

Back in 1964, some of my students were griping about an assignment their social studies teacher had given them—write an original Greek myth. I told them that sounded like fun, so they challenged me to do the assignment. The results follow.

THE FIRST GOAT
An Original Greek Myth
By Alice Eby Hall

One day Old Zeus,
King of Heaven and Earth,
In his home on Olympus
Couldn't move from his berth.

He tried to arise
And go to his throne
But all he could do
Was wail and groan.

He called for Hera,
His beautiful wife,
And moaned, "Hera,
I fear for my immortal life."

Hera was worried,
As any wife would be.
"I'll make you well
At all costs," said she.

She called Aesculapius,
Father of all doctors,
To try his hand
At miraculous cures.

He summoned Ganymede,
Cupbearer of Kings,
To bring ambrosia, nectar,
And other good things.

Poor Old Zeus, though,
Could keep nothing down.
He regurgitated everything
His tummy was shown.

So he sent for Hygeia,
Goddess of Health,
And he asked for Hermes
Winged feet were his wealth.

Hygeia saw the problem;
Zeus's ulcers had ruptured.
"You need milk," she said,
"for your stomach to be cured."

Hermes was sent to
Bring milk of each kind—
Camel, reindeer, sheep,
All the cows he could find.

Nervous, tense Zeus drank
All the milk he could hold,
But nothing could help.
It all left him cold.

So Hermes fetched Pan,
Who looked rather odd,
But who was tolerated
As a shepherd and god.

Hygeia told Pan, "We need
Milk easy to digest.
You know all animals.
What do you suggest?"

Pan mused a while,
Then his face came to life.
The Satyrs," he said,
Each need a wife."

"We'll make an animal
That looks just like them
That will give the best milk
Known to gods or to men."

So Pan, quick as a wink,
Took the mind of a shoat,
Body of a lamb, bag of a cow,
And called it a goat.

She ate delicately, and so
Her milk was a dream.
It tasted like ambrosia
And looked like pure cream.

It made Zeus well
In no time flat!
So he immortalized her...
...just like that!

You can see her today
Frolicking on high,
A tribute from gods—
Capricorn in the sky.

