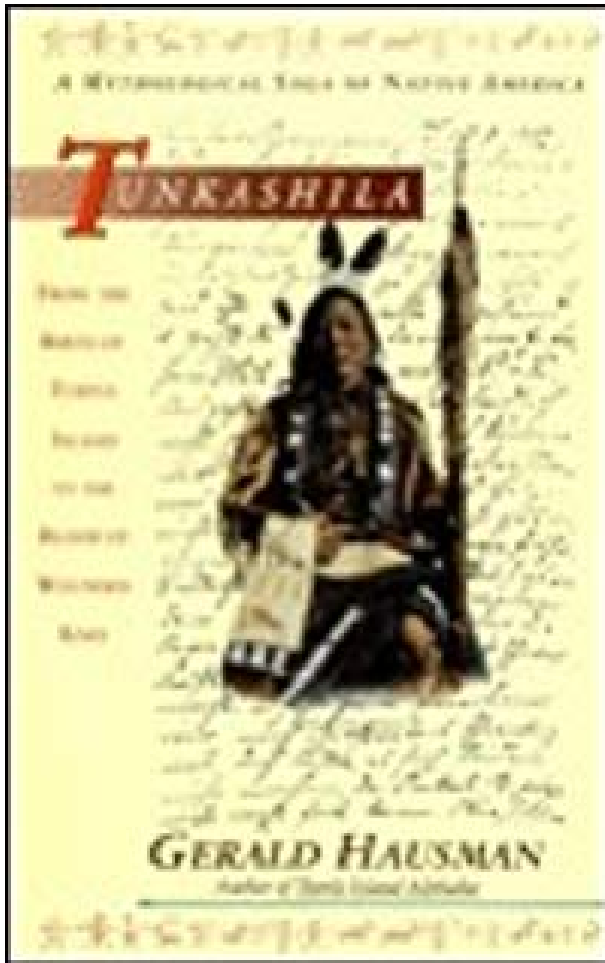


# Tunkashila: From the Birth of Turtle Island to the Blood of Wounded Knee



<b>Author:</b>	Gerald Hausman
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Tunkashila, which means "grandfather" in Lakota, is the epic tale of Native America as told through Indian eyes. The Southwest storyteller, Gerald Hausman, using mythological works like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Biblical epics like *Genesis* as his inspiration, has constructed a sweeping narrative that tells the saga of Native American heritage - from creation, to the formation of Turtle Island, or earth, to the battle at Wounded Knee, where the tale ends. Retelling over eighty Indian stories that have been handed down to us from antiquity, Hausman has assembled a great pageant of mythological characters into a circle of highly anecdotal myths: the myths of creation; the myths of love, loss, and leaving; the myths of power; the myths of war; and the myths of two worlds, one white and one red. Tunkashila's creation begins with our original parents, Sun Father and Mother Earth; their rebellious twins - known as the Monster Slayers; the holy people of earth, air, water, and fire; and a spectacular carnival of animal and insect people, who act in a cosmology of co-creation. From these central figures, their children and sacred relations, come the stories themselves, all based on oral tale: we read of the Abalone Girl who fell in love with a whale; of the story of Mountain Singing, where a mortal pursues a goddess and discovers the consequences; of Tall Man, who followed Red Shell down to the underworld only

to see her shade disappear; of Blue Elk, the mute boy, who was given the gift of voice through the antlers of an elk; and of an all-male clan of the River Crows that was destroyed by a white man's plague. Mythologizing actual events, Hausman finally chronicles the decline of Turtle Island, guiding the reader on a haunting journey through the ruined, wraith-like terrain of late nineteenth-century Native America. *Tunkashila* is a noble work that can be read from start to finish, but also can be dipped into, for each story is complete in its own right. The singular be