

Spoken to Washington Matthews  
prior to the recounting of a  
Navajo cosmogony, circa 1890.

Torlino

"THEREFORE I MUST TELL THE TRUTH"

I am ashamed before the earth:  
I am ashamed before the heavens:  
I am ashamed before the dawn:  
I am ashamed before the evening twilight:  
I am ashamed before the blue sky:  
I am ashamed before the darkness:  
I am ashamed before the sun.  
I am ashamed before that standing within me which speaks with me.  
Some of these things are always looking at me.  
I am never out of sight.  
Therefore I must tell the truth.  
That is why I always tell the truth.  
I hold my word tight to my breast.

—Translation from Navajo by Washington Matthews