

From: Taking the fruit: Modern women's tales of the bible. This is the "First Tale" (1973) by Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb.

In the beginning  
God made the earth and the sky and the sea  
God reached into the waters  
formed a womb in my hand  
and put it in the sky  
then  
with Her own breath  
God filled womb with Lilith  
first woman

Deep inside the womb  
Lilith began her birthing  
the womb grew heavy with woman  
until one day  
Lilith pushed her arms outward  
tore the walls which held her  
to reach the sky

The sky received her smiling  
Lilith embraced all life  
her wings of fire  
not knowing where sky began  
and her own self ended

Lilith looked down  
saw a shadow on the water  
She saw herself hovering over the deep  
Lilith rejoiced  
thinking she had found another like herself  
spoke to the image  
which did not answer  
First loneliness

and God said: it is not good  
for woman to be alone  
I will make her a companion  
As Lilith is sky  
so man shall be earth  
and God made man  
from the dust of the ground  
breathed into him the breath of life  
and man became a living being

then God brought Lilith to dry land  
there upon the soil  
Lilith became still  
seeing a place which did not move  
like wind or water  
Lilith said:  
I will stay awhile

then, he appeared  
and came toward her  
his eyes still spoke of birth  
like hers  
and yet she know a difference  
this one stood solid on the ground

He said: I am Adam child of Adamah  
walk with me and I will show you the earth  
Lilith smiled and said: I am Lilith  
with wings of fire  
come and I will show you the sky  
but Adam, afraid of Lilith's wings of fire  
fell to the earth

Lilith  
needing her companion  
removed her wings of fire  
hurled them to the sky  
Adam saw Lilith without her fire  
no longer afraid  
he rose to meet her  
woman and man walked together  
sharing memories of their own first hours

Lilith remembered a spirit on the waters  
called to the sun to return her fire  
Adam knew her now  
and would not be afraid

but Adam  
still afraid of woman's fire  
forced Lilith to the ground  
hoping to make her more like himself  
but she continued calling  
then Adam understood  
the power of this holding  
forced himself down upon her  
Lilith felt his strength as pain  
closed her eyes  
first sleep of terror

deep inside her own darkness  
under the fear of man  
Lilith forgot her sky birth  
and awoke  
without memory

Eve  
second woman  
Eve opened her eyes  
saw Adam standing large before her  
he moved and revealed the sun  
Adam said: I will call you woman  
because you come from man  
serve me  
and I will protect you from strange fires

Eve upon the earth  
gave herself to man  
and God sad parent of creation  
wept  
seeing woman slave to man  
and man afraid of woman  
God knew  
she must give them life and death  
the passing of generations  
so one future man and woman  
as intended at creation

and God planted the tree of knowledge in the garden saying  
You must choose eternity or knowledge  
for on the day you eat this fruit  
you shall surely die

and Eve said: I want to know  
and felt a strange remembering  
she saw the tree was good for food  
and a delight to the eyes  
so she took the fruit and ate it  
Adam ate with her

then Eve heard the evening wind  
moving in the garden  
and some dark memory stirred her soul  
a memory of fire  
a spirit on the waters

Adam saw death  
the lost eternity of man  
and said: In pain you shall bear my children  
your desire will be toward me  
Eve left the garden  
with her master  
mourning a self not quite remembered

Lilith  
we are your children  
we are the changing generations  
help us recover our wings of fire  
so we can come together  
woman and man  
as intended by God  
in the beginning  
of creation