

WORLD FOLKLORE SERIES

PACHAMAMA TALES

Folklore from Argentina, Bolivia,
Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay



Retold and Translated by Paula Martín
Edited by Margaret Read MacDonald | Illustrations by Luna Núñez

Pachamama Tales

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Martín, Paula, 1962–

Pachamama tales : folklore from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay / retold and translated by Paula Martín ; edited by Margaret Read MacDonald.

pages cm. — (World folklore series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

English and Spanish parallel text.

ISBN 978–1–59158–299–1 (hardback) — ISBN 978–1–61069–853–5 (ebook) 1. Folklore—South America. 2. Indians of South America—Folklore. I. Title.

GR130.M37 2014

398.2098—dc23

2014007863

ISBN: 978–1–59158–299–1

EISBN: 978–1–61069–853–5

18 17 16 15 14 1 2 3 4 5

This book is also available on the World Wide Web as an eBook.

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130 Cremona Drive, P.O. Box 1911

Santa Barbara, California 93116-1911

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PREFACE

In 1998 Paula Martín invited me to come tell stories in Buenos Aires as her guest. She introduced me to the rich life of contemporary storytelling in that cosmopolitan city. Tellers meet in many cafés throughout the city to share stories . . . some are folktales, many are by contemporary authors. The audiences for these late night sessions are adults, and adult programs are offered at dinner theatre performances, and museum and library evenings. Paula also took me to see exciting telling for children at theatres and schools.

Later I was fortunate to be able to invite Paula to come tell stories in our libraries in Seattle and for our King County Storyfest International. And still later, Paula and I worked together in Habana, Cuba at their ContArte storytelling festival. Staying at the home of teller Elvia Pérez, we three planned a collection of Cuban folktales, *Desde los Vientos de Manguito/From the Winds of Manguito* (Libraries Unlimited, 2004). Elvia wrote it, Paula translated into English, and I edited the collection.

Now it is time to offer a collection of folktales from Paula's own territory. Though many of the stories are from her own country of Argentina, we expanded our reach to include tales from adjacent Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and since the Andean culture of Bolivia holds so much in common with the Andean regions of Peru, we include Peru also. Paula has traveled extensively throughout Argentina and to the other countries as well. I was fortunate to live for two years in Buenos Aires (1972–1974). Each year we spent a month in Santiago de Chile, driving our Volkswagen bus over the Andes, and touring through Bariloche and down to the island of Chiloé. Twice we drove up to spend a month in Asunción, Paraguay and visit Iguazú Falls. Often we drove, flew, or ferried over to Uruguay to stay in Montevideo or Punta del Este. And en route to Buenos Aires, we had traveled to Lima, Cuzco, Machu Pichu, by train down the high mountain plateau to Puno, where we caught an overnight boat across Lake Titicaca and then by bus to La Paz.

It has been a delight to revisit these places again in my imagination as I worked with Paula on this collection. We have given our readers a sampling of the vast body of folk literature which has evolved here, and through these tales we hope to offer a glimpse into some of the many cultures of these countries.

Margaret Read MacDonald, Guemes Island, Washington

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INTRODUCTION

PACHAMAMA

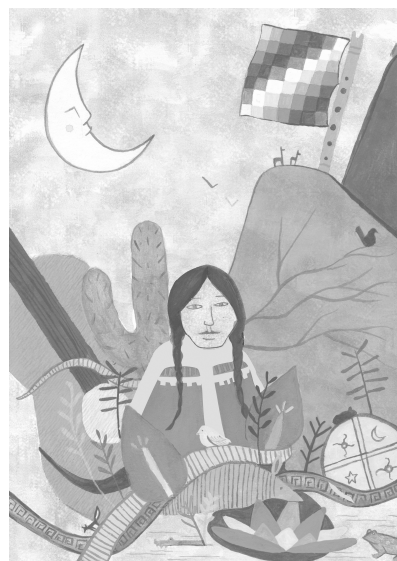
La Pachamama es la tierra como madre, la Madre Tierra. Es la madre de los cerros, de la vida que nace y crece, de la gente. Por ella maduran los frutos y se fecundan los vientres. Es ella quien controla las heladas y las lluvias. Cuando se enoja puede enviar el trueno y la tormenta. Es ella también quien ayuda a las tejedoras y a los alfareros a terminar sus piezas de artesanía. Vive en los cerros y guarda las riquezas de las minas.

En el mes de agosto la Pachamama abre sus entrañas para fecundar a las semillas con el amor de Pachamamac, el sol. En el tiempo en que transcurre esta unión sagrada la gente cuida de sus acciones, sus deseos, sus pensamientos, sus emociones de modo tal que nada interfiera ni entorpezca la felicidad de sus dioses.

Durante el mes de agosto, se celebran los ritos de veneración a la Pachamama. La tierra se abre y se le da de comer y de beber. Con profundo agradecimiento por las bondades recibidas se le ofrece *chicha* (una bebida alcohólica que se hace con la fermentación del maíz), cigarros, granos, hojas de coca, *acullicos* (hojas de coca mascadas), flores e hilos de colores. Se le pide por los días que vendrán, por los nuevos proyectos, por la salud y por el bienestar general.

El templo de la Pachamama es la naturaleza entera, pero la veneración se hace a través de las *apachetas*, montículos de piedra que se van colocando una sobre otra hasta armar una pirámide. Muchas de estas apachetas tienen que ver con los caminos y los caminantes. Algunas veces señalan el punto más alto del camino y otras un punto de encuentro entre un camino que termina y otro que comienza. Algunas veces muestran el lugar desde el cual se descubre un nuevo horizonte. A través de estas apachetas los viajeros le piden a la Pachamama salud y protección en el camino y los senderos, que otorgue descanso y fuerzas para continuar y que les dé permiso para ingresar a un lugar nuevo.

En la veneración a la Pachamama se le ofrece el primer bocado de comida, el primer sorbo de bebida y el primer fruto de la cosecha. Así entonces, que vayan para ella las primeras palabras de este libro.



AGRADECIMIENTOS

Este libro nace en la Pachamama, con cuentos que han sido paridos y criados desde la tierra de Sudamérica y de sus gentes. Es el momento de hacer una apacheta de palabras para pedir por su camino y su ingreso a un lugar nuevo pero sobre todo para agradecer profundamente las bondades recibidas para que este nacimiento suceda.

A Margaret Read MacDonald, por su profesionalismo y pasión por los cuentos, por todo lo que aprendí en el camino a su lado y por los nuevos senderos que se abrieron a través de este encuentro. Es quien hizo que este libro fuera posible.

A Barbara Ittner, que creyó en este proyecto brindando su apoyo y lo esperó con mucha paciencia.

A mis abuelos, que trajeron de sus provincias de Tucumán y Córdoba tantos cuentos, creencias, música y supersticiones que poblaron mi alma y mi imaginación.

A mis padres, que me dieron la vida y a mis hermanas y hermano con quienes compartimos cuentos, canciones y nuestra historia.

A mis hijos Joia, Javier y Luna, bellos seres que hacen de mi corazón un paraíso de colores y son un apoyo y un motor constante. A Luna también por sus hermosas ilustraciones.

A José Luis, mi amor, que llegó cuando menos lo esperaba en medio de flores lilas con su maletín de doctor cuida-corazones y su corazón gigante y bello. Gracias también por esas fotos asombrosas.

A mis maestros y colegas en la narración oral, arte antiguo y maravilloso, por quienes estos y otros cuentos se encarnan, recuperan su voz y cobran vida.

A los que nos precedieron en el arte y oficio de recopilar cuentos y canciones y cuyo legado es inigualable. De estas latitudes podemos nombrar a: Berta Vidal de Battini, Susana Chertrudi, Félix Colluccio y Leda Valladares entre otros.

A Lidia Porto, por regalarme la colección de la biblioteca de Blas que tanto me ayudó en el impulso final de este libro.

A Delia Aguilera, por su asesoramiento en cuestiones del Paraguay, por los bellísimos encajes de ñandutí y por su inconmensurable ayuda diaria.

A los que abran las páginas de este libro, deseándoles un buen transitar por el sendero y que puedan desentrañar la magia, la belleza y la bondad que estas tierras ofrecen.

PACHAMAMA

According to South American indigenous traditions, Pachamama is earth as a mother, Mother Earth. She is the mother of the mountains, of life that is born and grows, of all people. It is because of her that fruit ripens, animals multiply, and women have babies. It is she who controls frosts and rains. If she gets angry, she sends thunder and storms. She is also the one who helps weavers and potters finish their handicrafts. She lives in the mountains and guards the riches of mines.

In August, Pachamama opens her entrails to make the seeds grow with the love of Pachacamac, the sun. During the time of this sacred union, people take care of their actions, their desires, their thoughts, and their emotions so that nothing interferes or impedes their gods' happiness.

All through the month of August, Pachamama veneration rites are celebrated. The earth opens and is given food and drink. With deep gratefulness for the goods received, she is offered *chicha* (an alcoholic beverage that is made with fermented corn), cigarettes, grains, coca leaves, *acullicos* (chewed coca leaves), flowers, and colorful threads. She is asked for goodness in the days that will come, for new projects, for health, and for general wellbeing.

Pachamama's temple is all nature but the veneration is through the *apachetas*, cairns of piled stones, one over the other forming a pyramid. Many of these *apachetas* are related to roads and travelers. Sometimes, they mark the highest point of the way and others mark where a road ends and another one begins. Sometimes, they show a place from which a new horizon could be discovered. Through these *apachetas* travelers ask Pachamama for health and protection along the way and the paths, for her to grant rest and the strength to continue and for her to grant permission to enter a new place.

In veneration to Pachamama one offers the first bite of food, the first sip of drink, and the first fruit of the harvest. So let us offer to her as well, the first words in this book.

GIVING THANKS

This book is born in Pachamama with stories that have been born and raised from the land of South America and its people. Now is the time to make an *apacheta* with words, so we hope for this book's good path and its entrance into a new place, and above all, to give profound thanks for the benefits received so that it could happen.

To Margaret Read MacDonald, for her professionalism and passion for the stories, for all that I have learned at her side and for the new paths that opened through this encounter. She is the one who made this book possible.

To Barbara Ittner, who believed in this project offering her support and waited for it patiently.

To my grandparents, who brought from their provinces of Tucumán and Córdoba so many stories, music, and superstitions that inhabited my soul and my imagination.

To my parents, who gave me life, and to my sisters and brother with whom we shared stories, songs, and our history.

To my children Joia, Javier, and Luna, beautiful beings that make of my heart a colorful paradise and offer constant support and strength. To Luna also for her wonderful illustrations.

To Jose Luis, my love, that came when I least expected it in between lilac flowers with his doctor's heart-caring briefcase and his giant and beautiful heart. Thank you also for the amazing pictures.

To my teachers and colleagues in storytelling, old and marvelous art, through whom this and other stories manifest, recover their voice, and come to life.

To all who preceded us in the art of collecting songs and stories and whose legacy has no comparison. From these latitudes we can name: Berta Vidal de Battini, Susana Chertrudi, Félix Colluccio, and Leda Valladares among others.

To Lidia Porto, who gave me the collection from Blas's library that was of so much help in the final push of this book.

To Delia Aguilera, for her advice on Paraguayan issues, for the beautiful ñandutí laces and for her immeasurable daily help.

To all who will open the pages of this book, wishing them a good path along the way and the ability to fathom the magic, the beauty, and the goodness that these lands offer.

A BEAUTIFUL RAINBOW

South America is a continent of fascinating contrasts. There are hectic, cosmopolitan cities where people dress fashionably, with towering high-rises and all the characteristics of modern life, and then there are small towns where life has barely changed through hundreds of years and people dress in the same traditional clothing as centuries ago. There are vast extensions of virgin, unpopulated areas where nature contrasts with those other areas where everything shows the man-made touch.

From deserts to rain forest, from mountains to seashores, from tropical to Antarctic weather, as in a rainbow, the whole color spectrum is reflected.

And thus, there is something to be found for every interest that one may have: mountains with scenic treks or high altitude climbs; beaches that offer anything from unspoiled tropical islands to whale watching, or crowded fun. In the jungles and tropical rain forest, one can discover all types of animal and plant species. If you like water, you can find anything from the largest and the widest river to waterfalls and even glaciers. There are extensive deserts and salt plains. If you are interested in culture and history, there are many ruins with their mysteries to be discovered, colonial churches, missions, fortresses, and palaces. If you like music, there is *candombe* in Uruguay, *tango* in Argentina, harp music in Paraguay, *cueca* in Chile, and the beautiful Andean music in Bolivia and Peru. There are artists and artisans that offer amazing pieces of pottery, weavings, leather work, or paintings.

This diversity is also in the stories. This is why, even though we tried to be as representative of the different regions and ethnic groups as possible, we may have left some of the colors out. We have chosen for this book tales from the countries of the southern part of the South American continent. The ethnic groups living in these areas are not confined to one country, but their homelands stretch across borders. There is a logic to our inclusion of Quechua and Aymara tales (Peru, Bolivia, northern portions of Chile and Argentina), Guaraní tales (Paraguay and portions of Argentina, Uruguay, and Bolivia), Mapuche tales (Chile and Argentina), and of course, tales of Spanish origin which abound especially in Chile, Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay.

As we read these stories, it is useful to think about why the people of this area wanted to keep telling them. Stories pass from person to person for generations; some are imagined independently by groups of people, others travel to new lands as people migrate from place to place. People pass on their folktales for many reasons. We find here stories such as the “Sky Stories” which help people think about the things they see in the heavens and their relationships to heavenly beings. The tales of “Lost Places” are connected to specific places in the landscape and sometimes help people explain strange geological effects. Tales explaining the origins of plants, trees, stars, and musical instruments are sometimes imaginative inventions, and are sometimes connected to more deeply seated cultural beliefs. The “how and why” story is a playful form which every culture seems to be enjoying creating. And it is one that today’s students have success replicating in the classroom as well.

Every culture has its frightening tales, often seriously imbedded into the terrors of the group, and of course very useful in keeping children under control: “Don’t wander off or the *Millalobo* might get you!” Stories of witches and devils traveled from Spain with emigrants and continue to

hold a deep connection to the Catholic traditions now embedded in the area. These too suggest the importance of steering clear of evil.

Animal stories such as “The Vain Fox” and “Khamkhe and Kusi-Kusi” are excellent devices to teach morals to children. Every group also needs some just plain fun stories to relax with in the evening and our “Fool Stories” fill this bill. And for those persistent children who just won’t go to sleep, there are the totally annoying “Endless Tales.”

We have focused in this book on folktales told by contemporary people, all collected by folklorists in the last hundred years or so. For a good children’s collection of ancient mythology, see John Bierhorst, *Black Rainbow: Legends of the Incas and Myths of Ancient Peru* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976).

These tales have served the people of South America well for generations, now is your turn to join in. We welcome you and we hope you will enjoy your visit to our lands through these stories!

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PART 1

SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA



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THE LANDS FROM WHICH THESE STORIES COME



For this book we have taken stories from the southern part of the continent of South America. Our tales come from Perú and Chile on the continent’s Pacific side, from Argentina and Uruguay on the Atlantic, and from landlocked Bolivia and Paraguay. In terms of our tales, it makes the most sense to think about the various geographical regions of this area, rather than political borders.

THE ALTIPLANO

Let’s start with the Altiplano. The Altiplano (which means “high plain” in Spanish) has an average height of 12,300 feet (3750 meters). Some passes reach as high as 15,000 feet (4570 meters). The air at these altitudes has much less oxygen than air at sea level. Visitors from lower altitudes find themselves feeling weak until they have acclimated to the lack of oxygen. But the native people of this region have adapted physically to this and manage to work exceedingly hard even at this high altitude.

This huge, high plain, which stretches across the tops of the Andean mountain chain, features even higher volcanic peaks along its western border and high peaks of the Cordillera Real along the eastern border in Bolivia. The Altiplano begins in southern Peruvian territory, just north of Lake Titicaca, and stretches across western Bolivia, touching on the borders of Chile to the West and Argentina to the south. Most of the native residents of the Altiplano are Aymara.

The llama and alpaca are basic to the life of the Quechua and Aymara who live in these high Andean lands. From these animals they get wool to weave their clothing and blankets. The Aymara story of “Kharua and Kjirkinchi” (“The Llama and the Armadillo”) shows us just how harsh life on the Altiplano can be. From one season to another, there is always some hardship to endure.

The people of the Altiplano do not care much for snobbish folks who think they know it all. The Aymara story of “Khamkhe and Kusi-Kusi” shows a fox being dressed down by a small spider for his arrogance. And in a Peruvian story, “Fox and *Cuy*,” the fox is tricked by a little *cuy*, a guinea pig. *Cuy* are much prized in the Altiplano and Andean high country of Peru and Bolivia as a delicious dinner!

From the Altiplano come also the stories of Chungará, the lost city, whose inhabitants are said to have fled toward Tiahuanaco and Lake Titicaca.

Over the mountain range to the east of the Altiplano lie Bolivian lands with more favorable climates. Our Quechua tale “El Lago Asiru Qucha” comes from Arani, Bolivia. You will notice that this tale is very similar to the story of Chungará, told on the slightly higher Altiplano.

PERUVIAN ANDES

The people of the Andean high country to the north of the Altiplano in Peru share much of the same climate. Here we find the historic city of Cuzco, the gateway to Machu Pichu. The Quechua culture found in this part of the Andes has many similarities with the Aymara culture of the Altiplano.

The haunting strains of Andean folk music are known now throughout the world. Quechua and Aymara music is played on different and unique instruments: a flute-type *quena*, made of cane or wood; a square flute called a *tarka*, panpipes called *sikus* or *sampoñas*, drums called *cajas*, and the *charango*, a string instrument that used to be made of an armadillo shell but now is made of wood, since the animal is under protection. The story of “Quirquincho, the Great Singer” tells how armadillo came to give his shell to become an instrument, the *charango*. “The *Quena*: the Legend of *Manchai Puytu*” tells how the *quena* with its enchanting tones came to be.

Also from the Quechua people we have the story of “La zorra vanidosa” (“The Vain Fox”). As with the Aymara, the Quechua use stories to teach morals. The condor in this story is a highly respected bird with a huge wingspan. In the high mountain air, the full moon must be gorgeous. No wonder the fox wanted so badly to reach it! And from the Quechua we also have the story of “How the Queshque Cactus Got Its Spines,” another tale which features the fox.

AMAZONIAN RAIN FOREST

The eastern parts of Peru and Bolivia drop off steeply into the Amazonian rain forest basin. In these areas live native people who have tentative contact with the world outside their jungles. From here comes the Machiguengas’ tale, “The Origin of Yucca.” Manioc or cassava roots (*yuca*) are a main staple of the diet of these people. The Cashinahua people live also in the Peruvian rain forest. Their tale of “The Night of the *Tati*” tells how night originated.

From another Amazonian people, the Shipibo-Conibo, comes the magical tale of a city that floated away, “The Traveling Mountain.” Further south in the Amazonian basin, the Chimané (Tsimané) people along the Beni River in Bolivia’s Beni Province tell the tale of “*Ñucu*, the Worm” about the origin of the Milky Way.

COASTAL PLAIN

To the west, Peru drops off steeply again, this time to a coastal plain. The capital, Lima, is located there. And far to the south in Peru lies the Atacama Desert. So Peru has Andean Mountains, coastal cities, dry desert, and rain forest!

Traveling south along the coast, we reach Chile. Chile is a very long, narrow country, enclosed between the Andean Mountains to the east that separate it from Argentina, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Chile’s natural environment resembles the west coast of North

America in many ways except everything is reversed, north to south. The northern part of coastal Chile is desert; just as in the Northern Hemisphere we have desert lands in the far south, such as Baja California. As we move south in Chile, the desert gives way to pleasant farmland and at Valparaiso we have a coastline, not unlike California's Monterey area. Inland is the capital city of Santiago de Chile, a city with a pleasant Southern California feel.

Further south, snowcapped volcanic peaks erupt from the Andean Mountain range, reminding one of the snowcapped volcanoes in the Pacific Northwest. Even further south begin forested islands, reminiscent of the islands of Canada's British Columbia. And at the southernmost tip lie the fiords, as in the North American continent's coast of British Columbia and Alaska.

From the coast of northern Chile comes the ancient tale of "The Disappearance of *La Serena*." In this tale, we find the appearance of a Spanish soldier, Juan Soldado. The story comes from a historical time period when the city was well developed, with a church and rich men about.

In Valdivia, much further south on the coast, we find the story of "The Devil's Mother-in-Law" and a version of "Misery, the Blacksmith." These tales appear in many provinces of Argentina as well. Since Chile and Argentina share a similar Spanish heritage and a border, we find many of the same tales told throughout both countries.

The endless tales, "The Little Ant," "The King's Cow," and "The King Who Had Two Sons" also come from the Spanish heritage of Chile's coastal areas.

CHILEAN AND ARGENTINIAN SOUTHERN ANDES

In the Central and Southern Andean mountains of Chile and Argentina live the Mapuche people. Here the mountain range becomes less harsh than the Andes in Northern Chile/Argentina and the Altiplano. There are forested mountains, snowcapped volcanoes, ancient glaciers, and ski resorts. The Mapuche tale of "The Cowhide" comes from this region. The Mapuche also live further south in Chile's Southern Archipelago and in Patagonia.

CHILE'S SOUTHERN ARCHIPELAGO

At the southernmost end of Chile's highway system the land dissolves away into myriad wooded islands where Mapuche people live. Chiloé is one of the largest islands and being reached by a ferry from Puerto Montt, has many residents. The story of the Millalobo, a creature who lives in a lake on Chiloé is included in our section on monsters.

THE NORTHERN ARGENTINE ANDES

Across the Andes we find the eighth largest country in the world, Argentina. In Latin America only Brazil has a larger land mass. This country stretches from the Altiplano and Gran Chaco in the north to the cold lands of Tierra del Fuego in the south.

Driving east from Santiago, one reaches the Andean Mountains and the Bermejo Pass, crossing the 12,572 feet (3832 meters) mountain range into Argentina. Another day of driving will bring you to its capital Buenos Aires.

North of the Pass we find the provinces of Salta, Jujuy, Tucumán, La Rioja, and Catamarca. These are dry, mountainous regions. Though many of the residents here are descended from native people, the folklore from this region tends to draw on Spanish traditions. Many versions of “The Devil’s Helper” were heard in this area (Salta, Jujuy, Tucumán, Catamarca), as were versions of “Misery, the Blacksmith” and “The Devil’s Mother-in-Law.” With their Catholic faith and Spanish legend tradition, these stories of witches and devils are taken as true. The story of “The Jujuy Witch” was told to Margaret by her *mucama*, Berta Bautista, when they lived in Acassuso. Berta definitely believed that this had happened.

From this area also come animal fables such as the story of “The Toad’s Spots” and “The Toad and the Round Armadillo.” And from La Rioja comes the bizarre tale of the “*Zapam Zacum*.” The story of “El duende sombrero” is found throughout the provinces of this region. And the fool story, “Five Kilos of Corn” is found in Jujuy, Tucumán, and La Rioja.

THE PAMPAS

Central Argentina is a broad plain, the pampas, where cattle are a major part of life. This is a tall grass prairie. The pampas area includes the Argentinian provinces of Buenos Aires, La Pampa, Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, Córdoba, and parts of San Luis, as well as most of Uruguay and even a bit of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul.

The gauchos are an important part of Argentinian and Uruguayan folklore, just as cowboys form such an important part of the lore of the American West. You can read more about them on page 11. The stories from this area are mainly Spanish in origin, told by the ranchers and their workers. Music was important in the life of the gaucho. Our story of “The Legend of the Guitar” comes from this tradition. “The Toad’s Spots” mentions the many kinds of traditional folk dance popular among the gauchos. “Sunday Seven” features an *ombú* tree. This tree is one of the few trees that would grow on the pampas grasslands, so an *ombú* was a place for the gauchos to rest in the shade during a break from their work looking after the cattle. The fool stories are popular in this region as “Five Kilos of Corn” was found in Córdoba and “When Ingele Believed He Was Dead” in Entre Ríos.

URUGUAY

Uruguay is the second smallest country in South America. Its gently rolling hills and fertile lands are conducive to agriculture and to the raising of cattle. The gaucho lifestyle of Argentina is a folk tradition also in Uruguay. And cattle and sheep ranching are still important to this country. The country borders on the Atlantic Ocean to the east, with many beautiful seaside areas. To the south it lies on the broad Río Plata. The residents of this area, and of Argentina, are mostly of European descent, primarily from Spain and Italy. One fourth of the residents of Uruguay claim Italian origin. Thus, the folklore from the area has strong roots in Spanish and Italian folklore. Many of the folktales told in the Pampas of Argentina are also told in the Uruguayan gaucho culture. For example, our story of “When Ingele Believed He Was Dead” comes from sources in both Argentina and Uruguay. We also include the tale of the origin of the arrival of *candombe* drumming

with the Bantu slaves, “*Candombe Drums*.” The 2006 census listed nine percent of Uruguayans as black/mulatto.

“The River of the Painted Birds” gives a glimpse into the myriad bird life of Uruguay and “The Legend of the *Lajau (Ombú)*” shows us many of the trees of Uruguay.

RÍO DE LA PLATA

Buenos Aires, the nation’s capital, is located on the Río de la Plata (River of Silver). This enormous river is formed by the joining of the Río Uruguay and the Río Paraná. It widens quickly to an estuary 140 miles (225 kilometers) wide by the time it empties into the Atlantic Ocean and thus is the widest river in the world. The Argentinian capital, Buenos Aires, is set well inland from the sea, near the start of this 180 mile (290 kilometer) long river. At the river’s mouth on the opposite shore lies Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. Buenos Aires had a 2010 population of 2.89 million and is one of the 20 largest cities in the world. Montevideo’s 2011 population was 1.3 million. Since folklorists have tended to collect tales from rural areas, our collection does not reflect the incredible diversity of these cities: Italian, German, British, Jewish among others. From Buenos Aires we do have the five never-ending tales from Paula Martín’s family tradition. The fool stories “Five Kilos of Corn” and “When Ingele Believed He Was Dead” are also found in this province.

THE GRAN CHACO

The Gran Chaco is a large semi-arid plain, sparsely settled. Most of the Gran Chaco lies in Paraguay. The portions of the Gran Chaco nearest to the Andes in the west are dry, with little vegetation. The areas farther to the east get more rainfall and support savanna vegetation, though high rainfall here often results in a swampy plain.

The Gran Chaco extends into the Formosa and Chaco provinces of Argentina, slightly into Bolivia on its western edge, and into Brazil’s Matto Grosso and Matto Grosso do Sul provinces.

From the Gran Chaco we have a story told by the Qom/Toba people explaining why the stars are white. The story features use of the *algarrobo* (or carob) tree, which lives in parts of the Gran Chaco. The Qom/Toba also tell a story of the origin of tobacco in “The Cannibal Woman.”

PARAGUAY’S PARANÁ REGION AND THE ARGENTINE LITTORAL

The capital of Paraguay, Asuncion, is located on the Paraguay River, south of the Gran Chaco and close to the Argentinian border. The area to the south is called the “Paraná” and is a pleasant lightly wooded land, good for farming. The Guaraní, who make this their homeland, make up a large proportion of Paraguay’s citizens and their language is a second national language, along with Spanish. The Guaraní people are also found down the Paraná River into Argentina’s Littoral region. This riverine area includes portions of the provinces of Entre Ríos, Corrientes, and Misiones, but there are Guaraní people in Chaco and Formosa provinces as well. Some Guaraní also live across the Paraguayan borders into Bolivia, Brazil, and Uruguay.

Several Guaraní tales are included in this book. The tale of “The Monkey and the *Yacaré*” is from Paraguay and is also found in Corrientes Province in Argentina. The tale would be told in riverine areas where this caiman is common. We have stories about the origin of Paraguay’s native plants, “Anahí, the *Ceibo* Flower” and “The Story of the *Irupé* Flower.” And we have an unusual story, “The Origin of *Ñanduti* Lace” about the delicate lace created by Guaraní women. And we have a tale of the “*Yasí Yateré*,” a creature who, along with his variant, the *Kurupí*, is found from the Argentine Littoral north through Brazil and beyond.

MATA ATLÁNTICA

The amazing Iguazú Falls is located at the corner of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. The Iguazú River crashes over the edge of the Paraná Plateau just fourteen miles from where it joins the Paraná River. The falls extend for 1.7 miles (3 kilometers), and vary in height from 197 to 269 feet (60 to 80 meters). In 2012, they were declared one of the new seven natural wonders of the world. Around this area and extending into Misiones Province of Argentina are the extremely diverse and lush forests of the Mata Atlántica or Atlantic Forest, which extends into this region from Brazil. The Guaraní traditionally inhabited the lands around the falls.

ARGENTINIAN CENTRAL ANDES OR CUYO

On the Argentinian side of the Southern Andes lie the provinces of San Juan, San Luis, and Mendoza. This region includes the Andes and their foothills. It is a high, dry, and sunny area and is famous for its wines and olives. Versions of “Who Is First to See the Sunrise?” “The Toad and the *Ñandú*” and “The Toad and the Round Armadillo” were found in San Luis and Mendoza. Fool stories seem popular here; “The Brave Fool” is found in San Luis, and a version of “When Ingele Believed He Was Dead” was found in San Juan.

PATAGONIA

The southern tip of South America drops down into the sea just opposite Antarctica. The Chilean side of this area is rugged and uninhabited, with deep fiords, islands, and horrific winds. On the Argentinian side the mountains slope down to a broad steppe-like plain, which drops off in thirteen abrupt terraces, about 330 feet (100 kilometers) at a time. Here it is cold and windy as well, but the flatter land allows sheep farming.

Argentina considers several of its states to be part of Patagonia: Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz, Tierra del Fuego, Malvinas, and other islands. The northern states of Neuquén and Río Negro are somewhat milder than the most southern tip of the region. Here live the Mapuche and a northern group of Tehuelche. Farther south, especially near the Andes, live another Tehuelche group, largely assimilated after European encroachment. The magical tale of “El’Al and Kellfu, the Swan” is a Tehuelche tale. In the extreme south, the Selknam essentially died out after Europeans took over their territory, though some of their stories remain. We include the Selknam tale of “The Origin of the Calafate.”

Our Mapuche story, “The Cowhide” comes from Santa Cruz province, high in the Andes at Lake Buenos Aires. There are recollections of this story on the Chilean side of the Andes and in Chiloé as well. Lago Buenos Aires crosses the border and is shared with Chile, where it is called General Carrera Lake. Another Mapuche tale, “*The Kultrún*,” tells of the importance of the *kultrún* drum in Mapuche cosmogony and ceremonies.