



# **Piecing Earth and Sky Together: A Creation Story from the Mien Tribe of Laos**

*Nancy Raines Day*

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In the beginning, a helper from heaven named Faam Koh came down to make the sky. His sister, Faam Toh, came down to make the earth. So begins the delightful story of a very competitive pair who use the distinctive embroidery of the Mien people to create the earth and sky. Because both siblings want to make their part of the world the most beautiful, they work in secret until it is finally time to reveal their handiwork, and find out that the two pieces don't fit together! The two try stretching the sky- only to result in some stuffing falling out as clouds, but Faam Toh solves the problem by stitching the fabric into mountains, rivers, gorges, and valleys. Only then do the earth and sky fit perfectly, allowing all the plants and animals to thrive. Like the detailed Mien embroidery in the story, Nancy Raines Day's retelling of this traditional Mien tale and Genna Panzarellas striking illustrations also fit together like the earth and sky. Together, they create a book that is alive with the richness and beauty of the Mien culture and of the earth itself. An author's explanation of the tradition and significance of Mien embroidery follows the story.

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