



I ONLY SING AT NIGHT – 2019

# How the World Was Created

Story by Finnish mythology, illustrated by Saara Alhopuro

In the beginning of time there was only water, sky, and sky's daughter Ilmatar. One day Ilmatar gets bored with life in the sky and descends to the water, where she becomes impregnated by the wind. She carries the child for 700 years, floating in water, when she suddenly notices a beautiful bird searching for a place to nest.

Ilmatar raises her knee towards the bird so that it could land. The bird lays eggs on Imatar's knee, but they are so hot that she pulls her knee back underwater and breaks the eggs.

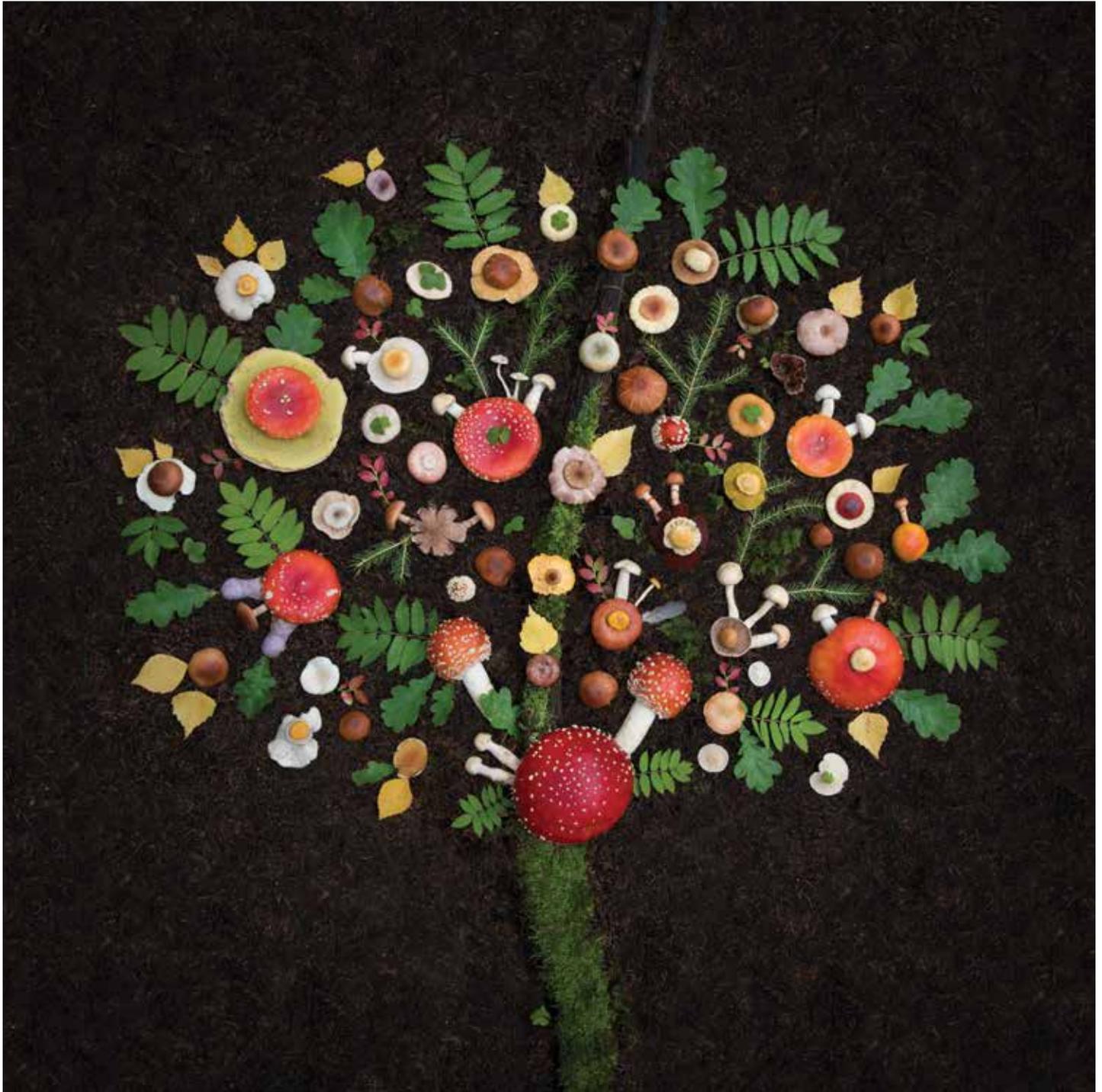
The lower part of the eggshell forms the land, while the top part forms the sky. The egg yolk becomes the sun, and the egg whites turn into the moon and stars.



COSMIC EGG – 2019



MOTHER MOON – 2019



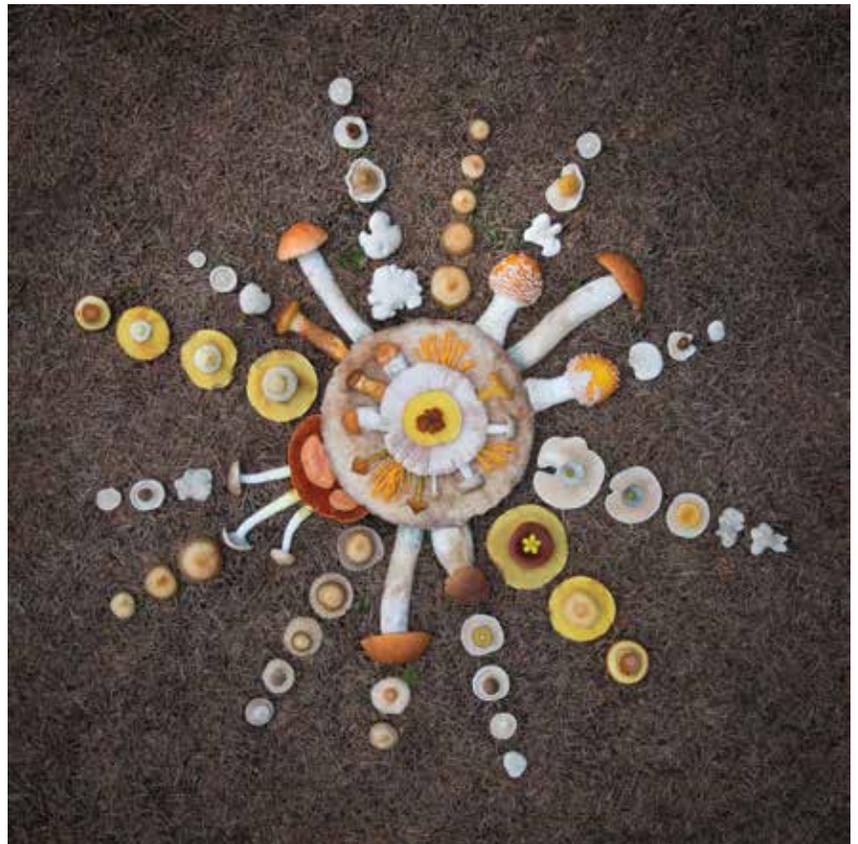
When the world is still being created, one tree starts to grow above everything else. Its branches stop the clouds, and cover the sun and the moon. Even the starlight dies in the sky, and the world becomes dark.

WORLD TREE – 2019



Ilmatar's son, our Grand Shaman Väinämöinen, calls the magic of the oceans for help - and look, a hero starts to rise from the water. Väinämöinen isn't impressed, though. This hero is too tiny, the size of a thumb, and surely too weak.

DO A LITTLE DANCE – 2019



But the tiny hero grows into a mighty giant, who strikes down the tree with one swing of an ax. And so the light returns into the world.

FATHER SUN – 2019



Whoever finds a branch of that tree is granted eternal happiness. Whoever secures the tree-top gains the master magic. And whoever gets a hold of its leaves finds love that never ends.

You can read the entire story in Finland's national epic, the Kalevala, or follow Saara Alhopuro's art at one of her social media pages:

Facebook: [@forestlikefairytale](#)

Instagram: [@forestlikefairytale](#)

TikTok: [@forestlikefairytale](#)

POSTCARD FROM FINLAND – 2018

# SAARA ALHOPURO

## *About my art*

Hi, dear readers of FUNGI Magazine. And greetings from Finland! This is Saara, Finnish land artist and photographer.

I use several techniques and styles of art, but I am best known for my mushroom art. I use wild mushrooms to create naivistic and colorful installations, which I create in the forest and leave there—on a moss bed, lichen mattress or a piece of rock—for anyone to find. The pieces themselves wither, but before they do, I record them and give them a new life through photography.

In my art I am especially interested in people's complex and controversial relationship with nature. The importance of nature and its biodiversity is highlighted in many fancy speeches, but do our actions tell the same story? And would our behavior change, if more of us actually spent time in nature, learning to appreciate its beauty?

For me the forest is a temple, studio and gallery. As a former dive instructor I enter the forest like I would dive down to a coral reef. I walk there slowly, paying attention to all the fairytale-like colors and shapes. The color palette found in our forests is much wider, and more exotic, than many realize. Collecting it takes a bit of time though, so I often spend 5–6 hours picking up my “paint” before being able to make art.

I want to wake up others to experience forests through art, as well. I am fascinated by the thought that anyone can accidentally find my pieces in their original gallery. Sometimes, when I have created an installation close to a popular nature path, I have stayed close-by and observed the people who find it to see their reactions. It has seemed clear

that my art has brought a bit of mystery and sense of magic to their day.

On the other hand you can also see darker tones in my art. I have often created skeleton shapes out of mushrooms, for example, along with other imagery of death. It is both an expression of concern towards the declining diversity in nature, as well as a study of nature's eternity. In land art, as in nature itself, everything disappears, and nothing will disappear permanently. When I leave my mushroom art in the forest, it lives on as part of the eternal circle of life.

I also use other materials I find in nature to create both abstract and descriptive art. Land art as a modern art movement is often said to have emerged in the 1960s, but in reality I believe it to be the most original art form of them all. We can only guess what kind of art people have created in their surroundings thousands of years ago—maybe they made art with mushrooms, too? I am just a temporary part of this long thread.

This is also why I started to share all my work on social media. I want to inspire people around the world to see the amazing beauty of wild mushrooms. If you want to help me with that—and see what I create next—you can support my work by following my social media sites.

I wish you a beautiful fall, and happy foraging! And if you ever decide to go mushroom hunting in Finland, keep your eyes open, and you may find a surprise...

Saara

(Facebook, Instagram and TikTok: @forestlikefairytale). 🍄