain.

They didn’t because Earth received all the spattered and scattered bloody drops. Then, when the seasons of the year turned full around, she gave birth to the mighty Furies (Erinyes), and to the great Giants, who wear gleaming battle gear and hold long spears in their hands, and to the Nymphs, the ones they call “Melian” or “Ash Tree”—this she did over the boundless earth.

But when Kronos had first cut off the genitals with the adamant, he cast them from the land into the loudly surging sea.

[190] They were carried along by the sea for a long time. And as they went along, a white foam bubbled up from the immortal flesh, and a young girl grew inside. She first drew near to sacred Kythera. Thereafter she came to sea-girt Cyprus. And from the foam stepped a beautiful goddess, one highly regarded. And grass grew all around from beneath her slender feet.

Both gods and men call her “Aphrodite” since she grew inside the foam (*aphros*), and “well-crowned Kythereia” since she landed on Kythera, and “Cyprus-born” since she was born on sea-girt Cyprus, [200] and “smile-loving” or “genital-loving” since she appeared from the genitals.

And Desire (Eros) and beautiful Longing (Himeros) joined themselves in common with her when she was first born and followed her when she went up to the tribe of the gods. From the beginning she holds this honor. And she has obtained by lot this portion among human beings and the immortal gods—the intimate chatting of young maidens and smiles and beguiling deceit and delightful pleasure and sweet love and affection and soft tenderness.

But great Sky, their father, upbraided his own sons, the ones he had brought into the world. He called them “Titans,” the ones who stretch out, adding this name to their other names. For he asserted that they had stretched out to accomplish a mighty deed in their reckless arrogance. [210] But later on, he said, there would be payback for their act!

So ends Reading 3, “Earth and Sky.” See you in Reading 4, “Night’s Offspring.”

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> It is unclear whether Sky hates the Titans and Titanesses as well as the Cyclopes and hundred-handers, or just the latter.



**THE CLASSICS CAVE**  
The earliest light for a brighter life  
[www.theclassicscave.com](http://www.theclassicscave.com)

