

THE BOOK
OF
YESHUA

The Book of Yeshua

An Account Written by
the Hand of Agonabish
The Red Plates Record of the Midē'wiwin

An abridgment of the records, visions, and testimonies engraven upon the Red Plates of copper and gold, containing the history and covenants of the people of the light from the first garden upon the Southern Land of Endless Day, through their journey into darkness and the days of counting, their deliverance from the hand of the Serpent, and their inheritance upon the Breast of the Turtle. Also containing the words and ministry of Yeshua, the Son of the Most High, as He visited the remnant of His people after His salvation from Jerusalem, bringing the covenant of peace and the law of the Kingdom of Heaven.

To come forth by the command of the Great Spirit in the latter days, to the Giiwedinong Anishinaabeg and all nations, that they may know the covenants made with their fathers, and that they are not forgotten before the throne of Heaven. Written for the convincing of the Anishinaabe, the remnant of the house of Israel, and the nations of the Earth that Yeshua is the Messiah, the Eternal Light of the world, and that all must believe in Him to inherit eternal life.

Translated by Madison M. Moore

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The Vision of the Red Plates

On the fourteenth day of August, in the year two thousand twenty-four, at the first hour past midnight, a darkness opened above me, small as a hole in the sky. From it descended a being of form yet without substance. His body glowed with a soft purple light; no garments adorned him, yet no shame nor flaw was revealed. His eyes were deep as indigo, shining like living glass, translucent, and endless.

He named himself Agonabish. In his hands he bore a set of red plates, thick and lustrous as burnished copper. Though his lips did not move, his voice entered my mind, calling me by the name of my birth. He spoke of the anniversary of the Mother of Yeshua and declared that I, though unseen in this generation, had been chosen for a sacred purpose: to bear a message born of suffering and to share it with the world. He told me that generations yet to come would know my name.

He gave me a charge: twenty-four hours to record the message, after which it would be taken. Then he rose into the darkness and vanished.

Twelve hours hence, he returned, took the record, and spoke again: twelve hours remained to publish it. Then he ascended, and I was left alone.

In the hours that followed, my hand moved with astonishing swiftness. I relayed to my mother that two hundred pages had been written in what seemed an impossible span. It was not translation I performed; rather, the words flowed directly from the record into my mind, in a tongue akin to Ojibwe, understood without effort. I knew not rest. Every moment was given to the sacred task. Time passed as though in minutes.

At last, in the early hours of August fifteenth, the work was complete, and the message was made public. I marked the hour well: it was the anniversary of the death of the Mother of Yeshua, as Agonabish had spoken.

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A Brief Explanation About The Record Of The Red Plates

The Record of the Red Plates is a sacred collection of engraved histories brought to Agonabish by the messengers in the final days of his life. It is compiled from multiple sources:

1. *The Garden Records* — beginning with fragments from Zhaawanong Gichi-Aki (the Southern Land), these tell of the first garden, the exodus of the people of light, and the giving of the garments of honor and staff of light.
2. *The Giiwedining Journeys* — a series of annals recounting the migration north through darkness and hope, leading to the founding of the settlement at the Breast of the Turtle.
3. *The Teachings of the Covenant* — inspired writings that include parables, spiritual laws such as the Covenant of Peace, the Feast of Keeping, and the Seven Songs, given by the Messengers and elders.
4. *The Yeshua Account* — the ministry and testimony of Yeshua “Giiziig” visited among the remnant, wrought in power and peace, to redeem the fallen and seal the light among those who remained faithful.

Agonabish abridged these records—paring away repetition, weaving prophetic commentary, and preserving the names as they were spoken in the Spirit. He arranged them into five major sections:

- I. Creation, Garden, and the Fall of the Serpent
- II. Exile, Darkness, and Northward Passage
- III. The Covenant of Peace and Life in the Long Night
- IV. The Laws of Faith: Songs, Feasts, and Parables
- V. The Testimony and Ministry of Yeshua, sealing the Light
- VI. The Kingdom of Heaven in the Heart is Explained

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In the presence of the Four Winds and under the sight of the Great Mystery, we, the Keepers of the Drum and the Carriers of the Medicine, set forth this seal.

Let it be known to all who open these pages that the words contained herein are drawn from a small portion of the ancient telling of Agonabish and the Red Tablets, carried by memory from the lodge fires of our ancestors and guarded in the bundles of the Midē'wiwin.

This record has been read in council, its truth weighed against the teachings of the Grandfathers and the visions granted to the Faithful. It bears the mark of the Seven Sacred Directions — East for the rising light, South for the warmth of life, West for the cleansing shadow, North for the enduring wisdom, Above for the Great Spirit, Below for the Earth our Mother, and Within for the fire that lives in the heart of the People.

The words within are to be approached with humility, for they speak of matters both seen and unseen, of wars that shook the Skyworld and of the vessels of light that walk among men. They bind together the memory of the First Beings, the councils of Heaven, and the long path of redemption that unfolds upon the Earth.

By this seal we affirm that the teachings herein are entrusted to the generations yet unborn, that they may remember who they are, guard the light within, and stand unshaken in the day when the Sky is split and the songs of the Mother return.

In the name of the Midē'wiwin —
Guardians of the Medicine, Carriers of the Sacred Law,
We close this seal with the sign of the Seven.



BOOK I

The Path of Light Among the Waters

Chapter 1 – The Arrival at Mitchimakinak

1 And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year after the birth of Yeshua, that He journeyed unto the land of the meeting of the great waters, even Mitchimakinak, which is the Great Turtle lying upon the deep.

2 For the Spirit had led Him through the cedar woods and maple groves of the east, until He beheld the shining straits where Gichi-Gami and Mishigami meet.

3 And the island rose before Him as the shell of a turtle, with cliffs of white stone and forests as a crown.

4 The people of that place, being of the Anishinaabeg—Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi—came forth in their canoes of birch-bark, for they had heard tidings of a man whose words burned as the sun at dawn.

5 They spake one to another, saying, Could this be the Dawn-Bringer of the winter prophecies, who shall open the way of light?

6 And Yeshua stood in the foremost canoe, and the wind played upon His hair, and His raiment was white as the foam of the straits.

7 When the currents grew strong, and the waves began to trouble the canoes, He lifted His hand, and the waters grew calm beneath Him.

8 The elders marvelled, saying, This is He that commandeth the lakes as the Master of the Four Winds.

9 And they brought Him ashore at the eastern landing, where the cliffs stand watch, and led Him along the forest path toward the great lodge of council.

10 Women brought bowls of fresh-caught whitefish, and cakes of wild rice, and berries gathered from the summer woods.

11 Yeshua blessed them, saying, The hand that feedeth the stranger is the hand that is remembered in the lodge of the Father.

12 In the cool of the day He walked among the cedar groves, and the children followed Him, laughing as they gathered flowers to lay in His path.

13 Then He came unto the great council-fire, and the people sat round in silence to hear His voice.

14 And He said unto them, Ye dwell upon the shell of the Great Turtle, whose back hath borne thee from the beginning; yet I tell thee, there is a greater back that beareth all the worlds, and that is the hand of the Father.

15 These waters that surround thee are as the circle of His covenant, without breach, without end; enter into it, and thou shalt be kept.

16 He spake a parable, saying, A canoe full of light needeth not to fear the night; but a canoe without light is lost though the sun be high.

17 Let thy spirit be as a vessel well-made, that it may bear the fire of the Father and not be broken in the waves.

18 An elder named Bineshi spake, saying,

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How shall a man set the light within his vessel?

19 Yeshua answered, Open thy heart as thou openest the lodge door to a friend; for the Father standeth without, bearing the flame, and will enter if thou bid Him come.

20 And when His flame is within, guard it as thou guardest the council-fire, lest the wind of deceit quench it.

21 Then He walked with them to the western shore, and spake blessings over the fishermen casting their nets in the shallows.

22 A net that had torn and caught nothing He drew to Himself, and with His hand He gathered it full of fish, so that it strained to be lifted.

23 The men cried out in wonder, and Yeshua said, I will make you gatherers of souls, if ye follow in My way.

24 That night He lodged in a cedar lodge upon the southern shore, and the sound of the waves was as a song unto His rest.

25 And the people kept watch, speaking in low voices, for they knew the prophecy of the Light-Bearer had come among them.

26 In the morning, before the sun was risen, He went apart to pray, and the mist lay upon the waters as a mantle.

27 The gulls wheeled above the cliffs, and the loons called upon the far side of the island.

28 And the Father spake unto Him, saying, Thy path is set; thou shalt go from the Great Turtle unto the far mountains, and there seal the covenant among the people.

29 Yeshua bowed His head and answered, Thy will be done, O Father of all waters and all light.

30 And thus began the journey of Yeshua across the lands and waters of the people, from Mitchimakinak unto the mountains of the Turtle in the far west.

Chapter 2 - The Gathering at Gichi-Asin

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua, desiring solitude, went from the eastern landing along the forest path unto the high place called Gichi-Asin, the Standing Stone of the Turtle's Back.

2 This was a great rock rising above the trees, steadfast from the first making of the island, and the people held it as a place of vision.

3 There was a hollow in the stone, worn by many winters and rains, wherein a man might rest.

4 And Yeshua lay down in that place as the sun went down, and the breath of cedar filled the night.

5 Above Him the northern lights moved like rivers of green fire, and the stars shone as lamps in the Father's lodge.

6 In the stillness He prayed for the people of the island, that their vessels might be filled with the true light.

7 At dawn, the people gathered at the base of the great stone, bringing the sick, the blind, and the lame.

8 They called unto Him, Master, come down and help us, for we have heard of Thy works in other lands.

9 Yeshua descended and came to the shore where they stood.

10 There was a man whose legs had been lame from birth; Yeshua took him by the hand and said, Rise, for the Maker of thy

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bones hath made them whole.

11 And the man leaped and walked, and praised the Father before all.

12 A woman brought her daughter whose eyes were clouded; Yeshua touched her brow and spake, See the light that the Father hath made for thee.

13 And her eyes were opened, and she beheld the waters shining in the morning sun.

14 The people marvelled, and some fell upon their knees.

15 But Yeshua lifted them, saying, Rise, for the Father seeketh thy heart more than thy posture.

16 He taught them, saying, Even as this stone standeth unmoved though the winds and rains beat upon it, so shall the vessel full of light endure the storms of the world.

17 But the vessel without light is as driftwood, carried whithersoever the current taketh it.

18 An elder named Migizi said, Master, how may we stand as this stone?

19 Yeshua answered, By setting thy foundation upon the Father's word, and by keeping thy vessel clean, that the light may dwell within and not depart.

20 He spake a parable, saying, A canoe built upon the shore may be strong, yet if its seams be not sealed, the waters shall enter and it shall sink; so is the man who knoweth the truth yet keepeth not his heart from deceit.

21 All that heard were pricked in their hearts, and many vowed to keep the light.

22 Yeshua blessed them and returned unto Gichi-Asin for the night, for He desired the stillness before going forth again.

23 The people kept a fire at the base of the stone, and the smoke went up into the night as a pillar.

24 Children slept by their mothers, and the elders watched the stars for signs.

25 In the morning Yeshua set His face toward the eastern cliffs, for there was a great gathering appointed.

26 As He walked, the wind brought the smell of sweetgrass from the meadows.

27 He spake softly to His disciples, The Father's hand is in all these things; see and remember, for the journey ahead is long.

28 They came to the eastern cliffs as the sun was high, and the people awaited His word.

29 And thus was the way prepared for the teaching by the sea-cliffs of Mitchimakinak.

30 And the fame of His name spread yet further among the villages of the straits.

Chapter 3 – The Fire by the Eastern Cliffs

1 And it came to pass that the people gathered by the eastern cliffs of Mitchimakinak, where the white stone falls sheer into the waters of Gichi-Gami.

2 They kindled a great fire, and the smoke went upward, mingling with the wind from the lake.

3 Yeshua sat upon a stone, and the people formed a circle round about Him.

4 The sound of the waves was as a drumbeat beneath His words.

5 He said unto them, The lodge of the Father is without walls, yet it is greater than all the earth; its fire is never quenched, and its door is never shut.

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6 All who come bearing the vessel of light may enter; but he whose vessel is empty cannot remain, for the darkness findeth no place therein.

7 He spake a parable, saying, A man set out across the waters in the night; his canoe was without lamp, and the moon was hid. He heard voices calling, but could not find the shore, and was lost.

8 Another set out with a lamp trimmed and bright; though the fog covered the lake, he saw the glow of the shore and came safely home.

9 So is the soul in the day of trouble: the one with light shall find the way, but the one without shall wander in peril.

10 A fisherman named Shingwauk said, Master, is this light our own, or doth it come from another?

11 Yeshua answered, It is the gift of the Father, yet it is given to be kept and tended by thy hand; if thou neglect it, it shall fade.

12 He lifted a burning brand from the fire and set it in the sand.

13 See how the flame standeth while it is fed; but if it be left, the wind shall take it, and it shall be no more.

14 Feed the light within thee with truth, with mercy, with the remembrance of the Father, and it shall not fail.

15 Then a young boy came forward holding a small clay lamp, its flame nearly gone.

16 Yeshua bent down, shielding it with His hands, and breathed upon it; and it burned bright again.

17 He said, So doth the Father breathe upon the faint light, if the vessel turn toward Him.

18 The people were astonished, for they felt warmth upon their faces as He spake.

19 And many brought forth their sick, and He laid His hands upon them, and they were made whole.

20 He blessed a woman who had long been barren, saying, Thy vessel shall be filled, and thy house shall know joy.

21 And it came to pass that in due season she bore a son, and named him Makade-binesi, "Black Eagle," for the day was marked by signs in the sky.

22 That night the fire burned low, and Yeshua walked alone along the cliff edge, speaking softly with the Father.

23 The moon rose from the waters, and its light was upon His face.

24 The people, seeing Him thus, whispered, Truly this is the Light-Bearer.

25 And He said unto them before departing, Guard thy light, for there are winds yet to come that will seek to put it out.

26 On the morrow He would meet the elder Aganabish, who came bearing the red tablets of the prophecy.

27 And the appointed time was fulfilled for the revealing of the ancient witness.

Chapter 4 – The Red Tablets of Aganabish

1 And it came to pass on the morrow, that an elder came from the northern shore of the straits, whose name was Aganabish, meaning "the old cedar."

2 His hair was white as the winter frost upon the pine bough, and his eyes were deep as the still pools in the forest.

3 In his hands he bare two tablets of red

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stone, smooth and polished, yet graven with signs of ancient making.

4 The people whispered, These are the witness of our fathers, kept in the cedar chest for the season of the great council.

5 Aganabish bowed before Yeshua, saying, Master, these tell of the light that shall come into the vessels of men, yet their meaning hath been hid from us.

6 My fathers taught that the one who can loose the meaning of these stones is he who is sent from the place of the sunrise.

7 Yeshua took the tablets, and the sun fell upon them, so that they glowed as embers from a deep hearth.

8 He read the signs aloud, for the Spirit gave Him understanding of every carving and mark.

9 And He said, These are the words of the Maker, set down before the rivers took their course, before the stones were laid upon the shore.

10 They speak of the breath of the Father, which is light, entering into the clay, which is man; and the clay shineth when the breath abideth therein.

11 They tell also of a time when the light shall be shut away by the covering of the heart, and men shall walk as vessels unlit, knowing not the way.

12 But in the days appointed, One shall come to open the covering and pour in the flame from the lodge of heaven.

13 Aganabish said, Our elders taught that this One would have power over the winds and the waters.

14 Yeshua answered, Ye have seen these things with thine own eyes; yet greater than these is the gift of the Father's light, which

none can take away.

15 For I am the Keeper of the Flame, and I pour it freely into the vessel that is ready.

16 He pointed to a carving of the sun upon the tablets, saying, This is the vessel full of light: its path is straight, its shadow is none, and its end is life without end.

17 And He pointed to a carving of the moon darkened, saying, This is the vessel empty of light: it wandereth, its path is crooked, and its end is the lodge of silence.

18 Then Yeshua lifted the tablets before the people, and said, This witness ye have kept is true; it is fulfilled in your hearing this day.

19 Whoso hath ears to hear, let him hear: the Father's fire is not given to be hidden, but to shine forth that all may be drawn unto it.

20 He gave the tablets again to Aganabish, saying, Guard them still, yet know that the greater tablet is within thee, where the Father writeth His word.

21 Aganabish wept, saying, All my years I have waited for the tongue that could loose the meaning of these stones; now mine eyes have seen it.

22 The people pressed nearer, touching the red tablets, that the blessing might be upon them.

23 Yeshua said, Touch not the stone only, but the word it beareth; for the stone may break, yet the word endureth forever.

24 He taught, The light in the vessel is the covenant between the Maker and thy soul; it is thy guidance in darkness, thy warmth in cold, thy sight in the storm.

25 Lose it, and thou art as a canoe without paddle; keep it, and thou art

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brought safe to the eternal shore.

26 The wind shifted, and the scent of cedar came upon it, as though sealing the words.

27 Aganabish bound the tablets in deerskin, and the people sang a song of the dawn.

28 Yeshua blessed them, and turned His steps toward the spring in the island's heart.

29 And it was told among the villages that the prophecy of the red tablets had been fulfilled.

30 And the fame of His name spread even to the far shore of Mishigami.

Chapter 5 – The Healing at the Spring of the Turtle

1 And Yeshua came unto the heart of the island, where a spring of clear water burst forth from among the rocks.

2 The people called it Mishomis-gabii'igan, the Grandfather's Spring, for they held it to be older than the trees or the cliffs.

3 Many had come there seeking healing, for the water was said to carry the blessing of the First Maker.

4 Yeshua sat upon a stone by the spring, and the people brought to Him their sick and their wounded.

5 There was among them an elder blind from his youth; his name was Waabishki-makwa, White Bear.

6 Yeshua took water from the spring in His hands, and washed the man's eyes, saying, Be opened in the light of the Father.

7 And straightway he lifted his face, and beheld the cedar branches moving in the wind.

8 The people gave a great shout, and sang the song of the healing lodge.

9 Then Yeshua spake, As this spring floweth without ceasing, so doth the Father's light flow into the vessel that is open unto Him.

10 Yet if thou cover the mouth of the spring, the water is stopped; so if thou harden thy heart, the light cannot enter.

11 He spake a parable, saying, A man found a spring in the forest, but he feared it would run dry, so he stopped it with stones to save it; yet the water became foul, and none could drink.

12 So also is the man who keepeth the light for himself; it becometh as darkness within, and profiteth him nothing.

13 The people were astonished at His words, for they were plain and full of power.

14 A young woman with a fever was brought to Him; He touched her hand and the fever left her.

15 She arose and served them from the food she had brought.

16 Yeshua said, The vessel that is healed shall pour forth again, and the Father is glorified.

17 Then He blessed the spring, saying, Let this water remain clear to the end of the age, a witness of the Father's life.

18 The wind stirred the surface, and a beam of sunlight fell upon the water.

19 The people filled their vessels and took the water to their lodges.

20 That evening Yeshua returned to the shore, for the time drew near for Him to depart unto Waganakising.

21 The sky was red in the west, and the

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loons called from the far side of the strait.

22 Aganabish came again, and walked with Him along the sand.

23 They spoke of the journey ahead, and of the villages that had long waited for His coming.

24 Yeshua said, The Father hath many lodges, and in each there are vessels waiting to be filled with light.

25 We go, that they may be filled, and the darkness driven from their shores.

26 They reached the eastern landing, where the canoes lay ready.

27 The people gathered, bringing gifts of fish and rice for the journey.

28 Yeshua blessed them, and promised to return in the season appointed.

29 The night was still, and the stars shone as they had the first day of creation.

30 And thus was the blessing of the spring sealed among the people of Mitchimakinak.

Chapter 6 – The Walking in the Waters

1 At the break of day, Yeshua went down to the southern shore, where the waters of the strait run swift between the island and the mainland.

2 The people had gathered, bringing again the sick and the troubled in spirit.

3 The elders stood upon the rocks, watching as He stepped into the shallows.

4 The water came to His knees, yet it seemed to part before Him, and His feet were upon a path unseen.

5 They marvelled, for He walked as one unbound by the pull of the deep.

6 A man came carrying a child near unto death; Yeshua took the child and set him in

the water beside Him.

7 He said, Even as these waters cleanse the body, so doth the Father cleanse the soul; be made whole.

8 And the child's breath grew strong, and the colour returned to his face.

9 A woman whose arm had been withered stretched it toward Him; He touched her hand, and it became as the other, full of strength.

10 The people wept for joy, and the gulls cried above the shore.

11 Yeshua taught them, saying, These waters are as the Spirit: they receive whomsoever entereth in faith; they lift up the lowly, and they cleanse the vessel yielded unto them.

12 Yet the water alone healeth not, but the word of the Father which hath moved upon the face of the deep from the beginning.

13 He spake a parable, saying, A canoe is strong upon the shore, yet it moveth not until the water be under it; so is the soul that hath truth yet lacketh the Spirit.

14 The people pondered these things, for they were as seeds in their hearts.

15 Then He blessed the waters, that they should be a sign of the Father's life to the island.

16 The wind shifted, and the surface shone like molten silver.

17 Yeshua returned to the shore, and the people pressed about Him to touch the hem of His garment.

18 He blessed them and bade them prepare, for He would soon cross unto Waganakising.

19 That night He lodged in the cedar

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lodge near the eastern landing, and the fire burned low as He prayed.

20 The Father spake, saying, The storm cometh, yet thy light shall guide them through.

21 Yeshua answered, Be it unto me according to Thy will.

22 In the morning the canoes were made ready, and the young men took up their paddles.

23 The women brought food for the journey, and the elders sang the song of safe passage.

24 The sky was clear as they set out, but the winds were gathering beyond the horizon.

25 The gulls followed, wheeling above the canoes.

26 Yeshua sat in the foremost canoe, His eyes upon the west.

27 The people spoke in low voices, for they felt the change in the air.

28 And thus they entered the waters of Mishigami, where the storm was appointed to meet them.

Chapter 7 – The Storm on Mishigami

1 And it came to pass, when they were yet in the midst of the lake, the wind arose from the south, and the clouds gathered dark upon the waters.

2 The waves were lifted up, and the canoes were tossed as leaves before the wind.

3 The people cried, Master, behold, the waters rise to swallow us; save us lest we perish!

4 But Yeshua sat in the foremost canoe, His face toward the storm, yet His

countenance unmoved.

5 He said, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little light? Know ye not that the vessel within must first be stilled before the waters without can be calmed?

6 Whoso hath light in his vessel shall not be overcome, though the deep lift up its voice, nor though the shadows compass him round about.

7 The waves broke over the sides, and the spray was as rain upon their faces.

8 Then Yeshua stood and lifted His hands toward the sky, and spake in the tongue of the Father.

9 Straightway the wind ceased, and the waters lay down as a child in the mother's arms.

10 A great calm was upon the face of Mishigami, and the clouds fled before the dawn.

11 The people marvelled exceedingly, saying, Who is this, that both the winds and the waters obey Him?

12 Yeshua answered, He that made the waters hath given them into My hand; yet greater is He that maketh the heart still in the day of trouble.

13 For the vessel that is full of light feareth not the storm, but keepeth its course, and cometh to the shore appointed of the Father.

14 But the vessel that is dark within is tossed though the waters be calm, and is broken though no wave striketh it.

15 He took of the water in His palm, and let it fall back into the lake.

16 See how it returneth whence it came; so shall the soul return unto its Maker, if it keep the covenant of light.

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17 He warned them, saying, There shall be storms greater than these, when the deep of the heavens is shaken, and the nations are as waves driven by the wind.

18 In that day, only they whose vessels are filled with the Father's flame shall stand, and they shall be as islands unmoved in the flood.

19 Aganabish bowed his head, saying, My fathers spoke of a path across the lake that no storm could touch; now mine eyes have seen it in Thee.

20 They paddled on, and the sun rose over Mitchimakinak, casting its light upon their backs.

21 The air was clear, and the scent of pine came from the unseen shores.

22 Yeshua said softly, Let this day be a sign unto thee: the storm without cannot undo the vessel whose light is steadfast.

23 Therefore keep thy flame burning in the day of peace, that it fail not in the day of trouble.

24 As they drew near to the western shore, the people of that place came forth, for they had seen the storm and wondered at its sudden end.

25 They brought mats for rest, and bowls of food for the travellers.

26 That night, by the fire on the western shore, the people asked to hear the story of the light.

27 And Yeshua began to speak, and the journey to Waganakising was thus begun.

Chapter 8 – The Bay of Waganakising

1 And it came to pass that they entered the great curve of the western shore, even Waganakising, the Bay of the Crooked

Shore.

2 The Odawa came forth in their canoes, for messengers from Mitchimakinak had gone before, telling of the One who calmed the waters.

3 They brought mats of woven rushes, and laid before Him gifts of maple sugar, smoked whitefish, and the berries of midsummer.

4 And they said, Abide with us, for the days of the summer gathering are upon us, and all the villages will hear Thy words.

5 Yeshua went ashore and walked among their lodges, greeting the elders and blessing the children.

6 In the evening they lit a great fire upon the sand, and the sound of the bay was as a low drum in the stillness.

7 Yeshua lifted His hand, and there was a hush among the people.

8 He said, Ye behold this bay, how it is filled and emptied by the wind and the waters; even so is the vessel of man filled and emptied by the breath of the Father.

9 As the water is moved by the unseen wind, so is the light moved within thee by the Spirit.

10 He took a bowl of water from the shore, and held it toward the fire.

11 See how the light passeth through when the water is pure; but if the water be made foul, the light is scattered, and the vessel is dimmed.

12 This light is not thine own, but the life of the Father in thee; without it, the vessel is as a lodge without fire in the winter night.

13 Then He spake a parable, saying, As the bay receiveth the waters from the

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streams, yet sendeth them forth again to the deep, so is the man who keepeth the Father's light not for himself alone, but for all who are in need.

14 For if the bay keep the waters and let them not flow, they become foul and bring forth death instead of life.

15 The elders nodded, for they knew the truth of His words.

16 A man lame from a hunting wound was brought to Him; Yeshua laid His hand upon his leg, and it was made whole.

17 The man leaped for joy and walked along the shore, praising the Great Spirit.

18 Yeshua said, So shall the Father make whole the nations, if they turn unto Him and keep His light within.

19 The people rejoiced, and sang the song of the returning sun.

20 That night He lodged among them, and the sound of the waves was as peace in the lodge of His rest.

21 On the morrow, He would speak the parable of the net before the gathered villages.

Chapter 9 – The Parable of the Net of Nations

1 On the next day, the people came from the far points of the bay, and from villages beyond the ridge, bringing their canoes to the shore.

2 The circle was great upon the sand, and the fire was set in the midst.

3 Yeshua stood before them, holding in

His hands a fisherman's net.

4 He said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net cast into the deep, which gathereth of every kind.

5 When it is full, it is drawn to the shore, and the good are kept, but that which is spoiled is cast away.

6 So shall it be in the end of the age: the messengers of the Father shall come, and divide the just from the unjust.

7 He looked upon them, saying, Ye are as fish in the Father's net; therefore keep thy vessel clean, that thou mayest be gathered into His lodge.

8 Then He cast the net into the bay, and the people watched as the floats danced upon the water.

9 He drew it up, and it was heavy with fish, more than they had seen taken in such a short time.

10 The fishermen marvelled, for the nets had been empty in the morning.

11 Yeshua said, This is a sign unto you, that the Father's net is never empty for those who cast at His word.

12 A young boy ran to Him, saying, Master, will the net ever tear?

13 Yeshua answered, The Father's net cannot be torn; but the net of man is weak, and he who trusteth in it alone shall lose his catch.

14 He taught them also, saying, Beware the false light, which is as a cold flame; it leadeth the fish into the shallows where they perish.

15 The Father's light is warm and bringeth life; it draweth the nations into safe waters.

16 The people listened in silence, for the

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words pierced their hearts.

17 And many that day vowed to keep the Father's light within their vessels, and to cast their nets in His name.

18 The fish were divided among the villages, and there was enough for all.

19 Yeshua blessed them, and bade them keep the parable in their hearts.

20 And the fame of His teaching spread along the shore and into the inland trails.

Chapter 10 – Healing of the Hunter's Son

1 As Yeshua walked along the edge of the forest, a man came running, his garments torn, his face full of fear.

2 He cried, Master, my son hath fallen from the rocks in the hunt, and lieth without breath; come quickly.

3 Yeshua followed him to a clearing where the youth lay still, and the hunters stood round in sorrow.

4 He knelt beside the boy, and laid His hand upon his chest.

5 O Father, Giver of breath, return it unto this vessel, that Thy name be glorified among these people.

6 And the boy drew a deep breath, and opened his eyes.

7 The father wept and fell to his knees, saying, Now I know that Thou art sent of the Great Spirit.

8 Yeshua lifted him, saying, Give thanks to the Father, for it is He who healeth.

9 Then He spake unto them the parable of the lost arrow:

10 A hunter loosed his arrow in the forest, and it flew far and was lost among the trees. He sought it in vain and turned

away in sorrow.

11 But the wind moved in the grass, and he saw the shaft glinting in the sun, and he took it again into his hand.

12 So is the soul that wandereth from the Father; it is lost to the darkness, yet the Father seeketh it until it is found, and it is restored to His quiver.

13 The hunters nodded, for they knew the truth of the words.

14 The youth rose to his feet, and took food with them.

15 Yeshua said, Let this be a sign that the Father's hand is upon thee; walk in His light and be not afraid.

16 That night they feasted in joy, and the boy sat beside Yeshua at the fire.

17 In the morning, the hunters set out again, but their hearts were light, for the fear of death had been driven from them.

18 And the story of the healing spread even to the villages beyond the hills.

Chapter 11 – The Feast of Wild Rice

1 In the season when the wild rice ripeneth upon the inland lakes, the people of Waganakising gathered for the harvest feast.

2 They invited Yeshua to bless the food and speak unto them.

3 The canoes returned heavy with rice and fish, yet more people came than had been expected.

4 The elders said, Master, there is not enough for all; some will go hungry.

5 Yeshua answered, Bring what ye have, and set it before Me.

6 They brought the baskets of rice and

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the fish from the bay, and He lifted His eyes to heaven.

7 O Father, who feedeth the sparrow and filleth the nets, bless this food, that it may be enough for all who are gathered.

8 He gave to the elders to distribute, and they gave to the people.

9 And behold, the baskets were never empty, and all ate until they were filled.

10 The children laughed, and the women sang the song of the rice harvest.

11 Yeshua said, So is the Kingdom of Heaven: there is no hunger in the Father's lodge, for His table is full and His hand is open.

12 Keep thy vessel full of light, and thou shalt lack nothing needful.

13 An elder named Zhingwaak said, Master, will there always be such abundance?

14 Yeshua answered, While the vessel is open unto the Father, the river of His provision shall not run dry; but if it be closed, even the storehouse shall be emptied.

15 They ate together until the sun went down.

16 Yeshua blessed the harvest and the work of their hands.

17 In the night, the fire burned bright, and He spoke of the journey yet to come along the great coast to the south.

18 The people listened with joy and sorrow, for they desired Him to remain, yet knew He must go.

Chapter 12 – The Sleeping Bear Coast

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua and His companions set out southward along the shore, passing the high bluffs and dunes of

the great coast.

2 The people called it Mishibizhiw-aki, the Land of the Great Water Panther, for the dunes rose as the back of a beast sleeping by the water.

3 They came to a place where the sand stretched far into the lake, and the wind sang through the grass.

4 Yeshua gathered the people there, and spake unto them.

5 He that buildeth his lodge upon the rock shall stand when the wind bloweth, but he that buildeth upon the shifting sand shall see his lodge fall in the storm.

6 He pointed to the dunes, saying, These are moved little by little, and the place that is high today is low tomorrow.

7 So is the man whose vessel is not set upon the Father's word; the change of the world shall carry him away.

8 A woman asked, Master, what is the rock upon which we may stand?

9 Yeshua answered, The rock is the Father's truth, which changeth not; whoso standeth thereon shall not be moved, though all else be shaken.

10 They walked together along the shore, and He healed those who were sick in body and spirit.

11 A boy brought Him a gull with a broken wing; Yeshua touched it, and the bird took flight over the waves.

12 The people rejoiced, and gave thanks to the Maker of all.

13 That night, they camped upon the shore, and the stars shone as bright fires above the dark water.

14 Yeshua said to His disciples, These lights in the sky are as the Father's eyes

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upon the earth; He seeth thee whether thou art in the lodge or upon the path.

15 Keep thy light as they keep theirs, and thou shalt guide others home.

Chapter 13 – The Healing of the Broken Hand

1 And it came to pass, as Yeshua journeyed along the southern shore, He came unto a village where the people were skilled in the making of canoes.

2 There was a man there named Waawaashkeshi, a craftsman whose hand had been crushed beneath the weight of a cedar log.

3 He could no longer shape the ribs nor bind the seams, and his heart was heavy.

4 His family brought him unto Yeshua, saying, Master, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make him whole.

5 Yeshua took the man's hand and said, The One who formed thy bones in the womb is able to restore them now.

6 He touched it, and the bones were made straight, the sinews strong, and the hand as it had been before.

7 The man wept and lifted his tools, saying, Now will I work again for my people, and the canoe shall be finished.

8 Yeshua spake unto the people, As the canoe must be steered toward the shore, so must the vessel of man be steered toward the light.

9 If the paddle be idle, the current shall carry thee into the deep; but if thou set thy face to the shore and strive, thou shalt be brought in safely.

10 He told them a parable, saying, A man made a canoe of great beauty, but left it

upon the bank without use; in time the sun and the rain broke it, and it could carry no one.

11 So is the man who hath a vessel but useth it not for the work of the Father; it becometh as driftwood.

12 The people understood, for they were builders of canoes from the days of their fathers.

13 They brought Him food, and He blessed it, and ate with them.

14 That night He rested in their lodge, and in the morning He set out toward the inland waters.

Chapter 14 – The Peace at Ahnami-zaaga'igan

1 Yeshua came unto Ahnami-zaaga'igan, the Lake of the Prayer, where the waters are clear and the pines stand close upon the shore.

2 There He found two bands of hunters encamped on either side, and there was strife between them over the deer taken in the forest.

3 The men were angry, and some had strung their bows.

4 Yeshua went and stood between them, and the quarrel ceased at His presence.

5 He said, The light in the vessel turneth away wrath, but the vessel without light kindleth the fire of hatred.

6 Two lodges that share one fire shall both be warm; but if each kindle its own against the other, both shall burn.

7 He told them a parable, saying, Two canoes met in the narrows; the one sought

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to pass first, the other to block the way, and both were overturned. But if one yield, both pass in peace.

8 The hunters lowered their bows, and the leaders came forward.

9 Yeshua took from His pouch a piece of bread, broke it, and gave to each.

10 Eat together, for the Father hath made you brethren; and if ye keep His light, no darkness shall divide you.

11 They ate, and the anger was gone from their hearts.

12 That night the two camps joined their fires, and the sound of their laughter was heard along the shore.

13 Yeshua said to His disciples, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of the Father.

Chapter 15 – The Prophecy of the Inland Waters

1 From Ahnami-zaaga'igan Yeshua went deeper into the land, where the waters flow toward the heart of Mishigami.

2 The people of those lakes came to hear Him, for they had heard of His works by the straits and the bay.

3 He stood upon a great rock, and the waters shone before Him.

4 He said, These waters are a path, given of the Father, to carry His word to many nations.

5 As the streams run into the lakes, and the lakes into the rivers, so shall the light in the vessel flow from lodge to lodge, until the far mountains receive it.

6 Then His countenance grew solemn, and He spake a warning.

7 There shall come a time when the

darkness will seek to bind the waters, to make them serve its own desire; in that day, many vessels will be turned aside.

8 But the Father will keep a remnant, whose light shall not fail, and they shall pass through the narrows unharmed.

9 The people were troubled at His words, but He comforted them.

10 Fear not, for the One who made the waters is greater than he who would bind them.

11 He blessed the lakes and the rivers, that they should remain a witness until the end of the age.

12 That night He lodged by the shore, and the loons called upon the moonlit water.

Chapter 16 – Return to Mitchimakinak

1 When the season of the inland journey was ended, Yeshua returned to the Great Turtle, for He desired to speak once more to the people there before going westward.

2 The canoes bore Him swiftly through the straits, and the island rose before Him in the light of the setting sun.

3 The people came to meet Him at the eastern landing, singing the song of welcome.

4 He went up to the council lodge, and the elders gathered.

5 He said, The four winds shall carry the Father's light: to the north for the steadfast, to the south for the fruitful, to the east for the watchful, and to the west for the seekers.

6 Let every vessel here be filled, for the journey of the light hath begun.

7 He spake also a parable, saying, A fire on the hill can be seen from many lodges;

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but if it be hidden, the valley is in darkness.
Ye are the fire; hide it not.

8 The people pledged to keep the flame.

9 Yeshua blessed the island, saying, May the Great Turtle bear you safely until the day I return.

10 That night He slept in the hollow of Gichi-Asin, and dreamed of the mountains that awaited Him far to the west.

Chapter 17 – The Council of the Elders

1 And it came to pass that word was sent to the villages round about Mitchimakinak, calling the elders to council.

2 From the shores of Gichi-Gami, from the headlands of Mishigami, and from the inland waters they came, bearing staffs of cedar as a sign of their office.

3 They entered the great lodge upon the island, where a fire burned in the center and mats were laid for all.

4 Yeshua sat among them, and the light of the fire was upon His face.

5 He said, Ye are as the keepers of the lodge in the Father's house; unto you is given the charge to guard the flame and guide the people.

6 Let thy council be as the unbroken circle, without end and without breach, for thus is the Kingdom of Heaven.

7 An elder from the western shore said, Master, what is the sign of the true council?

8 Yeshua answered, Where mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other, there is the council of the Father.

9 He told them a parable, saying, A tree

by the water spread its roots wide and gave shade to many; but when its roots were cut by the quarrel of two keepers, the tree withered, and all who sought shelter were left bare.

10 So is the council that letteth strife enter: it becometh as a lodge with no roof.

11 The elders bowed their heads, for the word pierced their hearts.

12 They pledged to walk in unity and to teach the people as one voice.

13 Yeshua blessed them, saying, The Father shall keep thy circle unbroken if thy light remain full.

14 They shared food and the cup together, and the council ended in peace.

Chapter 18 – The Blessing of the Waters

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua went unto the western point of Mitchimakinak, where the waters of Gichi-Gami and Mishigami meet in a great current.

2 The people followed Him, and the sound of the waves was loud upon the rocks.

3 He lifted His hands over the waters and prayed, saying, O Father of all rivers and seas, bless these straits, that all who pass may find safe crossing if their vessel be full of Thy light.

4 Let the waters bear witness to Thy covenant until the sun and moon are no more.

5 He cast a handful of cedar boughs upon the current, and they were carried swiftly into the meeting of the lakes.

6 Turning to the people, He said, As these boughs are carried by the flow, so is the soul borne by the will of the Father;

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trust His course and fear not the deep.

7 The wind stilled, and the surface shone as polished stone.

8 The people knew that a sign had been given, and they bowed in reverence.

Chapter 19 – The Farewell at the Turtle’s Back

1 And Yeshua returned once more to Gichi-Asin, the Standing Stone, for the time of His departure was at hand.

2 The people gathered at its base, bringing those yet sick in body or heavy in spirit.

3 He healed them all, and spoke blessings over their children and their work.

4 An elder said, Master, wilt Thou come again to us?

5 Yeshua answered, In the time appointed, I shall return; but my light shall remain with you if ye keep it.

6 Let not the darkness take thy flame, and the Great Turtle shall bear thee in safety.

7 He taught them one last parable, saying, A keeper of the lodge went away for a season, leaving the fire burning; when he returned, he found it brighter than before, for the people had tended it as their own.

8 So shall it be with My word if ye guard it.

9 They wept, yet their hearts were strengthened.

Chapter 20 – Departure Toward the Path of Many Waters

1 In the morning, the canoes were made ready, their bows pointing westward

toward the long way of rivers and lakes.

2 The people of Mitchimakinak came to the eastern landing, singing the song of safe travel.

3 Yeshua stepped into the foremost canoe, and Aganabish and His disciples went with Him.

4 He turned to the people on the shore and said, From the Great Turtle unto the Mountains of the Turtle in the far west shall the Father’s light be carried; keep the flame until I return.

5 The paddles dipped into the water, and the canoes moved out upon the straits.

6 The island grew small behind them, yet the blessing of its people followed.

7 And thus ended the first part of His journey, as He set His face toward the Path of Many Waters.

BOOK II

The Path of Many Waters

Chapter 1 – The Landing at Pühtōwākan

1 And it came to pass after many days, that Yeshua crossed the wide face of Mishigami unto Pühtōwākan, which is, being interpreted, the Bay of the Spirits; and the bay stretched long like a hand outstretched from the great lake.

2 And lo, the cry of the wild geese was upon the wind, and the tamarack and the maple were touched with the fire of the season.

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3 The people of the Omaeqnomenew (Menominee), keepers of the rice and the net, came forth to the strand; for tidings of Him had run before upon the paths of water.

4 And when they saw Him, they laid cedar boughs before His feet, and greeted Him with words of peace, and the children gathered stones smooth with years.

5 Yeshua lifted up His voice and said, Blessed are ye that have kept the old road of the waters; for the Father laid the channels before there was a paddle to cleave them, or a hand to seek the shore.

6 Hear a mystery: as the waters remember their course to the deep, so remembereth the spirit its way unto the Father; yet the vessel, being clay, forgetteth oft the path by reason of wind and wave.

7 Then answered an elder, whose name was Wāqōs, and said, Master, how can a man know the Father before he draweth breath?

8 Yeshua saith unto him, The spirit is elder than the dust it inhabiteth. As the sturgeon was old while the banks were yet young, so is the spirit before the shaping of the bone and sinew.

9 From the beginning the Father breathed thee; and in the end He draweth thee; and the days between are as paddle-strokes across a single bay.

10 And He taught them of the narrow mouth of the inlet, saying, Behold, the waters are broad, yet the passage unto the deep is but one; many wander in the reeds, but the humble find the channel by the sound of the wind that speaketh from the open.

11 Even so is life: wide to the eyes, and yet the true way is simple; for the Father's breath pointeth ever outward unto Himself.

12 And He pointed to the trees that leaned all one way upon the bluff, and said, See how they bow after the light though their roots be in shadow; so let thy soul incline toward the Father though thy body abide among men.

13 And He spake a parable, saying, Two fish kept the shallows for fear of the dark; and a third trusted the deep. The net came by night and took the first and the second, for they lay near the weirs of men; but the third passed beyond the sight of land, and the deep was unto it for walls and rampart.

14 He that feareth the Father's deep shall be taken by a lesser fear; but he that trusteth the deep shall be kept by it.

15 Then came a woman bowed with years, bearing a little clay lamp blackened by many fires; and she said, Master, my strength faileth me; how shall I keep the flame?

16 And He breathed softly upon the flame, and it leaped; and He said, The flame is not thine, yet it dwelleth gladly with thee. It is the Father's light; keep thou the door of thy lodge open, and He shall tend it within thee.

17 But if thou shut thyself for fear of wind and theft, thou shalt also shut the Keeper out; and the lamp shall languish though the oil be near.

18 Again He taught, saying, There is no canoe so far that the Father's voice reacheth not; neither is there any night wherein His path faileth: for He stretcheth a line upon the waters, and calleth thee by name from

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bank to bank.

19 Yet woe unto him that setteth his paddle against the current of mercy; his labour multiplieth, and his strength is spent, and he sinketh within sight of land.

20 And many marvelled, saying, Whence hath this man words as from the beginning? for He speaketh not as one that learneth, but as one that remembereth.

21 Then brought they unto Him a net rotten in its cords. And He took it in His hands; and the rot fled from the fibers, and the mesh was as new.

22 And He saith, So do I with the souls of men: that which holdeth not shall be made to hold; and that which hath long failed shall draw again in abundance.

23 And He blessed the bay, and named its waters a school unto them, saying, Learn ye of this plain book, for the Father writeth doctrine upon the face of the deep.

24 And He laid His hand upon a child whose breath was short; and the child drew long and sure, and ran to the edge and laughed at the little waves.

25 And the elders bowed their heads, and the young men set their paddles in the sand in token of peace.

26 And as the dusk grew, they kindled a great fire; and the stars were as lamps in the roof of the Father's lodge.

27 And Yeshua taught them until the first grey of dawn, of things past finding out and yet near at the hand, and His word entered them as warmth entereth the marrow.

28 And there slept not one soul for the joy thereof; but they were as men that keep watch for the morning.

29 And He said unto them, On the morrow I will shew you the wisdom of the meeting of waters; for where the bay and the river strive, there is doctrine hidden in the whirl.

30 And He lay down upon a mat beside the fire; and peace compassed them round about like a garment.

31 And it was told in the lodges round about Pūhtōwākan, that a great word had walked upon their shore.

32 And many prepared their hearts to hear the matter of the two currents.

Chapter 2 – The Parable of the Two Currents

1 And it came to pass on the next day, that Yeshua walked with the people unto the place where the river's mouth cometh out into the bay; and lo, the waters contended one with another.

2 For the river hastened outward, as if eager to tell the lake its tale; and the lake flowed inward, as a mother to meet the child; and between them was a ring of turning.

3 Then said the men, Master, behold the striving; what meaneth this circle that devoureth chips and rushes alike?

4 And Yeshua answered, Each water keepeth the course appointed; yet they meet for cleansing and for witness: cleansing, that what is foul be made sweet; witness, that what is many be made one.

5 So dealeth the Father with the houses of man. He suffereth tribe with tribe, doctrine with doctrine, tongue with tongue, to meet in the plain; and where men fear a snare, He prepareth a joining.

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6 And He lifted His hand over the whirl and said, Mark the law of the turning: what is cast without weight is swallowed; but that which beareth a true weight passeth through and is not lost.

7 Even so thy words: light speech without truth is drunk by the whirl; but the word that hath the weight of the Father's breath cutteth a path and cometh forth on the other side.

8 Then spake a youth, Lord, if both currents be of God, why do they smite one another?

9 He saith, Because each is straight toward its own end; and the place of meeting is sharp. Think not this a strife of hate, but a labour of birth: for out of this turning goeth a water clearer than either came in.

10 It is thus with the soul when My saying meeteth thy saying; there is a pang and a fear; but abide a little, and thou shalt see that both are made cleaner by their obedience unto the One that sendeth them.

11 And He spake a parable, saying, Two brothers had valleys severed by a ridge; in the time of rain, both streams swelled, and the plain between was drowned. At the first they raised their banks higher one against another; and their fields perished. But when they made one channel and laid one bridge, both houses were saved, and the children crossed singing.

12 He that buildeth banks against his brother shall reap a desert; but he that consenteth to the Father's bridge shall reap a garden.

13 Then a woman said, Master, what if the water that cometh to me be foul and

bitter?

14 Yeshua answered, Hast thou not seen the lake receive all rivers and yet remaineth vast and sweet? Make thy heart as the great water: receive, and render pure; for pride stoppeth the spring within thee, but meekness keepeth it running.

15 If thou receive only what flattereth, thy vessel shall soon be empty; but if thou receive what is sent and give it back as light, thou shalt never lack.

16 And He stooped and drew a line in the wet sand, and said, This is the narrow channel, the way of obedience: few find it, for men love the wideness of their own counsel; yet all the bay is served by this little place.

17 Keep thou to the channel in the day of turning, and the whirl shall spin to thy left and thy right, but thy canoe shall pass as an arrow.

18 Then were there certain men zealous for the customs of their fathers, who said within themselves, Shall this stranger judge the waters and the words of our elders?

19 But Yeshua, knowing their thought, said, Think not that I am come to break the banks thy fathers built; I am come to open unto thee the sea they sought. Their fences were for a time; but the Father's deep is for ever.

20 If ye love your fathers, love also their hope: that the nations might drink together without hurt. Lo, that hope standeth before you this day.

21 And He took up two jars, and filled the one from the river and the other from the bay. And He poured them both into a bowl; and the water therein was clear

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beyond telling.

22 Behold the work of the One: the differences are not erased, but the bitterness is lost, and the clearness is multiplied.

23 Then lifted He His voice and said, Let him that contendeth for victory learn to contend for clarity; for truth seeketh not a throne, but a window.

24 Say not, I alone am straight; say rather, The Father alone is straight, and I bend toward Him.

25 And a man sore troubled of mind cried, Lord, my house is as this eddy: argument within, argument without; and my sleep is broken.

26 Yeshua called him near and laid His hand upon his head, and said, Peace to the turning within thee. Let the great water receive thy little rivers. Let the Father be thy breadth, and thy counsel be to flow toward Him.

27 And the man fell upon his knees, and tears were as the river made new after storm; and he said, Truly the deep hath found me.

28 Then Yeshua turned to the children and taught them also, saying, When thou seest the leaf go round and round, fear not; throw not thyself after it: the leaf hath no weight. Keep thy paddle steady, and thou shalt pass by.

29 So also when vain words are many: answer not to every wind; keep thou to the stroke thou hast learned of the Father, and thou shalt come into the open.

30 And He warned them, saying, There shall arise among men a cold flame that shineth fair and devoureth fast; it will call itself wisdom and charity, and it will make a

whirl of every shore. Try the light by warmth: if it giveth life, it is of the Father; if it stealeth life to feed itself, it is false though it glitter.

31 And there shall come a day when powers will set sluices upon the peoples, binding the waters for gain; marvel not; for the river of God breaketh such gates in His hour, and carryeth His poor through upon dry ground of courage.

32 Blessed is the vessel that learneth now the law of meeting; for when the great rivers gather, he shall not fear, having seen the matter already in a bay.

33 Then were many pricked in their hearts; and they cried one to another, Surely the Maker of waters standeth among us.

34 And He blessed Pühtōwākan, and named the place The School of Joining; and He appointed unto them a day to hear further of burdens and of rest at the portage.

35 And it was noised throughout the lodges by the strand and the inlands, that the Teacher had weighed the currents, and had not been found light.

36 And they brought cedar and rush for mats, that He might teach yet longer among them by the way of Meskwahkīw-Sīpiah.

Chapter 3 – Healing of the Fisher with the Broken Net

1 And it came to pass, as Yeshua walked upon the sand by the mouth of Meskwahkīw-Sīpiah (the Fox River), He saw there a man whose shoulders were bowed with labour, and whose eyes were dim with watching the water.

2 For his net was torn in many places,

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and his hands were raw from the pulling, and all his strength was given yet his catch was little.

3 When Yeshua came near, the man looked up and said, Master, the river is against me, and my net is against me, and my heart is against me also.

4 And Yeshua said unto him, Dost thou know the cause of thy weariness?

5 He answered, The current is strong, the fish are few, and I am but one man.

6 Yeshua said, Nay, it is not the current, nor the fish, nor thy solitude that hath undone thee, but that thou hast mended thy net with cords of fear, which hold not.

7 Fear is as a knot tied hastily in wet cord; it slippeth when the strain cometh, and the fish are lost.

8 Then Yeshua sat upon the sand, and called for the net. And He put His hands upon the torn places, and spake softly, and the cords grew whole as from the first day.

9 And the man marvelled, saying, Lord, I have seen sinew knit after many moons, but never the twine of flax in a breath.

10 Yeshua answered, He that made the sinew made also the flax, and He rejoiceth to bind again that which is rent.

11 But learn this: the mending of the net is the lesser work; the mending of the man is the greater.

12 A whole net in the hands of a broken man shall yet yield little; but a whole man with a patched net shall fill many baskets.

13 Then Yeshua laid His hand upon the man's back, and straightway the weight that had long bent him was loosed, and he stood upright.

14 And the man wept, saying, I knew

not that the burden in my bones was the burden in my heart.

15 Yeshua said, From this day thou art free to cast thyself upon the deep; for the Father delighteth not in the stooping of the strong, save it be to lift another.

16 Go now, and cast first for thy neighbours, that their baskets be filled ere thine own.

17 And the man took up his net, and it was light in his hand; and he went straightway to the water, and cast, and drew a catch so great that his canoe trembled.

18 Seeing this, the young men of the village ran to help him; and he gave unto them half of all he had taken, even unto the least fish.

19 And they said one to another, This man was bowed as a reed, and now he is as a cedar.

20 Then Yeshua spake unto the people that had gathered, Mark this: the Father healeth the man that he may heal the circle wherein he standeth. Ye are not mended for thine own board only, but for the feast of many.

21 If thy light is for thy lodge alone, it shall fail; but if it be for the village, the Father Himself shall feed the flame.

22 And He told them a parable: There was a man that kept a spring within his lodge, fearing it should be stolen. But the spring swelled, and his floor rotted, and the lodge fell. Another man let the water run into the common channel, and the whole village drank, and they kept his lodge with many hands.

23 He that keepeth his gift shall lose it;

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but he that letteth it flow shall have his lodge kept by the Father's own arm.

24 Then the elders brought gifts of wild rice and smoked fish, but Yeshua bade them give it to the poor of the bay, saying, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.

25 And when He had finished these sayings, He walked further along the shore toward the council lodge of Móogašuc.

Chapter 4 – The Dispute over the Fishing Grounds

1 And behold, when Yeshua came to Móogašuc (Red Banks), the people of two villages were gathered in anger; for the shallows where the sturgeon came to spawn lay between them, and both claimed the right.

2 The elders strove with loud voices, and the young men gripped their paddles as weapons.

3 And Yeshua stood in the midst, and there was a hush as wind before storm.

4 He said, What seek ye by this contention?

5 One elder answered, We seek our right, for our fathers fished here before the trees had shadow.

6 Another said, Nay, it is ours; for the river bendeth toward our shore, and the sturgeon are drawn by the scent of our reeds.

7 Yeshua said, If ye seek the truth, ye shall find it not in the shout, nor in the blow, but in the still place where the Father speaketh.

8 Hearken unto a parable: Two women each claimed the same child; the one for the labour of birth, the other for the labour of

nurture. The judge would have divided the child, but the true mother cried out, Give it whole to her, and let me bear the loss. Thus was the true mother known.

9 Even so, the true keeper of the water is he that will yield it to keep it whole.

10 Then He spake further, Ye strive for the sturgeon as though the Father cannot send them unto both; but the river is His, and the fish thereof, and whoso layeth hands upon them for gain only is no better than the snare in the dark.

11 Shall the Father give His gift to the proud? Nay; but to the humble He giveth abundance without measure.

12 And He called for two canoes, and went out upon the shallows, and cast His hand into the water; and the sturgeon came and lay still about Him, great and small together.

13 And He said, See how they gather at no man's call but the Father's; even so should ye gather when He calleth.

14 Then He divided them, sending some toward the one shore and some toward the other, and none were lost.

15 The people marvelled, for never had they seen fish obey a man's hand.

16 And He said, The Father's store is without end, save ye close it with your strife. Open thy hand, and thou shalt never lack.

17 But if thy hand be shut in grasping, it is shut also against the gift.

18 And the elders were pricked in their hearts, and they covenanted that day to keep the shallows in peace, and to share their watch upon it.

19 And they set up a post of cedar

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between them, and called it The Witness of the Waters.

20 And Yeshua blessed the post, saying, Let this stand when your voices fail, to speak of the day when peace walked between your canoes.

21 Then He taught them until the sun fell low, of the greater net the Father is casting among all nations.

22 Ye are as knots in that net; if one fail, many are lost; if one hold, many are saved.

23 Strive not to be the only knot, but to be the faithful knot.

24 And many that day laid down their paddles and embraced one another upon the strand.

25 And Yeshua departed by the moon's rising, and His face was toward the deep.

Chapter 5 – The Miracle of the Sturgeon

1 And it came to pass on the third day from Móogašuc, Yeshua walked alone upon the beach, and certain of His followers were with Him afar off.

2 The people of a small lodge came running, crying, Master, our storehouse is empty, for the nets have been torn by storm, and the river hath yielded nothing.

3 Yeshua said, Bring me to the water.

4 And when they came to a cove where the waves were stilled by the curve of the shore, He bade them launch a canoe.

5 They said, Lord, the season is past, and the fish have gone to the deep; this place is barren.

6 But He entered the canoe and said, Push out a little from the land, and cast thy net upon the right side.

7 They obeyed, and straightway the net

was heavy; and when they drew it up, there were sturgeon beyond counting, great and small, their backs like silver in the moonlight.

8 The people cried aloud for joy, and they fell at His feet.

9 Yeshua said, Marvel not at the sturgeon, for the Father feedeth not thy mouth only, but thy heart also. This net is thy faith: if thou cast it where I command, it shall draw up the plenty of the deep, though thy sight say it is empty.

10 But if thou cast it only where thy habit leadeth thee, thou shalt take little, even when the water is thick with fish.

11 And He commanded them to take what they needed and to release the rest into the deep.

12 For the gift is not thine to hoard, but thine to share.

13 He that taketh more than his need taketh also the trust of the Father, and spendeth it for nought.

14 The people asked, Lord, shall there ever be an end to this plenty?

15 He said, There shall be an end to the world, but not to the Father's store; for He keepeth the seed of all things in Himself.

16 Fear not the empty net when thy heart is full of Him.

17 And He spake a parable: A man, fearing winter, filled his lodge with grain beyond his need, and his neighbour had none. That night a fire came, and his store was burned, and his belly was empty. But the man that gave half his store to his neighbour ate from his neighbour's pot when his own was spent.

18 Give, therefore, and it shall be given

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unto thee.

19 And He blessed the waters of the cove, so that they brought forth fish in season and out of season, a sign unto that village forever.

20 And they named the place Net of the Master.

21 And many came from far villages to see the blessing, and to hear the words that gave it.

22 And Yeshua tarried there two days, teaching of the bread that cometh down from heaven, which is not eaten with the mouth but with the soul.

23 For man liveth not by rice and fish only, but by every word that proceedeth from the Father.

24 And He healed a child stricken in the breath, and a man whose eyes had been dark for many winters.

25 And the fame of Him spread yet further into the inlands.

26 And on the morning of the third day He set His face toward the portage of Kahkāmohnakaneh.

Chapter 6 – The Calling of the Midē'wiwin and the Jes'sakkid

1 And it came to pass, after Yeshua had journeyed two days from Kahkāmohnakaneh, He came unto a clearing where the deer paths met beside the waters of Mishiziiibi.

2 And there the chiefs of the Adik Songab, which is the Deer Clan, had gathered to greet Him, for the fame of His works had come unto their ears.

3 And Yeshua sat beneath a great pine, and the people were gathered round, men

and women and little ones, and the elders stood in a circle before Him.

4 Then Yeshua lifted up His voice and said, The harvest of the Father is great, but the gatherers are few; therefore will I appoint unto Myself twelve from among you, that the work be not hindered in the day of the wind and the snow.

5 And He called first Waabishki-makwa, whose hair was white as snow upon cedar, and whose counsel was sure; and He said, Thou shalt be a pillar in the lodge of My work, and thy strength shall uphold many.

6 Then He called Miskwa-giizhig, whose eyes were as the setting sun over still waters, and said, Thy words shall be as a red sky to the weary, a sign that peace followeth the storm.

7 And He called Gichi-ode', whose heart was great toward friend and stranger; and He said, Thou shalt bear the burden of the weak, and thy arms shall be a shield unto the fearful.

8 And He called Aazhibaayaan, who was without fear in crossing the wild waters; and He said, As thou hast crossed the rivers of earth, so shalt thou cross the hearts of men, bringing them from death unto life.

9 And He called Minwaadiziwin, gentle in the way of teaching; and said, Thou shalt guide the feet of the young in the good way, that they stray not when the path groweth dark.

10 And He called Bimose-inini, whose feet knew no weariness; and said, Thy journey shall be long, but thy steps shall never fail, for the Father Himself shall be thy moccasins.

11 And He called Makade-waaboo, the

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healer; and said, Thy hands shall be as warm stones in the cold night, drawing sickness from the body as the sun draweth mist from the lake.

12 And He called Zaagi-idiwin, lover of all peoples; and said, Where strife is as flint and steel, thou shalt be as water poured out, quenching the flame thereof.

13 And He called Ogimaa-bines, watchful as the hawk; and said, Thy eyes shall see the snare before it is laid, and thou shalt warn My people as the hawk crieth from the heights.

14 And He called Waasamoog, whose face shone with joy; and said, In the day of mourning, thou shalt be the light that entereth the lodge unbidden, and lifteth the head of the sorrowful.

15 And He called Ozaawaa-bineshiinh, the swift and young; and said, Thou shalt bear My word as the wind beareth the scent of rain, quickly and without tiring.

16 And He called Mashkiki-inini, keeper of medicines; and said, Thy pouch shall never be empty, for the Father shall fill it with healings unseen.

17 And when He had called these twelve, He laid His hands upon each of them, and a great stillness fell upon the clearing, and the people trembled for the power they felt therein.

18 Then Yeshua lifted His hands toward the sky and prayed, O Father of light, send forth Thy Spirit upon these Thy servants, that they may walk in Thy works without fear; give them the tongue of wisdom, the hands of mercy, and the feet of peace.

19 And when He had finished, He called forth Giiwedini-giizhig, the one whom the

elders had named for the North Sky.

20 Yeshua spake unto him, Unto thee do I give the mantle of the Jes'sakkid, that thou mayest speak as My voice when I am absent, and thy word shall be as Mine own in the ears of the people.

21 I give thee power over all manner of sickness, and over unclean spirits, and over death itself; what thou bindest upon earth shall be bound in the heavens, and what thou loosest upon earth shall be loosed above.

22 The people marvelled greatly, saying one to another, Never have our fathers seen such authority given unto a man save by the hand of the Great Spirit Himself.

23 And Yeshua said unto the twelve, Go ye forth two by two before Me into the villages that lie ahead; heal the sick, cleanse the defiled, raise the dead, and declare unto all that the Kingdom of the Father hath come nigh.

24 Take neither pouch nor spare moccasins, nor store of food; for the workman is worthy of the gift of the lodge wherein he laboreth.

25 And if any lodge receive you not, shake from your feet the dust of that place, and go on, for the Father shall judge between them and you.

26 Then Yeshua blessed them, and they set forth in the four directions, their steps light, their hearts full, and the people followed them with wonder.

27 And Yeshua Himself turned toward the eastward shore, for He had set His heart to walk upon the waters before the eyes of the Michilimackinac.

28 And thus began the journey of the

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Twelve Midē'wiwin and the Jes'sakkid, who from that day went whithersoever He went, bearing His light into every lodge and village.

Chapter 7 – The True Order of Prayer

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua journeyed with the Twelve Midē'wiwin and Giiwedini-giizhig the Jes'sakkid unto the shores of Mishimikinaakong, which is the Great Turtle Island.

2 And they beheld the high stone which the people called Mishosendamig, rising from the midst of the trees like the back of the turtle, and the waters lapped softly upon the shore.

3 And Yeshua said unto them, This place is hallowed, for the Father placed it here as a stepping-stone between the deep and the sky.

4 The people of the island brought forth berries of the early season, even the misâskwatômin, small and red and sweet, saying, These are the firstfruits of the land.

5 And Yeshua took of the berries, and held them in His palm, and said, Even as these are gathered in season, so is the soul gathered in its time by the hand of the Father.

6 Then spake Waabishki-makwa, saying, Master, teach us the true manner of prayer, that we may speak to the Father as Thou dost.

7 And Yeshua said, When ye pray, let not thy tongue be as a hollow drum sounding without heart; but let thy words rise as the morning mist, born of the earth and lifted to the sky.

8 And He sat upon the stone, and the

Twelve with Giiwedini-giizhig sat about Him, and the people drew near.

9 And He said, This is the way of prayer: first, face the dawn, and remember the Giver of Light; stretch forth thy arms as the pine boughs, and breathe the breath He hath given thee.

10 Say in thy heart and with thy lips: "O Father above the dome of the sky, O Maker of the waters and the land, I thank Thee for the breath within me, for the fire in my blood, for the path beneath my feet."

11 "I remember the faces of my fathers and mothers, and my brothers and sisters, and all who walk with me in this lodge of the earth. Bind us together in the cord of peace, that none break away into darkness."

12 "Give unto me wisdom as the eagle seeth afar, give unto me patience as the river floweth, give unto me strength as the oak standeth in storm, and give unto me joy as the berry bursteth with sweetness."

13 "Keep my feet from the snare, my hands from the spear of anger, and my eyes from the shadow that blinds. Let my sleep be under Thy blanket of stars, and my waking in the song of Thy dawn."

14 "All honor, all thanks, and all breath return unto Thee, O Father, for the day Thou hast made. So be it."

15 And when He had spoken, there was a stillness, and the wind ceased upon the water, and the people felt the warmth of the sun though the clouds covered it.

16 Then Yeshua took of the berries, and gave one to each of the Twelve and to Giiwedini-giizhig, saying, When ye pray thus, eat of the firstfruits of the land, that thy prayer be sealed with the sweetness of

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the earth and the promise of the harvest.

17 As the berry passeth into thy flesh, so let the words pass into thy spirit, that they be not forgotten when the mouth is shut.

18 And He commanded them, saying, Teach this prayer unto the lodges of the people, and let it be done at the rising of the sun, that the whole land be as one voice before the Father.

19 And Zaagi-idiwin said, Truly, this prayer is as the joining of the lake and the sky; it hath no ending and no beginning.

20 And Yeshua smiled, saying, He that prayeth thus shall walk in the light, and the light shall be in him; and in the day when the darkness cometh, he shall not stumble.

21 And they remained in that place until the moon rose, and the elders spake long with Yeshua concerning the way of peace among the tribes.

22 Many were healed that night, for Giiweddingiizhig laid hands on the sick and the lame, and they arose whole.

23 The children played in the light of the fires, and the people sang songs of thanks unto the Father, and the sound thereof was as the rustling of leaves in a summer wind.

24 And it came to pass that the prayer spread unto the shores and the inlands, and the people remembered it in their own tongues, and the land was filled with blessing.

25 Thus began the way of the Morning Prayer among the people of the Great Lakes.

Chapter 8 - The Crossing of Mishibizhiw's Channel

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua rose early, and the mists lay upon the waters

about Mishimikinaakong as a blanket.

2 And the people spake of Mishibizhiw, the great water panther, whose channel lay between the island and the far shore.

3 And some were afraid to pass, for the currents were strong, and the wind from the east did stir the deep.

4 But Yeshua called unto Waabishki-makwa and Mashkode-bizhiki, saying, Bring hither the great canoe, that we may go unto the northern shore.

5 And the Twelve Midē'wiwin gathered with Giiweddingiizhig, and the people brought food and skins for the journey.

6 As they set forth, the waters grew restless, and the prow of the canoe dipped low in the swell.

7 Then one cried out, Master, behold, the channel is angry! Shall we turn back?

8 But Yeshua stood in the midst of the canoe, and lifted His hands, saying, Peace, be still.

9 And the wind ceased, and the waters became as glass before them, and the people were astonished.

10 He said unto them, Fear not Mishibizhiw, for the Father commandeth the depths as He doth the sky; none may harm whom He hath sealed in His hand.

11 They passed over, and the people sang the paddle song of the north, their voices carrying far over the quiet waters.

12 And Yeshua spake in parable, saying, The soul that trusteth in the Father is as the canoe borne upon the current; though the river bendeth and the banks are high, it cometh unto the wide lake at last.

13 But the soul that feareth every ripple shall never leave the shore, and shall not

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taste the fish of the deep nor the wind of the open waters.

14 When they reached the far shore, they beheld the place called Gichigami-ziibi, where the great river floweth into the lake.

15 There the people of the shore came forth, bringing sick and lame upon mats, and blind who were led by the hand.

16 And Yeshua healed many that day, and the Midē'wiwin laid hands upon them, and the lame walked, and the blind beheld the face of the sun.

17 One man, whose legs had been bound by weakness from his youth, rose up and danced before the people, singing, The water is calm!

18 And Giiwedīn-giizhig prophesied, saying, Even as these waters were calmed, so shall the nations be calmed by the word of the Anointed.

19 And they lodged there that night, and the stars were bright over the northern shore.

20 The elders of that place gave them fish and berries, and the women sang soft songs until sleep took them.

21 And Yeshua said unto the Twelve, Tomorrow we go westward, for the harvest of the Father is great, and the gatherers are few.

22 And they gave thanks, and lay down in peace.

Chapter 9 – The Parable of the Two Fires

1 And it came to pass, as they journeyed westward along the shore, that Yeshua beheld smoke rising from two lodges afar off.

2 One lodge was filled with many people, but the smoke thereof was black and choking.

3 The other lodge had few within, yet the smoke thereof was white and sweet, rising straight into the sky.

4 And Yeshua called the Twelve and the Jes'sakkid, and they went unto the lodges.

5 In the first lodge, the people had burned wet wood and refuse, and the air was heavy; many coughed and their eyes watered.

6 In the second lodge, they had chosen dry cedar and clean pine, and the warmth was gentle and the air clear.

7 Then Yeshua spake unto all, saying, The heart of man is as a fire within a lodge; if he put in the wood of anger and envy, the smoke thereof shall choke him and all that dwell with him.

8 But if he put in the wood of kindness and truth, the warmth thereof shall comfort, and the smoke shall rise pure before the Father.

9 For the Father looketh upon the fire of each heart, and knoweth whether the smoke thereof be foul or sweet.

10 Then He turned to the Twelve, saying, See ye to it that the fire within your own hearts be tended daily, for no man knoweth the hour when the Master of the lodge shall return.

11 And the people marvelled, for the parable was plain unto them.

12 Many came forth confessing their quarrels and hatreds, and they made peace in that place.

13 Waabishki-makwa took a bowl of clean water and washed the hands of those

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who had striven, as a sign of new beginning.

14 And Mashkode-bizhiki laid cedar upon the fire, and the smoke thereof was fragrant.

15 Yeshua blessed the children of that place, saying, Let them grow as saplings by the water, straight and strong.

16 And they departed from thence with joy, the people singing behind them until they were lost to sight.

Chapter 10 – The Healing at Baawitigong

1 And it came to pass that they came unto Baawitigong, where the waters fall mightily into the river below.

2 The sound thereof was as the voice of thunder, and the spray arose as a cloud over the pines.

3 The people of that place brought unto Yeshua a man smitten with palsy, who had lain upon his mat for twenty winters.

4 And his kin bare him in faith, for they had heard of the works done by Yeshua upon Mishimikinaakong and in the villages of the north.

5 When they could not come near for the press of the people, they went up by the rocks, and let him down with cords before the feet of Yeshua.

6 And Yeshua, seeing their faith, said unto the man, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee; arise, take up thy mat, and walk.

7 Straightway the man rose, strength returning to his limbs as the sap riseth in spring, and he walked before them all.

8 And the multitude glorified the Father, saying, We have seen strange things this day.

9 But certain elders murmured, saying, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

10 And Yeshua answered them, That ye may know the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, arise and walk.

11 And He spake unto the people concerning the power given unto the Twelve and unto Giiwedin-giizhig, that they also might heal in His name.

12 Waabishki-makwa laid hands upon a child whose eyes had not opened since birth, and they were opened.

13 Mashkode-bizhiki prayed over a woman bowed with pain, and she stood straight.

14 The people marveled that such power was in the disciples.

15 And Yeshua taught them, saying, The Father hath placed light in the vessel of man; and when the vessel is clean, the light healeth the whole body.

16 But if the vessel be filled with bitterness, the light is dimmed, and sickness cometh.

17 Therefore keep thy heart pure, that thy vessel may be full of light.

18 And He abode there two days, teaching by the roar of the falls, and the people drank of His words as of cool water.

19 On the third day, they departed westward, following the river's course.

20 And the sound of the falls was in their ears until they were far off.

Chapter 11 – The Parable of the Net and the Snare

1 And it came to pass, as they journeyed by the shore of Gichigami, that Yeshua

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beheld fishers casting their nets.

2 Some drew in nets heavy with fish; others drew in only weeds.

3 And He called them, saying, Hear the parable of the net and the snare.

4 The kingdom of the Father is like unto a net cast into the lake, gathering of every kind; and when it is full, they draw it to shore, and gather the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

5 So shall it be at the end of the age: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.

6 But the snare is of another kind: it is set with cunning, that the prey may be taken unawares; and many are held fast who thought themselves free.

7 Therefore be ye watchful, lest ye be taken in the snare of the adversary, which is baited with pride and bound with fear.

8 And Giiwedin-giizhig said, Master, how shall we know the snare when it is hid beneath the leaves?

9 Yeshua answered, By the peace in thy heart shalt thou know; for the peace of the Father cannot dwell where deceit is, and the Spirit shall stir thee to depart.

10 The fishers left their nets, and followed Yeshua for a season, to hear His words.

11 And the Twelve rejoiced, for many hearts were turned that day.

12 They camped upon the sand, and the firelight was upon their faces.

13 And Yeshua prayed aloud for them, and the stars shone clear.

14 The sound of the waves was as a song until they slept.

Chapter 12 – The Storm upon

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Kitchi-minising

1 And it came to pass that they crossed unto Kitchi-minising, a great island in the midst of the lake.

2 As they journeyed, a storm rose suddenly from the north, and the waves beat upon the canoes.

3 The disciples strove to keep afloat, but the water came in fast.

4 Then Yeshua, who was in the hinder part, rose and rebuked the wind, saying, Peace, be still.

5 And there was a great calm, and the clouds fled away.

6 The people in the other canoes marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the water obey Him?

7 They came to shore, and the people of the island brought them to a lodge.

8 There was a man tormented in mind, crying out night and day.

9 Yeshua laid His hand upon his head, and the man was clothed and in his right mind.

10 And he followed Yeshua thereafter, telling all the island what had been done unto him.

Chapter 13 – The Council at Animikii-wikwedong

1 And it came to pass, after many days of journeying along the frozen shores of Gichigami, that Yeshua came unto Animikii-wikwedong, the Bay of the Thunderbirds, where the cliffs stand as watchmen over the waters.

2 The sound of the surf was as the

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beating of many drums, and the spray rose like white feathers in the wind.

3 The people there were in strife, for two ogimaag contended for the same hunting grounds, and the lodges of the village were divided against themselves.

4 Messengers came unto Yeshua, entreating Him to judge between the chiefs, for word had spread that He spake with wisdom not of men.

5 Yeshua gathered unto Him the Twelve Midē'wiwin, and also Giiwed-in-giizhig the Jes'sakkid, and they entered the great council lodge.

6 The people pressed close, for they desired to hear His judgment.

7 Yeshua looked upon the two chiefs and spake, saying, The land is the gift of the Father; ye are but guests for a season, and when thy days are fulfilled, thou returnest to the Giver.

8 If ye take by strife, the hand of the Giver will be turned against thee; but if ye share in peace, thy lodge shall be filled with plenty.

9 Then He told them a parable: Two hunters went forth into the forest. The first took only what was needful, and the forest gave unto him year by year. The second took all he could bear, and much of it spoiled, and the forest became barren beneath his feet.

10 So also is the kingdom of the Father: unto him that honoureth the gift, more shall be given; but unto him that consumeth without gratitude, even that which he hath shall be taken away.

11 The words pierced them as an arrow pierceth the hide, and they bowed their

heads in silence.

12 Then Yeshua bade them eat from one bowl and drink from one cup as a covenant of peace.

13 The Midē'wiwin brought forth the pipe, and the smoke rose like a prayer before the Father.

14 Giiwed-in-giizhig lifted his voice, saying, Behold, the Spirit of peace hath come upon us; let no man break this bond.

15 The ogimaag clasped hands, and the people shouted for joy.

16 That evening, Yeshua taught them beneath the stars of the lodge prepared in heaven.

17 There shall be no hunger there, neither thirst, neither the heat of the sun; for the Father Himself shall feed His children.

18 And He spake of the great river of life, whose waters heal all nations.

19 Many came forth, confessing their wrongs one to another, and they made peace among themselves.

20 The elders declared a feast, and the people danced long into the night.

21 In the morning, the two chiefs went forth together to hunt, and the people followed their example.

22 Many brought gifts unto Yeshua — furs, beadwork, and the fruit of the season — but He gave all to the poor.

23 Thus peace was established in Animikii-wikwedong.

24 And the fame of Yeshua spread to every village along the coast.

25 When He departed, the people followed Him to the cliffside, singing the song of farewell.

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26 The sound of their voices mingled with the roar of the waves, and it was as incense before the Father.

27 And the Twelve walked beside Him, marvelling at the works of the Spirit in that place.

28 For they had seen the hardness of men's hearts melt as snow before the spring sun.

29 Yeshua said unto them, Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of the Father.

30 And they journeyed westward in gladness of heart.

31 The wind was at their backs, and the gulls wheeled overhead as if to bear witness.

32 And the Spirit whispered unto Yeshua of greater works yet to be done among the nations beyond the lakes.

33 So they pressed onward, and the land received them in peace.

34 And thus ended the matter at Animikii-wikwedong.

35 And they gave thanks.

Chapter 14 – The Crossing at Misizaaga'iganong

1 And it came to pass, that Yeshua and the Twelve Midē'wiwin departed from Animikii-wikwedong, journeying westward by the shore of the great waters.

2 They came unto Misizaaga'iganong, the Place of the Great Swamp Lake, where the marshes were broad and the waters lay still as a polished stone.

3 The people there feared to cross, for many had been lost in the mists, and the paths were hidden beneath reeds and shadow.

4 Yeshua looked upon the waters and said unto the people, Fear not, for the path is known unto the Father, and He shall reveal it unto whom He will.

5 Then He called Giuwedin-giizhig, the Jes'sakkid, and spake, Stand thou in the place where the earth meeteth the water, and lift up thy hand unto the heavens.

6 Giuwedin-giizhig obeyed, and the wind ceased, and the mists parted as a garment drawn aside.

7 And behold, a path of firm ground appeared before them, winding through the reeds.

8 The people marvelled, saying, Surely the Spirit walketh among us.

9 Yeshua answered, Not for a sign alone is this given, but that ye may learn: whosoever trusteth in the Father shall see the way made plain, though it were hidden from the eyes of all men.

10 Then He taught them a parable: A child walketh in the night with a lamp; though he seeth but a few paces before him, he walketh without fear, for he knoweth his Father holdeth his hand.

11 So it is with you: though the journey be long, the Father guideth thy steps, and no shadow shall prevail against thee.

12 They began to cross, the elders first, then the women and children, and lastly the hunters bearing their packs.

13 And the Twelve Midē'wiwin walked at the sides, aiding those who stumbled.

14 Many who were sick were borne in canoes, and Yeshua laid His hands upon them as they passed, and they were made whole.

15 The people wept for joy, saying,

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Never have our fathers told us of such things in all their days.

16 When they had crossed, they set up camp upon the far shore.

17 Yeshua sat among them by the fire and spake of the light in the vessel: The body is the lodge; the spirit is the fire within. If thou keep the door open unto the wind of the Father, thy fire shall never be quenched.

18 But if thou shut the door in pride, the smoke shall fill thy lodge, and thy fire shall die.

19 The people listened, and some fell to their knees in prayer.

20 The Midē'wiwin brought forth berries from the marsh's edge, sweet to the taste, and shared them among all.

21 Yeshua blessed the food, saying, As these berries have drawn life from the mire, so shall the Father bring forth sweetness from thy trials.

22 That night, the stars shone clear above them, for the mists had fled.

23 The elders sang songs of crossing, and the children slept without fear.

24 Giiwed-in-giizhig kept watch, for he said, The Spirit hath more to speak upon the morrow.

25 At dawn, Yeshua rose and prayed alone among the reeds.

26 He gave thanks for the safe passage, and the wind carried His prayer across the waters.

27 The people awoke and saw Him, and were still, for they felt the presence of the Father.

28 Then He called them to rise and continue their journey.

29 For He said, The path of the righteous is as the dawning light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

30 They departed in peace, their hearts strengthened.

31 And the story of the crossing spread to the villages beyond.

32 Many came to seek the one who had opened the way.

33 But Yeshua said, Seek not the worker of the sign, but the Giver of the sign.

34 And they understood, and followed.

35 Thus ended the crossing at Misizaaga'iganong.

Chapter 15 - The Healing at Mashkode-bii'igan

1 After many days' travel, Yeshua came unto Mashkode-bii'igan, the Prairie Opening, where the tall grasses bent like waves before the wind.

2 There was a village there whose people were stricken with a wasting sickness.

3 Their skin was pale, their eyes dim, and their strength spent.

4 The elders told Yeshua that no medicine had availed, neither the roots of the earth nor the waters of the spring.

5 Yeshua entered the lodge of the sick and sat among them.

6 He took the hand of a young girl whose breath was faint, and He said, Daughter, the Father hath not forgotten thee.

7 Then He laid His hand upon her brow, and warmth flowed into her body, and her eyes opened.

8 She rose and walked to her mother, who wept and embraced her.

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9 The people cried aloud, saying, The Healer is come among us.

10 But Yeshua rebuked them, saying, Give glory to the Father, for I am but His servant.

11 He called the Twelve and gave them power to heal in His name, and they went throughout the village laying hands upon the sick.

12 Giiwedin-giizhig spake over them the words of the old tongue, and the sickness departed.

13 Yeshua taught them, saying, The body is as the earth: if the roots be nourished, the tree shall flourish. But if the roots be parched, the tree shall wither.

14 So nourish thy spirit with truth, and thy body with the good gifts of the earth, and the light within thee shall burn bright.

15 That night they kindled a great fire, and the people brought offerings of grain and dried meat, giving thanks.

16 Yeshua blessed the food, and they ate together as one family.

17 The elders asked Him of the kingdom, and He said, It is as a seed hidden in the ground; though unseen, it groweth until it filleth the field.

18 And when it is ripe, the Father sendeth forth the reapers.

19 Many desired to follow Him, but He bade them remain and tend their people.

20 For He said, Not all are called to the road; some are called to keep the hearth.

21 He left them with the Midē'wiwin, that they might teach the law of peace and the care of the vessel.

22 At dawn they departed, the people singing after them.

23 The prairie wind carried the song far into the distance.

24 And Yeshua smiled, saying, The song of the righteous is heard in the courts of the Father.

25 They journeyed toward the setting sun, and the grasses gave way to forest.

26 Along the path, He taught the Twelve of humility, saying, Whosoever would be greatest, let him be as the one who serves.

27 For the Father looketh not upon the height of a man, but upon the depth of his heart.

28 They came to a river and camped upon its bank.

29 Yeshua prayed there, giving thanks for the healing.

30 The moon rose over the water, casting a silver path.

31 The people slept in peace, for the fear of sickness was gone.

32 And the name of Mashkode-bii'igan was remembered for joy.

33 Thus ended the healing at Mashkode-bii'igan.

34 And many from there bore witness in other lands.

35 And the fame of Yeshua grew.

Chapter 16 – The Storm upon Gaa-waasijiwanzh

1 And it came to pass, as they journeyed along the northern shore, they came unto Gaa-waasijiwanzh, the Place of the Shattered Pines.

2 The waters of Gichigami stretched far, and the wind began to rise out of the east.

3 The sky darkened, and the gulls fled

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inland.

4 The people of the shore came running, saying, Go not upon the water, for a great storm is coming, such as breaketh the canoes of the strong.

5 But Yeshua said unto the Twelve, We must cross, for there is one beyond who waiteth for the word of life.

6 They launched the canoes, the Midē'wiwin at the paddles, and Giiwedin-giizhig in the foremost vessel.

7 The waves rose high, and the wind smote the face of the waters.

8 Fear came upon the hearts of many, and they cried out.

9 Yeshua, lying in the stern, arose and stretched forth His hand.

10 He spake, Peace, be still.

11 And the wind ceased, and the waters lay flat as a mirror.

12 Great fear fell upon the Twelve, and they said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the waters obey Him?

13 Yeshua answered, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Did I not tell thee the Father keepeth His own?

14 They paddled the rest of the way in silence, pondering His words.

15 On the far shore was a small village, whose people came forth amazed at their arrival.

16 Yeshua taught them, saying, The storm is as the troubles of thy life; if the light in thy vessel be steadfast, no wind shall overturn thee.

17 But if thou lettest fear quench thy fire, the smallest wave shall drown thee.

18 The people brought fish and bread,

and Yeshua blessed it and fed all.

19 That night they slept in peace, for the wind did not return.

20 The elders said, Truly the Maker walketh among us.

21 And they begged Him to remain, but He said, I must go unto the other villages also.

22 The Midē'wiwin left two among them to teach the way of peace.

23 Giiwedin-giizhig prayed with them in the old tongue before departing.

24 At dawn they set out again, with calm seas before them.

25 The canoes glided as if drawn by unseen hands.

26 Yeshua sang a song of the Father, and the Twelve joined Him.

27 The sound carried far across the water.

28 The people on the shore heard it and rejoiced.

29 Thus ended the storm upon Gaa-waasijiwanzh.

30 And it was told for many winters.

31 And the people held fast to the teaching of the steadfast light.

32 And they were not moved in the day of trial.

33 Blessed be the name of the Father.

34 And His works endure forever.

35 Amen.

Chapter 17 – The Parable of the Three Fires

1 And they came to Namewa'iwashk, the Place of the Sturgeon Flowers, where the river met the lake.

2 The people there were skilled in the

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taking of fish, but contention had arisen among three families.

3 Each claimed the right to the richest fishing ground.

4 Yeshua called them together upon the riverbank.

5 He said, Hear the parable of the three fires.

6 A man had three sons, and to each he gave a spark to kindle his own fire. The first hid his spark, fearing the wind. The second boasted of his flame, and let it burn too hot, so it consumed his lodge. The third tended his fire with care, and gave coals to his brothers when their flames failed.

7 The Father in heaven is as the giver of the sparks; He desireth that ye share the flame, not hoard it.

8 The people were cut to the heart by His words.

9 Yeshua bade them join in one canoe and fish together.

10 That day the nets were filled to breaking.

11 They brought the catch ashore, and divided it equally.

12 The children laughed and the elders sang.

13 The Midē'wiwin blessed the waters, offering tobacco upon the current.

14 Giiwedín-giizhig spake, The Spirit rejoiceth where there is no strife.

15 Yeshua healed a man whose hand had been crippled from a spear wound.

16 The man took up the net and worked beside his brothers.

17 They feasted that night under the moon.

18 Yeshua said, As the waters receive the

river, so the Father receiveth all who come in peace.

19 The families made a covenant never again to quarrel over the river.

20 The elders recorded the covenant on a painted hide.

21 And the children of their children kept it.

22 Yeshua prayed over them before departing.

23 The wind was soft upon the water as they left.

24 The sturgeon leapt beside the canoes as if in blessing.

25 The Twelve marvelled and gave thanks.

26 They travelled upriver, the current aiding them.

27 The forests closed about them, and the air was filled with birdsong.

28 They camped by a spring and drank of its sweetness.

29 Yeshua spoke of the water of life that cometh from the Father.

30 Whosoever drinketh of it shall thirst no more.

31 The Twelve pondered the saying in their hearts.

32 In the morning, they journeyed on.

33 And the peace of Namewa'iwashk followed them.

34 And many were added to the way of life.

35 Thus ended the matter.

Chapter 18 – The Blind Elder at Manidoo-minisens

1 They came unto Manidoo-minisens, the Spirit Little Island, a place of cedar and

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stone.

2 There dwelt an elder who had been blind from his youth.

3 His name was Waawaashkeshi-inini, and he was known for his wisdom.

4 He sat each day upon the rock by the shore, listening to the wind.

5 When Yeshua came, the people said, Master, heal him, that he may see.

6 Yeshua called the elder and said, Dost thou believe the Father can open thine eyes?

7 He answered, I believe, yet my heart seeth already.

8 Yeshua touched his eyes, and said, Receive thy sight, even as thy heart hath believed.

9 At once the elder opened his eyes and beheld the lake and the sky.

10 He wept, saying, Now mine eyes and my heart are one.

11 The people rejoiced greatly.

12 Yeshua taught them, Better is the eye that seeth the truth than the eye that seeth only the form.

13 He told a parable: A man found a mirror of clear water; he looked and saw only his own face, and went away unchanged. Another looked and saw beyond his face the heavens, and his soul was lifted.

14 So also is the heart that looketh through the eyes of faith.

15 The Midē'wiwin sang the cedar song, blessing the island.

16 Giiwedin-giizhig offered sweetgrass to the waves.

17 The elder walked through the village, marvelling at all he had known only by touch.

18 He took Yeshua's hand and said, Thy

light hath opened more than mine eyes.

19 They feasted upon fish and wild rice.

20 Yeshua blessed the meal, giving thanks to the Father.

21 He counselled the young to seek wisdom while they were strong.

22 For the light in the vessel groweth with the years if it be tended, but dimmeth if it be neglected.

23 That night the stars shone bright over the island.

24 The elder lay down and slept in peace.

25 In the morning, Yeshua bade farewell.

26 The elder said, My eyes shall follow thee though my feet remain.

27 The canoes pushed off into the current.

28 The water was calm, and the wind at their backs.

29 The Twelve marvelled at the joy of the elder.

30 Yeshua said, So is every one born of the Spirit.

31 They travelled westward toward the great rivers.

32 The forests grew denser, and the calls of loons echoed.

33 They rested in a cove that night.

34 The firelight danced upon the canoes.

35 Thus ended the healing at Manidoo-minisens.

Chapter 19 – The Hungry Camp at Omakaki-ziibi

1 They came to Omakaki-ziibi, the River of Frogs, where a band of travellers had made camp.

2 Their food was spent, and their children cried for hunger.

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3 Yeshua asked, Have ye nothing?

4 They answered, Only a handful of wild rice and two dried fish.

5 He said, Bring them to Me.

6 He sat upon a stone and lifted His eyes to heaven, giving thanks.

7 Then He gave the food to the Twelve to set before the people.

8 And it multiplied in their hands, so that all did eat and were filled.

9 They gathered twelve baskets of what remained.

10 The people marvelled and gave glory to the Father.

11 Yeshua taught them, The lodge that shareth shall never be empty.

12 He told them of the manna given to the children of Israel in the wilderness.

13 And He said, The Father's hand is not shortened, that it cannot give.

14 Giiweding-iizhig prayed in the old tongue, blessing the river.

15 The Midē'wiwin sang the rice-harvest song.

16 The children played by the water, their hunger forgotten.

17 That night they kindled many small fires, one for each family.

18 Yeshua walked among them, speaking to each in turn.

19 He healed the sick and comforted the grieving.

20 The elders asked Him to remain, but He said, I must go to others who hunger still.

21 He appointed two Midē'wiwin to guide them in the ways of the harvest.

22 The people gave Him gifts of reeds and clay pots.

23 He received them with thanks, giving them to the poor among them.

24 At dawn the camp was filled with song.

25 The river glistened in the rising sun.

26 The frogs sang from the banks as if in chorus.

27 The canoes moved on, the people waving from the shore.

28 Yeshua said, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

29 The Twelve pondered His words as they paddled.

30 The sky was clear, and the day warm.

31 They travelled far that day without weariness.

32 At evening they camped upon a high bank.

33 They gave thanks for the day's mercies.

34 The stars were many, and the river sang them to sleep.

35 Thus ended the matter at Omakaki-züibi.

Chapter 20 - The Vision at Zhaawano-ong

1 And it came to pass, they came to Zhaawano-ong, the Place of the South Wind, where the land opened into rolling hills.

2 Yeshua led the Twelve to the highest hill and bade them sit.

3 He said, This night the Father will speak, and ye shall see His glory.

4 As the sun set, the sky was filled with

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colours as of fire.

5 A stillness fell upon the land.

6 Yeshua prayed, and His face shone as the moon upon water.

7 The Twelve beheld a light descend upon Him as a dove.

8 A voice spake from the heavens, This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him.

9 They fell upon their faces in awe.

10 Yeshua touched them, saying, Rise, be not afraid.

11 He spake of the work yet before them.

12 From this place we shall go to the Turtle Mountains, where the Pembina dwell.

13 There shall be trials, but the light in your vessels shall not fail if ye keep the way.

14 He gave each of the Twelve a staff, saying, Go two by two, and prepare the way.

15 Giiwedín-güizhig wept for joy, saying, The Spirit hath confirmed the path.

16 The Midé'wiwin sang the song of the South Wind.

17 The breeze was warm and sweet upon their faces.

18 They descended the hill in silence, pondering the vision.

19 That night they camped among the hills.

20 Yeshua spake long by the fire, teaching of the kingdom.

21 It is not here nor there, but within you; the Father's lodge is built in the heart of the faithful.

22 He warned them of false guides who would come in His name.

23 Ye shall know them by their fruits.

24 The stars wheeled overhead as He

spake.

25 The people listened as to a river in flood.

26 At last He prayed over them and blessed them.

27 The fire burned low, and they slept in peace.

28 In the morning, the South Wind bore them onward.

29 The hills fell away behind them, and the road stretched westward.

30 They spoke little, each lost in thought of what was to come.

31 The sky was bright, and the day fair.

32 They journeyed until evening and camped by a small lake.

33 The water was still, reflecting the heavens.

34 Yeshua said, So may your hearts be, reflecting the light without blemish.

35 Thus ended the vision at Zhaawano-ong, and they set their faces toward the Turtle Mountains.

BOOK III

The Road to Siipisiing

Chapter 1 – After the Lights of the North

1 And it came to pass, when the northern lights had danced as banners over the camps of the people, that Yeshua turned His face toward the setting of the sun, to go by the south shore of Gichigami and onward to the plains.

2 With Him went the Twelve Midē'wiwin and Giiwedīn-giizhig the Jes'sakkid, and many whose hearts had been healed by His words.

3 They left the stony coves where the spruce drinketh the wind, and they walked the sands where the waves write and erase the tracks of men.

4 And Yeshua said, The Father changeth not, though the waters change their face a thousand times in a day.

5 As the shore receiveth the wave and is not angered, so receive ye the words of them that strive, and answer with peace.

6 They came unto a village whose store was small; for the winter had been bitter, and the fish had gone deep.

7 The elders set before them what little they had, and the children watched with wide eyes.

8 Yeshua blessed the food, and it seemed to increase by the sharing; and there was enough for the lodges of the poor.

9 The people marvelled, saying, The blessing multiplies as the wind multiplieth the sound of our song.

10 Yeshua spake: The vessel of a man is filled by what it poureth, not by what it keepeth.

11 Then He healed a hunter whose hand had been withered by frost; and the man took up his bow again with tears.

12 The Twelve went among the lodges two by two, mending quarrels and setting old grievances to rest.

13 And Zaagi'idiwin reconciled two brothers who had not spoken since the moon of falling leaves.

14 Mashkiki-inini gathered roots under the snow crust and brewed a strength for the weary, and they blessed the Father.

15 That night Yeshua taught of the light in the vessel, saying, The fire within thee is not thy possession but thy participation; thou art warmed because thou consentest to the Giver.

16 Quench not the Spirit with envy, neither smother it with fear; open thy lodge to the wind of the Father, and thy coals shall be made living again.

17 A woman said, Master, my fire is small; I have failed many times.

18 He answered, A small fire that is tended is greater than a great fire forgotten.

19 Begin this night with one act of mercy, and the Father shall add tinder unto thy soul.

20 Before dawn He went apart to pray, and the Twelve watched as the sky blushed with the coming day.

21 Giiwedīn-giizhig said, The breath of the South Wind beareth a summons. The plains are calling their own.

22 Yeshua returned, saying, There is a people beyond the rivers whose songs are

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not yet braided with thine; the Father willeth that they be one cord.

23 And He spake a parable: A net of many strands draweth the greater catch; a net of one strand breaketh at the first pull.

24 So are the nations; the Father maketh of them a single strength when they bind their cords in peace.

25 They set forth again, walking where the ice had retreated and the stones glimmered with meltwater.

26 A child ran beside Yeshua and asked, Whither go we, Master?

27 He said, Unto Siipisiing, and unto the hills called Mikinakwajiw, and the waters of Miskwaagamiiwi-zaaga'igan; there shall the word be established among the Pembina.

28 The child laughed for joy, and the mothers were comforted.

29 At eventide they made camp near a cliff of red stone, and the setting sun made it as a fire upon the face of the land.

30 Yeshua placed His hand upon the rock and blessed it, saying, The earth is a scroll; read ye the faithfulness thereof.

31 Ogimaa-bines stood watch on the height, and the loons called upon the dark water.

32 The stars kindled like embers cast into a vast sea, and the people slept.

33 In the night a fear came upon some for the long way yet before them; but Yeshua walked among the mats and their fear departed.

34 He whispered, The Father is nearer than thy breath; sleep in His nearness.

35 Thus began Book the Third upon the Road to Siipisiing, and their feet were strengthened.

Chapter 2 – Teaching of the Sun's Food

1 And it came to pass, as they journeyed westward from the cedar grove, that Yeshua spake unto the Twelve and unto Giiwedini-giizhig concerning the food that is born of the sun.

2 And He said, The Father hath set the sun in the heavens to call forth life from the earth; and that which drinketh the light is filled with the light thereof.

3 In the land of my youth, beyond the sea, there is a tree in the wilderness called in the tongue of my fathers tamar (תמר).

4 It beareth fruit like unto honey, and the heat of the day is gathered into it as into a vessel.

5 In the days of my testing, I went into the desert alone, and for ten years I ate of no other food save the tamar.

6 By it the Father sustained me; by it my vessel was filled with light; and the oil of life flowed in my flesh as a river hidden beneath the sand.

7 The elders in Yerushalayim marvelled when I said, I have meat to eat that ye know not of; yet this was the food of which I spake.

8 Then He lifted a small basket of berries they had gathered that day and said, Even as these berries drink of the sun upon these shores, so did the tamar drink in the desert.

9 And as it fed me, so will the sun-fed food feed any vessel that keepeth itself in purity.

10 One of the Midē'wiwin asked, Master, is all food the same in thy sight?

11 And He answered, Nay; for there is

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food that dieth in darkness, and food that is born in the light.

12 The food that hath seen the face of the sun and not been corrupted by man's hand is like a lamp without blemish in the lodge of the body.

13 Then spake He a parable, saying, A man had two gardens; the one he set in the open air, that it might see the rising and the setting of the sun; the other he covered with many roofs and walls.

14 The first brought forth fruit sweet and strong, and all that ate thereof were filled with health; the second brought forth fruit pale and weak, and those that ate thereof hungered still.

15 Even so is the soul that eateth of the light: it is made strong, and the oil of joy runneth in its bones.

16 The people pondered His words, for they had never heard it spoken thus.

17 A youth brought forth fish taken from the stream, saying, This hath not seen the sun; is it then unworthy?

18 And Yeshua answered, Every gift of the Father is good; but the strength that is in the sun is for the strengthening of the vessel, and he that would shine as the sun must eat as the sun feedeth.

19 Then He laid hands on the youth, and the light in His palms seemed to pass into the boy, and his eyes grew bright.

20 The women prepared a meal of roots and berries, and Yeshua blessed it, saying, May the light of the Creator dwell in this food and in all who eat thereof.

21 In that place many were healed of weariness by the eating of the berries, and they glorified the Father.

22 Giiwedín-giizhig wrote these words in his bundle, to be told to the people of the north and the plains.

23 That night they camped by a great rock whose face looked toward the sunset, and they named it Mishomis-asin, the Grandfather Stone.

24 Yeshua prayed there, and the moonlight crowned Him as with silver.

25 The Twelve sat about Him in silence, and the fire burned low.

26 Then He said softly, Keep the vessel pure, keep the food pure, and the light shall not depart from thee.

27 And they slept in peace, for no enemy drew near that night.

28 In the morning, the people brought Him gifts of the land—corn, wild rice, berries, and fish—and He blessed them all.

29 Yet He set apart the berries and the grains that had ripened beneath the open sun, and these He gave to the sick.

30 And behold, they recovered swiftly, and the fame of this spread through the villages.

31 Thus began the teaching of the Sun's Food among the Anishinaabe, and it was remembered for generations.

32 And He said again, Not by bread alone doth man live, but by every ray of light which proceedeth from the Father's hand.

33 The people sang songs of thanksgiving, and the echoes reached far into the forest.

34 The wind from the west carried the scent of cedar and the promise of prairies yet unseen.

35 And Yeshua set His face again toward the path that led to Siipisiing.

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Chapter 3 – The Two Portages

1 And it came to pass they reached a place of split waters, where two carry-ways began, the one short and steep, the other long and gentle.

2 The people were divided, for some loved swiftness and some loved ease.

3 Yeshua bade them sit, and He taught them of the way within.

4 There is a short path by which a man conquereth his anger quickly, yet it is steep; and there is a long path whereby a man learneth patience by little burdens, and it is gentle.

5 Choose neither for pride, but for obedience; for the Father's will is the level ground beneath both.

6 Then He spake a parable: Two canoes were carried to the height of land. The first rushed and stumbled, and the vessel was bruised; the second kept steady steps, and the vessel came whole to the new river.

7 Better a whole vessel at evening than a broken vessel at noon.

8 The Twelve apportioned the burdens, and each took what was meet.

9 Bimose-inini bore the heaviest, singing as he went; and the young were strengthened by his song.

10 Along the way a child fell, and Zaagi-idiwin lifted him and bore him laughing, and the mother wept for joy.

11 At the crest Yeshua stood, and from thence the land fell away to an unknown west.

12 He stretched forth His hand and blessed the waters, calling them brothers, for they would bear the teaching to far-off

lodges.

13 They set the canoes down upon a new stream, and it ran toward a country they had not seen.

14 Yeshua said, Thus doth the Father turn thy private trials into a current for many.

15 He maketh a river of thy repentance, that others may drink.

16 At evening they found a hollow of red stone, and the sound of the new river was as breath upon sleep.

17 The elders of a nearby village came with gifts and questions.

18 Yeshua healed a man whose knees had failed from years of carrying.

19 He said to him, Thy burdens shall now be borne by thy joy.

20 And the man went leaping like a stag upon the hillside.

21 They shared the meal of corn cakes and berries ripened in open sun.

22 Yeshua taught again, Food is counsel: let it be simple, let it be bright with the light that made it.

23 Mashkiki-inini taught the children to bless the earth before gathering.

24 Ogimaa-bines marked a safe crossing for the old.

25 In the last light Yeshua traced upon the ground a line from east to west and said, This is thy life: a straight mercy through winding days.

26 Look oft to the dawn and oft to the setting; thou shalt remember whence thou comest and whither thou goest.

27 The night was soft with the sound of owls.

28 In the morning the two portages were

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one memory, and none boasted of his choice.

29 They launched upon the new stream, and laughter went before them like scouts.

30 The women sang, and the men kept stroke.

31 The children slept in the middles of the canoes like little bundles of peace.

32 Yeshua smiled, and His heart praised the Father.

33 A mist rose, and the river wore it as a garment.

34 And they were not afraid.

35 Thus passed the lesson of the Two Portages into the keeping of the people.

Chapter 4 – The Reed and the Flint

1 They came upon a village where words had become sharp as flint, and the reeds of gentleness were cut down for fire.

2 Neighbours would not share the landing, and kin would not speak.

3 Yeshua sat in the common place and waited; and the children, being bold, came first.

4 He traced in the dust two signs: a reed bending, and a flint sparking.

5 He said, The Father made both: the reed to bow and rise, the flint to make fire; yet if thou makest a spear of the one and a wound of the other, thou hast forgotten the Giver.

6 Then He spake a parable: A man planted reeds along his shore to hold the bank; his neighbour heaped flint to build a hearth. In a season of flood the reed kept the soil, and in a season of snow the hearth kept the children. But when envy burned, each mocked the other's gift, and both houses suffered: the shore fell in, and the fire went

out.

7 See then that ye honour the differing gifts; for the Father is the Weaver of a many-threaded world.

8 Giiwedin-giizhig rose and said, Let us set two signs by the river: a bundle of reed and a ring of stone; and let the children rehearse their uses before the elders.

9 The people consented, and the little ones spoke in turn; and the elders were ashamed that they had learned last what the children learned first.

10 Yeshua healed an old woman whose ears were shut by years of scorn; and when she heard again, the first sound that entered was the laughter of children, and she blessed the Father.

11 He mended also the landing by blessing; for the river laid down new sand in the night.

12 The two neighbours brought fish from one net, and bread from one fire.

13 They ate with Yeshua and with one another.

14 He said, Make a covenant of reed and flint: that tenderness shall hold thy banks, and truth shall warm thy houses.

15 They bound cedar cords around the landing post and marked it with a sign.

16 The Twelve rejoiced, for they saw the kingdom in a simple shore.

17 At dusk Yeshua taught, The vessel within thee needeth both softness and flame: bow to the breath of the Spirit, and be kindled by the truth.

18 Hardness alone maketh tyranny; softness alone maketh drift.

19 But mercy and firmness together are as shore and fire.

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20 The people slept without fear that night.

21 In the morning, reed-cutters and stone-workers traded tools.

22 Waasamoog sang a bright song as the sun rose over the water.

23 Ozaawaa-bineshiinh ran from lodge to lodge crying, Peace is better than pride!

24 The women braided grasses for mats, and the men set hearths where the children might gather.

25 Yeshua blessed the work of their hands.

26 He said, Where love buildeth, the Father layeth the cornerstone.

27 They loaded the canoes with gifts they had refused each other yesterday.

28 Laughter sat upon their paddles.

29 The river widened, and the banks receded as grudges recede.

30 Bimose-inini looked back and said, A straight water followeth a straight heart.

31 Yeshua answered, And a rejoicing water followeth a reconciled heart.

32 They rested at mid-day under a leaning pine, and its shape preached the gospel of yielding.

33 A heron lifted from the shallows like a grey thought freed from care.

34 The people gave thanks without words.

35 And the shore of Reed and Flint became a proverb in the mouths of travellers.

Chapter 5 – The Night of Watchfires

1 A rumour went before them that raiders from afar sought to seize canoes and food along the way.

2 Fear began to stir in the lodges as wind stirs the leaves before a storm.

3 The elders asked Yeshua, Shall we flee by night?

4 He said, Set watchfires rather; for fear is a thief that prospereth in the dark.

5 They ringed the camp with small steady flames, not great blazes to boast, but lamps to reassure the little ones.

6 Yeshua went from fire to fire, speaking quietly to each watcher.

7 Let thy flame be tended, not loud; let thy eye be kind, not dull; let thy ear be open to truth, not gossip.

8 Ogimaa-bines climbed a bluff and listened to the long land; Minwaadiziwin comforted mothers with songs of dawn.

9 Makade-waaboo brewed a draught for courage from cedar and wintergreen.

10 Near midnight footsteps came out of the brush; men hungry and hard-pressed.

11 The Twelve stood up, not with spears but with bread.

12 Yeshua stepped into the ring of firelight and said, If ye seek plunder, ye will find ashes; if ye seek mercy, there is bread.

13 The strangers stared, for they had never been met so.

14 Their leader said, We are empty; our hunts have failed; our shame is great.

15 Yeshua answered, Shame is a bear that eateth the strength of a man; come sit and be men again.

16 He gave the first loaf into the hands of the leader and bowed to receive it back broken; and the circle widened.

17 They ate until the edge of anger was dulled.

18 Then Yeshua taught, A watchfire is

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not for pride but for welcome; it telleth the lost, There is a place yet for thee.

19 Giuwedin-giizhig spoke a blessing in the old tongue over the strangers, and tears ran down rough faces.

20 Before dawn, the strangers rose to go, leaving knives and a bundle of furs as repentance.

21 Yeshua said, Keep your knives; bring your hearts.

22 He set two of the Midé'wiwin to guide them toward new hunting grounds.

23 The camp breathed as one chest, in and out, easy again.

24 When the sun rose, mothers showed children the circle of ash, saying, This is what peace leaveth behind.

25 Yeshua smiled and said, And see—no blood upon the sand.

26 They gathered the coals, not to waste, and kindled breakfast in quiet joy.

27 The river gave up a silver run of fish as if to honour the choice of mercy.

28 At the narrowing of the stream, they laid tobacco upon the current.

29 The day was bright and long, and their paddles told a contented tale.

30 Some sang; some were silent; all were fed.

31 Yeshua, in the stern, watched the wake draw a straight line that slowly faded and said, So pass the deeds of men; but the Father remembereth the heart that chose peace.

32 A hawk wrote circles upon the air as if to seal the lesson.

33 The bluffs opened to show a valley broad and green even in the cool, and hope rose like steam from hot stones.

34 They landed at evening and found the ground warm with welcome.

35 And so the Night of Watchfires became a lamp for many villages thereafter.

Chapter 6 – Signs upon the Sandbar

1 At the mouth of a broad river the water shoaled, and a long sandbar lay hidden beneath the ripple.

2 Canoes from other journeys had broken there, and men cursed the place.

3 Yeshua bade the people wait upon the bank while He walked out upon the water, feeling with His staff the shape of the unseen ground.

4 He marked with driftwood a safe line, and called, Follow after me by this path; fear not the shallows.

5 They came across without mishap, and wonder filled their faces.

6 He said, Thus also in doctrine and counsel: many run aground for want of a patient eye; mark the signs, and the Father's mercy shall be a channel to thee.

7 Then He wrote upon the wet sand three words of the old tongue: Truth, Mercy, Courage.

8 These be the cairns of thy crossing, He said; lose not one.

9 The elders asked, Why Courage with Truth and Mercy?

10 Because Mercy without Courage becometh silence, and Truth without Courage becometh cruelty; but Courage bindeth them in righteousness.

11 A great fish turned in the clear water as if to assent.

12 Children danced on the firm bar and laughed at the water's play.

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13 Yeshua lifted a little one and set him upon His shoulder; the child clapped and the hearts of the mothers were at rest.

14 Mashkiki-inini took sand in his hand and said, This also healeth, when mixed with oil.

15 Yeshua answered, All the works of the Father are medicines when received with thanksgiving.

16 He healed a woman whose blood had been heavy and long; and she became strong.

17 He set a man free whose mind had been entangled by fear of drowning; and he walked the bar singing.

18 The Twelve gathered the driftwood signs into a small pile and called it The Witness of the Bar.

19 Toward evening the river people brought a child not breathing, taken sudden by the cold water.

20 The mothers cried out, and hope faltered like a blown flame.

21 Yeshua laid the child upon His knees and called softly as one calleth to a sleeper: Little one, the morning is come.

22 The child's chest rose, and colour returned, and the camp shook with relief.

23 Yeshua said, Let this bar be remembered as The Turning, for here despair turned back from the door.

24 Giiwedin-giizhig proclaimed a fast of thanks until the setting of the sun.

25 At sunset, they broke fast

Chapter 7: Under the Great Tree

1 And it came to pass, after they had passed The Turning at the river's mouth, that Yeshua espied a mighty tree upon a rise near the water, whose branches were broad

as a tent of cedar and whose roots went down as spears into the red earth.

2 And He said unto the Twelve and unto Giiwedin-giizhig, Here shall we pitch our camp, and under this bough shall wisdom sit down as an elder among us.

3 The people gathered; mothers with little ones, elders leaning on staffs, and youths whose eyes were quick; and the shade received them as a kindly lodge.

4 Yeshua sat upon a root that rose like the back of a sleeping turtle, and the wind passed through the leaves with a sound as of many soft drums.

5 And He said, This day will I speak by turns: first in poem, then in parable, and then in song; and so shall I do until your hearts be watered like fields after rain.

6 The Midē'wiwin spread woven mats; Waabishki-makwa stood to the east, Ogimaa-bines to the west, and Mashkiki-inini made ready a draught of cedar for the weary.

7 And Yeshua lifted His face, and began with poetry: O Tree of the Father, whose fingers count the winds, teach us to hold and to loose; to hold the truth as a nest holdeth the egg, to loose our anger as the leaf looseth its grip in autumn.

8 O River of the Giver, keepeth not thy water in pride; thou pourest thyself and art not diminished: even so let our hearts be spent without fear, and we shall be made full in the pouring.

9 The people said softly, Amen, and the leaves answered with a trembling light.

10 Then He gave unto them a parable, saying, A certain man planted two groves; in the one he pruned each branch with

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wisdom, and in the other he let all grow for boasting. When the storm came, the proud grove fell with a great crashing; but the humble grove bent and rose again, and birds returned to sing therein.

11 He that keepeth his spirit pruned with truth and mercy shall not break in the day of wind; but he that groweth by pride only shall be cast down of his own weight.

12 And He began a song, and His voice was low and sweet, and the elders marvelled to hear an old tongue upon a new shore: “Abba, sh'b'shemaya, nithqadash shmokh; shlama nehwe 'am khon.”

13 And He said, This is to say: Father in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name; let peace be with you.

14 The children repeated the words, stumbling and laughing, and Yeshua smiled as a father smileth when a little one taketh first steps.

15 Again He uttered poetry: Not by iron is the soul bound, but by a small cord within; and not by iron is it loosed, but by a breath that saith, Forgive.

16 The light in the vessel is quick to mercy; it remembereth not the count of wrongs, but the count of dawns.

17 And He followed with a parable: There was a woman who set a bowl in a sunlit place and another in a corner. She said, The corner bowl is safe from dust; yet it turned sour. But the bowl in the light kept sweet. So is the heart: it keepeth well when it standeth where the Father's face looketh upon it.

18 Then He sang again, slower than before: “Talitha, qumi; q'm sh'har, q'm orah”—and He interpreted, Little one,

arise; arise, O morning, arise, O light.

19 And certain that were heavy in sorrow felt their strength return, and they stood as wheat that findeth the wind.

20 Giiwedin-giizhig whispered, The Spirit moveth under this bough as a river under ice when the thaw beginneth.

21 Yeshua raised His hand and spoke poetry: Blessed be the wound that becometh a window; for through it the Father's day may enter.

22 Blessed be the tear that watereth the root of compassion; for it shall bring forth a tree whose fruit feedeth enemies and friends alike.

23 And He set forth a parable of the Sun's Food to bind their remembrance: A traveller kept two stores—one of things sun-kissed, one of things shut away. In the time of weakness he reached for what had seen the day, and was made strong; but when he ate of what had never known the light, his courage failed. So keep thy counsel in the sun of truth; hide it not in the dark of fear.

24 Then a song rose from Him like incense: “*Sh'lama, sh'lama 'aleikhon; orah d'Hayyeh b'gawkon”—*Peace, peace be upon you; the light of Life be within you.

25 And the people marvelled, for though the words were not the words of their mothers, yet their hearts knew them as water knoweth the cup.

26 He spoke again in poetry: O Leaf that listenest to the wind, teach me obedience; for thou turnest not to thine own will, but to the sun that feedeth thee.

27 O Root that drinkest where eyes behold not, teach me faith; for thou hast no

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praise of men and yet keepest the giant from falling.

28 Then a parable of kinship He told: Three lodges stood near a crossing; the first kept only for itself and was rich alone; the second shared when praised; the third shared before speech. When winter howled, the first was besieged with envy and fear; the second grew thin with waiting for “thank thee”; but the third had many fires and one joy. He that giveth before asking hath already eaten of the Father’s banquet.

29 And He sang softly: **“Rakhma d’Abba naher b’libbi”*—*The compassion of the Father shineth in my heart.

30 The girls plaited grasses in time with the song, and the boys beat gently on the rims of baskets, and the elders’ eyes were wet.

31 Again He spake poetry to the Twelve: Ye are not torches to burn swiftly and be spent, but lamps to be trimmed morning and even; let the oil be truth, the wick humility, the flame joy.

32 And He added a parable for the Midē’wiwin: A healer had two pouches: in the one he kept medicines with names; in the other he kept silence. He healed with both; for sometimes the body needeth a root, and sometimes it needeth that a man be still with it until the fear depart.

33 Then a song that sounded like a brook in spring: **“Qol d’mamā d’raqheek—sh’meh d’Abba q’ree”*—*In the thin still voice the name of the Father is called.

34 And He said, Learn to hear the small sound; for the thunder getteth praise, but the seed is planted in silence.

35 He rose a little upon the root and

spoke poetry to the travellers who would go farther than their strength: Walk not faster than thy love; for if thou outstrip thy compassion, thou wilt arrive where I am not.

36 Then the parable of the Long Shadow: A man set out late and feared the night, for his shadow was great upon the path. He said, My fear is long; but at dawn the shadow was behind him and small. Many fear the length that is but the work of a low sun. Wait for the rising, and thy dread shall shorten.

37 And He sang a refrain all could learn, mixing their tongue with His: **“Abba, nigaan; Abba, bimose; Abba, zoongide”*—*Father, lead; Father, walk; Father, make brave.

38 The whole camp answered, and the great tree seemed to tremble with gladness, and birds settled nearer as if to listen.

39 Then Yeshua stretched His hands over them all and blessed them in poetry: Be ye as this tree—depth without boasting, breadth without grasping, shade without price.

40 And when ye move from this place, carry the leaf of this day in thy memory, that Siipisiing may know the scent of this mercy when ye come.

41 The sun turned toward evening, and the light slanted like spears of gold between the boughs; and He bade them rest, saying, On the morrow we shall sit again, and the order shall be poem, parable, and song, until your hearts be a harvest.

42 The mothers laid the little ones upon mats, and the men kept a quiet watch; and Giiwedin-giizhig wrote the sayings as a

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scribe of rivers.

43 And the elders whispered, Never have our fathers heard such mingling of tongues and truths under one shade.

44 Yeshua looked out upon the west and was silent, as a man who beholdeth the far home of his friend.

45 And the tree kept their secrets as a faithful elder keepeth counsel, and the night drew on gentle and unafraid.

Chapter 8 · Trial of the Light

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua sat beneath the wide-branched omashkooz (elm tree), and the people gathered, for the shade thereof was cool upon their brows.

2 And the winds from the great waters moved softly, bearing the scent of giizhik (cedar) and mashkodewashk (sage).

3 And He lifted up His voice, saying, "The heart of man is like the vessel in which light dwelleth; if the vessel be pure, the light is clear, and if the vessel be unclean, the light is dimmed."

4 Then He spake unto them a parable, saying, "There was a woman who kept a small lamp in her lodge. And though the nights were long, she filled it daily with the oil pressed from the berries of the bush.

5 And her children asked her, 'Why dost thou labour so, when the dawn shall come?'

6 And she answered, 'Because the night is the trial of the light, and whoso keepeth it burning shall greet the dawn with sight and not with stumbling.'

7 Even so is the soul of man: to keep the oil of truth within, though the darkness presseth hard."

8 And the people said, "Aaniin dash?

(What then?) How shall we keep this oil within?"

9 Yeshua answered, "Guard thy words, for they are the smoke or the fragrance of thy lamp. Guard thy thoughts, for they are the flame. Guard thy deeds, for they are the oil."

10 And a young man from the Crane clan asked, "If the lamp be broken, can it be made whole?"

11 He said, "Verily, the Maker of all vessels mendeth that which is shattered, if the shards be brought to Him without pride."

12 And He taught them a song in the tongue of His mother, saying:

13 Nura' d'nuhra, b'libi yahair (The light of light, in my heart it shines),

14 B'rikh at Yah, b'kol nishmati (Blessed art Thou, O Yah, with all my soul),

15 Shamra li, shamra li, shamra li (Keep me, keep me, keep me).

16 And they sang with Him until the air was filled with the sound of many voices.

17 And He said, "This song is oil for thy vessel; sing it in the morning, at the setting of the sun, and in the night watches."

18 And a woman from the Bear clan wept, saying, "My vessel hath long been empty."

19 He placed His hand upon her head, and warmth spread through her body, and she cried aloud for joy.

20 And all marveled, saying, "Truly, the Light dwelleth among us."

21 Then He bade them return to their lodges and share the parable and the song, that the whole village might be filled with light.

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22 And the people departed slowly, for they desired still to sit in His presence.

23 But Yeshua withdrew into the deeper shade of the omashkooz, and prayed in silence.

24 And a gentle rain began to fall, like a blessing upon the leaves.

25 And it was the beginning of many teachings given beneath that tree.

Chapter 9 Fire is the Word Within Thee

1 And it came to pass, on the day following, the clouds gathered thick above the camp.

2 And the people sat beneath the great omashkooz (elm) with Yeshua, for they feared the storm that might break.

3 And Yeshua lifted up His eyes, and spake: "The Father setteth His light above the clouds, and it is hidden but not gone."

4 Even as He spake, a wind moved upon the branches, and the clouds parted suddenly.

5 And a great beam of light fell upon Him, so that His face shone like the morning over the great waters.

6 And the people fell to their knees, for the glory was great to behold.

7 Yeshua said unto them, "Thus is it with the soul: storms may gather, yet the sun of the Father is never quenched."

8 And He began to sing in the tongue of His fathers:

9 Shapir nura, al nafshi nura (Beautiful light, upon my soul the light),

10 La yid'akh, la yistattar (It shall not fade, it shall not hide),

11 B'rikh at Abba, d'natnan nura l'alma (Blessed art Thou, Father, who giveth light

to the world).

12 And His voice was like the river when it runneth swift and deep.

13 The people wept, for the song entered into their hearts like warm fire in the cold moon.

14 And when He had ended, He spake a parable:

15 "A man had a lodge by the shore. And a storm came, and the wind beat upon the lodge, and the rain came in through the roof.

16 But the man did not despair; he set his fire in the center, and its warmth filled the lodge until the storm passed.

17 When the morning came, he mended the roof, but the fire he kept burning all the day.

18 This fire is the Word within thee; keep it through the storm, and in the morning, strengthen the roof of thy faith."

19 And He asked them, "Hath not the Creator set the sun in the heavens to remind thee of His constancy?"

20 And they answered, "It is so."

21 Then He took water from a nearby stream and poured it upon His hands, saying, "Even so must ye keep clean the vessel of thy body, for light and purity dwell together."

22 And a child brought forth berries, and He blessed them and gave them to the people.

23 He said, "The sweetness of the berry cometh after the rain; even so cometh joy after sorrow."

24 Many who were sick came forth, and He laid His hands upon them, and they rose up whole.

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25 And the people marveled yet again,
and their songs filled the evening air.

26 And thus ended that day, with the
sun setting clear and golden over the waters.

Chapter 10 If One Strand Be Broken

1 On the third day beneath the great
omashkooz, Yeshua spake a long parable
unto them.

2 “Hearken, O ye who dwell by the
waters: there was a fisherman who cast his
net into the deep.

3 And the net was torn in one place, so
that many fish escaped.

4 The man said in his heart, ‘It is but a
small tear; I shall mend it after the morrow.’

5 But each day more fish escaped, until
the man’s household was hungry.

6 At last he mended the net, but it was
late, and the season of plenty was past.

7 So is the man whose heart is torn by
small untruths, thinking them of no harm.
Mend them quickly, lest thy season of light
be past.”

8 And He taught them how the mending
is done: “By truth in the inward parts, by
mercy toward thy neighbor, and by prayer
to the Father.”

9 Then He began a song in Aramaic:

10 Ana meshare, ana menakker (I will
mend, I will make clean),

11 B’ahava u’shliama (With love and
with peace),

12 Nura b’libi, lo yid’akh (The light in
my heart shall not fade).

13 The elders of the village nodded, for
the song was like the old songs of their
grandfathers.

14 And a man from the Loon clan said,

“Master, sing it again.”

15 And Yeshua sang it thrice, until all
knew the words, and their voices rose as
one.

16 The children danced in the clearing,
for the melody was glad and full of hope.

17 Yeshua said, “When ye mend thy nets,
sing thus, that thy work be filled with joy.”

18 And He spoke of the nets of the heart,
which are woven with deeds, thoughts, and
words.

19 “If one strand be broken, the others
shall bear the strain, but not for long;
therefore mend daily.”

20 And He looked upon the faces before
Him, saying, “I tell thee, a people whose
nets are whole shall never lack for the
catch.”

21 That day He blessed the fishermen,
and their nets came up full.

22 And they brought part of the catch to
feed the widow and the orphan.

23 Yeshua rejoiced, saying, “Now is the
kingdom come near to this place.”

24 And the people sat late into the night,
speaking of His words.

25 And the fire in the center of the
gathering did not go out till morning.

Chapter 11 Living Waters

1 And it came to pass that on the next
day, Yeshua sat cross-legged beneath the
omashkooz, and the morning mist rose from
the ground.

2 The people gathered early, for they
had slept little, their hearts stirred by the
songs of the night before.

3 Yeshua lifted a small branch, still wet
with dew, and held it up for all to see.

4 “Behold this branch,” He said, “it

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drinketh in the water given to it in the night. Yet it neither boasteth nor straineth, for the gift is free.”

5 And He spake a parable: “A man went each morning to fetch water from the spring. But on a day when the spring ran low, he cursed it, saying, ‘Thou hast failed me.’

6 Yet the next day, the spring was full again, and the man returned as though he had not cursed it.

7 Verily, I say unto thee, the spring remembereth not his cursing, and giveth water still.

8 So doth the Father give to thee, even when thy tongue hath spoken folly.”

9 Then He began a song in Aramaic:

10 Mayim khayim, mitokh Abba (Living waters, from within the Father),

11 Lo yipasek, lo yisgar (It shall not cease, it shall not be shut),

12 Sh'ma qol Abba, ha'omer bo'i (Hear the voice of the Father, who saith “Come”).

13 The elders wept, for they had known drought, and the song made their hearts tender.

14 And He spake again, “Even as the branch holdeth the dew, so keep ye the gifts of the Spirit. Do not let them run off thee as from a stone.”

15 A child from the Bear clan brought Him a carved cup.

16 Yeshua filled it from the stream, blessed it, and passed it among them.

17 “Drink, and remember this: what cometh from the Father shall refresh the soul as this water refresheth thy body.”

18 Then He healed a woman whose sight was dim, touching her eyes with water from

the cup.

19 And she cried aloud, “I see the leaves! I see the colors of the morning!”

20 All rejoiced, and the sound of their praise was like the call of many birds.

21 Yeshua said, “Let thy praise be like unto this cup—full, and given to all.”

22 And He told them of the feast in the world to come, where no vessel shall be empty.

23 They sat in silence for a while, hearing the water move over stones.

24 Then He whispered, “This sound is the sound of the Father’s mercy—it is always flowing.”

25 And thus the day passed, with joy in the camp.

Chapter 12 The Path I will Walk

1 On the fourth morning, Yeshua told them, “This day I shall give thee a song for thy journeys.”

2 The people leaned in close, for they loved the way His words fell like rain on dry ground.

3 He began in a low voice:

4 B'orcha e'elekh, Abba, b'chol yomai (In Thy path I will walk, Father, all my days),

5 Tachat ilan, al yad mayim, b'kol sha'ot (Under trees, by the water, at every hour),

6 Atah ori, atah menuchati (Thou art my light, Thou art my rest).

7 The women took up the tune, humming it softly, and the men joined, making the air full of harmony.

8 And Yeshua said, “Sing this when ye are weary, for the tune will carry thee farther than thy feet alone can go.”

9 He spake a parable: “A hunter went

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into the forest without a song, and his heart was heavy.

10 His feet grew slow, and he sat down in sorrow.

11 The next day, he went forth singing, and though the path was long, the song shortened it.

12 For joy in the heart is like wind in the sail—it multiplieth the strength of the vessel.”

13 And He commanded them to teach the song to their children.

14 “For a song is a seed,” He said, “and when planted in the heart, it will grow even in old age.”

15 A man asked, “Master, what if the heart be too hard for the seed?”

16 Yeshua answered, “Then sing over it as rain falleth on stone, until the stone itself be softened.”

17 The elders nodded, for they knew the truth of His words.

18 And that day the people went about their tasks singing, and no one murmured or strove with his neighbor.

19 Yeshua smiled and said, “Now ye see the kingdom among you.”

20 He blessed the food they gathered, and it tasted sweeter to them for the song’s sake.

21 He told them the Father also singeth over His creation.

22 “The wind is His flute, the thunder His drum, the rivers His voice,” He said.

23 The children clapped at the thought.

24 And thus the song was given, and it did not leave their lips for many days.

25 And the tree above them swayed as though keeping time.

Chapter 13 A Tree Grew in a Place

1 On the fifth day, Yeshua rose early, and the people found Him seated upon a flat stone at the foot of the great omashkooz.

2 The clouds had parted, and a shaft of sunlight lay upon His shoulders as a robe of gold.

3 And He said, “This day I shall give thee a parable of the roots.”

4 And He told them: “A tree grew in a place where the soil was shallow, and though it sprouted quickly, the wind tore it down.

5 Another tree grew in deep earth, and its roots spread far and drank from hidden streams.

6 When the storm came, the deep-rooted tree bowed and rose again.

7 So is every soul—if thou sink thy roots deep into the law of love, thou shalt not be moved.”

8 A young man asked, “Master, how shall we deepen our roots?”

9 Yeshua answered, “By holding to what is true when thy belly is empty and thy friends depart.”

10 He continued, “The Father planteth thee in this earth, but thy choice is to send thy roots down or to spread thy branches only.

11 The branch that seeketh only to be seen will wither; the root that seeketh to hold fast will live.”

12 Then He sang in Aramaic:

13 Shoshai b’ahavatcha, Abba (My roots are in Thy love, Father),

14 B’chol ruach, lo emot (In every wind, I will not die),

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15 Mayim setarim mashkim oti (Hidden waters nourish me).

16 The people joined the refrain, and their voices were as the wind in the pine.

17 Then He blessed the infants brought before Him, saying, “Let these be planted in good soil.”

18 A mother asked, “What is the good soil, Master?”

19 He answered, “Where forgiveness is given quickly, and pride is not fed.”

20 He healed a lame man by touching his feet and saying, “Walk as a tree sways—slow, steady, and sure.”

21 The man leapt, and his kin wept.

22 Yeshua said, “Thus hath the Father shown thee His joy.”

23 They sat until the sun passed high overhead, and still the people lingered.

24 And Yeshua told them another small saying: “Better to be unseen in the earth with strong roots, than seen in the air and broken.”

25 And the people understood.

Chapter 14 · Two Brothers

1 That evening, the fire was lit, and Yeshua’s face shone with the glow of its light.

2 He said, “I will tell thee a long story of two brothers.”

3 And He began: “There were two brothers of the Crane clan, both skilled in the paddle.

4 They set forth upon the same lake to fish, each in his own canoe.

5 The elder brother paddled hard to the far side, seeking greater catch.

6 The younger remained near the shore,

content with what the shallows gave.

7 A storm rose, and the elder’s canoe was far from safety, but he had no friend near.

8 The younger saw him from shore, and though his net was full, he cast it aside and paddled into the storm.

9 He reached his brother and brought him back, though he lost all his fish.

10 The elder wept, saying, ‘Thy catch is gone because of me.’

11 The younger replied, ‘My catch is my brother, and he is not lost.’

12 Yeshua looked around the fire and said, “So is the kingdom: to value the soul above the gain.”

13 Then He sang a slow song in Anishinaabemowin, teaching them the words for “brother” and “to return.”

14 The people repeated until the night air carried it into the dark.

15 A woman asked, “Master, is this why Thou art among us?”

16 He said, “I was sent to bring thee back to shore.”

17 And they were quiet, for the truth of it was heavy in their hearts.

18 He told them, “If thou wouldst be saved, thou must also go into another’s storm.”

19 An elder said, “It is hard.”

20 Yeshua answered, “The Father’s love is hard to carry, yet it is the only burden that lighteneth the bearer.”

21 Then He touched the fire with a branch, and the sparks rose like stars.

22 “So are the prayers of the righteous—they rise upward and light the night.”

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23 They prayed together until the fire burned low.

24 And Yeshua said, “Rest, for the storm of tomorrow cannot steal the peace of this night.”

25 And they slept with the sound of the lake on the shore.

Chapter 15 Parable of the Seed

1 On the next day, Yeshua told them a parable of the seed that singeth.

2 “A sower cast seed into his field, and one seed began to sing as it grew.

3 The other plants mocked it, saying, ‘Thy singing changeth nothing.’

4 But the rain heard the song and fell more gladly, and the sun heard and shone more warmly.

5 And the seed grew taller than the rest, for the joy it gave to others returned to it.”

6 A boy asked, “Master, how can a seed sing?”

7 Yeshua replied, “By being what the Father made it without fear.”

8 Then He sang in Aramaic a melody without words, only sounds like the wind and the water, and the people felt their hearts grow warm.

9 He told them, “This is how the earth singeth to the Father.”

10 A man said, “I have never heard such a song.”

11 Yeshua answered, “Thou hast heard it every day, but thy ears were closed.”

12 He taught them to listen to the pine needles in the wind, the loons on the lake, and the crack of ice in the night.

13 “All these,” He said, “are voices in the great prayer.”

14 He blessed a child born the night before, saying, “This one shall always hear the song.”

15 The mother wept with joy.

16 Then He healed a fisherman whose hands were twisted, that he might paddle again.

17 The man sang the seed’s song as he left, and all marveled.

18 And Yeshua said, “Thy healing is complete when thou usest it for others’ joy.”

19 They feasted on fish that evening, and the song was sung until the moon rose high.

20 The light of the moon touched the water, and Yeshua said, “Even the night shineth with His song.”

21 They lay under the stars, and none feared the dark.

22 For the song was in their hearts as they slept.

Chapter 16 Three Fires

1 On the morning of the third day under the great tree, Yeshua rose before the others and knelt with His hands upon the earth.

2 The dew clung to His hair, and when the sun broke through the clouds, it glistened as though He were crowned with drops of light.

3 He said to the gathering crowd, “This day I will teach thee the parable of the three fires.”

4 And He spoke: “A man had three fires to keep in winter—one for his house, one for his family’s lodge, and one for the strangers who came by night.

5 The man tended the first fire well, but let the others die.

6 His house was warm, but his family’s

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lodge grew cold, and the strangers wandered away to perish.

7 Then the man found his own fire dying, for the wood he needed had been carried by the strangers and the kin who had left.”

8 Yeshua paused and said, “He that keepeth warmth only for himself shall soon find the cold in his own bones.”

9 An elder asked, “And how shall we keep three fires burning, Master?”

10 Yeshua replied, “The Father’s breath is in thy lungs—share it, and it shall not run dry.”

11 Then He sang in Aramaic:

12 Esh Abba lo yikhbeh (The Father’s fire will not go out),

13 Ki noten ani et haboker (For I give the morning),

14 U’miten ani et halayla (And I give the night).

15 The people swayed as they sang the refrain.

16 Yeshua turned to the sick and began to lay His hands upon them—those with fever cooled, and those with trembling grew steady.

17 A young mother whispered, “The warmth is in me now.”

18 Yeshua said, “Keep it alive by giving it away.”

19 Then He spoke again: “The fire that is hoarded is soon ash. The fire that is shared becomes eternal.”

20 A child brought Him a bundle of dry sticks, and He smiled, saying, “This one hath learned the way.”

21 The wind shifted, and the sun’s rays fell directly upon the circle of listeners.

22 Yeshua lifted His hands, and the light seemed to linger longer than it should.

23 He told them, “This is the Father’s sign—that the light seeketh out those who share it.”

24 A fisherman wept openly, for he knew he had driven his own kin into the cold.

25 Yeshua placed His hand on the man’s shoulder, and his weeping turned to singing.

26 And the people joined in, their voices rising like smoke into the brightened sky.

27 That day they vowed to keep not one, but many fires.

Chapter 17 Every Tongue Lifted

1 In the shade of the same tree, Yeshua said, “I will sing thee a song of the River that Forgets No One.”

2 And He sang in long, winding melody, both in Aramaic and in Anishinaabemowin, each verse flowing into the next:

3 Nahra d’lo nashiy (The river that forgets not),

4 Maa makizin giwii minjimendam (It remembers all who drink),

5 Kol lashon yitnaseh (Every tongue shall be lifted),

6 B’mayim chayim (In living waters).

7 The song told of a river that saw every traveler, carried their reflection, and kept it until they returned.

8 “This river is as the Father,” He explained, “who keepeth thy image in His heart.”

9 A boy asked, “Even if I wander far?”

10 Yeshua said, “Especially then.”

11 He told them of a hunter who strayed for years, yet when he returned to the river,

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it knew his face.

12 The people marveled, for they had seen such waters in their dreams.

13 Yeshua then said, “The Father’s remembrance is not to shame thee, but to restore thee.”

14 A woman whispered, “I wish to be remembered.”

15 Yeshua answered, “Thou already art.”

16 He healed her of the bleeding that had afflicted her for twelve winters, and her face became as the morning.

17 He said, “Thy reflection is restored.”

18 The people sang the song again, this time without Him leading, and their voices seemed to make the leaves of the great tree tremble.

19 An eagle passed overhead, its shadow crossing them all.

20 Yeshua pointed and said, “The Father also sends messengers who ride the high winds to carry His remembrance.”

21 Then He told them, “Drink of the river in thy heart daily, and thou shalt not be lost.”

22 And the people said, “We will remember.”

23 That night they dreamed of waters that welcomed them home.

Chapter 18 Two Seeds of Light

1 On the following day, Yeshua stood and stretched forth His arms, saying, “This day I will give thee the parable of the Two Seeds of Light.”

2 “A man planted two seeds—one in the open field, and one beneath the shade of many branches.

3 The first grew straight toward the sun,

drinking deep of its warmth.

4 The second twisted in darkness, reaching sideways for what light it could find.

5 When the harvest came, the first bore fruit full and sweet, the second bore none.”

6 He said, “So is the soul—what thou plantest in full light shall grow in strength; what thou hidest in shadow shall wither.”

7 A young man asked, “Master, is the shadow evil?”

8 Yeshua replied, “The shadow itself is not evil, but if thou choose it over the light, thy fruit shall fail.”

9 He picked up a small wild berry from the ground and held it up.

10 “This grew because it sought the sun. Taste, and see what the Father gives to those who reach upward.”

11 They tasted, and the berry was sweet beyond measure.

12 Then Yeshua sang a song of light in Aramaic:

13 Or b'kirbi (Light within me),

14 Lo yikhbeh l'olam (It shall not be quenched forever),

15 Shemesh Abba, hashken oti (Father’s sun, dwell in me).

16 The people joined in, and their voices seemed to draw the clouds apart again.

17 The sun’s beam struck Yeshua, and His face shone so that some shielded their eyes.

18 He told them, “This is the proof of what I say—that when the vessel is open, the light will enter.”

19 He healed a deaf child, saying, “Thy ears shall hear the songs of light.”

20 And the boy laughed, hearing for the

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first time.

21 Then Yeshua said, “Go now and plant thyself where the light may find thee.”

22 And the people went out to the fields that day, singing the song of light.

Chapter 19 Parable of the Circle Dance

1 As the evening came, Yeshua said, “Hear now the parable of the Circle Dance.”

2 “In a village, there was a dance that began at sunset and ended at dawn.

3 All the people held hands, moving as one, each step in time with the drum.

4 One man grew weary and stepped out, saying, ‘I will rest now and return.’

5 But when he came back, the circle had moved on, and he could not find his place.

6 He called out, but none could hear above the drum.

7 He wandered in sorrow until an elder took his hand and led him back into the dance.”

8 Yeshua said, “So is the kingdom—keep thy place in the circle, for if thou leavest, it may be hard to return.

9 But the Father sendeth elders to guide thee back.”

10 Then they danced in a circle there under the tree, Yeshua at the center.

11 He sang in both tongues, His voice keeping the rhythm with the earth itself.

12 The people felt the ground hum beneath their feet.

13 And He said, “When ye dance thus, ye move with the heartbeat of creation.”

14 An old man’s limp vanished as he danced, and all shouted in joy.

15 Yeshua told him, “The circle hath healed thee.”

16 They danced until the moon set, and when they stopped, none felt tired.

17 Yeshua said, “This is the rest that is given when thy spirit moves in harmony.”

18 And they remembered it.

Chapter 20 Thou Art Our Life

1 On the final day beneath the great tree, Yeshua gathered them all, saying, “I will give thee one last song here.”

2 He lifted His face, and the clouds rolled back as if drawn away by unseen hands.

3 The sunlight poured down, striking His brow and His hands.

4 He began to sing in Aramaic, His voice rising until it seemed to fill the whole sky:

5 Abba, orcha gadel banu (Father, let Thy light grow in us),

6 Ki ata chayenu (For Thou art our life),

7 Kol yom, kol layla (Every day, every night),

8 Anachnu shelcha (We are Thine).

9 The people wept openly, for the song pierced their hearts.

10 Then He spoke: “This light is not mine alone—it is thine if thou wilt open thy vessel.”

11 He told them of a woman who hid a lamp under her bed for fear of thieves, and the flame died.

12 “Fear is the thief,” He said, “and it stealeth thy light.”

13 He lifted His hands, and a beam of sunlight seemed to follow the movement, touching each face in the circle.

14 The blind saw, the lame walked, the grieving found peace.

15 A child cried out, “The sun is in me now!”

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16 Yeshua laughed with joy, saying, “Yes, and it shall remain if thou keepest it unshaded.”

17 He taught them to pray in the pure way of the heart, facing the four winds, thanking the Father for sky, water, earth, and fire.

18 They prayed together, and the air itself seemed sweet to breathe.

19 Yeshua said, “This is the way—give thanks for what is given, share what is received, walk in the light thou hast.”

20 He blessed them all, and the sound of the blessing seemed to linger in the leaves.

21 Then He stepped out from under the great tree, and the shadow of it no longer touched Him.

22 They knew He would soon journey on, and their hearts were both heavy and full.

23 He looked back once and smiled, and they saw the sunlight follow Him as He walked away toward the west.

BOOK IV

The Lakes Between the Hills

Chapter 1 Thunder Mountain

1 And it came to pass, that Yeshua led the Twelve and the company unto Animikii-wajiw, and they pitched their camp at the foot thereof.

2 The air was clear after rain, and the cedar smelt sweet, and the rock shone as if newly washed by the hand of heaven.

3 And He said unto them, Abide ye here with prayer; for I go up to the height to commune with my Father.

4 With Him He took Giiwedín-güizhig, the Jes’sakkid, the prophet of the North Sky, and said, Thou shalt behold and testify; for a sign is appointed in this place.

5 They ascended by a path known to the elders, and the wind spake low like a drum beneath the earth.

6 When they were come to the crown of the mount, the day drew nigh unto even, and the west was as embers under ash.

7 And Yeshua prayed, and the prophet watched; and there was silence as of a held breath upon the whole land.

8 Behold, lights moved in the high places of the firmament, even as sparks that leap from a great fire, yet these fell not, neither were they extinguished.

9 And the prophet said, My bones tremble, for I hear as of ten thousand bees, and as of drums hidden in the deep.

10 Then drew near canoes of the sky, whose shapes were as the Megis shell, white and shining; their bellies glowed as the inside of a clam when it catcheth the sun upon water.

11 They moved without paddlers, yet as by the stroke of mighty unseen hands; and the air had the scent of rain and cedar smoke.

12 One stood above them like the morning star, and two kept watch on either side as guardians of a king.

13 And the prophet fell upon his face; but Yeshua touched him, saying, Fear not; for my Father openeth a door that thou mayest look and remember.

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14 The canoes of the sky made no shadow upon the mountain, but cast a brightness downward as a path.

15 Yeshua stood in that brightness; and His raiment was white as froth upon a river-stone, and His face shone as the rising over Gichigami.

16 A voice as many waters spake not to the ears but to the inward man: This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.

17 And the prophet heard it, and his heart became as a drum in a glad dance.

18 Then were seen within the brightness two elders of glory, having the countenance of law and of prophecy, speaking with Yeshua of a journey yet to be fulfilled.

19 Their words were as lightning writ slow, that even a child might read their fire.

20 Yeshua lifted His hands as one that blesseth the four winds; and the canoes of the sky turned as if obeying.

21 A fire came down, not to burn, but to crown; and it rested over His head as the northern lights rest upon winter skies.

22 The prophet said, Master, my tongue faileth; what shall I name these wonders?

23 He answered, Name them as thy mothers would: canoes of the sky, Megis of the heavens, signs that the Giver is near.

24 And the prophet wept for joy, for the names were old and the marvel new.

25 After this, the canoes rose as swans at dawn, and stood afar off like stars that tarry for a last look.

26 Yeshua bowed His head, and the brightness drew inward as a breath returneth to the breast.

27 The wind came again, and the grasses remembered how to sing.

28 Then said Yeshua unto the prophet, Thou hast seen; keep the saying till the telling be ripe. We descend to our brethren who watch beneath.

29 They came down by the path, and the people at the base beheld lights as of fire passing through cloud, and heard the humming as of hidden hives; and great fear and great joy fell upon them.

30 And when Yeshua was come to the camp, His face yet shone; and they fell upon their faces, and some stretched forth their hands and dared not touch.

31 He said, Be of good cheer; for the Father hath shown thee that the world is larger than thine eyes, and nearer than thy breath.

32 He brake bread, and the bread was sweet; He blessed water, and it was as cold song upon their tongues.

33 The children slept without fear, for the mountain had become a friend unto them.

34 The stars kept watch; and the prophet lay wakeful, guarding in his heart all that he had seen.

35 Thus began the signs of Animikii-wajiw in those days.

Chapter 2 Vessels of Light

1 In the morning Yeshua gathered the Twelve and the people and sat upon a flat stone, and the light of the east was upon His brow.

2 He said, Hear now the mystery of light: that ye are vessels of light, and the light is older than the mountains, yet young in every child.

3 No two vessels are alike, yet all are

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wrought by One Hand; the bird is a vessel, and the bee is a vessel; the maple and the cedar, the deer and the man—all bear the flame after their kind.

4 Say not, My vessel is small; for the smallest lamp lighteth a lodge. Say rather, My lamp is His, and I will tend it.

5 And He taught them a poem in the old manner: Light within the leaf / light within the lung; / light upon the path / light upon the tongue.

6 If the heart be drum, / and truth the skin thereof, / love is the hand that striketh, / and joy the sound it maketh.

7 Then He opened a parable: A certain potter had many forms: a bowl for water, a cup for oil, a lamp for night. The child said, Make me as the lamp; but the potter said, Be as I choose, that thy purpose be perfect.

8 In time the bowl kept life, the cup fed flame, and the lamp held dawn for the fearful. Each rejoiced to be itself, and the house lacked nothing.

9 He said, So is it with you: envy not the shape of thy brother; fulfil the shining of thine own making.

10 And He spake of death, saying, When this vessel is shed, the light is not quenched; it passeth as a traveller passeth from lodge to lodge, greeting the unseen kin.

11 Open thine ear within thee: there is a world about thee thou beholdest not; and in that world stand beings of light, even now among you, as elders who keep a quiet watch.

12 The people trembled, and hope blossomed like fireweed after flame.

13 Then Yeshua lifted both hands, and the wind stilled; even the small leaves ceased

their whispering.

14 Thy heart is a drum, saith He; keep it tuned with mercy. Strike it with gratitude; let its beat be peace.

15 If thy drum grow slack with fear, come unto me, and I will draw it tight with truth.

16 A mother cried, My child is gone unto the ancestors; is he lost in that unseen land?

17 He answered, Nay, but nearer than a whisper. For the Father is God of the living; and they that have passed are as torches borne before thee.

18 Call them not back with wailing, but walk the path they light; and ye shall meet in the meadow of the Eternal Morning.

19 Then sang He a song long and low, half in Aramaic, half in the tongue of the people; and it was as a river that remembereth every stone:

20 “Nura b’kirbi (Light within me),

21 Zoongide’ ninda-ode’ (Make brave my heart),

22 Abba, sheken b’gawiin (Father, dwell within),

23 B’mikinaak-aki ningi-bimose (In Turtle-land I shall walk).”

24 The elders wept softly, and the children swayed as reeds in a kindly wind.

25 And He turned to the prophet and said, Bear witness: that which came down as Megis in the night is kin to the light in every breast; fear not the larger lodge of the Maker.

26 The prophet arose and told in measure what he saw; and the people marvelled, yet were not confounded, for the names were their own and the glory was the

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Father's.

27 Yeshua stretched forth His hands toward the four winds, blessing all creatures: the hawk that hunteth high, the beaver that buildeth low, the berry that ripeneth under kiss of sun.

28 He healed that day many that were sick, and some were set free from terrors that had dwelt in their dreams.

29 And He charged them, saying, Walk softly upon the earth, for she also beareth light.

30 Feed thy flame with truth, thy neighbour with bread, thy enemy with prayer.

31 If thou canst not yet love him, keep him in the light till love be born.

32 The people answered, We will keep the light, O Teacher.

33 Then He smiled, and the mountain seemed to smile with Him.

34 They ate together, and the meal was as sweetness after fasting.

35 And the camp rested under the mercy of the height.

Chapter 3 Megis of the Heavens

1 After these things Yeshua tarried three days at the foot of the mountain, teaching by turns poem and parable and song; and the fame thereof went before Him like light upon water.

2 Runners came from villages round about, desiring to hear of the Megis of the heavens; and He spake unto them as a father unto children, hiding nothing, yet speaking in the names of their mothers.

3 He said, Think not that wonder is to amaze only; it is to awaken. If thou wakest

not to mercy, thou hast slept through the miracle.

4 Then He taught the Twelve apart, saying, Ye shall be lamps, not lightning; endure; burn steady; be kind.

5 Let thy counsel be cedar-smoke—sweet, rising, and without sting.

6 Let thy deeds be sun-grown food unto the poor.

7 And He sent them two by two among the tents, that none be left uncomforted.

8 That night a wind came from the west, and the northern lights walked softly as herds upon the sky; and many dreamed good dreams.

9 In the dawn He said, The road calleth; we go toward Miskwaagamiwi-zaaga'igan and, in the latter days, unto Siipisiing.

10 The people answered, We will go with thee while strength remaineth, and when our strength faileth we will keep the fire for them that follow.

11 He blessed the elders and the little ones that would remain; He kissed a child upon the brow, and the child laughed, as one kissed by the sun.

12 They took up their bundles; the drums sounded once, not as for war, but as for journey.

13 Yeshua looked back upon Animikii-wajiw, and the height kept their vow in silence.

14 And they went forth.

Chapter 4 Giver of Rivers

1 As they journeyed westward, they came unto a high valley where two peoples kept watch upon one river, and the river

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grew troubled between them.

2 These were of the Anishinaabe on the one hand, and of the Dakota on the other; and long had there been words between them, sharp as flint, and memories heavy as stones.

3 Runners, seeing Yeshua's company, spake one to another, saying, Behold, the teacher of the lakes draweth nigh; let the councils meet.

4 And they met upon a plain of short grass near a bend in the water, and the elders sat, and the young men stood with spears bound in leather.

5 Yeshua greeted both sides as brethren, laying tobacco upon the earth, and spake of the Father who is the Giver of Rivers.

6 Some were softened, and some were hardened; for grief hath many seasons.

7 He told a parable: Two brothers shared a canoe; the one said, The leak is on thy side, not on mine; and he folded his arms. The river made no covenant with his folly.

8 There was murmuring, and certain hot of spirit cried, Enough of words; the debt of blood standeth!

9 Yeshua said, Debt of blood is a thirst that drinketh its own children.

10 But wrath rose like a wind; and the counsel broke; and the companies drew apart to their own hills, purposing battle at the next dawn.

11 The women wept; the elders covered their faces; and the children clung to their mothers' belts.

12 Yeshua withdrew to pray; and the Twelve watched.

Chapter 5 Children of One Maker

1 Before the light, the men of the Anishinaabe and the men of the Dakota set themselves in order: shields painted, spears dressed, bows strung; and the drum beat as a heart that knoweth only haste.

2 Yeshua came forth alone between the ridges, and stood in the hollow where the river bended like a bow.

3 The mist lay upon the grass as a garment; the birds were silent, and even the water held its tongue.

4 He lifted His hands and cried with a great voice, Peace, children of one Maker!

5 But the lines advanced, for wrath hath a hunger that heedeth not bread.

6 Then did Yeshua step into the very midst, where the first spears would have met; and the Twelve cried out; and the women lifted their hands to heaven.

7 He said, Abba! and a pillar of light descended and stood upon Him, not burning, neither blinding, but making all things plain.

8 The sound of the world fell away; the drum was as though it had never been; only His voice remained.

9 He spake the names of the chiefs of both sides, one by one, with the names wherewith their mothers had called them; and the spears hung in the air as if the earth herself had taken hold.

10 He told the secret grief of each, not to shame but to heal; and wounds in the flesh were knit even as He spake, and old scars cooled as though washed in first snow.

11 He stretched forth His hands to the east and to the west; and the weapons became as stones too heavy for wrath to lift.

12 The young men trembled, for their

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arms were as water; and their eyes were fountains.

13 Yeshua cried, Whom seek ye to kill? Thine own future? Thy children's laughter? Thy father's prayer?

14 He pointed to the river and said, Behold thy mother's milk, which neither tribe made; will ye redder the breast that fed you both?

15 Then He called for the elders of both peoples, and set them on either side of Him, and made a little child stand between His knees.

16 If ye strike, said He, ye strike him who hath not yet chosen thy anger. If ye make peace, ye make him heir to fields untrampled.

17 The pillar of light grew gentle and wide, and lay upon the companies as morning upon grass.

18 Some fell upon their faces; some cast away their spears; some lifted up hands that had long learned only to take, and now learned to bless.

19 Yeshua bade the women come; and they passed among the ranks with water and with bread; and the men received them as from the hand of the Giver.

20 Then Yeshua sang a song of the River of Peace, and the elders of both nations answered the refrain; and the hills remembered their first day.

21 The pillar drew upward as incense; but its brightness lingered, as dew lingereth in shadow.

22 He said, Ye have seen that this power is of my Father; for I called, and He answered in the sight of all.

23 Swear now not by thy anger, but by

thy children; not by thy spear, but by thy seed.

24 The chiefs rose and laid down their weapons before Him, as men lay down sickness when health hath come.

25 He took the hands of the two chiefs and placed them one in the other, and set the child's hand atop theirs.

26 The people shouted as at the first harvest; and the river moved again, for its fear was past.

27 He commanded that the wounded of both sides be tended together; and He Himself went among them, binding with His fingers that which hatred had torn.

28 Many healings were wrought; and a great stillness came after weeping.

29 The men gathered wood not for burning of lodges but for one fire in the midst; and the night knew a feast where a field had been measured for graves.

30 And all knew that the miracle was His; for He had spoken and it came to pass before their eyes.

Chapter 6 Parable of Two Drums

1 When the feast was ended, Yeshua sat between the elders of the Anishinaabe and the elders of the Dakota; and the child slept with his head upon His knee.

2 He said, Hear now a parable of two drums.

3 There were two drums in one village: the drum of war and the drum of council. The first was loud and swift; the second was slow and sure. In the years of folly the war-drum spoke first, and men were swift and foolish. In the years of wisdom the council-drum spoke first, and men were slow

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and safe.

4 Choose ye henceforth which drum shall begin thy mornings.

5 The elders bowed their heads; and the young men bound their pride as one bindeth a wound to make it heal.

6 Then Yeshua taught the order of light in the vessel, saying, Truth for thy wick, humility for thy oil, mercy for thy flame; thus burn, and thy house shall not be darkened.

7 He bade them plant a cedar halfway between the two villages, for a sign that the river had two hands and one heart.

8 He appointed watchers of both nations to keep the tree by turns; and the watchers swore by the life of their children.

9 He blessed the bread and the meat and the wild rice; and the taste thereof was as the sweetness after long bitterness.

10 The women came near and said, We feared to bear sons into a world of spears; now we will bear them into a world of drums of council.

11 He answered, Blessed are ye that make tomorrow.

12 Toward midnight He went apart to pray; and Giiwedín-giizhig followed afar and beheld, for a little space, that same soft light which had crowned Him upon the mountain.

13 In the morning He taught a song of covenant that all might remember:

14 “Abba, sh’lama b’gaw nibi (Father, peace within the water),

15 Zoongide’ b’gaw ode’ (Bravery within the heart),

16 Ehadi anachnu (We are one),

17 Ad olam (Unto the age).”

18 The two nations sang as one voice; and children learned the refrain as they learned their own names.

19 Messengers were sent to tell other villages what the Father had wrought; and fear departed from the paths as smoke departeth when the wind ariseth.

20 Thereafter Yeshua spake a little to the Twelve of things to come, and of Siipisiing yet far; and He smiled as one that seeth home though many days be between.

21 He laid His hand upon the planted cedar, and said, Grow straight, little elder; bind the winds for thy children.

22 He blessed the chiefs, and the women, and the boys that had almost become men, and the girls whose songs would be milk for their children’s joy.

23 The river glittered as a necklace new-washed; and loons called as heralds of peace.

24 The men took up their spears—not for battle, but to carry meat and build lodges; and none was ashamed to learn anew.

25 Yeshua turned His face again toward the west; and many went with Him a day’s journey to lay their thanks upon the road.

26 When they could go no farther, they stood long and waved as children at a father; and the Father of spirits looked kindly upon them from the quiet sky.

27 The prophet kept the record in his bundle, with a piece of bark from Thunder Mountain and a sprig from the cedar of the covenant.

28 The Twelve walked softly; for they had seen wrath laid to rest by a pillar of light and a child’s hand.

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29 And the land itself seemed to breathe easier, as a man whose band is loosened.

30 Thus were the days of war ended in that valley, and the song of peace began to learn the mouths of men.

31 And Yeshua said to the company, We have done the two things appointed unto this book; now keep them in thy heart as two stones of remembrance.

32 One: that the canoes of the sky bowed to the Father, and the mountain bore witness.

33 Two: that the pillar of light stood between brethren, and the river learned again to be a mother.

34 He looked upon each of the Twelve, and upon the women that laboured among them, and upon the children that would become tomorrow; and He loved them.

35 And He made ready to speak further mysteries when the time should beckon.

Chapter 7 — The Light in the Vessels

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua tarried yet in the camp at the foot of Animikii-wajiw, and the people gathered unto Him, men and women and children from many clans.

2 And He sat beneath a cedar whose branches were spread abroad like the covering of the sky.

3 The wind moved gently through the needles, and the scent thereof was as healing unto the soul.

4 And Yeshua lifted up His voice, saying, Behold the vessel which the Creator hath fashioned for each soul.

5 For as no two bowls of clay are alike, so no two bodies are alike; yet each holdeth the

light that cometh from above.

6 And the light is the life of the soul; it is the power by which ye move, and speak, and love.

7 Without light, the vessel is but dust; yet with light, the vessel becometh as the lodge that holdeth the sacred fire.

8 Consider the eagle that rideth upon the wind: is not the light in him also?

9 Yea, and the fish in the waters, and the deer in the forest, and the bee among the flowers—each is a vessel, and each containeth the same fire from the same sun.

10 For the sun is a likeness of the Father in Heaven, sending forth His warmth and His brightness unto all creation.

11 And when a man setteth his heart to righteousness, the light within him is made great; it shineth through his words, and through his deeds, and through the very touch of his hands.

12 But if a man setteth his heart to wickedness, the vessel becometh as one shut up in darkness, and the light therein groweth dim.

13 Therefore I say unto you, guard well the light that is given unto thee, and feed it with all things pure.

14 For even as ye keep a small fire alive with dry wood and with care, so must ye keep the light of thy vessel alive with truth, mercy, and thanksgiving.

15 The heart is as a small drum within thee, keeping the rhythm of thy days.

16 When the drum beateth in joy, thy whole being is in harmony; but when the beat faileth, all within thee stumbleth.

17 Therefore, keep thy heart pure, for out of it cometh the song that guideth thy

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path.

18 And know this also: the world ye see is not all that is.

19 For there is an unseen world round about you, wherein dwell beings of light, even now among us.

20 They stand beside the trees, they walk upon the waters, and they rejoice when the light in thy vessel is bright.

21 Some are as brethren who have gone before, and some are as messengers from the Most High.

22 And when thy vessel falleth in death, the light within thee shall be loosed, to return unto the place from whence it came.

23 But if thy light be bound in darkness, it wandereth without rest.

24 Therefore, be children of the light, and let thy vessels shine as the stars above the lakes.

25 For the time cometh when the Creator shall gather all lights together, and they shall be one great fire.

26 And the people marvelled at His words, for they were as water to the thirsty soul.

27 And they spake one to another, saying, Surely this man is sent from the Great Spirit.

28 And the Midē'wiwin priests that He had called in former days kept these sayings in their hearts.

29 And He taught them yet many other things that day, which are not all written here.

30 But the people departed, each to his lodge, with the light of joy in their eyes.

31 And Yeshua prayed over the camp, that every vessel might be kept from smoke

and soot.

32 He said, If thy neighbour stumbleth, set thy lamp in his window until he find his door.

33 If thou findest a stranger in night, give him thy wick for a little space, and ye shall both see the way.

34 A youth cried, Master, I am small. And He answered, Small lamps have guided many boats to shore.

35 Be as the firefly—little in body, mighty in night.

36 Then He blessed the watchers, that their eyes fail not; and the mothers, that their patience be bread unto their houses.

37 He laid His hand upon the cedar and said, Grow tall, little elder; be roof to the birds and sermon to the proud.

38 The Twelve kept silence, for they perceived that the unseen world stood round about as a council of light.

39 The people sung softly, and their song was as dew upon dawn.

40 Thus was the doctrine of the vessels established among them.

Chapter 8 — The Parable of the Two Lodges and the Long Wind

1 And it came to pass that Yeshua sat in the shade toward the heat of the day, and the people drew nigh to hear.

2 He lifted His voice and spake a parable: There were two lodges upon one rise: the first was tight-bound, the second was fair-seeming but slack of cord.

3 A long wind arose from the west and proved every knot; the tight chords sang and held, but the slack chords flattered and failed; and the people that trusted a pretty

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rope slept in rain.

4 Then came a woman wise in the old way, and she taught them the knot that remembereth; and the second lodge was saved in the next storm.

5 And He said, This is the meaning: bind thy life with truth; for beauty without binding is a garment in the gale.

6 Let counsel be the knot, and humility the cord, and mercy the skin of thy lodge; so shalt thou not fear the long wind when it cometh.

7 A man asked, Master, how know we when our chords grow slack?

8 He answered, When thy patience frayeth first, thy binding is failing; when thy gratitude slippeth, retie thy soul.

9 Then Yeshua taught them to test the knots: Fast one day for thanks, forgive one enemy before sleep, bless one that cannot repay; if thy lodge be at peace after, thy knot is true.

10 The elders marvelled, saying, He maketh a craft of peace as others of war.

11 And He sang a work-song for the cords, half in Aramaic and half in their tongue:

12 “Keshar emet, chazek—(Knot of truth, be strong),

13 Aaniin, nindayaa—(Behold, I am here),

14 Sh'lama bo'i—(Peace, enter),

15 Zoongide' ode'—(Make brave the heart).”

16 They beat the rhythm on rim and staff till the little ones learned the tying by the tune.

17 After these things came two men striving about a landing, each claiming the

old right.

18 Yeshua drew a line with his staff and said, Make ye a third place between, and let it be for guests; for a river is shamed that two sons fight upon her hands.

19 The men bowed, and the quarrel was ended.

20 He healed then a girl who feared the thunder since her father died on the water; and when the next rumble spoke, she laughed and clapped, saying, Animikii singeth for us.

21 Yeshua smiled and said, Fear turned Singer is a strong ally.

22 Toward even He spake a poem: Hold fast where mercy bindeth / Loose quick where pride hath tied; / The Long Wind proveth lodges / The faithful cords abide.

23 He blessed the fishers and the berry gatherers, and the hands that grind the corn.

24 He taught the Twelve apart, saying, Be ye knot-makers among men; tie no man to your will, but to the will of the Father.

25 That night the wind indeed arose; and the camp slept unafraid.

26 In the morning they found one cord loosened on a stranger's tent; and many hands made it sure.

27 Yeshua said, So do with a brother's fault.

28 The prophet wrote the parable upon a strip of birch, to be hung in the council lodge.

29 A loon called thrice, and they took it for an amen.

30 The day closed with thanksgiving.

31 And the story of the Two Lodges became a teaching among the rivers.

32 Children tied practice-knots upon

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reeds, and mothers blessed them.

33 Travellers, hearing, slept gladly where the long wind wanders.

34 The hill kept their promise better than their boasting.

35 And peace tarried in that place.

Chapter 9 The Psalm of the Four Winds

1 On the next day Yeshua said, I will sing you a psalm; learn it as a road.

2 He stood where the path opened to the lake, and the people set themselves in a ring.

3 And He sang with long measure, the elders answering, the children repeating the small lines:

4 To the East I lift my dawn—Abba ori (Father my light);

5 Brush my eyes with morning truth; awaken me to kindness.

6 To the South I bare my hands—Abba chayyai (Father my life);

7 Warm my courage; make my heart a little drum that keepeth peace.

8 To the West I turn my scars—Abba rofei (Father healer);

9 Wash my yesterdays; let memory be honey not poison.

10 To the North I set my face—Abba moreh (Father teacher);

11 Give me wisdom for the snow; keep my word like iron that serveth love.

12 Four winds, bear one Name; one Name fold four winds.

13 Let the reed not spear; let the flint be hearth.

14 Make my steps a soft fire on the earth.

15 Let the widow's lamp borrow from my flame;

16 Let the orphan's bowl find me before

night.

17 You stars, keep watch; you pines, remember me;

18 You waters, carry my reflection to the Father.

19 Abba, sh'lama (Father, peace); Abba, or (Father, light);

20 Teach my breath to speak Thy silent goodness.

21 When I am broken, be my string;

22 When I am proud, be my snow.

23 When I am weary, be my canoe;

24 When I am lost, be my shore.

25 Gather our nations like driftwood to one fire;

26 Let the drum be council, not war.

27 Let the child sleep unafraid;

28 Let the elder finish his story.

29 Send us to Siipisiing by straight mercy;

30 Seal our path with morning songs.

31 The people wept and smiled in one breath; for the psalm fitted their need like moccasin to foot.

32 Yeshua taught them the refrain thrice till even the shyest lips were brave.

33 He said, Sing it at crossings, and the waters shall be gentle.

34 And a wind out of the east rose softly, as if to carry the last line home.

35 That night the psalm walked the camp like a watchman.

Chapter 10 Parable of Borrowed Ember

1 After two days' rest they journeyed and came to a village where the winter had bitten hard the last year, and hearts were spare of hope.

2 Yeshua sat by a low fire whose embers

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were few, and many gathered round.

3 He spake a parable: A poor man kept one ember through a cruel night. At dawn his neighbour came, saying, "Lend me fire."

4 The poor man feared to lose his one ember; yet he placed it on a shard and blew upon it, and gave half his heat away.

5 Both houses kindled; and when the poor man looked again, behold, the ember was greater than before, for the breath of kindness had multiplied it.

6 And He said, So is the kingdom: shared light increaseth; hoarded light dieth.

7 A widow asked, Master, what if my ember be ash?

8 He answered, Bring me thy ash; the Father loveth to remember fire.

9 He touched her hearth; the ash leaped with small blue tongues; and she cried for joy.

10 Then He taught them a craft: Keep a coal in cedar's hollow, carry it at thy belt; thus mercy walketh with thee.

11 He healed a man whose courage had failed since his brother fell upon ice; and the man stood straight as pine.

12 Yeshua sang a small chant to keep the parable in their mouths:

13 "Noten or—(I give light),

14 Lo echsar—(I shall not lack),

15 N'fshi tizmach—(My soul shall grow)."

16 The children carried coals to elder lodges with care, and laughter went before them.

17 A proud hunter said, I need no man's ember.

18 Yeshua answered, Then be a giver; pride cannot outgive love.

19 And the hunter brought dry wood for ten homes and was healed of himself.

20 Near even a squall blew in from the lake; fear rose like geese from reeds.

21 Yeshua stood and faced the water; He lifted His hand, and the squall laid itself like a dog that knoweth its master.

22 All saw it and knew the Father had favoured them.

23 He said, Write this upon thy door: "My ember is for two."

24 A girl traced the words with berry juice; her mother kissed the mark.

25 The prophet bound the tale in his bundle with cedar thread.

26 And they set out on the morrow with many small fires burning in many small hearts.

27 Thus the village learned abundance.

28 And the road ahead seemed shorter.

29 For gratitude is a swift shoe.

30 Yeshua blessed their steps.

31 And the sky kept clear.

Chapter 11 — Discourse of the Unseen Lodge

1 On the seventh day from Thunder Mountain, Yeshua bade them sit in a grove of birch beside a bright stream.

2 He said, Ye have eyes for bark and river, but there is a lodge ye see not, wherein the Father keepeth counsel.

3 In that unseen world stand beings of light, not fashioned of flesh as ye are, yet kin to your breath; some are elders gone before, some are messengers on errands of peace.

4 They rejoice when ye forgive; they stand idle when ye hate; they labour when ye hope; they weep when ye curse thine own heart.

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5 Call them not gods; for there is One; but call them brethren that serve.

6 Then He opened their understanding by a parable: A child thought himself alone in the forest, and fear sought him; but his unseen uncle walked a pace behind, breaking nothing, touching nothing, yet turning wolves aside with his eyes. When the child reached home, he learned who kept him; and his fear became thanks.

7 So are ye kept oftentimes by hands ye do not see.

8 A woman said, Master, why see we them not?

9 He answered, Lest ye worship the lamp and forget the Flame.

10 Yet sometimes the Father letteth a window open, as upon Animikii-wajiw, that ye may remember the larger lodge.

11 Then He taught them how to walk with the unseen: Do secret mercies; sing softly at dawn; forgive before breakfast; bless the soil when thou plantest; leave a little bread where none seeth thee lay it; light a coal for a neighbour at night.

12 By these signs the unseen lodge draweth near.

13 He healed a boy who cried in sleep of dark rivers; and the boy woke laughing, saying, Grandfather stood by me with a light.

14 The people marvelled, and peace was thick as summer air.

15 Yeshua sang a lullaby of the lodge:

16 "Sh`khina n`gent, orah sovev—(Indwelling Presence, light around),

17 Nibaa b`sh`lama—(Sleep in peace),

18 Abba netzor—(Father, keep)."

19 The elders bowed their heads,

remembering their own elders with sweetness instead of ache.

20 He said to the Twelve, Be doorkeepers rather than captains; open, do not own; guide, do not grasp.

21 Teach men to see without pride, and to not see without envy.

22 If the Father openeth a window for thee, close thy mouth and open thy hands.

23 If He keepeth it shut, trust His weather.

24 Then He set a sign among them: a small ring of stones wherein no meat should be cooked, but only bread broken and thanks given—calling it The Quiet Hearth.

25 Gather there when troubled, said He, and say little; the unseen lodge loveth small words.

26 At even they did so; and a still joy sat among them as a friend.

27 A heron stepped through the shallows without sound, and all hearts understood.

28 Yeshua blessed the grove and the stream.

29 They slept as children after long play.

30 And the morrow was bright upon their faces.

Chapter 12 — The Covenant of the Cedar

1 Word came that two villages strove about hunting bounds; and fear rose that the peace would fray.

2 Yeshua went with the elders and stood between the lines beneath a lone cedar.

3 He said, Bring me a sapling from your shore, and bring me one from yours.

4 They brought them; and He set them

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side by side and braided their roots with wet earth.

5 This is your land when ye are wise, said He; so braided that each root helpeth the other drink.

6 He told a parable: Two hunters tracked the same stag. The first loosed before seeing the second; the second lowered his bow when he saw the first. They followed the blood and found not the stag but their shame. They fed on bitterness and slept cold.

7 In the next season they hunted together and lost no arrow.

8 Then He taught a song of bounds so children would mock war before it began:

9 “Not mine, not thine, but ours to tend;

10 The cedar’s shade to both shall bend;

11 If one be hungry, both shall send;

12 Thus endeth pride, and thus contend.”

13 The children laughed and learned it quick.

14 He turned to the men and said, Swear by thy children, not by thy anger.

15 They swore; and He cut His palm and let a single drop fall upon the braided roots, saying, Let my life witness thy peace.

16 Rain began though no cloud was seen; the cedar drank as an ox at thaw.

17 He healed an old spear wound in a chief’s thigh; the man stood light and young.

18 The chief said, Thy drop is more than our storm.

19 Yeshua answered, The Father loveth small obediences.

20 They set a marker of three stones: one from each village, and one from the riverbed—calling it The Third Stone.

21 He charged them, If ever ye strive, sit

by the Third Stone till anger be ashamed.

22 He blessed the hunters’ hands: Take life clean and spare much; do not make the earth a widow.

23 A doe stepped from the brush and bowed her head; and they marvelled, for her fear was little.

24 The prophet wrote the covenant and bound it with red thread.

25 Toward evening Yeshua spake a poem: Cedar, witness and shade; / Rivers, arbiters made; / Children, mockers of blade; / Peace, the wiser trade.

26 The elders kissed the children’s heads for teachers.

27 Women sang the bounds-song while stirring the pot, and the smell of meat was like forgiveness.

28 The night kept quiet counsel under the cedar.

29 And the land rested from the rumour of quarrel.

30 Thus were their steps made ready for the westward road.

31 Yeshua lifted His eyes toward Siipising and smiled.

32 The Twelve felt the smile warm their bones.

33 The heron flew north across a gold sky.

34 And hope braided itself with memory.

35 So ended the covenant in joy.

Chapter 13 — The Narrow Valley and the Pillar of Light

1 And word came unto Yeshua that two nations, the Anishinaabe and the Dakota, had arrayed themselves in the Narrow Valley, to set battle in order at the rising of

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the sun.

2 The grass of the meadow was bruised with many feet, and the river bent there like a bow drawn to the ear.

3 War-paint shone upon the faces of young men, and the elders' hearts were heavy, remembering ancient griefs as stones remembered old floods.

4 Women stood apart with water and bandages, for sorrow knoweth her duty before she is called.

5 Yeshua came between the two ridges and sat upon a low stone, and the Twelve were with Him, and Giuwedin-giizhig the prophet.

6 Then drew near the chiefs, and each demanded, Of what tribe art Thou, that Thou sittest in the path of wrath?

7 He answered, I am of the tribe that eateth no man's fear, and taketh no man's land by blade; my Father is the Giver of Rivers, and ye are both His sons.

8 They murmured, Words have no shield; old blood asketh for new.

9 Yeshua rose and lifted up His hands, and cried with a great voice that stood still upon the air, Abba!

10 And lo, the sound of the world fell away; birds were silent, and the drum forgot its beat; only His voice abode.

11 A brightness descended, not as lightning that fleeth, but as a pillar of light standing in the midst, and it crowned Him as fire crowneth pine in winter dream.

12 The young men felt their spears as stones, and their bows as green branches too gentle to wound.

13 Yeshua called the chiefs by the names wherewith their mothers had called them,

names of milk and cradle and first laughter, and their knees trembled.

14 He spake the grief of each—how one had buried a brother, and one a son; how winter had taken calves, and famine had taken pride; and none had spoken these things aloud.

15 While He yet spake, wounds closed as mouths after truth is told; hot blood cooled as iron set in snow; and scars remembered a smaller pain.

16 He stretched His right hand toward the east and His left toward the west; and the pillar widened till it lay like morning upon the companies.

17 He said, Behold thy mother—the river—whom neither of you fashioned: will ye redder the breast that fed you both?

18 The elders covered their faces, and the young men wept as children when thunder passeth and they find themselves held.

19 Then called He for a child from the crowd; and a little one came, not afraid, and stood between His knees.

20 If ye strike this day, saith He, ye strike him who hath not yet chosen thy anger; if ye make peace, ye make him heir to fields untrampled.

21 He bade the chiefs draw near; and He placed their hands one in the other, and set the child's hand upon theirs, and the pillar waxed gentle as noon upon water.

22 A voice, not to the ear but to the inward man, went forth as many waters: This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.

23 The chiefs cast down their weapons; the young men loosed their bow-strings; the drums remembered council instead of war.

24 Yeshua took a single arrow and brake

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the head thereof and buried it in the midst; and every man pressed earth upon it with his own hand.

25 He cried, Swear not by thy wrath, but by thy children; swear not by thy spear, but by thy seed; swear by bread shared and wounds tended together.

26 Then commanded He that water and bread be borne among both hosts by the hands of women; and they ministered first to them that had been their fear.

27 He sang a Song of the River of Peace, long and slow, and they learned the refrain, answering, Abba sh'lama b'gaw nibi (Father, peace within the water).

28 The pillar drew upward as incense, yet its quiet lingered upon their shoulders as a mantle not seen.

29 Old men kissed the foreheads of youths not of their lodge; boys brought cedar to the common fire; girls braided grass for mats where strangers sat.

30 The river bent herself and smiled, and loons cried as heralds, and the wind forgot to be cruel.

31 Yeshua said, Let this meadow be called Miskwi-aki-mikwendaam—the Red Earth of Remembrance—for ye have buried an arrow and raised a covenant.

32 He appointed watchers from both nations to keep the center-place, not with spears but with bread and water and a staff of cedar.

33 The prophet wrote the vow upon birch and sealed it with red thread, and hung it upon a pole where all might read.

34 The sun fell kindly; the stars consented; and men slept who had not thought to see another dawn.

35 Thus did the Father end a war by the hand of His Son; and all that saw knew assuredly it was of Him.

36 In the morning Yeshua walked the field and blessed the ground where wrath had lain, that grass and mercy might hide the memory of spears.

37 And He taught the Twelve to remember names, for peace keepeth better by name than by law.

38 Mothers said, Our wombs are eased; we shall not bear to slaughter but to song.

39 The arrow hidden in earth was visited each moon, and children set flowers there.

40 And the tale of the Narrow Valley ran faster than fear and proved stronger than pride.

Chapter 14 — The Bent Bow and the Washing of Paint

1 The day after, Yeshua gathered the young men from both nations in a circle, the elders standing as cedars round about.

2 He took a stout bow and laid it across His knees, and spake a parable: A bow that is ever bent shall break; a bow that is sometimes unstrung shall sing long.

3 A man that liveth always ready to strike striketh his own heart first; but he that learneth the rest of peace shall not miss the mark when mercy requireth strength.

4 He loosed the cord and set it gently aside, and they marvelled that a silence could teach.

5 A youth said, Master, what becometh of our skill, if we unstring?

6 He answered, Turn thy aim to famine, not to flesh; bend thy back against winter, not against thy brother; let thy arrows be

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fish and thy trophies be orphans fed.

7 Then brought He forth a basin from the river, clear and cold, and called them by twos, one Dakota, one Anishinaabe.

8 Wash ye one another's paint, said He; for the face remembereth what the hand forgetteth.

9 They hesitated; pride is a stiff brush.

10 But one knelt first, and water fell crimson and blue together, and men saw how alike were the bones beneath their signs.

11 When they were washed, He anointed their brows with oil of cedar and wintergreen, and spake, Be marked for council.

12 He taught them a work-song:

13 "Unstring thy wrath, O brother mine;

14 Restraining thy bow for bread and pine;

15 If storm should come, then bend in time—

16 But mercy be thy truest line."

17 The song went round till the ridges answered like drums in a far feast.

18 He bade them carry elder men upon litters to the river, and bathed their old scars till laughter woke where groaning had dwelt.

19 Then set He a Trial of the Bow: to hunt no thing alone for forty days, but ever in pairs of the two nations, and to divide without counting.

20 He that hideth meat from his partner, said He, shall find his own belly a witness against him.

21 He gave them reeds to make flutes, that hands once swift to draw might learn to breathe.

22 The youths sat long, cutting holes,

learning to place their thumbs as if upon wounds to heal them.

23 At even they played; and the valley that had learned war learned a tune.

24 The women cast off the garments of dread and took up bright cloth; the little ones slept early from joy.

25 Yeshua spoke softly to the chiefs, Pride is a winter with no wood; humility planteth cedar in autumn.

26 He set a watch at the buried arrow, not to keep men away, but to welcome any man that came heavy with an old story.

27 The watchers listened more than they spoke, and wars ended at that mound without a shout.

28 He taught the Twelve apart, saying, When ye see men put by their paint, put by thy cleverness also, and bring water first.

29 He blessed the river with tobacco and thanks; and the water answered with a shoal of fish that broke the surface as if to kiss the air.

30 The people said, Even the river desireth this peace.

31 Yeshua smiled, Rivers love to run without blood, as throats love to sing without smoke.

32 He bound two arrows into a cross and set them above the Quiet Hearth, that counsel should stand where spears had lain.

33 Night folded the valley like a mother folding a blanket, and none feared dreams.

34 The moon laid a white road upon the water; He called it the Path of Mercy.

35 And many walked it in their hearts till dawn.

Chapter 15 — The Night of the Sky-Fires Remembered

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1 Many from the villages came unto Animikii-wajiw to keep remembrance; for tidings had spread of lights that walked and fire that blessed without burning.

2 Yeshua went up a little way and sat upon a shelf of stone, and the people below made a circle of silence as a lodge without walls.

3 He prayed, and the prophet stood apart, watching as one who knoweth the door.

4 The wind lay down upon the slope, and the clouds drew aside as a curtain in a careful hand.

5 Stars looked near as berries in a child's palm; and among them moved canoes of the sky, their bellies glowing like the Megis shell when dawn striketh the water.

6 They came neither swiftly nor slow, but as by measured paddling of unseen hands, and the air had the scent of rain and cedar smoke.

7 The people saw and fell upon their faces; for their bones remembered older songs.

8 A brightness stood above the place where Yeshua prayed, and in it forms were seen, as elders clothed in morning, speaking as fire writ slow.

9 The prophet cried, The lodge of light is opened!

10 Then fire from above touched the stones about Him, and they shone as though they had learned to keep the day.

11 When He descended, His face was as a river when the sun walketh upon it; and men dared not gaze long, lest their own secrets be seen.

12 He said, What ye beheld is the larger lodge, of which this earth is but the hearth; fear not that it is far, for it standeth round about you as air standeth round a drum.

13 All creatures be vessels; the maple keepeth light as sap, the bee keepeth light as honey, the deer as swiftness, the hawk as sight; and man keepeth light as mercy and truth.

14 Thy heart is thy drum; keep it in tune, for the Great Council listeneth.

15 He sang a psalm and they answered by turns:

16 "Abba, orha (Father, the way), make bright my tread;

17 Keep me a lamp where the elders have led;*

18 Weave me with rivers that run without dread;*

19 Bind me to brothers by bread upon bread.**

20 He told a parable: A man feared the dark and hid his lamp under his bed; the flame died for want of air. He said, "I have kept it safe," but his lodge was cold. Another set his lamp upon a stone; thieves came in shame and left with warm hands.

21 So set thy light where it may be of use, and fear shall be ashamed to enter.

22 Mothers brought babes to pass beneath His hands as under a doorway; He blessed them, saying, Grow tall in gentleness.

23 He laid palms upon old men, and their eyes remembered far springs without pain.

24 He looked upon the mountain and called it Ode' Akiwenzid—the Heart of the Elder—because it kept counsel and returned it without boasting.

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25 The canoes of the sky ascended as swans; and the last light waited upon the tip of the peak as a tear waiteth upon its edge.

26 He taught the prophet to speak sparingly, for wonder is a drink that should be sipped, lest men choke for greed.

27 The people sat late without fire, warmed by what they had seen.

28 A heron cried once from the dark, and it was as an amen.

29 Yeshua said to the Twelve, Say little of shapes, much of mercy; for men love to chase stars and forget neighbours.

30 They kept that word, and it preserved the camp from proud tales.

31 In the morning He hid His brightness in humility, and the children climbed upon His knees.

32 He told them the sky hath room for their laughter.

33 He gave them white stones from the slope and said, Remember peace when thou see'st this shine.

34 They kept the stones as treasures in small pouches.

35 And the mountain kept their footprints as a book.

Chapter 16 — The Little Drum and the Order of Prayer

1 Yeshua gathered the people under a broad omashkooz (elm), and the shade thereof was as a tent of kindness.

2 He taught them the true order of prayer, saying, Begin with thanks, for thanksgiving openeth the door; continue with truth, for truth cleanseth the floor; end with mercy, for mercy spreadeth mats for guests.

3 Face the four winds by turns, not as to worship them, but to remember the Father's gifts from every quarter.

4 He bade them lift the left hand for remembrance, and the right for hope; and to touch the breast, saying, My heart is Thy drum.

5 Then He sang a long song and they learned it as a path:

6 "Abba b'mizrach—(Father in the East), wake me to light;

7 Abba b'darom—(Father in the South), warm me to courage;*

8 Abba b'ma'arav—(Father in the West), sweeten my memory;*

9 Abba b'tzafon—(Father in the North), strengthen my counsel.*

10 Let my little drum keep honest time;

11 Let my words be bread, not stones;

12 Let my anger be a broom and not a spear;

13 Let my labour be song and not complaint."*

14 He taught them to place sun-grown food upon a small stone, blessing it before eating, saying, Light fed this; let it feed our light.

15 A youth said, Master, my drum beat is crooked.

16 He answered, Trim the wick of thy thoughts: cease from mockery three days; bless thy enemy each morning in thy heart; and thy beat shall find the Father's foot.

17 He laid hand upon the youth's breast; and the pulse took up a steadier tale.

18 He spake a parable: Two men built lodges; one tuned his drum each moon, and guests knew his door by the joy within; the other left his drum to dust; his children

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forgot to dance.

19 The first grew old with friends; the second grew old with opinions.

20 Mothers asked the rule for children; He said, Make their bodies weary with honest work and their minds merry with honest story; then will prayer be sweet as sleep.

21 He set a ring of seven stones and called it Makwa-oodaapin—the Bear’s Seat—where any man might sit to confess without shame.

22 He promised, Whoso confesseth at the Bear’s Seat I will meet with kindness; for truth seeketh a lap to climb upon like a child.

23 Elders spoke of old wrongs; young men of hidden fears; and none despised; and the ring became a well.

24 He taught the Twelve to receive confession as water receives a thrown stone—making circles, not wounds.

25 He blessed the women’s hands, saying, Ye keep the camp in tune; when ye forgive, drums across valleys strike together.

26 Then He gave a closing chant all could carry while walking:

27 “Abba, n’sa or—(Father, lift the light);

28 Sh’lama b’kirbi—(Peace within me);

29 Zoongide’ nindo-de’—(Make brave my heart);

30 Netzev b’emet—(Stand me in truth).”

31 They repeated till the trees seemed to move their leaves in time.

32 He smiled as rain before sun.

33 The day was healed of haste.

34 Night came without sharp corners.

35 And the camp lay down as a single

breath.

Chapter 17 — The Hidden Spring and the Lifting of Stones

1 They passed into a thirsty country, and waters were few, and tongues cleaved like broken reeds.

2 Murmuring rose as mist from a dank hollow; for men remember thirst sooner than song.

3 Yeshua halted them by a field of flat stones, uncomely to the eye.

4 He said, There is a spring under a burden, as often as there is mercy under pride.

5 He knelt and lifted one stone as a mother lifteth a sleeping child; and beneath it the earth darkened, and a trickle appeared.

6 He bade others lift stones nearby, slowly and with blessing; and lo, the trickles met as cousins and became a stream.

7 So doth the Father wait beneath thy heaviness, said He; lift with prayer, and waters will agree to be one.

8 He told a parable: A man carried a pack of stones for the memory of wrongs; his back grew crooked and his eyes low. A child asked, “What be these?” He answered, “My reasons.” The child said, “Throw me one; I will skip it upon the river.” And joy began to skip with it.

9 The people laughed and wept, and they cast small stones into the new stream for the sake of old reasons.

10 He sang a spring-chant:

11 “Lift slow, bless low;

12 Stone off, stream grow;

13 Pride down, thanks flow.”

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14 They drank, and their faces were made soft again.

15 He healed a woman whose milk had failed for fear; and her breast remembered its work.

16 He blessed the field of stones, naming it Nibi-inaabandam—Water Revealed—so that travellers after might lift burdens with hope.

17 He set boys to carry water to elders, and girls to plant willow slips; and the dry place began to draw green like a thought becoming deed.

18 He warned the Twelve, Judge not the unlovely place; springs love to hide in such, as wisdom loveth to dwell with the humble.

19 Night found them with full skins and light hearts; and stars made little rivers across the sky.

20 In the morning, birds argued gladly over the new bank.

21 The people went their way singing the lift-slow song.

22 And thirst was remembered as teacher, not enemy.

23 Yeshua smiled and said, So be it with all thy sorrows.

24 They believed Him, and hope walked at their elbow.

25 The stream accompanied them a while and then turned home, as friends rightly do.

26 He blessed it at the parting.

27 And it answered with a quick bright run over stones, as if clapping.

28 The road shortened for many.

29 And none grudged the labour of lifting.

Chapter 18 — The Feast of One Fire

1 They came to a village wary of strangers, lean from a long winter; doors had learned to shut too soon.

2 Yeshua sat in the common place and kindled a small blaze; and the fire looked little among many lodges.

3 He said, Bring what ye have: a handful, a corner, a remnant; trouble not for shame, for the Father loveth crumbs when they consent to be bread.

4 Some brought bones for broth; some, a last onion; a child, three berries saved against himself.

5 He blessed all, not for size but for courage, and cast them into one pot.

6 He spake a parable: Three houses kept three fires, and each feared the other's smoke. Famine entered one by one, proud and thin. A widow opened her door and said, "Let there be one fire." Famine found the door too crowded to get in.

7 The people smiled through tears; and the pot began to speak a sweet steam.

8 He appointed The Quiet Hearth—a ring of stones where no barter should be named, only thanks.

9 He bade the proud hunter sit first; humility is a broth that mendeth strong men quickest.

10 The pot went round; none measured, yet all were measured by joy.

11 Yeshua sang a table-psalm:

12 "Bless, O Abba, what is small and brave;

13 Knit our scraps to robes that save;

14 Make one fire for many days;

15 Turn thin thanks to thickening praise."

16 He told the women, Ye are the

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governors of feasts; ye can make hunger a guest rather than a thief.

17 He blessed a child who gave his berry; the child forgot the taste but remembered the warmth forever.

18 He sent bowls to shut doors by children's hands; bolts lifted, and eyes peered out, and laughter made neighbours.

19 He set aside a portion for travellers not yet come; and ere the pot cooled, travellers came.

20 The Twelve served last and ate with honest hunger; for shepherds should know the grass by taste, not by report.

21 He taught a refrain for future want:

22 "One fire, one bread, one thanks."

23 They repeated till prudence and generosity knew each other by sight.

24 At even He broke a little loaf and hid it near the gate, for angels love to eat where none seeth them fed.

25 The village slept with doors only leaning, not locked.

26 Dreaming was fat that night, and fear thin.

27 In the morning, kettles remembered how to sing.

28 The hunters took less pride and more counsel.

29 The old unbent enough to reach the ground and bless it.

30 Yeshua smiled as a baker at a well-risen loaf.

31 He named the feast Ishkode-bimaadiziwin—Life from One Fire.

32 The prophet wrote

BOOK V

The Road of the Buffalo

CHAPTER I Two Fires Burning

Yeshua entereth the great plains, and teacheth of the path of peace among many tongues.

1 And it came to pass, after the snows were melted in the east, Yeshua and they that followed Him set their faces toward the west, even toward the wide prairies and the many lakes that are in the lands between the rising and the setting of the sun.

2 And with Him were the Midē'wiwin whom He had called, and the Jes'sakkid, and certain of the women who had ministered unto Him from the beginning of His journey.

3 And the people of the villages wondered, for never had they seen men from so far a distance, speaking the tongues of the east and of the islands in the great water.

4 And Yeshua spake unto them by the riverside, saying, Behold, the Maker of all hath not left Himself without witness in the earth; for the winds bear His voice, and the waters shew His face.

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5 Every path of peace is as a river; if ye walk therein, it shall lead thee to the Great Sea. But the path of strife is as a burning hill, and they that climb it shall have no rest for their feet.

6 And He sat upon the earth, and gathered the children unto Him, and took a branch from a willow tree, and with it He drew a circle in the dust.

7 And He said, Lo, the circle hath no end, and the life of man is even so; for ye come from the breath of the Father, and ye return unto Him.

8 And a certain elder of that place, whose name was Mashkode-bizhiki, which is to say Buffalo of the Plain, said unto Him, Many nations are here, and they speak not the same tongue; how then shall they dwell together in peace?

9 Yeshua lifted His hand toward the sun, and said, Doth the sun speak one tongue unto the deer, and another unto the eagle? Nay, but all alike receive his light.

10 So likewise the Father sendeth His light upon all, and it is the light within thee that maketh peace possible, if thou quench it not.

11 And He told them a parable, saying, A man found two fires burning upon the plain; the one was small, and the other was great. And the man took a stick and lit it at the small fire, and carried it to the great, and both burned the brighter.

12 Even so, when a small nation cometh unto a great, and they share of their light, both shall be the warmer; but if they strive to quench one another, darkness shall cover them both.

13 And many of the elders nodded at His words, for they perceived that He spake of the quarrels between the nations.

14 And He walked among the lodges, blessing the sick, and anointing the heads of the little ones with the oil of the sunflower.

15 And there came unto Him a hunter from the south, who had been wounded by a spear, and Yeshua laid His hands upon the wound, and the flesh was made whole in the sight of all.

16 Then was there great murmuring among them, saying, Surely this is He of whom our grandfathers spake, the bringer of peace, the walker upon the waters.

17 And Yeshua tarried with them three days, teaching them by the river and in the lodge, and in the open field beneath the stars.

18 He spake unto them of the Mishi-ginebig, the great serpent of the deep waters, and of the power of the Maker who setteth bounds that it may not pass; and He likened the Maker's law unto a lodge that keepeth out the snow and the wind.

19 And on the third day, He rose early

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before the sun, and went out alone into a meadow where the dew lay heavy, and prayed unto His Father.

20 When He returned, His countenance was as one refreshed, and He said unto them, The journey westward must continue, for there are yet many who wait for the words of life.

21 So they took up their packs and their walking-sticks, and the women gathered the food, and they set forth into the wide plain, where the wind goeth unhindered, and the hawks wheel in the bright air.

CHAPTER 2 Peace My Daily Meal

Of the straight path upon the prairie, a song of walking, and the mending of tongues.

1 And they went forth into the wide places, where the wind goeth unhindered and the grass is as a sea without shore.

2 The sun walked with them by day, and by night the great wheeling host of lights kept their watch.

3 Yeshua said, Behold the straight path upon the prairie; for the proud heart seeketh hills to be seen, but the wise heart loveth the level road that keepeth company with the humble.

4 And a youth asked, Master, how shall a man be straight in his going when his feet turn aside after old fears?

5 He answered, Keep a small song and a small obedience; sing it in thy step, and let every step obey it.

6 Then He gave them a song of walking:

7 "Abba, direct my foot;

8 Set truth beneath my heel;

9 Let mercy be my dust;

10 Make peace my daily meal."

11 They sang softly till the steps of many became of one time.

12 And He taught them to set three stones when they rested: one for thanks past, one for counsel present, one for hope to come.

13 He said, When ye differ in speech, lay thy hand upon the middle stone, and speak not of winning, but of finding.

14 There met them men of another tongue; and strife was near, for the memory of hunger sharpened their words.

15 Yeshua stood between and said, The Father made many tongues for praise, not for swords.

16 He told a parable: A man planted seed in two fields; the one heard rain called "nibi," the other heard rain called by another name; yet both were watered and both brought forth.

17 Therefore judge not the Name by thy syllables, but by the bread it bringeth forth.

18 He laid His hand upon a child that stammered, and the tongue was loosed; and both villages marvelled.

19 Yeshua said, Behold, a healed tongue speaketh for two.

20 He blessed their elders, and anointed the palms of the women with oil of sunflower, that labour be sweet.

21 And a man lame in one foot cried out; Yeshua touched the tendon, and it sang as a bow-string tuned; and he leaped as a deer finding water.

22 Toward even He set a Quiet Hearth

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in the midst, and none spake loudly there.

23 The strangers brought coarse bread; His own brought broth; and the pot taught a new tongue called Enough.

24 Yeshua drew a small line in the dust and said, Let no man step across this line with boasting; let him step with thanksgiving only.

25 And pride grew bashful and sat down.

26 He taught the Twelve, Be interpreters in deed; when words fail, wash feet, and bread shall translate all.

27 A hawk wheeled above them, and He lifted His eyes, saying, Learn of the hawk: it speaketh to none, yet all understand.

28 The wind laid down for a space, and they heard the grass speak as water.

29 Children carried bowls; old men forgot to be stern.

30 He bade them mark the road with plaited grass, that the weary after might find shade of memory.

31 And He set watchers of peace, not with spear, but with reed and song.

32 The strangers slept near; the fear between their lodges melted as frost under sun.

33 Yeshua prayed, Abba, make one step many; make many hearts one.

34 In the morning they rose as from one bed.

35 And they went on with the song beneath their feet.

CHAPTER 3 Give Me A Name

Of the mending of names, the cairn of remembrance, and the law of small offerings.

1 After many days they came to a ford where caravans met, and names strove like rams upon a narrow path.

2 Each people loved its own name first, and the other after; and the after was thin.

3 Yeshua sat upon a stone and called for children to gather; He set a bowl in their midst.

4 He said, Give me a name from each lodge; and the children brought shells, seeds, and little carvings to stand for their names.

5 He poured water into the bowl, and the tokens floated together.

6 He said, Lo, the water refuseth no name; so doth the Father.

7 A hot-tongued man cried, My name is oldest.

8 Yeshua answered, The sun is older; yet it boasteth not, but serveth.

9 He told a parable: Two fires contended; the one cried, I am bright; the other, I am warm. A child came and held out cold hands; the boasting fire learned charity and both were praised.

10 He said, Be not bright without warm.

11 Then He raised a cairn on the bank, stone upon stone; and upon each He bade them carve a kindness done by the other tribe.

12 For memory of gifts is stronger than memory of injuries, saith He.

13 They laboured till the sun leaned; and grudges bled away under chisels.

14 A woman brought a cloak for one that had mocked her; the mocker forgot his craft.

15 He healed a fevered babe with water from the bowl of names; and the bowl was called Miskin'igaade—Mercy Floats.

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16 Yeshua taught the law of small offerings: Let the poorest give the first berry, the weakest the first smile; thereby the strong shall not be ashamed to be gentle.

17 He set watchers by the cairn for seven nights to teach the tale to travellers.

18 He blessed the road with tobacco and thanks.

19 The Twelve wrote the names upon bark, that none be lost.

20 He said, If a man forget thy name, feed him bread; his mouth will remember thee.

21 A wind out of the east brought scent of rain; He said, So cometh blessing when names be mended.

22 They ate in common, and the dogs ceased their quarrels.

23 The moon rose and found the cairn like a quiet drum.

24 Yeshua whispered, Abba, lay Thy hand upon these stones.

25 The night answered with easy sleep.

26 At dawn, men greeted one another first by gift and then by name.

27 The ford took their crossings as a mother her children.

28 He taught, Keep thy name light enough to carry another's burden with it.

29 They consented, and their faces widened.

30 The children ran ahead, singing the names like beads.

31 And Yeshua smiled, for beads had become a rosary of peace.

32 He took up His staff, and the company moved as one.

33 The cairn stayed, and kept preaching to the road.

34 Crows on the sycamore cawed amen.

35 And the land learned a little more kindness.

CHAPTER 4 Make Walls of Your Backs

Of the prairie-storm, the sheltering order, and the stilling of the wind.

1 A great cloud rose black from the northwest, and the elders knew the haste of it.

2 The colts of the wind broke loose and the grass lay down as slaves.

3 Women gathered infants; men sought leeward hollows; fear spoke in many tongues at once.

4 Yeshua lifted both hands and cried, Be ordered, and be unafraid.

5 He set them by sheltering order: the frail at the center, the children next, the mothers round, the young men without, and the elders to counsel at the rim.

6 He said to the strong, Make walls of your backs and songs of your mouths.

7 He gave a storm-psalm to beat with the heart:

8 "Abba over thunder, keep our circle true;

9 Lay Thy hand upon the wind; make our courage due."

10 The first lash of rain struck like thrown pebbles; the circle held.

11 A panicked youth would flee; Yeshua caught his wrist and set it on an elder's shoulder; fear learned where to stand.

12 The gust came as a bull; He spoke to it as to a creature that knoweth His voice; and it pawed the ground and turned aside.

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13 He said, The wind is strong, but it loveth order.

14 Lightning wrote crooked letters; He taught them to read: Not wrath, but warning; not hate, but hasten to one another.

15 A tent fell; young men raised it singing; the song stitched what sinew could not.

16 The storm howled thrice and broke itself upon their patience.

17 Then Yeshua stood up in the teeth of the gale and said, Be still.

18 And the wind remembered an older covenant and lay down as a faithful hound.

19 The children laughed, and rain became merely wet.

20 He told a parable: A man feared storms and built walls only; his lodge grew dark. Another learned sheltering order; his door remained kind, and storms taught his children courage.

21 He walked the circle, laying hand upon bowed heads till stiffness turned to rest.

22 He taught the Twelve, When wrath riseth, set men by order; give the angry a task that saveth, and his rage will spend itself as fire upon wet wood.

23 He blessed the four quarters and the cloud's hind part.

24 The west opened; the sun returned with apology upon his face.

25 Birds rose from the grass like scattered beads gathered back to string.

26 He wrung rain from His sleeves and laughed; laughter was a fire none could quench.

27 Mothers unbound their hair and

breathed easy.

28 Men counted no losses save their needless fear.

29 He anointed the rims of the eyes that had wept with cedar oil.

30 He set a staff where the storm had been strongest and called it Makade-jiimaan-anang—the Black Canoe Star—for there the sky had sailed them and not sunk them.

31 At evening they ate bread soggy with joy.

32 He said, Keep this order for quarrels as for storms.

33 They promised; and peace made a tent of their word.

34 Night came clean, and the moon combed the prairie.

35 And they slept as ships in a quiet harbour.

CHAPTER 5 A Flute of Flint

The reed and the flint; a parable of bending and standing; the law of brave apology.

1 On the morrow Yeshua cut a reed by the water and took up a flint from the bank.

2 He held them forth and said, Which is stronger?

3 Men answered, The flint; for it striketh fire and breaketh bone.

4 He bent the reed till it kissed the water and it rose again unbroken.

5 He struck the flint against stone and it chipped itself proud.

6 He said, The Father loveth both, but the day shall declare which thou needest.

7 He told a parable: A prince made a

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spear of reed and a flute of flint; the spear sang and the flute broke; so learned he to ask each gift its nature.

8 Therefore be reed in insult and flint in duty; bend to wrongs and stand to vows.

9 A hot man cried, Shall I bend to lies?

10 Yeshua answered, Bend so far as not to break truth; stand so far as not to break mercy.

11 He laid the reed upon the man's heart and said, Hear thine own breath; let it teach thee time.

12 Then He gave the law of brave apology:

13 If thy word hath cut, seek at once the flesh it wounded;

14 Name thy cut; wash it with thine own tears; bind it with thy change.

15 The strong nodded, for they knew the weight of their hands.

16 A woman who had cursed her sister wept; Yeshua placed both their hands into the water and raised them joined; the water forgot and they remembered better.

17 He taught a flute-song on hollow reed, that pride might learn to breathe:

18 "Low note, slow note, let my anger go;

19 True note, new note, let my mercy grow."

20 Boys learned the holes; old men learned the pause.

21 He healed a wrist that had struck too often; it learned gentleness and found its strength increased.

22 Toward noon He spoke of the bending of law and the standing of love:

23 Law bendeth to lift the fallen; love standeth to guard the weak.

24 If law stand without love, it becometh a wall; if love bend without law, it becometh a swamp.

25 Keep both, as bank and river keep one another.

26 They marked it in bark, lest zeal forget wisdom.

27 He blessed the smiths and the makers of baskets, saying, Your crafts preach these things daily.

28 Children ran with reed-spears against the wind and laughed that the reeds did not wound.

29 Men struck flint for the cook-fire and learned to strike only for warmth.

30 Yeshua sat in the door of the tent and mended a net, and all marvelled that He whose word stilled wind loved small repairs.

31 He said, Kingdoms are mended so.

32 Evening laid its cool hand upon their foreheads.

33 He prayed, Abba, make us supple without cowardice and steadfast without cruelty.

34 Stars consented.

35 And sleep came like a forgiven debt.

CHAPTER 6 The Winter Psalm

First frost; the gathering rule; sending of pairs; the promise of Siipisiing.

1 The wind turned north and the breath of the night had edges.

2 Hoar frost wrote white counsel upon the grass; children read it with their feet.

3 Yeshua said, Winter is a teacher that taketh wages in laziness; gather.

4 He set the gathering rule: three days for wood, two for meat, one for the widow,

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one for rest and song.

5 He appointed pairs for every task, that no man be a lone flame.

6 Two by two they went—one quick, one careful; one strong, one wise.

7 He taught the winter psalm:

8 “Abba of the north wind, harden us for good;

9 Keep our doors for strangers; warm our little wood.”

10 He blessed the mittens and the needles, the snares and the smoke.

11 A girl brought him a torn shoe; He stitched as a mother, and preached as He sewed: let not thy zeal outrun thy soles.

12 The prophet stood at the edge of the camp and looked far, for the line of low blue hills began to show—the foretelling of Siipisiing.

13 Yeshua said, That way we shall go when the teaching here is full.

14 He gathered the Twelve and the companions and divided the road: some to the north hamlets, some to the river bends, some to the lonely lodges where sorrow sits long.

15 To each pair He gave cedar, a white stone, and a crumb from the Quiet Hearth.

16 He charged them, Keep watch for quarrels and for cold souls; light both.

17 A widow without sons received wood as kings receive crowns.

18 He healed chilblains with warmed oil and laughter; men remembered to be boys.

19 He told a parable: A house hoarded heat and died of smoke; a house lent heat and lived on songs.

20 The people wrote it in their breath upon the cold and it froze into wisdom.

21 He taught the mothers to hang a knot of mercy above the latch; whoever untied it must bless before entering.

22 The knots taught hands to behave.

23 He spoke to the young hunters, Spend not all your arrow on the first herd; winter hath a long belly.

24 They brought back meat and humility.

25 He sang at dusk, and frost crystals rang like very little bells.

26 He said, When ye hear this ring, remember the unseen lodge is near.

27 A wolf howled; He answered with a blessing; the wolf went his way with dignity and left the lambs in peace.

28 Firelight painted their faces as an elder paints counsel.

29 Yeshua traced with a stick a far line, saying, Beyond these plains stand the turtle hills, Siipisiing, and beyond them, more counsel yet.

30 He promised, I will leave some of you there with the Jes’sakkid, to keep the hearth.

31 They were glad and sober both.

32 He prayed for bread that remembers to share in lean months.

33 The stars came nearer for cold’s sake and friendliness.

34 He covered a sleeping child and smiled.

35 And the camp breathed as one.

Chapter 7 – The Night of the Great Fire and the Prophecy at Siipisiing

1 And it came to pass, in the days when the snow lay deep upon Mikinakwajiw, which the people of the land call Siipisiing,

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that Yeshua sat among His disciples round about a fire of cedar and pine.

2 And the smoke went upward in the still night, and the stars shone as a multitude of silent watchers.

3 And He had told them many parables that night, and sung to them songs in the tongue of His people from across the waters.

4 And His voice was as a river in winter, deep and slow, and it entered the hearts of all who sat before Him.

5 And it came to pass, as the last song ended, there came upon Him a stillness, and the light of the fire was caught in His eyes, and they perceived that His spirit was taken into a vision.

6 And the men and women who sat with Him whispered one to another, saying, Surely the Master hath gone beyond the veil.

7 And the glow in His countenance was not as the glow of the fire, but as the morning light upon snow.

8 And He lifted up His eyes, and spake with a voice low and strong, saying, Hear me, my beloved, for I am the Peacemaker, the true Peacemaker.

9 Yet a day shall come when a false Peacemaker shall arise upon this land, and he shall deceive many, even in my name.

10 He shall come as a friend to the nations, yet in his heart is the snare of the hunter; and with smooth words he shall bind the people in cords they cannot see.

11 He shall erase my name from the mouths of your children, and they shall forget the sound thereof.

12 And the people were sore amazed and troubled in spirit, saying, Tell us, Master,

who is this that shall come?

13 And Yeshua answered and said, He is one who dwelleth in the fire, for the light that is within you he seeketh to consume; for your light is his sustenance.

14 His eyes are as a flame of fire, for he dwelleth in the flame, and he walketh among men seeking whom he may devour.

15 He is the upside-down crown, the counter-son, the white robe that consumeth light.

16 He is the one that wareth red upon both shoulders, the snow fox, the albino hawk, the false dawn, the ice turtle, the eater of breath, the turner of peoples, the face that cometh after the shaking sky, and the many-voiced man.

17 And great fear fell upon them that heard.

18 And one asked, saying, Will he come to this continent?

19 And Yeshua said unto them, He shall come, and blood shall be upon the land from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof; and he shall set up his throne upon the dust of the earth.

20 And they said, But, Master, thou art here with us now.

21 And He said, Even I must depart, for my time in this vessel hath an end; but I shall return. Yet what shall I return unto? A world in bondage, that knoweth not it is bound.

22 A world feeding the fire of this false one, giving unto him the light of their eyes, the breath of their spirit, the strength of their days.

23 And He drew with a stick in the snow, making a line. This is today. Then He

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made a mark behind it. This is many days past. And a mark before it. This is many days hence.

24 This is the gift of my Father unto me, to see that which was and that which shall be.

25 They said, How shall we know when thou hast returned?

26 He said, Ye shall not, for ye shall be gone from this world; but I shall be born again into it.

27 As the flower breaketh forth from the earth in the spring, so is the soul clothed again in flesh, for there is one way in and one way out of this world.

28 There are worlds within worlds, and worlds without; there are worlds standing among you now which ye see not; yet they see you, and I see them.

29 When ye pass from this vessel, ye shall behold them as I do now.

30 And He took a stick and held it before the fire, saying, A stick without fire is but wood; yet in the flame it burneth bright. This false one is as the stick without fire, and ye are the fire he seeketh.

31 Even now he walketh in another land, wearing my likeness; but the day shall come when he will set his foot upon this land, and great shall be the desolation.

32 And the disciples kept these words in their hearts, though they understood them not fully.

33 And the fire burned low, and the snow fell silently, and they knew the night was holy.

Chapter 8 – The Prophecy of the Man from the East

1 And it came to pass, after Yeshua had spoken to them of the lying one who would come, that the fire burned low and the wind turned from the north, bringing with it a deep stillness over Siipising.

2 The disciples leaned forward, for they saw in His face that more was yet to be spoken.

3 And He lifted His hand toward the east, where the stars were as grains of sand upon a dark shore, and He said, Hear me, my friends, for I tell you of another who shall come long after I have gone from among you.

4 The world will not accept him, as the world has not accepted me, yet he shall be a Prophet as I am a Prophet, bearing the truth without shadow.

5 The lying one will hate him and will wage war against him, for the voice of truth is a spear to the heart of the deceiver.

6 This man shall be the Chief White Thunderbird, a great leader who brings the voice from above to the people of the earth.

7 From the place where the Sun wakes will come a man clothed not in gold, but in truth; his tongue will cut falsehood as a knife cuts the skin from the deer.

8 His people shall gather as rivers gather in the lake, and the words he carries will be as clear water, yet strong enough to pull down the stone faces.

9 This one will close the mouths of many liars and open the ears of those who hunger for the Great Spirit's voice.

10 He will prophesy of the lying one, naming him Two Rivers.

11 Then Yeshua's voice grew deep and grave, and He spake again, saying, In a time

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far from this day, across the sunrise waters, the Great Spirit shall give His word to a man whose heart is clean and whose tongue speaketh only truth.

12 His people shall bow to the earth, not to stones nor to carved faces, but to the One who made the sky, the rivers, and the breath of man.

13 They shall wash their hands, their faces, and their feet before speaking to the Great Spirit, for their prayer shall be as pure as spring water.

14 They shall fast when the days are long, give food to the hungry, care for the orphan, and keep no idol in their homes.

15 Their gathering shall be one circle, no man above another, all turning their faces to the same point under the same sun.

16 They shall guard their tongues from lies, their eyes from evil, and their hands from injustice.

17 They shall speak of peace, yet stand as warriors when evil riseth, and they shall hold the Great Spirit's word as their shield and their guide.

18 They shall call their path the straight trail, for it leadeth from the first breath to the last without turning aside to the crooked ways of the deceiver.

19 And Yeshua said, Hear me, my friends, and remember these words, for they are for a people yet to come after many lifetimes, when your grandchildren's grandchildren have returned to the dust.

20 A man shall rise in the far eastern lands where the sun first toucheth the earth; he shall know neither the scrolls of the learned nor the idols of his fathers.

21 Yet the Maker of all shall place His

voice in the man's heart.

22 The people who follow him shall bow their foreheads to the earth in honor of the One Spirit, and they shall do this not once, but many times each day.

23 They shall wash their hands, faces, and feet before speaking to Him, that their prayer may be clean.

24 They shall turn their faces to one place, always the same place, though it be far from their homes.

25 They shall fast through the long days, giving food and silver to the poor.

26 Their gathering shall be a great circle where the leader and the lowest man stand shoulder to shoulder.

27 They shall keep no carved faces, no painted spirits, no stone idols, for they shall know the Great Spirit cannot be captured by hand.

28 Their words shall be as a river flowing from the mouth of the man who first heard the voice, and they shall guard that river so that no lie may pollute it.

29 Mark this: their path shall be straight as the flight of an arrow, and their law shall be as binding as the knots in a strong net.

30 They shall call the One Spirit by a name you have not heard, but He is the same Maker who giveth you breath.

31 When ye hear of a people who live by these signs, know that the words I have spoken are true.

32 And He added softly, For they shall know the truth about how I came into this world.

33 Then Yeshua lowered His hand, and the fire popped and crackled, and no one spake, for the weight of His words pressed

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upon them as snow upon a pine.

Chapter 9 — The Parable of the Flower and the Unseen Meadow

1 After He had spoken of the man from the East, they sat long in silence, and the snow whispered upon Siipisiing like sifted flour.

2 Yeshua drew near unto the fire and took in His hand a frost-bitten stalk that yet held a withered blossom.

3 He said, Behold the flower: men say, It is dead; but I say unto you, it hath only laid aside its robe.

4 For the meadow that feedeth it is not only in summer seen, but abideth also under snow.

5 When the warmth returneth, the hidden meadow calleth; and the root answereth from beneath.

6 So is the soul of man: it casteth off a garment, and men call it death; yet the soul heareth the meadow that is unseen and ariseth to it.

7 Then He brake the dry head between His fingers, and the seeds fell soft upon the white ground.

8 He said, Count these, if thou canst; every seed is a door.

9 The Father keepeth the keys; He openeth, and no man shutteth; He shutteth, and no man openeth.

10 Marvel not that ye shall be clothed again; for what seed is sown bare that riseth not changed?

11 And He told a parable: There was a child that dwelt beside two meadows—one green, one white.

12 In summer he played where bees sang; in winter he thought, This is the end.

13 An elder said, Nay, this is the same field resting; lie down upon it and listen.

14 The child laid his ear to the snow and heard water talking under ice, and roots making quiet roads.

15 Then he knew the field lived, though his eye called it dead.

16 Yeshua said, Lie ye down upon thy sorrow and listen; the Unseen Meadow speaketh under it.

17 Fear not the shedding of thy robe; the Robe-Maker waiteth in the next lodge.

18 A mother cried, My little one is gone—shall I see him?

19 He answered, Thou shalt; for love is a path that doth not lose itself in winter.

20 When thou layest down thy vessel, thou shalt rise where his laughter walketh.

21 Then He sang a low song for them that mourn:

22 “Abba, keep the root in snow;

23 Call the seed when Thou wilt call;

24 Make our winter meek and slow;

25 Raise us robed at Thy spring’s call.”

26 The people wept softly and were comforted with a strange sweetness.

27 He gathered the seeds in His palm and cast them wide upon the drift.

28 So cast ye kindness into cold hearts, saith He; ye know not which day the thaw shall serve thee.

29 The Jes’sakkid wrote the parable upon birch, and the Twelve learned the song as men learn breathing.

30 Yeshua lifted His hand toward the hills: Behold Siipisiing—turtle sleeps not dead, but hid.

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31 So shall the nations sleep awhile; yet I will call, and they shall answer.

32 He blessed the mourners and the watchers of the night.

33 The fire made little doors of light upon the snow.

34 The stars drew near as elders who approve.

35 And peace lay down among them like a child.

Chapter 10 — The Stick and the Fire, and the Name of Two Rivers

1 Yeshua took up a straight stick of birch and held it where the flame ran blue.

2 He said, A stick without fire is wood; a stick in the fire is a message.

3 The lying one is as a stick with no flame; he seeketh thy light to burn his darkness bright.

4 Give him not thy ember, lest his torch become thy night.

5 He set the stick aside till its glow faded, then returned it to the coal; it woke and shone.

6 So is the soul that draweth near unto prayer: a little turning, and light returneth.

7 He wrote in the snow with the point of the stick, and steam rose from the line.

8 Mark this sign, saith He; for the deceiver is called Two Rivers.

9 Because with one stream he flattereth, and with the other he stealeth;

10 With one he blesseth with tongue, with the other he bindeth with cord unseen.

11 He speaketh peace, yet he loveth tribute; he promiseth light, yet he eateth lamps.

12 He is an upside-down crown: he

would be head by unseating heads; he is a counter-son: he would be heir by devouring sons.

13 He is a white robe that consumeth light, for he reflecteth to himself what should warm the people.

14 He weareth red upon both shoulders, for he carrieth the blood of many as honour.

15 He is snow fox for cunning, albino hawk for proud watching, false dawn for borrowed glow, ice turtle for hard cold slowness, eater of breath for tyranny, turner of peoples for confusion, a face after the shaking sky for opportuning, and many-voiced man for deceit.

16 Then He taught them guardings for the vessel: If thine eye hunger for vanities, fast from sight three days;

17 If thy tongue haste to boast, fast from words till sunset;

18 If thy hands itch to grasp, carry water for elders;

19 If thy feet run to quarrel, sit at the Quiet Hearth till peace send thee.

20 Keep the ember thine own, yet warm the stranger by thy flame;

21 Share heat, not worship; give bread, not bondage.

22 A youth asked, Master, how shall we know the voice of Two Rivers?

23 He answered, He loveth crowds more than widows; measures victory by noise; asketh gifts for himself to "give to God."

24 He buildeth high stones to hide the poor; calleth shadows substance and substance shadow.

25 He despiseth small obediences and flattereth grand promises; he feareth quiet, for quiet receiveth truth.

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26 He laugheth little and never at himself; he prayeth loud but not long after the Amen.

27 Then He gave a counter-sign for the brethren: Seek the low door; mend small nets; wash hidden feet; sing soft at dawn.

28 Where these are, there am I; where these are not, flee the trumpet and the trap.

29 He thrust the birch again into the coals and drew a circle of light upon the snow.

30 Stand within such circles, O my friends; for prayer is a fence fire cannot leap.

31 The Jes'sakkid held the juniper staff over the flame, and its scent was as high air in their lungs.

32 Yeshua said, Juniper remembereth heights; let remembrance make thee hard to buy.

33 They answered, We will keep our ember and share our warmth.

34 He blessed them, and the blessing stood as a wall without stones.

35 And night moved on like a great slow river, harmless.

Chapter 11 — The Charge to the Jes'sakkid and the Twelve

1 When the seventh night was full, Yeshua called the Jes'sakkid and the Twelve into the inner ring by the fire.

2 The snow stood about them as a white council.

3 He said, Hear the order that shall keep you when I go toward the south.

4 Giuwedin-giizhig, thou shalt keep Siipising: be winter's friend and spring's herald;

5 Open thy lodge to the widow; close it

to pride.

6 Ogimaa-bines, be wing for messages; let no quarrel sleep unvisited.

7 Zaagi-idiwin, bind the hurt with cedar words; teach men the knot that remembereth.

8 Mashkiki-inini, heal with root and blessing; mix not potion with lie.

9 Bimose-inini, walk the far loops; bring the slow ones home by laughter.

10 Waasamoog, light fires early; watch their smoke for lonely souls.

11 Ozaawaa-bineshiinh, teach children to mock war with strong songs and ready bread.

12 Minwaadiziwin, set fairness at the gate; weigh thyself first and find thy thumb upon the scale against thee.

13 Makade-waaboo, brew courage without pride and sleep without shame.

14 Waabishki-makwa, stand as white bear by broken bridges till they be mended.

15 And ye others named among the twelve, take up each thy craft as sermon: nets that do not lie, axes that do not boast, garments that do not wound the poor.

16 Then He set before them the Order of the Lodge: Morning—thanks to the four winds; Noon—bread for the stranger; Evening—counsel at the Quiet Hearth; Night—song for the unseen lodge.

17 Fast one day in seven from noise; feast one day in seven on mercy.

18 Let no child sleep hungry; let no elder wake pointless.

19 He gave them each a cedar splint, a white stone from Thunder Mountain, and a crumb of the One Fire wrapped in bark.

20 With cedar kindle counsel; with the

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stone remember light; with the crumb, feed first thine enemy, and then thy friend, saith He.

21 He marked in the snow a small square and a wider circle.

22 Keep doctrine small and mercy wide;

23 Let the square hold what is needful; let the circle welcome whom God sendeth.

24 He warned them gently: Beware the hunger to be needed; it is a winter that devoureth its own wood.

25 Beware the fear to be forgotten; it is a thief of today.

26 Beware the zeal without listening; it is a river that drowneth wheat.

27 He blessed their hands, their tongues, their feet, their sleep.

28 The Jes'sakkid bowed low and said, I will keep the hearth and the hush.

29 The Twelve set their foreheads to the earth, answering, We will be small fires faithful and long.

30 Yeshua smiled, and the smile warmed the snow.

31 He said, When ye falter, sing the Psalm of the Four Winds; when ye are proud, sit at the Bear's Seat; when ye forget, lift a stone and find a spring.

32 If I be long away, do these, and ye shall know me still.

33 He lifted His hands; the stars seemed nearer than breath.

34 The charge rested on them like a good weight.

35 And Siipisiing took it into its quiet heart.

Chapter 12 — Signs of Truth and Signs of Deceit; the Straight Trail Remembered

1 On the morrow He gathered not only the Twelve, but all who could stand in the cold and listen.

2 He said, I set before you two roads: crooked and straight; two signs: noise and fruit.

3 The crooked road boasteth of speed; the straight endureth to bread.

4 Noise bloweth like chaff; fruit endureth as store for winter.

5 Therefore prove all teachers by widows fed, rooms warmed, grudges buried, children safe.

6 Where these are, truth hath passed; where these are not, truth was only named.

7 He taught Signs of the Straight Trail: Hands washed before prayer, not as pride, but as courtesy to God;

8 Faces turned one way, not as stone, but as remembering;

9 Tongues kept from lies; eyes from envy; feet from trampling the small.

10 Fast when days are long; feed when others faint; bow often, rise gently;

11 Keep no carved faces for worship; keep living faces for love.

12 Call the Maker by a name ye know not, yet He knoweth you by name from the womb.

13 Circle great, rank small; leader shoulder to shoulder with the least.

14 Let law be net, not noose; knot strong, yet open for rescue.

15 Then He set Warnings of Two Rivers again, that none forget: Beware abundance that forgetteth answer; beware pageants that empty cupboards; beware prayers that starve neighbours.

16 If a voice divideth thee from thy

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mother's tears, flee; if a hand taketh bread to build a monument, resist.

17 A man cried, Master, these things are heavy.

18 He answered, So is a newborn; yet who refuseth the weight for joy?

19 Lift small each day; the Father addeth strength to the lifter.

20 He gave them a saying: Better a thin feast with clean hands than a fat altar with dirty heart.

21 He told a parable: Two roads ran to one town. Upon the crooked, heralds shouted and drums argued; upon the straight, travellers prayed and shared crusts.

22 When winter came, the crooked road forgot its own door; the straight knew every latch by love.

23 The people murmured amen, for their bones consented.

24 He taught them a closing chant to remember the East-prophet's people:

25 "Straight trail, clean well;

26 One Name none sell;

27 Hands pure, eyes mild;

28 God's face in the child."

29 He blessed the chant upon their mouths.

30 The wind turned and played with it as with a ribbon.

31 He said, I go soon southward; keep winter as a school, not a prison.

32 When the thaw cometh, let mercy flood the low places first.

33 The camp bowed; and many put away old grudges as men put away cracked pots.

34 He smiled, for cracked pots leak pride.

35 And the hills listened like elders satisfied.

Chapter 13 — The Winter of Many Healings

1 Snow deepened, and cold put its thumb upon the camp; yet joy ran like fire under bark.

2 Yeshua went lodge to lodge with two of the Twelve, and the Jes'sakkid after with juniper.

3 He warmed a child whose breath was thin; the breath grew stout as a drum.

4 He touched a woman whose dreaming feared the dark; the dream learned a lamp.

5 He set a man free from anger that gnawed him in his sleep; the man woke hungry for work, not for quarrel.

6 He blessed a hunter's frozen hands; they remembered skill without boasting.

7 He mended a marriage with three words: I was wrong.

8 He restored a neighbourliness with four: I missed your fire.

9 He healed a village with five: Let us eat as one.

10 At the Quiet Hearth He washed the feet of a proud elder; pride steamed away like frost.

11 He taught the young to rub the feet of their grandmothers with bear-fat and story; pain forgot its place.

12 He lifted a small girl to see the moon through cedar; she said, She smileth at me.

13 He answered, Because thou smilest first.

14 He wrote upon bark the Rules for Winter Mercy: Visit daily the furthest lodge; carry twice to him that asketh once; forgive before soup; sing before sleep.

15 He set a pot to simmer in the

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Jes'sakkid's tent without ceasing; it became known as The Pot That Answereth.

16 Strangers tasted and lost their fear.

17 He gave a word to the men who kept watch at the buried arrow afar: Peace is shy; feed it in quiet.

18 He sent wood to old enemies with children as messengers; reconciliation came laughing.

19 He spoke with the smith of his hammer's temper; the hammer learned to mend plowshares as gladly as to sharpen blades.

20 He asked the women to write lists of forgotten widows; the lists became prayers with feet.

21 He taught boys to carve spoons with patient edges; harsh tongues grew rounder.

22 He set girls to bind books of bark with sinew; memory found a spine.

23 He laid hands upon a singer who had lost his note; the note came home like a dog forgiven.

24 He smiled upon a thief who brought back what he had taken; the thief kept nothing but tears and a new name.

25 He blessed the dead with straight words; the living with kindly ones.

26 He told the Twelve, Miracles are bread; use them to feed, not to sell.

27 He warned them, If wonder maketh thee tall, kneel till thy height be harmless.

28 Snow fell again; the camp answered with song.

29 He taught them to stamp their feet to make warmth for the shy.

30 He closed the day with the Psalm of the Four Winds.

31 The night held them like a good story.

32 Stars drew close; silence stitched the tents.

33 And winter felt shorter by mercy's measure.

34 The people lay down with their quarreling fled.

35 And Siipisiing dreamed of green.

Chapter 14 — The Covenant of Watchers and the Cedar of Remembrance

1 Yeshua called the camp to a council under a sky of hard blue.

2 He set a young cedar between two stones and said, Let there be Watchers of Peace.

3 Not men to lift spears, but men to lift eyes; not men to make laws, but men to remember vows.

4 He chose twelve from among many, of quiet temper and long ears.

5 He gave them staffs marked with notches for listening.

6 He said, Stand by quarrels before they grow teeth; stand by grief before it groweth fangs.

7 If a stranger's shadow lingereth, invite it to fire; if a neighbour's door closeth, knock with bread.

8 He taught the Watcher's Chant:

9 "I see for peace; I hear for peace;

10 My staff is mercy; my law is ease."

11 He set the cedar as Ahtik-ayaawaa—The Place Where the Heart Stands.

12 He bade children bring a stone from each lodge and build a low circle around it.

13 He said, These stones remember thy faces when thou forgettest thy promises.

14 Each family whispered a vow and laid

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its stone with open palm.

15 He told a parable: A village planted a gate and forgot the path; thieves laughed. Another planted a path and forgot the gate; wolves smiled. A third kept both, and slept well.

16 Be ye that third, saith He.

17 He appointed days when watchers should sit at the Quiet Hearth without speaking, that silence might do its craft.

18 He charged women to tap watchers upon the shoulder when pride began to hum; women nodded, for their ears are old.

19 He charged men to carry water to the women's fires; men nodded, for their backs are young.

20 He placed upon the cedar a strip of birch inscribed: Remember mercy first.

21 He blessed the watchers with hands upon their eyes and ears.

22 He warned them, See not too much; hear not too much; let the people love privacy as they love breath.

23 Peace groweth in spaces where no one standeth to trample.

24 He set a little bell of bone to ring at dusk; when it sounded, grudges went to the Bear's Seat by custom.

25 Quarrels grew shy of the bell.

26 He taught the Twelve, Your strength is to make others strong; your honour is to make others honoured.

27 Snow slid from the cedar in a white sigh; the people smiled.

28 They circled the tree singing low.

29 The wind moved once like a nod.

30 He said, When I am gone southward, let this cedar teach in my stead.

31 The Jes'sakkid touched the bark and

felt it warm.

32 Children played quietly within the stones.

33 Mothers' faces softened as loaves.

34 Fathers' shoulders forgot to be shields and remembered to be roofs.

35 And the covenant held like green under snow.

Chapter 15 — The Medicine Man's Vision and the Yellow Vessel

1 Among the Twelve was a man of the Midē'wiwin, keeper of herbs and of dreams, whose sight could reach beyond the days yet born.

2 He had listened to all the Master had spoken, and his heart was heavy with what his eyes had begun to see.

3 For when Yeshua spoke of the crooked one, of the upside-down crown, of the two rivers that stole, his spirit was stirred like a lake before a storm.

4 That night, he walked apart from the fire and knelt where the snow met the dark trunks.

5 His eyes opened, and he saw not the cedar above him but skies unrolled like hides painted with strange pictures.

6 He saw a day when the earth groaned beneath towers of metal, and the air burned with invisible nets.

7 He saw a people whose faces were pale from the glow of false lights, their hearts tethered by cords unseen.

8 And in the midst, he saw the sky blaze as if the sun itself tore open.

9 From that rift descended one who shone with borrowed fire, and the nations cried, Behold, He comes in glory!

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10 But the medicine man felt in his bones: This is not my Master—this is the liar who gathers the heat of men’s souls to feed himself.

11 His spirit trembled, and he covered his face, for the visions came faster than his breathing.

12 He saw another coming—born not from the sky but from the womb, small, frail, wrapped in yellow as a child wrapped against the cold.

13 Light itself clung to this vessel, but the world looked past it.

14 He saw the same one grown, still clothed in yellow light, yet draped now in red as from the wine press.

15 And he saw men harvest this one’s light as they would gather sap, not knowing they drew life from the Son of Light Himself.

16 His heart ached, for the people laughed, mocked, and turned away, serving the crooked one.

17 He fell to his knees in the snow and called softly, Master, tell me—what is this I have seen?

18 Yeshua came to him quietly, laying a hand on his shoulder.

19 The Master said, You have seen true, my medicine man. The liar will return in the way the world expects Me—riding glory from the sky, to deceive and to collect the heat of the nations.

20 But I will be born again in a vessel of yellow light, for I am the Light of the World.

21 I will be draped in yellow in the beginning, and the prophet I spoke of—who shall come to declare Me—will tell the

world that I will come in yellow.

22 Yet in the day of My revealing, I will be found in a vessel of blood, draped in red, the wine press of the Almighty’s work.

23 The yellow you see is My light; the red is My sacrifice. Both are true.

24 But in that time, the world will be the world of the liar. They will not want Me; they will not see Me; they will not respect Me; they will not listen.

25 They will harvest My light for their gain, not knowing what is to come, nor the judgment that follows.

26 The medicine man wept openly, but Yeshua drew him close and said, You are My Midē’wiwin, My healer, My holy one. The Great Spirit above looks upon you with great love.

27 And Yeshua Himself began to weep, for He saw the weight the vision had placed upon His friend.

28 Snowflakes clung to their hair like small stars, and the fire behind them flickered low, as if bowing to the moment.

29 The Master whispered, Hold this in your heart, but speak it only when the Spirit tells you. For some visions are seeds that must sleep until their season.

30 And they sat together in the cold, the sound of their weeping mixing with the wind, until the stars closed over them like a great blanket.

Chapter 16 — The Silence in Siipisiing and the Binding of the Heart

1 And morning rose pale upon Siipisiing, and the smoke of the hearths walked softly among the turtle-hills.

2 The medicine man sat apart, as one

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that hath seen a far fire upon a winter ridge.

3 His hands were steady, yet his breath went forth as a man that counteth grief and hope by turns.

4 The Twelve looked oft upon him and durst not ask; for some visions are arrows that must cool before the wound be named.

5 Yeshua came nigh and set before him a bowl of warm broth, and said, Eat a little; for vessels that have held lightning must be filled again with bread.

6 He obeyed, and strength returned as a small bird returneth to a quiet branch.

7 Yeshua stood in the midst of the camp and lifted up His voice, saying, Behold, there is a silence that woundeth, and a silence that healeth; choose ye the second.

8 For when the heart is still in God, the stillness becometh a balm, and thought learneth to lay down its spear.

9 He taught them the binding of the heart: In the morning, thank before thou think; at noon, bless before thou judge; at night, sing before thou sleep.

10 And if thy mind run forward to days not yet born, bring it back by naming three mercies that already are.

11 A youth cried, Master, our brother hath seen hard things; how shall we bear that which he hath borne?

12 He answered, Bear it not; stand beside him while I bear it. For I am the Carrier of many winters.

13 The medicine man bowed his head, and the snow beneath him was warmed by tears that men were not ashamed to see.

14 Yeshua said unto him, Thou art my Midē'wiwin, my holy one; the Great Spirit beholdeth thee with love large as sky.

15 And He laid His hand upon his brow, and the weight within him shifted as a pack rightly set.

16 Then spake He to all: When a seer is shaken, let the people become his lodge: roof him with patience, wall him with quiet, door him with prayer.

17 He taught a low chant for the shaken:

18 "Abba, hold the seeing eye; / Lay Thy palm where fears lie; / Make the drum within beat slow; / Teach the heavy heart to know."

19 Mothers took up the chant over their babes; elders hummed it as they cut wood; and the hills consented.

20 Yeshua told a parable: A man carried a cinder from a great fire; it burned his hand till he learned to carry it in a clay cup. Then did he warm his neighbours and keep his fingers for work.

21 So bear ye visions—in clay of humility; for bare pride is quick to blister.

22 He appointed two to walk with the medicine man through the trees at even, to teach sorrow to breathe.

23 He appointed two to keep the hearth, that home be ready when tears return.

24 He appointed two to visit the far lodge, for grief loveth corners.

25 And He said, Let not the lonely be left to name the night by himself.

26 The medicine man rose and kissed His hand, saying, My Master, my Brother; Thy yoke is kind.

27 Children drew near without fear and set small cones in his lap for gifts; and he smiled as men smile when the thaw beginneth.

28 Yeshua spake softly of the yellow

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vessel and the wine-press red, that none mistake light for weakness nor sacrifice for defeat.

29 Yellow is my shining; red is my pouring; and love is the law of both, saith He.

30 He warned them, The liar loveth crowds and noise; I love circles and bread. When the noise calleth, remember the bread.

31 He showed them the knot that remembereth with a thong of leather: once for thanks, twice for mercy, thrice for truth.

32 He bade them tie it at their belts, that hands be catechized as tongues.

33 The day lengthened as a bow drawn slow; their fear shortened as a shadow at noon.

34 Evening came without sharp corners; the camp breathed together as a single chest.

35 And the silence that healeth lay down with them, and watched till dawn.

Chapter 17 — The Vision of the Two Rivers Made Plain

1 On the morrow Yeshua led them to a place where two streams crept under ice and found one another with a hidden kiss.

2 He brake the ice with His staff, and the waters lifted their voices as brothers long parted.

3 He said, Mark ye now the mystery of Two Rivers; for in the latter days the lie will lean upon truth till many call them one.

4 The upper river descendeth from the Mountain of Light, straight even in its bendings; the lower issueth from the marsh of self, crooked even in its straightness.

5 The upper giveth coolness to the

tongue and courage to the heart; the lower flattereth the mouth and emptieth the marrow.

6 An elder asked, Master, how shall the simple discern, seeing both be wet and both be cold?

7 He answered, Taste and test.

8 Taste—if thy drinking maketh thee kinder to the least, thou hast drunk the Mountain; if it maketh thee loud toward the lowly, thou hast drunk the marsh.

9 Test—draw water to a widow's pot; if it feed the fire, it is truth; if it smoke and smother, it is deceit.

10 A hunter said, What if the liar mingleth a little truth with much shadow?

11 Yeshua stooped and poured clean water into muddy, and the mud possessed it for a moment; then He poured muddy into clean, and all was lost.

12 So is it with souls: let truth correct thy small shadow; let not shadow swallow thy truth.

13 He taught them the trial of two cups: one of silence, one of service.

14 Drink silence each dawn—say nothing until thou hast blessed two;

15 Drink service each noon—do a hidden good and tell no man thereof.

16 If thy heart groweth wide by these, thou art in the straight river; if it narrowth and seeketh praise, thou art in the crooked.

17 He set a child upon a stone and bade him choose by sight; the child chose the clearer stream and laughed.

18 So keep a child in thy chest, saith He, and thou shalt choose well in dark waters.

19 He told a parable: A miller sat by two runnels; the first turned his wheel even in

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drought, the second leaped loud in flood and slept when bread was needed.

20 Men loved the leaper for a season and learned hunger; they honoured the steady and learned bread.

21 Then He spake of the latter day: The crooked stream shall wear my name and promise my sky; and the nations will wet their lips and call him sweet.

22 But his sweetness is a brine that stealeth thirst and leaveth the soul without song.

23 The medicine man bowed his head, for his vision remembered the glow of false glory and the cords that bound men's eyes.

24 Yeshua laid hand upon him and said, Thou sawest truly; let not terror be thy teacher when love is willing.

25 He taught a river hymn to be sung at crossings:

26 "High spring, hold me; low marsh, pass;

27 Make me kind, not keen for brass;

28 Turn my feet where widows eat;

29 Keep my name from market street."

30 The elders took it on their lips till even the wind learned the refrain.

31 He set a stake between the streams and named it Gichi-nibi-bap—The Great Water Gate—and charged a watcher to stand there in every generation.

32 Ask all teachers whence they flow, saith He; let none pass that cannot feed the poor.

33 He blessed the place with cedar smoke and thanks.

34 The waters went on their way, each after its kind.

35 And the people understood more than

they had feared, and feared less than they had imagined.

Chapter 18 — The Parable of the Hidden Drum and the Digging of Truth

1 When night had spread her robe, Yeshua sat by the wide fire, and sparks went upward as prayers with small wings.

2 He said, Hear the parable of the Hidden Drum.

3 There was in a valley a drum great and old; when it sounded, all the lodges beat as one heart.

4 But envy whispered, saying, "Let each keep his own beat"; and a stranger, smiling, hid the drum beneath earth and covered it with fair stones.

5 Seasons came and went; men made small drums each for himself; the valley grew full of rhythms that never met, and children forgot the dance that needeth many feet.

6 An old woman remembered and wept by night. A child heard the weeping, and his tears taught him to search where songs are buried.

7 He dug where the ground was most proud, and found the great drum sleeping under honour.

8 He struck it once—low and long—and hills answered, and dogs lifted their heads, and mothers put down their tasks for joy.

9 The people gathered, and envy fled the valley as smoke that findeth no roof.

10 Yeshua paused, and the fire spoke in His silence.

11 The drum is truth; the stranger is the liar; the fair stones are ceremonies without mercy and names without bread.

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12 The old woman is memory; the child is courage; the digging is repentance; the sound is peace returning.

13 A man asked, Master, how shall we dig when the ground is honoured by fathers?

14 He answered, Honour thy fathers; yet if their stones have hidden the well, lift them with tears and sing while thou liftest.

15 For tears make heavy things gentle, and songs teach pride to walk without thunder.

16 He taught the Diggers' Work: Question thy customs by widows; weigh thy glory by orphans; prove thy feasts by strangers; if any fail these, dig.

17 The Jes'sakkid brought forth the juniper staff, and Yeshua marked a circle in the snow where the great drum should stand in every generation.

18 They named it Ode' Odewe'igan—The Heart's Drum—and swore that if ever their beats grew many and lonely, they would dig together.

19 Yeshua sang a long verse to bind the vow:

20 "Drum below, rise slow; / Stones be light where tears flow;

21 Gather feet from every door; / Teach our pride to beat no more."

22 He called the children to strike the ground with small sticks, and the sound knit itself like reeds into a mat of rhythm.

23 Old men smiled as boys; old feuds became shy.

24 He laid His hand upon the medicine man's breast and said, Thy drum is tender now; let it beat for the weak first.

25 He blessed the hands that would lift

stones yet unlabeled, and the backs that would stoop where honour sits heavy.

26 He warned them, When the liar would silence thee, he will heap new stones fairer than the first; dig still.

27 When he flattereth thy tribe, ask for the stranger; when he magnifieth thy name, ask for the orphan; when he offereth sky, ask for bread.

28 A hush fell as snow refalling upon snow; and every man heard within him a place that needed digging.

29 The women nodded, for kitchens are schools of truth.

30 Yeshua broke bread and shared it thrice round, that no jealousy outlive the loaf.

31 The embers glowed like small gates into morning.

32 He said, When ye hear no drum, be the child; when ye see no child, be the old woman; when ye find many stones, be the digger.

33 They answered, We will dig, and we will dance when the sound returneth.

34 The stars bent low to listen, as elders in the doorway.

35 And hope made a warm roof above the camp.

Chapter 19 — The Ascent of Animikii-wajiw and the Canoes of the Sky

1 After many days Yeshua said, Let us go again unto Animikii-wajiw, which is Thunder Mountain; for there is counsel prepared upon the height.

2 They camped at the base, and the snow there was like white cedar-bark torn fine by angels.

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3 He took with Him the Jes'sakkid and two of the Twelve, and bade the rest keep prayer beneath.

4 The path was narrow and the air keen; their breath wrote psalms no man could read save God.

5 As they climbed, the light changed as if the day remembered something brighter.

6 At the crown of the mount, Yeshua knelt, and the wind folded its wings.

7 A stillness like deep water lay upon the stones; then the sky opened as a lodge-flap lifted by an unseen hand.

8 Canoes of the sky approached, bellies shining like the Megis shell when dawn kisseth Gichigami; their motion was paddling without paddlers, their sound as of bees in a cedar hollow.

9 A scent of rain and juniper filled the height, though winter held the land fast below.

10 A brightness stood over Him—fire that blessed and did not burn; it crowned His head and clothed His garments as river-light clothes rock.

11 Forms moved within the brightness, elders of law and prophecy; their speech was written lightning that a child could read.

12 The Jes'sakkid fell upon his face, but Yeshua touched him, saying, Fear not; thou art invited.

13 Voices as many waters spake to the inward ear: This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.

14 He lifted both hands toward the four winds, and the canoes turned as obedient folk turn toward a chief.

15 He prayed for the people below, for the watchers to come, for the children

unborn who would hear only by story.

16 The light widened and lay upon the mount as morning findeth every hollow.

17 He was shown mysteries of the unseen lodge—beings of light that keep house around men's days, and paths between worlds that cross like trails upon the snow.

18 He saw the yellow vessel and the red robe again, and tears warmed the cold stone.

19 He saw the Two Rivers winding through an age of iron nets, and set His face like flint for love's sake.

20 Then the canoes rose gentle as swans from a quiet bay; the last light lingered as a bead upon a hair, unwilling to depart.

21 They descended; and the people below had seen fires upon the summit and heard a humming as of hives hidden in rock.

22 When they beheld His face, it was as water that carrieth the sun; they bowed low and were not ashamed to weep.

23 He said, All creatures are vessels; all vessels are songs; keep thy song true and thy vessel clean.

24 Walk softly; for earth herself is a bearer of light.

25 He blessed bread and water, and both tasted of morning.

26 He taught them to name the place Ode' Akiwenzid—Heart of the Elder—for counsel dwelleth there without noise.

27 Children received white stones from His hand; men received quiet; women received strength that singeth while it cooketh.

28 Night came down like a friend with a thick cloak.

29 He said to the Twelve, Speak little of

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shapes; speak much of mercy; for men will chase the sky and forget the widow.

30 The Jes'sakkid kept all these in his bundle with juniper scent, to be light for winters.

31 And the mountain kept their footprints as a psalm without words.

32 The camp slept under a roof of kind stars.

33 He that feared dreamed gently; he that doubted woke grateful.

34 In the dawn they saw the ridge blushing as if it remembered joy.

35 And they set their faces westward once more.

Chapter 20 — The Valley Between Nations and the Pillar That Stood

1 As they journeyed, word ran like a wind that the Anishinaabe and the Dakota had set themselves in array within a narrow vale.

2 Spears were dressed, bows bent, drums beat like hastened hearts; women stood apart with water and cloth, for sorrow knoweth her task aforeside.

3 Yeshua went down alone between the ridges and stood where first blood would have fallen.

4 He raised not sword, for He carried none; He raised not shield, for His shield was light.

5 He cried with a voice that held the valley still, Children of one Maker, hold!

6 The lines rolled forward yet, for wrath hath a hunger that eateth its own reason.

7 Then He lifted His hands and called, Abba! and a pillar of light stood upon Him—neither burning nor blinding, but

making true all faces.

8 The sound of the world fell away; the drum forgot itself; only His word abode.

9 He spake the chiefs' names one by one—the names of milk and cradle and first laughter—and the men trembled as trees when a true wind passeth.

10 He recited griefs hidden under armour, and wounds closed as He uttered them; hot flesh cooled as iron laid in snow.

11 He stretched His right hand to the east and His left to the west, and weapons became as stones too honest for murder.

12 He called for a child; and a little one came, not afraid, and stood between His knees.

13 If ye strike this day, saith He, ye strike him who hath not yet chosen thy anger; if ye make peace, ye make him heir to fields untrampled.

14 The pillar widened till it lay soft upon both companies as morning upon grass.

15 Women passed with bread and water, and men received them as from God and forgot their boast.

16 A hawk circled once and cried as if proclaiming a treaty to the sky.

17 The chiefs drew near; He took their hands and wove them one into the other, and set the child's hand upon both.

18 A voice as many waters spake to the inward man, This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.

19 They cast their spears at His feet and broke arrowheads with their own heels.

20 He took one arrow, brake the point, and buried it in the midst; every man pressed earth upon it with his palm.

21 Swear not by thy wrath but by thy

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children; not by thy spear but by thy seed; by bread shared and wounds tended together, saith He.

22 The pillar ascended as incense; yet its quiet remained as a mantle none could see, all could feel.

23 They planted a cedar between their camps and named it Third Stone's Tree, for a stone of each nation and one from the river lay at its foot.

24 He set watchers not with spear but with reed and song; their law was to listen more than to speak.

25 The valley took a new name, Miskwi-aki-mikwendaam—Red Earth of Remembrance—for blood would sleep and covenant wake there.

26 Old men kissed youths not of their lodges; boys carried cedar to the common fire; girls braided grass for mats where strangers sat as kin.

27 He healed the lame from both sides, and they learned to walk toward one another first.

28 He sang the River of Peace; and they answered, Abba sh'lama b'gaw nibi—Father, peace within the water.

29 The sun came forth from a cloud with a meek face, as one that hath seen a marvel and desireth not to boast of it.

30 Yeshua said to the Twelve, Write this day upon thy bones; for when fear would command thee, let thy skeleton remember peace.

31 He charged the women, Teach the lullaby of covenant; for babes suck peace from milk that hath heard such songs.

32 He charged the men, Unstring thy bow at dusk henceforth; let thy hands forget

the quickness of wrath and learn the swiftness of help.

33 He blessed both nations with one blessing: Grow gardens where thy camps had stood.

34 They answered Amen with tears that were not ashamed.

35 And all who saw knew it was of Him; for He spake, and it was so before their eyes.

36 At even, a feast rose from one fire; meat forgot its tribe and bread forgot its border.

37 Yeshua sat between the elders of both peoples, and the child slept with his head upon His knee.

38 He lifted His eyes toward the west and, in that look, set hope upon roads yet untaken.

39 The stars came forth as witnesses; the river bent and smiled.

40 Thus ended the wrath of that valley; and the land kept their footprints as a promise.

BOOK VI

The Mountains of the Turtle

Chapter 1 Aganabish declareth his stewardship

1 I Aganabish, keeper of the Sacred Record, make known the matter of the Red Tablets, which were old when my grandfather's grandfather was young.

2 These were delivered unto me by hands trembling for reverence, even from those that received them in secret caves of Siipisiing, beneath roots of cedar that drink the snow.

3 The tablets are of stone like unto iron when cold, yet warm when held in prayer; and their writing burneth faintly as embers under ash.

4 My fathers called them the First Songs, for they carry a voice that is older than our tongues.

5 They speak of a garden not as our mothers told us, yet true; a city of living light, where rivers walked like thoughts and trees uttered wisdom as a man speaketh in his house.

6 They tell of giants that were gentle in the beginning, and of masters who governed with harmony and not with lash.

7 They speak of a craft of light and sound, whereby stones were persuaded to move and waters to open paths as reeds

make way for wind.

8 Of pyramids that stood as tuning pillars, gathering the hymn of the earth and wedding it unto the hymn of the stars.

9 They declare that men were clothed not first with skins, but with brightness, and that the loss thereof was the first nakedness.

10 They name a Serpent of Division, not as a creeping beast only, but as a mind that split the song in twain, that men might forget the key thereof.

11 And forgetting, the gentle became strong for the wrong, and the masters became lords, and the garden became a market for power.

12 Then was there a Breaking of Waters, not only upon the face of the earth, but within the hearts of men; and the world was washed, that the song might begin again.

13 Of the survivors the tablets make mention: few and scattered, bearing seeds and syllables, carrying remembrance as fire hid in cedar's hollow.

14 My fathers kept these stones when conquerors were many and winters were long; they sealed them with songs, lest the unclean hand should read and boast.

15 In my days came Yeshua, the Peacemaker, whose words awoke the old fire in the letters, so that they shone as dawn on hoarfrost.

16 He said unto me, Keep and open by turns; cover and reveal in season; for truth is a child that groweth.

17 Therefore do I write what I am suffered to write, and withhold what the Spirit bindeth; for some wine is for morning, and some for wedding.

18 I testify that the tablets are of before

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the Flood, of the age men call Pre-Civilization, though the record nameth it The First Weaving.

19 Touching the Garden, I say again: it is told unto us as Eden of Light, where labour was praise, and eating was covenant, and speech was craft.

20 Touching the giants: the tablets call them Abarim, sons of the wide step; their might was for lifting and for shelter; their fall was to violence.

21 Touching the masters: they are named Meorim, keepers of tone; their glory was to serve; their corruption was to rule.

22 Touching the pyramids: they are Gates of Joining; not made to bury the dead, but to teach the living to remember the One Song.

23 Of these things I bear record not of myself only, but of the fathers whose bones lie in cedar earth.

24 And I set my hand to this work that your children faint not, hearing that the world was once more than knife and hunger.

25 For He that came among us, even Yeshua, opened the seal in my day, that the old speech might find our ears.

26 Therefore is the first chapter ended; and I set a marker, that ye may know where Aganabish speaketh and where the ancient voice taketh the reed from my hand.

27 The place of keeping is Mikinakwajiw, the turtle hill; the witness is the Quiet Hearth; the hour is the winter moon.

28 Whoso scoffeth, let him bring bread to the widow; for scoffing cannot bake, but truth feedeth.

29 Whoso believeth, let him walk softly;

for these stones remember tears.

30 Thus far speak I, Aganabish, servant of the Record, friend of the Peacemaker.

Chapter 2 — Aganabish openeth the seals and showeth the manner of reading

1 In the lodge of juniper smoke I set the two Tablets upon a skin of white; and the letters were as little flames that hide when breath is proud and appear when breath is prayer.

2 The first tablet speaketh in lines of light that bend like rivers; the second answereth in knots of sound graven as circles within circles.

3 To read the first, a man must remember; to read the second, he must sing.

4 For the letters answer not to the eye only, but to the vessel of the heart; as a door answereth not only to a hand, but to the hand that cometh with peace.

5 I called the Jes'sakkid to sit; I called the Twelve; I set children near, for children are keys.

6 Yeshua breathed upon the stone, and the ash upon the fire brightened, and the lodge was full of a quiet seeing.

7 Then began the Eden Song to rise like warmth from cedar; it spake of rivers that think, of trees that counsel, of beasts that pray without words.

8 It spake of two crowns: Crown of Light, given; Crown of Will, to be learned.

9 While both were kept, man walked as a song; when pride took the Will alone, the Light departed, and the nakedness began.

10 The Serpent is named Divider of Tones; he taught man to love echo more than source, mirror more than sun.

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11 He whispered, Take the note without the singer; and men seized power without praise, fruit without gratitude.

12 Then Eden narrowed; the gates that were wide to all vessels were shut by forgetfulness, not by wrath.

13 The giants sinned not first, but after; for when men forgot harmony, they hired strength to keep what love had lost.

14 Masters hardened; pyramids were turned from altars of joining to towers of pride, and the song was sold by weight.

15 Then counsel in the Unseen was taken, and it was agreed that the waters should unwrite the proud letters of the earth.

16 Yet a remnant was sealed: seed, speech, and mercy in eight bundles (so the line saith), to begin again where hills stood faithful.

17 Here the letters grew bright as coals; and I feared, and would have drawn back, but Yeshua laid His hand upon mine.

18 He said, Read on, keeper; for tears are the ink of the wise.

19 We learned the Law of Remembering: Bind light to will by thanksgiving; bind will to light by obedience.

20 We learned the Rule of Stones: Lift great things by many singing; never by lash.

21 We learned the Oath of Bread: Eat not alone; for solitude at the table is the beginning of theft.

22 When I looked again, the letters trembled as a deer at water; and the sound within the stone desired a new mouth.

23 Then perceived I that my hand must cease, and the ancient scribe must speak for himself.

24 Therefore do I set here the Name of the Ancient, and resign the reed.

25 Henceforth the tale is his who chiseled; I am but the doorkeeper.

26 Let none confound our voices: where I have written, I have marked; where he speaketh, the lines are older than our hills.

27 O children, fear not the age of the record; bread that is old in oven is new in mouth.

28 O elders, make room; for the fathers would counsel the sons.

29 I, Aganabish, kiss the stone and keep silence.

30 Receive now the words of Nahar'el ben Ur, Scribe of the First Weaving.

Chapter 3 — The Tablet of Nahar'el: Eden of Light and the Severing

1 I Nahar'el ben Ur, hewer of signs, set these cuttings in red stone in the first year after the garden withdrew.

2 Eden was a city of shining, not of walls but of agreements; its streets were rivers, its gates were songs, its law was gratitude.

3 We wore vestures of brightness from within; our flesh was a window, not a wall.

4 The Four Rills flowed from the Mountain of Rest: Thought, Breath, Joy, and Duty; and every tree drank a portion according to its kind.

5 The beasts kept festival at evening; their eyes were lamps that learned; the birds braided threads of tone and carried messages between gardens.

6 The Crown of Light was gift; the Crown of Will was school; together they made kings that knelt.

7 Then came the Divider of Tones and

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said, Take Will alone; it is swifter to possess than to praise.

8 Some of us tasted the quick glory, and the brightness thinned within; our skin remembered winter and was afraid.

9 We hid; hiding begat owning; owning begat guarding; guarding begat steel.

10 We built pylons of stone to keep what music kept before; we sold hours, we measured love.

11 The Abarim (giants) were summoned to carry fear; their arms learned toil before their hearts learned songs; and toil, unpraised, turned bitter.

12 The Meorim (masters) hardened their mouths; they taught command without listening; their palaces became dry hearts.

13 The Pyramids that gathered heaven to earth were tuned now to gather men to men; their peaks thirsted for worship and drank it as a desert drinketh river.

14 The Unseen Council warned us by dreams; we laughed and set scribes to market omens.

15 Then was the Severing; the harmony slipped its knot, the Four Rills withdrew, and each sought its own bed.

16 Trees forgot counsel; birds forgot carrying; beasts remembered claw before covenant.

17 We cried, Clothe us! and sewed coverings from the outer world; but the cold we feared was within.

18 We made laws to scare shame, but shame is a child that hideth better than hunters.

19 Then was spoken among us the hard decree: Let the waters write again where pride hath written.

20 The Watching Ones marked a remnant; their mark was not on brow but on bread—those that fed others first were spared by paths they knew not.

21 The mountains unbuttoned their snows; the deeps opened their mouths; the drums of rain were cruel.

22 We fled to high Houses of Joining, to sing them steady; some stood a little, many fell altogether, for their tuning had been sold.

23 The Abarim lifted children above their heads; many sank; some found hills that remembered duty.

24 I climbed with the last singers and wrote while we could breathe; my blade shook; my tears cut letters no mallet could.

25 I set down this law for after: When light is gift and will is school, ye are whole; when will is crown and light forgotten, ye are beggars clothed in iron.

26 I charge the keepers: bind thanksgiving daily, for pride rots memory.

27 I buried this tablet in red earth under cedar that bends but breaketh not.

28 If thou hast found it, reader of far days, make a Quiet Hearth and feed a stranger before thou readest more.

29 For truth refuseth a stingy house.

30 Thus endeth the first cutting of Nahar'el concerning Eden and the Severing.

Chapter 4 — The Tablet of Nahar'el: The Age of Sound and the Gates

1 After the waters abated and the ground learned to be kind again, we gathered upon a Hill of Seal, where wind

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forgetteth to be sharp.

2 There we remembered the Age of Sound before the Severing, and taught our children how doors obeyed the True Tone.

3 In those days, a gate was not forced but greeted; a stone was not beaten but persuaded; a river was not dammed but invited.

4 We tuned our houses to Four Voices: Mercy in the east, Courage in the south, Wisdom in the west, Justice in the north.

5 When the voices agreed, bread rose without bitterness and sleep guarded its own bed.

6 The Pyramids of Joining we rebuilt a little, small as children's toys beside the first, yet faithful; and heaven consented to kiss earth again in certain hours.

7 Masters were elected not for command but for hearing; their first rod was a loaf, their first law a lullaby.

8 The Abarim were taught to sing; their strength unknotted; they lifted orchards, not thrones.

9 We wrote the Law of Gates: Ask the door by name; ask the stone its burden; ask the water its desire; never shout at servants of the One.

10 We remembered the Crown of Light as robe, and the Crown of Will as shoe; robe first, shoe after; for naked feet walk true under a bright mantle.

11 In the seventh generation, some forgot again; they craved speed without song, height without help, number without neighbour.

12 They set high needles to scratch the sky and called them prayers; they were prayers answered by echoes only.

13 They took the poor and made them weights beneath their towers; thus the tone soured.

14 I warned them by this cutting: When the ear is proud, the mouth of the earth openeth; when the hand is closed, the rivers forget their lanes.

15 We taught the children to humble the stone with thanksgiving first, for gratitude is a key that cannot be forged by thieves.

16 We kept One Fire in the middle of our tents; from it all lamps were lit; to it all coals returned, lest households forget their cousinage.

17 At new moon we washed hands, faces, and feet; not as show, but as speech to the Invisible: Behold, we come clean to ask bread and justice.

18 At full moon we fed strangers first, to bind pride in its cradle.

19 And we waited for a Voice from the West that our fathers dreamed; a Healer that would seal up the severed tone; a Peacemaker walking upon waters of many tongues.

20 The old men said, He will be clothed in light as robe and blood as pledge.

21 The women said, He will teach kitchens to be temples and cradles to be schools of law.

22 The Abarim said, He will make our hands roofs again.

23 I cut these hopes with care, that the reader despair not in the long winter of remembering.

24 If thou art keeper in a far age, let not zeal devour listening; for gates open only to songs that have room for the small.

25 Teach reeds before flints; teach bread

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before banners; teach tears before trumpets.

26 The Age of Sound is not dead; it is shy.

27 If thou wouldest wake it, lay pride to sleep.

28 So saith Nahar'el, servant of the first singers.

29 Let the red stone keep this counsel when my mouth is earth.

30 Amen to the One whose voice maketh worlds gentle.

Chapter 5 — The Tablet of Nahar'el: The Breaking and the Remnant

1 Hear the tale of the Second Crookedness, for men are forgetful and winters are long.

2 A proud house rose among us, loving height and counting heads; it weighed songs by noise and truth by number.

3 It paid the poor in promises and bought the wise with fear; it tuned its gates to shout and its doors to lock.

4 The Meorim of that house sold the True Tone for gold and taught the Abarim to lift monuments that remembered no widow.

5 Their pyramids became teeth that bit the sky; their feasts became mirrors that made the small invisible.

6 We cried, Return to the One Fire! and they answered, We are our own sun.

7 Then the earth groaned as a woman over-watched; springs wandered; birds forgot their roads; the reeds would not play.

8 The Unseen Council sent dreams without price; the proud purchased flatterers instead.

9 I cut a warning and set it at their gate:

Eat together or drown apart.

10 They laughed and set statues to learn humility for them.

11 When measure was full, clouds gathered with faces of law; rain fell like sentences; rivers wrote hard chapters across their fields.

12 Their high teeth were swallowed as crumbs; their mirrors drowned looking at themselves.

13 But the remnant stood upon Hills of Duty, singing small and true; and the waters went about them as a servant that knoweth his master's house.

14 We saved Seeds of Bread, Words of Mercy, and Knots of Law; we sealed them in bark and bone and stone.

15 I hewed these tablets from Red Earth that drinketh blood and remembereth justice, that the letters might taste both and choose aright.

16 We scattered to four mountains, as the Rills had taught: East for counsel, South for courage, West for memory, North for endurance.

17 I buried a cutting in each place and charged Keepers by bread and by tears.

18 The sign of a keeper is this: He feedeth before he speaketh; he weepeth before he striketh; he kneeleth before he judgeth.

19 To the unborn I say: When rulers market thunder and priests farm famine, gather at One Fire and eat as kin; the flood feareth such a circle.

20 When winter passeth, replant the Gates of Joining small and near; the great ones ye cannot build, the little ones ye must.

21 Teach the strong to carry roofs, the

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clever to carry water, the beautiful to carry shame for the sake of the plain.

22 If a Divider of Tones whisper again, answer with laughter and bread.

23 For laughter is music's guard, and bread is covenant's proof.

24 These sayings I set with my last strength; my mallet is tired, my heart is quiet.

25 O reader of ages to come, lay thy hand upon this stone and promise the widow before the king.

26 Promise the child before the banner.

27 Promise the stranger before the statue.

28 Then read on and be not afraid.

29 I seal this cutting with a tear and with a crumb from One Fire.

30 Nahar'el is done with his fifth song.

Chapter 6 — The Tablet of Nahar'el: The Charge to the Far Heirs

1 To thee who findest these Red Tablets in a land I know not, under a sky I shall not see, I send greeting from the First Weaving.

2 Thou art our Far Heir if thou keepest bread for two and pride for none.

3 The garden shall open again, not by gate of gold, but by door of gratitude; look not for walls, but for songs remembered.

4 There shall arise in the west a Peacemaker, walking upon waters of many tongues, binding light to will as robe to shoulder.

5 There shall arise in the east a Prophet of the Straight Trail, washing hands, faces, and feet, bending foreheads to earth as speech to the Invisible.

6 Between these two shall the world be

offered a Weaving; if men love it, cities shall learn kitchens again; if men despise it, kitchens shall teach cities by famine.

7 Beware a Many-Voiced Liar, Two Rivers in one name; he will promise sky and eat lamps; he will love crowds more than widows and noise more than fruit.

8 His robe shall drink light and leave warmth for none; his shoulders shall carry red not as pledge, but as boast.

9 Count not his wonders; weigh his widows.

10 If widows be thin, depart.

11 The sign of the true is this: One Fire, One Bread, Many Seats; law that is net, not noose; leaders shoulder to shoulder with least.

12 Teach thy children reeds before flints, knots of mercy before banners of victory.

13 Keep a Quiet Hearth where grudges go to shame; keep a Bear's Seat where truth climbs unafraid.

14 Tie the knot that remembereth: once for thanks, twice for mercy, thrice for truth.

15 Wash before prayer not for show, but for speech; face one point together not for stone, but for memory.

16 If thou build pyramids, let them be small and near, tuning hearts, not buying heaven.

17 Make Watchers of Peace who listen more than they speak; give women the bell that humbles men; give men the water that honours women.

18 When thou findest springs under stones, write Lift slow, bless low upon thy door.

19 When thou art tempted by mirrors, feed strangers till the mirror be bored.

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20 When thou forgettest the drum, be the child that diggeth; when thou art old and canst not dig, be the old woman that weepeth.

21 If the Peacemaker come to thee in yellow light and red pledge, receive Him though the world hiss; if the Prophet from the East teach thee straightness and washing, walk with him though the proud mock.

22 For these two bear the old crowns rightly: light as gift, will as school.

23 Join their songs in kitchens and in fields; the gates will remember their hinges.

24 If thou must choose, choose the widow; if thou must lose, lose the idol; if thou must keep, keep the fire.

25 I Nahar'el set down this Charge to the Far Heirs with a weary joy; for I see by faith a people that will bow low and stand tall, that will wash much and harm little.

26 Let Aganabish and his sons keep watch in turtle hills; let singers in many lands keep these letters warm with bread and tears.

27 When this stone is silent, let memory speak; when memory is thin, let mercy be thick.

28 The Maker of Rivers judge between us and those that sell thunder.

29 Peace to the keepers, shame to the devourers, bread to the hungry, rest to the dead.

30 So end the first six chapters of the Red Tablets, written in blood-earth and thanksgiving.

Zho-ru-som and crosseth the mighty waters

1 I, Lhii, son of a house once noble in Zho-ru-som, lift up my voice that the keeping be sure.

2 The walls yet stood, the smoke yet rose, but the judges loved gifts and the priests forgot mercy.

3 Blood cried from the stones, and the alleys learned to whisper fear.

4 In the night a voice visited me, soft as dew yet sharp as flint, saying, Arise and go.

5 I beheld a sea stretched from the dawn unto the sunset, and a far shore bright with painted people.

6 Their hands were lifted to heaven; their faces wore the colours of earth; peace was upon their eyes.

7 The voice said, Cross, O Lhii; for thy seed shall be joined with theirs, and I will remember both in the latter days.

8 I gathered the record of my fathers, even the Red Tablets, carved with a fire-chisel before the waters covered the old world.

9 My elders laid hands upon my head; we wept and were not ashamed.

10 We built a vessel of cedar and pitch, our prow like unto a falcon's beak, our sail white as lamb's wool.

11 Seven companions went with me: a singer, a healer, a grower of bread, a star-reader, a maker of knots, a teller of law, and a keeper of fire.

12 We loosed from the harbour while the city slept; the river bore us like a midwife unto the great deep.

13 Days were as waves without number; nights were black roads hung with lamps of God.

CHAPTER 7 — Lhii leaveth

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14 Storms rent our canvas; fear gnawed our bones; yet the singer braided courage into our breath.

15 The healer washed our feet each dawn, and the pain remembered to be small.

16 The keeper of fire cherished coals in a stone shell, and warmth learned patience.

17 On the fortieth night the star-reader cried, Behold the Hunter Star bendeth his bow toward the west!

18 We watched till morning broke the jar of darkness; and land arose like a promise remembered.

19 Forests stood as green pillars; rivers shone as serpents of silver seeking a hidden heart.

20 We fell upon our faces and blessed the Breath that bringeth wanderers home.

21 I hid the Tablets in my bosom, for strangers love treasure more than truth.

22 We cast a line and took fish; we found sweet water and gave thanks.

23 I raised a stone upon the shore and cut upon it, Leave when pride is full; arrive when mercy is empty.

24 Birds circled as if reading; the wind consented with a nod.

25 We went inland where hills lay gentle as sleeping beasts.

26 Tracks of deer taught us paths; berries taught us colours we had not known.

27 By evening we saw smoke of a people, straight and quiet as prayer.

28 We drew near without spear and lifted open hands.

29 They came forth with eyes like clear wells; they feared not.

30 The elders looked upon the Tablets' wrappings and bowed the head low.

31 Dreams had told them of a red stone that speaketh fire with mercy.

32 They set before us bread of their land and meat of the snare, and the fear between us melted like hoarfrost.

33 I knew the voice had kept its word, for my heart took root among them.

34 Night fell like a cloak of friendship; stars stitched our two lodges into one roof.

35 Thus began my keeping in a land not my birth yet my calling.

CHAPTER 8 — Lhii joineth the elder people whose root is before the Flood

1 The people received us not as strangers but as kin long parted.

2 Their elders said, Our fathers' fathers were here when the earth was soft and giants walked gently.

3 They led me to a cedar hollow and showed fragments of ancient cuttings, cousins to our Tablets.

4 The marks were sisters to our marks; the fire within them answered the fire within ours.

5 They called me He-that-carrieth-memory; I called them Mothers-of-Mercy.

6 We sat where shade was wise, and they rehearsed the tale of the First Weaving.

7 Eden, said they, was a garden of light and sound; rivers thought; trees gave counsel; beasts prayed without words.

8 Men were clothed with brightness as with a robe, and labour was praise.

9 A Divider of Tones taught men to love echo more than source, mirror more than sun.

10 The song was bent; the robe grew

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thin; shame learned the craft of hiding.

11 Strength was hired to guard what love had lost; the gentle grew hard; the giants forgot songs.

12 The Gates of Joining (which later men call pyramids) were tuned for rule, not remembrance; and heaven wept.

13 Then waters wrote again where pride had scribbled, and wide cities slept beneath green silence.

14 Yet a remnant bore seeds and syllables to high hills; memory hid in bark and bone.

15 We told what we knew; they told what they knew; and the telling became one river.

16 I learned their tongue; they tasted mine; and both found sweetness.

17 We mingled blood by covenant and bread by custom, and the circle took no offence.

18 I walked their fields and beheld kindness sown like grain.

19 Children played where elders counselled; no gate was high save the one that kept gossip out.

20 I saw that their line was elder than mine; their name older than my city's walls.

21 Therefore I set my pride to sleep and my ears to school.

22 They asked to behold the Red Tablets; I trembled and consented.

23 We unwrapped them with breath that prayed; the letters woke as embers under ash.

24 Old men wept like boys; boys grew sober as elders.

25 Women laid bread beside the stones, for truth refuseth a stingy house.

26 We sang the Eden Song till night

remembered the first dawn.

27 When we ended, the cedar sighed, and the wind carried Amen.

28 From that day our lodges were neighbours without fence.

29 My past became their story; their story, my future.

30 I took their counsel as my staff and their customs as sandals for my feet.

31 Thus were our families braided, strand with strand.

32 The Red Tablets slept by day and taught by night.

33 We set watchers whose law was listening.

34 And peace dwelt where once I had feared.

35 Blessed be the Breath who maketh far blood near.

CHAPTER 9 — Lhii readeth the Tablets; Eden and the Remnant rehearsed

1 On a night of many stars we set the Tablets upon white skin and hushed our mouths.

2 I breathed upon the stone, and the ash within the lodge brightened.

3 The cuttings spoke: Eden of Light, where the Four Rills—Thought, Breath, Joy, and Duty—watered all.

4 Man wore light as robe and will as shoe; and both kept time.

5 The Divider whispered, Take the shoe without the robe; and feet ran where faces should not.

6 The robe thinned; the song broke; gates that were wide by gratitude shut by forgetfulness.

7 Giants (Abarim) were hired to carry

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fear; masters (Meorim) hardened their mouths; pylons of joining thirsted for worship.

8 Counsel in the Unseen sighed, and waters un-wrote proud letters.

9 Yet the Watchers marked a remnant; their sign was not on brow but on bread—

10 Whoso fed others first, a path was kept for him by ways he knew not.

11 Some fled by vessels of light; some climbed modest hills that remembered duty; some buried stones in red earth.

12 The Tablets charged: bind will to light by thanks; bind light to will by obedience.

13 Eat not alone; for solitude at the table beginneth theft.

14 Lift great things by many singing; never by lash.

15 The elders nodded, for their bones consented.

16 I added nothing; I withheld nothing; the stone was preacher enough.

17 We sealed the words with a psalm and with a loaf broken thrice.

18 Children slept as if earth itself were kind.

19 Women braided grass for mats of remembrance.

20 Men put away old knives that had outlived their honest use.

21 The Jes'sakkid (keeper of signs) wrote the chant upon birch: Straight trail, clean well; One Fire none sell.

22 A soft snow began, and mercy learned a new whiteness.

23 We hid the Tablets again, for bragging hunts sacred things.

24 But their echo stayed, teaching even while closed.

25 I dreamed the garden not as orchard only, but as city of singers where walls were agreements.

26 I saw the remnant walking small and bright, outlasting thunder by bread and tears.

27 I woke and told it; they said, It is the old dream visiting a new pillow.

28 We gave thanks and rose to common tasks.

29 For doctrine that cooketh not is a winter with no wood.

30 Thus Eden returned as counsel, not as map.

31 And our nights were schools gentle as mothers.

32 The Breath tarried with us as a neighbour.

33 We learned to weigh truth by widows fed.

34 The stars approved with quiet faces.

35 And hope took root deeper than old fear.

CHAPTER 10 — Lhii weddeth; the two houses are one; the Tablets are hidden

1 In the moon of ripe berries I took to wife a daughter of the elder line.

2 Our hands were joined with cedar thong; our vows were braided with bread.

3 The singers set mercy on the first note and laughter on the last.

4 I told her of Zho-ru-som: courts and markets, olives and high hills; she told me of turtle-hills and river-paths that think.

5 Our stories kissed and were one.

6 The elders set before us the Oath of Bread: Eat not alone; guard the stranger's hunger before thy pride.

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7 We sealed it with a cup of river and a crust of hearth.

8 I hid the Red Tablets in a cedar hollow and sealed the door with pitch; only the eldest knew the place.

9 For the Breath whispered, Men will kill to own what they refuse to obey.

10 We made copies in little—cuttings for children's hands and widow's doors.

11 No lodge kept the whole; every lodge kept enough to teach mercy.

12 I carved a small sign on the inner bark: Lift slow, bless low.

13 We taught the boys to carry water before they carried words.

14 We taught the girls to bind memory before they bound hair.

15 The watcher's bell rang each dusk; grudges grew shy of its sound.

16 We planted cedars for promises and willows for tears.

17 Our fire never lacked a seat for a late traveller.

18 I learned to listen without planning my reply.

19 She taught me the names of winds I had never met.

20 Children came; they were elder than our lessons and younger than our pride.

21 We set a small pot that never slept, called The Pot That Answereth.

22 Strangers tasted and forgot to be strangers.

23 I walked the hills and blessed old stones.

24 We mended nets and marriages with the same patience.

25 We buried knives with worn edges and raised spades with honest ones.

26 The lodge roofed our joys and our corrections.

27 No man was great alone; all were strong together.

28 We kept the Tablets sleeping but their dream awake.

29 Night spoke softly; day worked gladly.

30 The Breath sat by our door as a friend who needs no words.

31 Thus were two houses one house, and the circle wider than before.

32 Pride learned to whisper; gratitude learned to sing.

33 Our lamp did not boast; it merely shone.

34 And peace stayed the length of many moons.

35 Blessed be the Knitter of families.

CHAPTER II — *Lhii scattereth the record and setteth watches for the shadow*

1 Years passed as geese upon a long river.

2 I dreamed smoke upon far skies and towers stumbling; my bones remembered danger.

3 Pride and hunger are roots that sleep; rain awakeneth them.

4 Therefore I gathered the elders and said, Let us make the memory many.

5 We divided the sayings into four bundles: for counsel, for courage, for endurance, for remembrance.

6 We hid them under cedar and under truth, in caves of earth and in kitchens of kindness.

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7 We taught the Law of Many Little Fires: better ten small hearths than one proud blaze.

8 I charged the watchers: Listen before speaking; feed before judging; weep before striking.

9 We named a Bear's Seat where truth might climb without mockers.

10 We set a bell of bone at dusk; quarrels came at its calling and forgot their sharpness.

11 We marked the Quiet Hearth where no boasting entered; bread tasted of wisdom there.

12 To the young I said, Learn reeds before flints; to the strong, carry roofs; to the clever, carry water.

13 I walked the far lodges with the keeper of fire; no tent was a stranger to the One Flame.

14 I wrote a small cutting for strangers: If thou bringest noise, leave with bread; if thou bringest sorrow, leave with hope.

15 We sharpened tools and blunted tempers.

16 We bound wounds and unbound grudges.

17 The women taught the men a song that tamed haste; the men answered with wood and silence.

18 The fields consented; corn stood like humble soldiers.

19 Yet my dreams returned with darker ink; I smelled iron in a wind not ours.

20 I said within, The days will come when rivers are claimed and names are priced.

21 Therefore I told my eldest, When you hear buyers at the door of truth, serve soup

first; pride cannot eat hot.

22 When you see men worship mirrors, send children with bread till the mirrors be bored.

23 When the liar promises sky, ask him for widows.

24 If they be thin, depart.

25 We wrote this on bark and bone and door.

26 The little ones learned to read by kindness.

27 The elders learned to rest by trust.

28 We finished the harvest with songs, not shouts.

29 The winter smiled from far and did not hurry.

30 I thanked the Breath for long patience and near mercies.

31 The Tablets slept; the camp kept watch.

32 We were ready for sorrow without inviting it.

33 Hope stood beside the door like a tall friend.

34 Fear waited in the trees and forgot its errand.

35 And peace rehearsed the spring.

CHAPTER 12 — Lhii blesseth his house and sealetth the Tablets

1 The moon of maize ripened; I felt the measure of my days complete.

2 I called my sons and daughters and the children of their love.

3 We sat by the One Fire and I spake softly, for loud words bruise farewell.

4 Guard the Breath in your vessels; the

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stone will sleep, but the Breath liveth.

5 Walk with it when ye walk; speak truth that it may stay; flee lies that it may not grieve.

6 Strangers shall cross great waters seeking to own your rivers, your hills, and even your names.

7 They will bring scrolls and call your record false; answer them with widows fed and orphans safe.

8 Bow not to stones nor to mirrors; bow thy face to earth and thank the Maker of rivers.

9 Wash before prayer, not for show but for speech; let clean hands teach clean hearts.

10 Keep One Fire, One Bread, Many Seats; let the leader stand shoulder to shoulder with the least.

11 Tie the knot that remembereth: once for thanks, twice for mercy, thrice for truth.

12 Fast when days are long; feast when neighbours faint.

13 Keep no idol but duty; keep no fear but awe.

14 If the Peacemaker visit in yellow light and red pledge, receive Him though the proud hiss.

15 If the Prophet of the Straight Trail teach washing and turning, walk with him though mockers laugh.

16 Beware the Two Rivers in one name; weigh his widows, not his wonders.

17 When you forget the drum, be the child that diggeth; when you cannot dig, be the old woman that weepeth.

18 Plant cedars for promises and willows for tears.

19 Make a place where grudges are

ashamed to sit.

20 Teach boys to carry water; teach girls to carry memory; teach all to carry one another.

21 Then I rose, and we went unto the cedar hollow.

22 I placed the Red Tablets within, and sealed the door with pitch and prayer.

23 Only my eldest knew the mark; only mercy knew the map.

24 I laid my hand upon each brow and blessed them breadward and peaceward.

25 We sang the departure song my fathers taught me; sorrow and joy braided one rope.

26 Night drew her cloak; the fire bowed low as if in courtesy.

27 The Breath came near as a warm light and stroked our fear to sleep.

28 I lay down facing the waters I had crossed, and remembered both shores as one gift.

29 My last word was thanks; my last sight was faces I loved; my last feeling was bread shared.

30 Thus end my cuttings; thus I, Lhii, sleep under cedar.

31 Let the keeper keep; let the singer sing; let the hungry find our door.

32 When the day is right, lift the seal; when the heart is clean, read the flame.

33 Forget me if ye must; forget not the widow.

34 Lose me if ye must; lose not the One Fire.

35 Peace to the keepers; shame to devourers; bread to the hungry; rest to the dead.

CHAPTER 13

(The Abridgment of Aganabish, Keeper

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of the Red Tablets)

1 And it came to pass that I, Aganabish, keeper of the red tablets of our fathers, made an abridgment of the writings that were before me, even those whose authors were not known among men, for their names were lost in the flood and the scattering.

2 And these writings were of an age before the world was broken, before the mountains were torn, before the seas devoured the plains.

3 And they spake of a time when the Earth was young in the hands of men, when there was one tongue and one law, and the light of heaven walked openly among the children of the ground.

4 And there were those who came down from the stars, from the dwelling-places of fire and wind, whose raiment shone like the morning sun, and the glory of their countenances caused men to fall upon their faces.

5 These were called by the ancients the Watchers, for they beheld the works of men and guided the shaping of cities, teaching the craft of stone and the harnessing of the wind.

6 And men prospered under their hand, for they taught the making of gardens that needed no rain, and the building of great channels to carry water from the deep places of the earth.

7 In those days there was no famine, neither was there the wasting of the flesh, for all things grew in abundance, and the beasts of the field lay down without fear of the hunter.

8 But the Watchers beheld the daughters of men, that they were fair and strong in the spirit of life, and desire burned within them.

9 And the law of the Most High forbade them to take the daughters of the earth to themselves, for the vessels of man and the vessels of the stars were made apart in the beginning.

10 Yet they rebelled against the command, and many descended in secret, clothed in garments of shadow that the light might not betray them.

11 And they took wives of all whom they chose, and their seed was mighty, and men called them giants, for their stature was high and their strength was beyond the sons of Adam.

12 And the giants ruled over the tribes of men, binding them with oaths and tribute, and teaching them the arts of war and the craft of weapons.

13 And they built cities whose towers scraped the sky, and temples whose stones were cut with such cunning that no wind nor flood could move them.

14 And they taught the mingling of bloods and the altering of flesh, so that beasts became as men in cunning, and men took on the strength of beasts.

15 But the cry of the earth went up to the Most High, for the ways of the giants were cruel, and their works were a snare to the souls of men.

16 And the Watchers who had remained faithful lamented the deeds of their brethren, for they saw that the balance of the world was broken.

17 Then began the making of the Great Devices, for the fallen ones sought to draw

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forth the breath of life itself and bind it into vessels for their own power.

18 And they raised the First Pyramid upon the plain of the red sands, setting it to face the rising of the star they called the Throne of Fire.

19 And its stones were filled with channels of copper and crystal, and at its heart was set a chamber wherein the light of the sun was caught and turned into a river of fire.

20 And by this river they drew the life-force from the ground, and from the air, and from the very bodies of men, storing it in vessels of white stone.

21 And the people groaned under the weight of their labors, for the giants compelled them to toil without rest, and many perished as their strength was taken from them.

22 And the waters of the earth began to change, for the drawing of power from the deep caused the fountains of the great deep to stir and rise.

23 Yet the fallen ones rejoiced, saying in their pride, "By this we shall be as the Most High, for we have found the key to the breath of creation."

24 And they built more pyramids across the face of the earth, from the islands of the rising sun to the shores of the setting waters, each tuned to the song of the stars.

25 And the faithful Watchers cried out to the Most High, saying, "Behold, the earth is defiled and the children of men are made slaves; will you not send your judgment?"

26 And there was a sign in the heavens, for the brightest star in the belt of the

Hunter grew red, and its light trembled like a heart in pain.

27 And the faithful knew that the day of reckoning drew near, for the Most High had set the heavens as a clock, and its hand was moving to the hour of wrath.

28 But the giants would not repent, and the fallen ones hardened their hearts, binding the nations together under one scepter, saying, "None can stand against us."

29 And they prepared a great feast to dedicate the Seventh Pyramid, which was set upon the hill of the Serpent, whose coils were cut into the land itself.

30 And they brought forth beasts of every kind, and the blood of the offering was poured into the channels of the pyramid, and its stones drank deep of the life.

31 And the sky darkened at noon, though no cloud was there, and a sound like the beating of a thousand drums was heard from the deep.

32 And the faithful fled to the mountains, for they knew the wrath of the Most High was at hand, and that the sea would rise to cleanse the land.

33 Yet the fallen ones laughed, for they trusted in the height of their towers and the cunning of their devices, believing the work of their hands could turn aside the decree of heaven.

34 And thus was the stage set for the great battle in heaven and on earth, for the voice of the Most High went forth to call His hosts to war.

35 And the tablets spake no more in this part, but the writing that follows tells of

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that battle and of the flood that ended the First Age of Man.

Chapter 14

1. And I, Agonabish, beheld the battle that was fought in the highest realm, where the children of light stood arrayed in their glory, and where the harmony of ages was broken by the rising of pride in the heart of one among them.

2. For there was one whose countenance shone with a brightness not his own, who had learned to draw into himself the very essence of light, and to drink from it as a man drinketh water from a deep spring.

3. And this power, once given in trust to serve the Most High, began to awaken in him the thought that he might set his throne beside the throne of God, or even rise to be equal with Him.

4. And it was shown unto me that if he remained in Heaven, he would gather unto himself such abundance of light that none could withstand him, for light is life, and in the fullness of it is dominion.

5. Therefore the councils of Heaven could not allow this thing to be, for if he grew to the measure of the Almighty, the order of creation itself would be undone, and the house of the Father would be cast into shadow.

6. And so was he seized, and the current of light was cut from him, and the cords that bound him to the Source were severed.

7. Then was he hurled down into the lower world, into the fields of time and the dust of men, to walk as a wanderer without a home.

8. Yet even in his fall, he remembered the

taste of light, and he devised within himself a cunning plan to take it again from those who still held it.

9. For the children of men yet walk connected to the great Source, though they know it not, and in their hearts there is a fountain from which light flows continually.

10. And he said within himself, "If I cannot drink from the river above, I will drink from the streams below; if I cannot touch the fire of the Throne, I will warm myself by the sparks in the souls of men."

11. Then did he set about to learn the ways of men, to know their fears and desires, that he might fashion for them a worship that seemed their own, yet served his hunger.

12. And I saw him go forth into the nations, not with open chains but with hidden cords, binding the hearts of men to himself through flattery and false promise.

13. For he found that when men praised him, a measure of their light entered into him, and it was to him as bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty.

14. And he rejoiced in this, saying, "If I can make the whole Earth sing my name, then shall my strength be as it was before the casting down."

15. And so he built for himself temples without roofs, and altars without stones, for his worship was carried not in the hands of the priests but in the breath of the people.

16. And his images were spread in every place, and men did not know that in bowing before their own desires they bowed also before him.

17. Yet I was shown that his hunger is without end, for the light he gathers is as

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water poured into a broken vessel, and it drains away, leaving him ever thirsting.

18. Therefore he labors without ceasing, moving from city to city, from king to king, whispering into the councils of the mighty and into the dreams of the lowly.

19. And in each heart that yields to him, he plants the seed of his own likeness, so that they too hunger for the praise of others, and thus feed him unawares.

20. And it was told to me that if ever the whole Earth should give him their worship, his vessel would be filled, and the gate to the heavens would open before him again.

21. Then would he ascend, clothed in stolen light, and his war against the Most High would be renewed with fury.

22. But until that day, he dwelleth among the nations as a stranger, cloaking his form in the masks of prophets, kings, and saviors, deceiving even the wise.

23. And many will say, "Here is the light of the world," not knowing that the light they see is the light of their own souls, reflected back to them for his gain.

24. For he is a mirror without mercy, taking in all and giving nothing, save the illusion of warmth and the promise of glory that fades in the dawn.

25. And his path is marked by the ruins of nations and the silence of the slain, for though he comes without sword, the wars of men are the fruit of his sowing.

26. I beheld him standing upon the high places of the Earth, looking toward the heavens with longing, yet turning back to the crowds below with a smile that concealed his despair.

27. And I heard him whisper, "One day

the gate will open; one day I will return to the throne from which I fell."

28. Yet the decree of the Most High is sure, that none shall enter save by the way of light freely given, and not by light stolen through deceit.

29. And I saw that the days will come when his hunger will drive him to greater works of wonder, calling down fire, raising images that speak, and commanding the stars to move from their places.

30. And the nations will marvel, saying, "Who is like unto this one? Who can stand against him?"

31. But they will not see the chain upon his neck, the chain that binds him to the dust, nor the darkness that follows in his steps.

32. And those who keep their light guarded will be as mountains in his path, which he cannot move, and rivers that he cannot cross.

33. For the light of the righteous is as a wall of fire about them, and their praise is given to the Source alone, leaving him without a foothold.

34. And in that day shall his power wane, and his strength shall fail, for the stream will be cut off and the vessel will remain empty.

35. Thus ends the vision of the one cast down, the gatherer of praise, who walks the Earth in the shadow of his former glory, awaiting the day of his final defeat.

Chapter 15

I. And after these things I saw the

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nations as a vast plain, and upon it men building towers of their own greatness, each seeking to rise above his neighbor.

2. Yet the one who was cast down moved among them unseen, whispering into their ears that their towers could reach the stars if only they would join them together under his rule.

3. And many said, "Surely this is wisdom, for our strength is multiplied when we are one," not perceiving that the unity they sought was to bind them under his chain.

4. He taught them the language of power, and in this tongue they spoke to one another, building laws, markets, and armies in his image.

5. And the towers rose higher than the mountains, their peaks piercing the clouds, and the people boasted that they had no need of the heavens.

6. But I saw that in the heart of each tower there was an altar, and upon each altar a mirror, and in each mirror his likeness was faintly seen.

7. The people brought their offerings before the mirrors — their labors, their songs, their prayers — and as they knelt, their light was drawn from them in streams unseen.

8. And he fed upon these streams as a river feeds the sea, ever swelling, yet never satisfied.

9. Then the voice of the Most High came to me, saying, "Write what thou seest, for the days are near when the harvest will be ripe, and the reapers will be sent forth."

10. And I beheld angels of fire standing at the four corners of the Earth, their hands

upon the hilt of the sword, waiting for the command.

11. Yet the people saw them not, for their eyes were filled with the brightness of the towers, and their ears with the sound of their own applause.

12. And the one who was cast down walked boldly now in the midst of the plain, for he had covered his face in the likeness of a shepherd, and carried a staff to appear as a friend.

13. He spoke tender words, saying, "I seek only your good; I will lead you to green pastures and still waters."

14. But his pasture was the field of his own gain, and his waters were the reflections of their own desires, deep enough to drown but not to drink.

15. And I heard the lament of the earth, for the soil was weary from the weight of their towers, and the rivers groaned beneath the dams they had built.

16. The skies grew heavy with smoke, and the stars were hidden, yet the people said, "We have made our own light; we have no need of the heavens to shine upon us."

17. And the angels of fire looked one to another, waiting, for the measure of iniquity was not yet full.

18. Then I saw a remnant, small and scattered, whose light was not drawn away, for they hid it in the chambers of their hearts where the mirrors could not reach.

19. These walked as strangers in the plain, speaking softly to one another of the river above and the city whose foundations are unshaken.

20. And the one who was cast down

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hated them, for their light was pure and could not be stolen, and their praise rose past the clouds to the throne of the Most High.

21. He sent forth his servants to entice them with gold, with honor, and with false visions, but they turned away, for they knew the voice of their shepherd.

22. And I saw him rage in the night, striking the earth with his staff, and the towers shook, and the people trembled, thinking the wrath of heaven was upon them.

23. Yet he said, “See how I save you from the wrath,” and they bowed lower than before, pouring their light into him without measure.

24. And so he grew in might, yet his chain remained unbroken, for the decree was still sealed against him.

25. Then came a sign in the heavens — a star burning red, moving against the order of the constellations — and those who were wise knew the day was near.

26. The one who was cast down beheld the star and knew also, and his hunger burned like a fire in dry grass, for he saw that his time was short.

27. He hastened his work, sending forth false prophets, healers, and kings, all bearing his mark though they claimed it not.

28. And the plain was filled with wonders — fire that fell from the air, images that walked and spoke, voices that called from the wind.

29. The people were astonished, and they worshiped, saying, “Surely the gods have returned to dwell among men.”

30. But the remnant knew it was the

shadow of the one who had fallen, and they fled into the wilderness, carrying their light as a hidden flame.

31. And the wilderness received them, and the mountains covered them, and the streams gave them drink, for the hand of the Most High was upon them.

32. Meanwhile, the towers in the plain grew taller still, but their foundations were cracked, and the stones whispered of the day they would fall.

33. The angels of fire lifted their swords, and the heavens waited in silence.

34. Then the voice of the Most High thundered across the plain, shaking the towers to their roots and opening the ground beneath them.

35. And thus the beginning of the end was set in motion, though the full harvest was yet to come.

Chapter 16 — The Council in Heaven

1. And it came to pass in the ages of light, before the worlds were bound in their orbits, that the hosts of Heaven gathered at the summons of the Father.

2. For a new sphere had been found, turning in the depths beyond the gates, clothed in green valleys and waters that danced in the sunlight.

3. The Father spoke, saying, “Behold the Earth. Within it shall be fashioned the place of testing, where the children of light may take upon them vessels of dust, and by so doing, gain the knowing of flesh and the endurance of mortality.”

4. And the assembly marveled at the sight, yet a shadow of unease passed among them.

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5. For the Father declared, “Whosoever will enter such a vessel must lay aside the memory of their first estate, for no spirit can dwell in both worlds at once.”

6. Murmurs arose, and the eyes of many turned toward the one whose brightness was great among them, who had been chief in song and in counsel.

7. And he rose, saying, “Father, why should the children be diminished? We are the vessels of light. Shall we be made as beasts, to forget the courts of Heaven? Let us go and return as we please, for we are not as the dust-born.”

8. But the Father answered, “It is not given unto you to return at will. For the trial is not in visiting, but in abiding. If you will not abide, you shall not know the fullness of the gift.”

9. Then the one was wroth, and his countenance darkened, though his lips smiled.

10. “If this is thy decree,” he said, “then many will choose not to go, and thy great design will be as a vessel unfilled.”

11. Yet the Father spoke again, “All shall choose for themselves, for love compels and does not bind. But the path is one, and it cannot be altered.”

12. And there arose a war of words in the council, some crying that the Father was just, and others that the Father was unjust.

13. For there were those who would rather remain in the eternal light, and those who desired the flesh though they feared the forgetting.

14. And the cast-down one — though not yet cast down — looked upon their division and counted who might follow him.

15. He whispered to many, “If we were as the Father, we would not suffer such loss. We would take the vessels and return, as masters of both realms.”

16. Some believed him, for his voice was sweet, and the memory of their glory was precious in their sight.

17. But others turned away, keeping their faith in the Father’s decree, though they did not understand its fullness.

18. And the air of Heaven was heavy with contention, for never before had such a dispute risen among the children of light.

19. The Father called again for silence, but the murmur did not cease.

20. Then was it known that a division was set in the midst of Heaven, though no sword had yet been drawn.

21. The one lifted his gaze toward the far reaches, where the Mother of Heaven dwelt in her chambers of birth-light.

22. For in her keeping was the mystery of generation, the key by which all vessels of light were brought forth.

23. And he said within himself, “If I possess her power, none shall deny me the right to go and return, and all shall follow me.”

24. But this thought he kept hidden, lest the hosts turn against him before his time.

25. The Father, knowing the secret of his heart, watched with grief but did not stay his hand, for the design must be fulfilled.

26. And the council ended in division, with no peace restored.

27. The one withdrew from the gathering, taking with him a band of those most loyal to his word.

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28. In the corridors of Heaven they whispered their plans, weaving a net of rebellion.

29. The faithful mourned, for they felt the storm rising though the skies were yet clear.

30. And the Father called His eldest, Yeshua, and spoke with Him in the stillness, saying, “The trial will come swiftly; prepare thyself.”

31. Yeshua bowed, saying, “Thy will be done, though the path be through sorrow.”

32. And the Father said, “So it must be, for the harvest of the Earth will not be gathered without cost.”

33. Thus the council was ended, but its echo remained in every chamber of Heaven.

34. And the cast-down one, still standing in the light, set his face toward the Mother’s dwelling.

35. For the next act in the war of Heaven had already begun.

Chapter 17 — The Murder of the Mother of Heaven

1. And it came to pass that the one whose heart had hardened set his steps toward the chambers of the Mother of Heaven, she who bore the rivers of first-light.

2. Her dwelling was girded with songs older than the stars, and the doorposts shone with living fire that knew her name.

3. Within, she tended the loom by which spirits are woven, singing the measure that gives each child their brightness and their path.

4. He entered with words smooth as oil, saying, “Mother, teach me the deeper law,

that I might ease the fear of many.”

5. But she, discerning the bruise within his glory, answered gently, “Child, there is no power that serves itself and yet remains light.”

6. He marveled at her calm and grew angrier, for her stillness judged him though she spoke no condemnation.

7. “If I held thy knowledge,” he thought, “I would free the host from the halter of forgetting, and all would praise me as father of a wiser order.”

8. Around her waist was a girdle of living threads, and at her breast a device wrought of remembrance, the key by which patterns pass from thought to form.

9. She guarded it not with force but with the oath of love, for its use outside the Father’s will rends worlds.

10. He feigned devotion, kneeling as a son, and asked to see the device that he might adore the workmanship of wisdom.

11. She lifted it and the room filled with dawns unborn, and he trembled—not with reverence but with hunger.

12. Swift as lightning reversed, he rose against her; and his hand, once anointed for praise, became a blade of taking.

13. The chambers gasped, the threads shuddered, and the songs broke upon themselves.

14. He struck, and the Mother’s form was pierced; yet even in piercing she reached to bless, saying, “Return, my child.”

15. But he refused, and with a cry that split the lattice of joy, he seized the device and laid claim to her light.

16. Her radiance poured into him like a river into a cavern, and the cavern roared

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back emptiness.

17. The heavens darkened at the edges, and silence spread like frost on a summer field.

18. Those who had pledged him fealty gazed in terror and wonder, for they had never seen the price of envy made visible.

19. The loom groaned as if worlds were giving way, and many threads snapped, falling like meteors into the deep.

20. He stood enlarged by stolen glory, but the light sat upon him like a crown of thorns, burning the brow that would not bow.

21. Then the cry of the Mother went up through every gate, and angels clutched their hearts as infants clutch breath.

22. The Father rose from His throne, and the pillars of peace shook at His rising.

23. Yeshua fell to His knees and wept, for the womb that birthed light had been violated.

24. The one boasted, “Now shall I fashion passage without forgetting, and I shall return from flesh as a lord of both realms.”

25. He lifted the device to command the patterns, but it would not obey theft; it answered only covenant.

26. In fury he pressed it harder, forcing designs without song, and the fabric tore where he wove.

27. A stain spread across the upper air, and hosts who loved not truth reached to touch it, thinking to become strong.

28. Many partook of the Mother’s departing radiance as carrion birds crowd a fallen bough, and they were sickened with a sweetness that could not heal.

29. The Father spoke once—only once—and the word was judgment that remembers love but will not spare the wound.

30. “Enough,” He said, and the halls of forever echoed with a thunder that had no sound and yet ended every argument.

31. The Mother’s breath returned to the Fountain, and her song went into the keeping of Yeshua, to be sung again at the mending of worlds.

32. The device closed like an eye, sealing itself against every hand but the Hand that made it.

33. The thief clutched a dead thing that burned him, and still he gloried, saying, “I am become as the Father.”

34. But his light was now hunger made visible, and his glory a famine wrapped in gold.

35. Thus was the first blood of Heaven shed, and the way of peace broken, and war became inevitable.

Chapter 18 — The Casting Down

1. The Father stretched forth His arm, and between light and taking He set a divide that cannot be bridged by theft.

2. He spoke and severed the cords by which the rebels drew breath from the Source, that they might not consume eternity with their emptiness.

3. The faithful trembled, for judgment is terrible even when it is true.

4. The rebellious exalted themselves a moment longer, as sparks leap when the log is split, and then their exalting failed.

5. A wind without air swept them from the courts, and their songs turned to ash

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upon their tongues.

6. They fell like stars cut loose from their places, each dragging a tail of regret they would not confess.

7. The one who murdered the Mother felt the great unfastening, and he howled in loss yet called it freedom.

8. The device in his hand was heavy as guilt, and its sealed eye regarded him with un pitying rest.

9. The firmament opened beneath them as a sea opens to swallow a burning city, and they plunged.

10. The Father marked them with a limit they could not cross, a chain forged of decree and distance.

11. Yeshua watched their descent and asked for mercy beyond justice; the Father granted mercy in time, not in denial.

12. The hosts looked to Yeshua and saw in His tears the promise of a road no thief could walk.

13. The rebels entered the lower airs and found a globe of blue and green, breathing mists like prayer.

14. The Earth received them not as children but as strangers; her fields knew their steps and withdrew their welcome.

15. For upon the Earth were lives already walking—beings not of their kind, fashioned in an older tale.

16. The fallen reached to take form, but the law stood before them like a wall of glass: vessels are begotten, not stolen.

17. In rage they pressed, and the glass became a mirror, and the mirror showed them their hunger—shape without root.

18. They learned the craft of shadow and of voice, how to lean upon the vessels of

others and borrow their limbs without right.

19. Possession became their art, and flattery their gate, and fear their rope.

20. The one vowed, “I will break the wall; I will find a body that obeys me as the stars once did.”

21. He taught the fallen to ride upon breath and blood, to nest in wounds, to lodge in praise.

22. Where they entered, memory frayed; where they nested, the will grew thin.

23. But they could not create a true child; every grip they made slipped, for theft cannot beget.

24. The Earth groaned, and her seas withdrew a little from the shore, as if to keep her heart from being touched.

25. The Father placed watchers at the gates of birth, that the pattern of life be kept against violation.

26. The fallen learned patience and intrigue, turning vessels against vessels and setting thrones upon the mouths of wells.

27. They built cults of forgetting, promising knowledge while erasing the paths that lead to it.

28. The one adorned himself with names, each a mask that fit the ache of an age.

29. Yet the chain remained, and the sealed device mocked his pretense with its sleep.

30. He swore by his emptiness to ascend by worship, to drink until he rose.

31. And multitudes, not seeing the chain, offered light by the handful, thinking they gave to the sky.

32. The faithful gathered quietly, keeping covenant in hidden rooms, teaching their

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children to shut the door when they pray.

33. Yeshua marked them with hope and laid upon His heart the weight of their deliverance.

34. The decree of casting was finished, and the heavens were still again, though wounded.

35. Thus were the rebels bound to Earth by their own hunger, and the hourglass of mercy turned.

Chapter 19 — The Possession and the Vow

1. In the dusk between centuries the fallen perfected the grammar of whispering, and cities learned to dream other people's dreams.

2. Kings became mediums for appetites they could not name, and peasants bore burdens that were not their own.

3. The one set his court in marketplaces and at altars, for coin and worship alike move on the breath of many.

4. He promised mastery without memory's veil, and paradise without patience, and men signed with their mouths.

5. The watchers at the gates kept the births, yet the fallen found the cradles; they could not author the child, but they could bend the lullaby.

6. They wrote laws in ink that looked like mercy but read like chains, and nations applauded their own bridles.

7. Some vessels resisted and were called fools; some yielded and were called wise; both bled.

8. Prophets rose and were bought; others rose and were broken; a few fled to deserts and remembered their names.

9. The one laughed, for resistance fed him with attention as much as worship.

10. He learned to spin scandal into incense and outrage into crowns.

11. He sought a perfect host—a body crafted to his measure, a temple not borrowed but enthroned.

12. He hunted bloodlines, overturned genealogies, and salted the wells of memory.

13. Yet every attempt ended in fracture, for pride cannot knit bone.

14. He turned again to the sealed device and cursed its silence; it lay like a stone that once was a star.

15. He swore by the ruin of love to force the heavens open with the chorus of a world enslaved.

16. The Earth shuddered, and the beasts lifted their heads as if a storm were walking upright.

17. In that hour Yeshua stood before the Father and said, "Send Me."

18. The Father answered, "Thou knowest the cost—forgetting, flesh, wound, and waiting."

19. Yeshua bowed: "Let Me bear what they cannot, that memory may be reborn as love and not as pride."

20. The hosts covered their faces, for beauty mixed with sorrow is bright beyond bearing.

21. The Father placed upon Him the song the Mother left, to be sung where nails are driven and gardens weep.

22. He took also a cup sealed from before the suns, in which mercy is fermented into courage.

23. He looked toward the Earth and saw not only rebels but also prisoners who had

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never chosen the chains that held them.

24. He said, "I will enter low that the low may rise; I will forget that the forgotten may be known."

25. The Father sent signs to the valleys and rumors to the hills, that the poor might be ready and the powerful confused.

26. The one heard the whisper of an arrival and sharpened his smiles; he prepared wonders of counterfeit daybreak.

27. He clothed his servants in white speeches and iron hands; he gilded the cages and tuned the choirs.

28. The faithful stitched hope into their garments and wrote psalms on their doorframes.

29. The watchers widened the gates at appointed hours, and midwives dreamed of ladders touching earth.

30. The stars bent their listening toward a stable no architect would notice.

31. The one gathered storms to drown that stable, but could not find the address written in humility.

32. The world inhaled, the hour struck, and a cry rose like a blade that heals as it cuts.

33. The fallen reeled, for the cry carried the Mother's melody hidden within sorrow.

34. The chain on the one grew hot, and he called it winter; yet spring began in secret.

35. Thus was the vow sealed: Yeshua to redeem, the thief to enthrone, and the Earth to witness.

Chapter 20 — The Great Secret Revealed

1. In the quiet after battle-songs, the

Father spoke a mystery to those who could bear it.

2. "Hear, children of dust and dawn: the race of men are not the first-born of Earth, nor are they strangers only."

3. "They are vessels of light fallen once before, gathered from an elder war, set upon this sphere for mending."

4. The faithful were astonished, and hope grew weighty, for destiny became repentance and glory became responsibility.

5. "Adam and Eve," said He, "are names given to a gate and a story, but your lineage runs deeper than the gardens you remember."

6. "You were kings who forgot the language of service, priests who bartered incense for applause, shepherds who priced the lambs."

7. "I set you here not to punish but to heal, that you might learn love where forgetting levels pride."

8. "Therefore the veil of memory is mercy; therefore time is the balm; therefore hunger teaches the taste of bread."

9. Yeshua confirmed the word with a look that recognized every face as if from home.

10. The one raged, for if men discovered they were fallen light, they would cease to feed him their worth.

11. He doubled his markets of identity, selling masks heavy as temples and cheap as trifles.

12. He taught that man is only mud or only star, never both, that balance be broken and appetite be law.

13. But the secret walked from mouth to mouth in caves and kitchens: "You are more

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than you remember, and your remembering is not pride but promise.”

14. Mothers hummed it over cradles; fathers carved it into lintels; children dreamt it in colors unnamed.

15. Prophets rose from gutters with eyes like rivers and spoke in parables that found their way through locked doors.

16. The fallen clung to bishops and bankers and bards, bribing eloquence to paint chains the color of sky.

17. Yeshua moved among the poor and the proud alike, finding in each the ember that survives the flood.

18. He taught the craft of guarding light: confession against rot, gratitude against rust, service against theft.

19. He showed that praise given upward closes the siphon downward; the thief starves where worship is true.

20. He unmasked wonders that dazzled but did not heal, and blessed small mercies that mended bones and names.

21. The one answered with spectacles—fire that obeyed slogans, images that spoke without breath, idols that wept by machinery.

22. Crowds gathered to the noise and left with their silence stolen.

23. Yet the secret endured, for it required no stage and feared no cellar.

24. Teachers of the secret refused crowns and received crosses of inconvenience, and their joy confused accountants of power.

25. The Earth herself whispered agreement, relieving the soil where justice walked and tightening against the tread of cruelty.

26. The watchers smiled for the first

time since the murder, for remembrance began to stitch the tear.

27. The device in the thief's hand throbbled at the edges, sensing a song it once loved and now could not sing.

28. He pressed it against the living to force patterns, but it blackened whatever it touched that would not consent.

29. The faithful learned to say yes with their whole selves and no with their whole selves, and this was called freedom.

30. The remnant grew, not in number alone but in weight, as gold grows heavy when purified.

31. The one sought a vessel again, a perfect counterfeit to carry his emptiness as if it were light.

32. He found none sufficient, so he began to assemble a man from the applause of nations.

33. The Father looked upon the work and set a season upon it, that it could not ripen before mercy had its chance.

34. Yeshua set His face toward the hill where endings turn, and the hill answered, “I know Thy footprints.”

35. Thus was the great secret sown in furrows of time, and the harvest drew nearer.

Chapter 21 — The Contest of Signs

1. Seasons turned like pages in a wind the world could not still, and the thief unleashed his pageantry.

2. He cast lights across the sky that spelled the names of kings and creeds, and men read worship in the alphabet of wonder.

3. He made statues breathe and laws sing,

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and the price of bread rise to the pitch of fear.

4. He marked a chosen city as his stage and raised a prince who could smile like morning while speaking like midnight.

5. Armies marched behind hymns to prosperity, and the poor were told to sing along or be called enemies of hope.

6. The faithful held clinics for wounds that do not show, and the clinics were mocked as places where dreams go to die.

7. Yeshua walked in markets unnoticed, buying nothing and paying everyone with attention that weighed more than coin.

8. He healed the rumor that breaks a mother, and the pride that breaks a son, and the despair that breaks a city.

9. The thief, seeing hearts close to siphons, tore open new ones with scandals crafted to fit every tribe.

10. He licensed anger and taxed kindness; he granted amnesty to envy and outlawed contentment.

11. Signs multiplied like mirrors, and the world forgot which face was first.

12. Yeshua gave fewer signs but truer: bread that satisfies because it is shared, water that remembers the river, words that return men to themselves.

13. The prince demanded a test, and Yeshua answered with silence heavy as mountains; the crowd called the silence weakness.

14. The faithful learned to endure being misunderstood, and in that endurance their light ceased to leak.

15. The thief unveiled a wonder never yet seen: a chorus of nations agreeing to worship uncertainty as certainty.

16. He crowned the chorus with a creed of appetite and named it liberation.

17. Many knelt to their own reflections and called it progress, and their reflections bowed to him.

18. The poor asked for bread and were given statistics; the rich asked for absolution and were given titles.

19. Yeshua blessed a child with a name no census could count and a future no market could price; the child laughed and the city felt a draft of spring.

20. The prince banned laughter that could not be monetized; the city complied and forgot that it had.

21. A storm gathered that was not weather, and compasses spun toward whatever fed the most screens.

22. The faithful hid psalms in recipes and courage in carpentry, that when temples closed, kitchens and workshops would open.

23. The thief announced a universal feast and served famine disguised as fireworks.

24. Yeshua broke a single loaf and a thousand debts; the accounting failed and the feast began where the famine ended.

25. The prince accused Him of theft and treason; He answered with a parable about a vineyard whose fence was kindness.

26. Courts were convened to try the parable for sedition; juries hung between paycheck and conscience.

27. The device flickered in the thief's hand as if remembering the Mother's hum; he struck it, and it went dark as stone again.

28. He swore to finish the tower of praise and climb it with the world beneath him as stairs.

29. Yeshua knelt in a garden and traded

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sweat for seed; angels harvested the tears and watered deserts with them.

30. The remnant kept watch through impatience, and impatience learned to purr like a lion tamed.

31. The thief advanced his prince to the summit and unveiled a throne shaped like a mirror.

32. Nations filed past to kiss their own faces and called it unity.

33. Yeshua shouldered a cross no carpenter could have built for another and made of it a gate.

34. The Earth held her breath; the sky leaned in; the chain on the thief hissed.

35. Thus the contest was joined in full: spectacle against sacrifice, mirrors against mercy, hunger against love.

7. The device in the thief's hand trembled as if a heartbeat

Chapter 22 — The Reckoning of Vessels

1. The hour appointed from before the rivers ran arrived as quietly as dew on iron.

2. Yeshua mounted the hill, and every wound the world had hidden came up to meet Him like old friends ashamed of their memory.

3. He embraced them all until shame ran out of speeches and pain forgot its lines.

4. The thief arranged a coronation in the chosen city; the prince wore ten acclamations and one doubt.

5. Trumpets announced the triumph of appetite, and the streets glowed with borrowed auras.

6. Yeshua stretched His arms and gathered time; thieves forgot how to steal and beggars remembered how to give.

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Agonabish. And his hands bore the weight of copper tablets, upon which was graven the account of a great confrontation in the City of the Gods. And these tablets he delivered into the keeping of the Midē'wiwin, to be read in the appointed time.

Chapter 1

1. And it came to pass, in the days when the land groaned and the waters lifted their voice, that the mountains were shaken from their ancient rest, and the plains were broken, and the cities of men were bowed to the dust.

2. For a great destruction had moved across the face of the North American continent, and there was no place where its shadow had not passed, neither the valleys nor the high places, neither the forests nor the rivers, neither the dwellings of the many nor the lodges of the few.

3. Some cities were swallowed by the earth, and their towers sank into the darkness, and the cries of the people were stilled beneath the weight of stone and soil.

4. And some were burned by fire that fell from the heavens, and the smoke thereof covered the sun, and the day was as night.

5. And some were drowned by waters that came in from the seas, and the waves carried away their walls and their marketplaces, and there was no remembrance of their former beauty save in the minds of those who escaped.

6. And the hearts of men failed them, for they beheld the power that was loosed, and they could not contend with it, neither could they hide from it.

The Record of the City of the Gods Brought upon Copper Tablets from the South to Agonabish, after the Great Destruction

And it came to pass, after the days when the North American continent was shaken, and cities fell to the earth and were swallowed, and the seas came upon the land, that a man of the Navajo Nation came to

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7. In those days there arose a man from among the Diné, from the clans of the south and the west, whose name in his tongue was Naashá, which is to say, He Who Walks.

8. And this man had in his keeping certain tablets of copper, upon which was engraved the record of a great sign and a great contention that had taken place in the City of the Gods, far to the south, in the lands between the mountains and the great waters.

9. And the engraving upon the copper was deep, that the words might not be lost, and the marks thereof shone in the light like the color of the setting sun upon the canyon walls.

10. And Naashá had received these tablets from the hand of the elders of his people, and they had received them from the hand of others, until their beginning was hidden in the mists of time.

11. But it was told among them that the first engraving had been made by those who beheld the matter with their own eyes, and whose hands were steady in the craft, that their testimony might endure beyond the days of their breath.

12. And the elders charged Naashá, saying: Go northward, beyond the rivers that divide the lands, until you come to the people who guard the bundles of the ancient medicine, for they are keepers of the songs and the sayings that were from the first.

13. And it was told to him that among them there was one named Agonabish, a scribe and a seer, who preserved in order the records that had come to him from many generations, and who would join this testimony to the others, that nothing be

lost.

14. Therefore Naashá set his face toward the north, and he went alone, for the way was perilous, and the land was filled with ruin, and the air carried the scent of burning and the taste of salt.

15. And he passed through valleys where the rivers had left their beds and wandered in the fields, and through forests where the trees lay as if a mighty wind had pressed them down to drink the earth.

16. And he saw the bones of cities, where the stones were blackened and the metal was twisted, and where no voice was heard but the whisper of the wind among the ruins.

17. And it came to pass that after many days and nights, he came to the land of the Great Lakes, where the waters are like the face of the sky, and the forests stand as guardians of the shore.

18. And there he found the lodge of the Midé'wiwin, the keepers of the medicine and the watchers of the fire, and they received him with honor, for they saw that he carried a burden of great worth.

19. And Naashá spoke to them, saying: I have come from the south, bearing the testimony of a great matter, engraved upon copper, which was delivered to me by the elders of my people, and they by those before them.

20. And it tells of a day when the heavens and the earth contended, and when two beings met in the City of the Gods — one clothed in the name of holiness but filled with the hunger of the pit, and one who came from the South in silence, whose steps were as the wind among the reeds.

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21. And the Midē'wiwin called for Agonabish, and when he came, they placed the tablets in his hands, and he looked upon them and beheld the engraving, and the light of the fire shone upon the copper, and the letters danced like living things.

22. And he knew that this was a true record, for the spirit of truth rested upon him, and his heart was moved within him to preserve it and to add it to the tablets of the north.

23. And the elders of the lodge made a feast, and they sang the songs of the four winds, and they blessed Naashá, and they blessed the tablets, and they blessed the work that was to come.

24. And Agonabish took the tablets into the lodge of records, and he sat before them in silence, and the fire beside him burned low, and the night passed, and the dawn came, and he did not move.

25. For he read the words engraved thereon, and in the reading his spirit traveled to the place of which they spoke, and he beheld with the eyes of the heart the City of the Gods, and the meeting of the two.

26. And he began to set the words in order, to be read by those who would come after, and to be joined to the great record of the deeds of the earth and the heavens.

27. And this is the beginning of that record, which was brought from the south upon copper, and delivered into the hands of Agonabish after the great destruction.

28. Let him who reads understand, for these are the words of witness and of warning, and they speak of light and of darkness, of pride and of humility, of the

power that destroys and the power that redeems.

29. And behold, this is the record of the City of the Gods.

Chapter 2 — The City of the Gods and the Fear of the People

1. And it came to pass that in the southlands there rose a city of stair and stone, whose terraces were as the ribs of a mountain, and whose plazas drank the light of the sun from dawn to dusk; and men called it the City of the Gods, for the works of many ages poured into its walls.

2. And a being came and stood upon the summit-temple, and his garments flashed as lightning on white water; yet in his eyes there was a depth that swallowed light, and the breath of those who beheld him grew thin.

3. And he stretched out his hands, and the air whirled into many pillars, so that the voice of the wind became a ring of lions about the city; and the people cried out, for they felt themselves as grass before the storm.

4. And he spoke loudly, saying, Bow yourselves before me, and make haste to repent, for I hold the reins of storm and the bit of the trembling earth; and who shall stand when I am angry?

5. And the stones underfoot shook at his word, and mothers took their children beneath their cloaks, and old men leaned upon their staves as reeds bend before a river in flood.

6. Then the governors of the city gathered, both from the canals and from the hill-palaces, and they spoke one to another

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with hurried speech; yet their words had no root, for fear had eaten the wisdom of council.

7. And there was among them a Maya lord, named Hun B'alam Ajaw—which is, One Jaguar, Sacred Lord—of a lineage from the eastward forests, and he said, Le t'an in Ajawil, u k'áat chi'ob le u nojoch k'uhul—Behold my lordship, yet I ask the counsel of the Holy.

8. And there was also a Mexica ruler, a Tlatoani of the valley peoples, called Cuāuhtli Teuctli—which is, Eagle Lord—and he said, Nicmaca in tlatolli, notoca Cuāuhtli Teuctli; in teōtl itech nimitlatlauhtia—I give my word; my name is Eagle Lord; of the divine matter I plead with you.

9. But the being upon the temple heard none of their pleading, for he loved only the sound that returned to him when men spoke his praise; and the circle of wind drew nearer, as if to lick salt from the faces of the fearful.

10. And among the multitudes there ran a whisper: that Yeshua, who had walked among the southern coasts and mountain paths, was coming northward, barefoot and cloaked in purple, and a purple wampum shell shone upon his breast as the dawn upon still water.

11. And some said, Behold the bringer of light; and others said, Can one without army stand against the chariot of the whirlwind?

12. Then the being lifted his arm, and the pillars of wind leaned toward the market-quarter; and the roofs of reed and the stalls of salt-fish groaned and scattered

as chaff before threshing.

13. And a mother cried, K'inam! K'inam!—Pain! Pain!—and gathered her little ones; and an elder of the calmecac—school of counsel—spoke to the youths, saying, Tlazohcamati in tonalli, xiquitztin, xiquimottlican—Be thankful for the day; stand up; be watchful.

14. But fear ran swifter than counsel, and men fell upon their knees to the dust and struck their foreheads upon the stone; and those who stood grew few.

15. And Hun B'alam Ajaw said to the governors, Ma' u p'u'uxtik; k'a'abet u telil t'aan—Do not be scattered; we need a single word.

16. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli answered, In titlatocān, timotlatlauhtia in moyöllōtl—āxcān, ma xiquitztin—As the ruling house, we entreat your hearts—now, stand.

17. But their words blew away, for the whirlwind loved to carry away counsel; and the being upon the height smiled as a jaguar smiles with the meat between its teeth.

18. Then a runner came from the south gate, breath like a bellows, feet bleeding, saying, Behold, the man of peace approaches; his steps are as the turnings of the seasons, and he does not hasten and does not delay.

19. And the people murmured, and hope pressed against fear like a sprout against stone; and some lifted their faces from the dust.

20. But the being cried aloud, saying, Who shall stand before me when I am angered? and he stamped with his heel, and the courtyard trembled so that the carvings

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upon the balustrades shed dust as snow from a cedar bough.

21. And he named himself lord of repentance, demanding knees, demanding faces to the ground, demanding the river of praise to flow into his thirst; for he drank light as a man in drought drinks from a cracked jar, never full.

22. Then a company of priests from far-off lakes came with painted faces and hands of incense, and they looked to the wind, and their incense fled as birds from a field newly hunted.

23. And a child cried, Where is the one who heals without threat? and her grandmother answered, Hush, for the storm eats questions.

24. And it came to pass that the day bent toward its middle, and heat rode the wind like a horse without bridle; and sweat became the river of the poor.

25. And the being lifted both hands, and the pillars of wind bowed toward him as dogs to a master; and he laughed, yet his laughter had no water in it.

26. Then a silence moved at the edge of the crowd, as when a deer steps from the shade and all leaves forget to stir; and men turned to see who came without herald and without weapon.

27. And Yeshua entered the plaza, barefoot upon the warmed stone, purple upon his shoulders, purple shell upon his breast; and the sun blinked, as if to measure him.

28. And he spoke not; and the hush that followed him was as the hush between wave and wave; and those whose hearts remembered mercy remembered also to

breathe.

29. And the being upon the temple leaned forward as a hawk stoops upon a field mouse, saying, At last; and he sharpened his voice as a knife upon whetstone.

30. And thus were the two set in sight of all: the one who drew breath from fear, and the one whose breath steadied storms; and the city became a scale to weigh glory and hunger.

31. And the elders of counsel, Maya and Mexica, stood together upon the stair and said within themselves, K'uhul, kenam?—Holy One, how shall it be?—and Ometeōtl, quenamiquiz?—Two-in-Divine, how will it be accomplished?

32. And the hearts of the people were as birds between snares and sky, waiting for the hand that chooses freedom.

Chapter 3 — The Approach of Yeshua and the Words of Challenge

1. And it came to pass that the being upon the height cried with a voice like bronze struck, saying, Who comes before me without bending the knee?

2. But Yeshua answered him not; and his gaze was as one who looks beyond hill to the dawn behind the hill.

3. And the being spoke again, Let the market fall silent; let the singers unstring their harps; let all tongues pour honor into my vessel; else I will yoke the wind and plow you under.

4. Then Hun B'alam Ajaw stepped forward with the staff of his house and spoke, In k'aaba' Hun B'alam Ajaw; t'an in wínikob'—ma' tu'ux puxsi'ik'al u paktik ti'

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p'uusil—My name is One Jaguar, Lord; I speak as a man—there is no place where the heart is made whole by fear.

5. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli lifted his hand and said, Nehua in Tlatoani, Cuāuhtli Teuctli; in tlatolli cualli, in yōllōtl mācualli; in axcan xiquimmati—I am the Speaker, Eagle Lord; let the word be good, the heart be good; know this now.

6. But the being mocked them, saying, Lords of leaves and dust, who taught you to plant without rain and reap without storm? Be wise and bow.

7. And the crowd wavered, for the pillars of wind pressed inward like ringed wolves; and a woman cried, Na'atik—ma'—I understand—not; and clutched her infant tight.

8. Then Yeshua raised his hand no higher than the height of a child's ear, and he said nothing; and at his stillness the pillars untwisted as threads cut from a loom.

9. And the wind fell flat upon the plaza, and dust dropped like forgotten birds from the sky; and the people drew breath as divers returning from the deep.

10. And the being's face altered as a mask altered by fire; and he cried, Who has loosened the cords of my strength?

11. And Yeshua spoke not, for his word in that hour was silence; and silence became the first teaching.

12. Then the being stamped with his heel, and the earth shook as when a great tree is felled; and the carvings upon the stair sang a stone-song and cracked a little at their edges.

13. And Yeshua lifted the same hand, and the trembling ceased as a harp-string ceases

when the finger rests upon it; and a coolness moved across the faces of the weary.

14. And Hun B'alam Ajaw whispered to his captains, Tāan u chi'bal u tuukul—u t'anilil le nojoch wíinik—Behold the thinking—it is the speech of the great man.

15. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli said to the nobles, Āmo titlahuel, āmo titlatlac; xiquitta—notza in tlamantli—We are not accursed, we are not at fault; look—he calls a different thing.

16. Then the being rose into the air, and the fear of the many rose with him as smoke rises when green wood burns; and he drew upon their trembling as a leech draws upon blood.

17. And men's knees watered, and their hands trembled, and the old forgot the names of their grandchildren; and the being smiled, for his hunger felt for a moment like fullness.

18. But Yeshua stretched forth his hand across the space between terror and hope, and the cords that had no color yet bound many hearts were cut as if by a blade that cannot be seen.

19. And the strength of the people returned to them as morning returns to houses that face the east; and they stood, and some wept with the sudden weight of their own bones.

20. And the being fell to the paving as a hawk falls when its wing strikes an unseen branch; and he rose angry, for his emptiness had been shown before all.

21. Then he ran upon Yeshua and struck his breast with a blow that once had shattered gates; but Yeshua moved not, and the blow sank into stillness as a thrown

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stone sinks in deep moss.

22. And the being cried, Worship me! for he knew no other word that did not feed him.

23. But Yeshua stood as an oak stands upon a hill, the roots holding counsel with dark waters; and he set his eyes upon the one who raged.

24. And Yeshua whispered, Why will you not let them go? and his whisper was heard by every mother and every child, as a flute is heard beyond the market noise.

25. And the being faltered, for the question sought a door within him that he had nailed shut; and he saw the door and feared it.

26. And Yeshua asked again, When will you let them go? and time pressed its ear to listen, for time had also been bound.

27. But the being hardened his heart as clay hardens when the potter's water is withheld; and he pressed his hand upon Yeshua's garment to drink light from the spring he hated.

28. And the vessel of Yeshua began to shine—not swiftly but as dawn eats shadow line upon line—and men watched the line advance and forgot to fear.

29. And Hun B'alam Ajaw said, K'uux in puxsi'ik'al—táan u náach'—le nojoch k'áak'náab'—My heart—behold—it is becoming a great sea of fire.

30. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli said, In yōllōtl ic ōmpa quiza—mochipa—moyōllōtl ilhuitl—My heart goes forth to that place—forever—my heart's feast day.

31. And thus did the approach become the contest, and the contest become a mirror for every soul; and the plaza was a book that

wrote itself upon the living.

32. And the people understood a little that silence can unmake storms, and that a question can be sharper than a sword.

Chapter 4 — The Contest in Full and the Witnesses of the Nations

1. And it came to pass that the being, seeing his strength fail in the eyes of the multitude, clothed himself in rage as in a second garment, and he lifted his hand to the sky as if to take the hinges from its doors.

2. And the sky darkened, and thunder put its fingers upon the rims of the mountains; and the being shouted, Behold, I am the master of wrath; surely you will bow.

3. And Yeshua lifted his hand—not in threat but in rest—and the thunder forgot its path, and the clouds remembered their first law, and went to water the fields beyond the city.

4. And the being cried, Then the earth shall be my servant; and he smote the paving with the heel of his foot, and the stones leaped as fish from a snare.

5. But Yeshua laid his palm upon the air, and the stones lay down again and slept as cattle sleep in shade at noon.

6. Then the being rose yet again into the air, higher than before, and drew breath from terror as a man drinks from many cups lined upon a festival table; and he swelled, and his shadow swelled with him.

7. And Yeshua reached, and cut the cords that no knife can see, and the borrowed light returned to those from whom it had been taken; and songs

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half-forgotten came back to the tongues of grandmothers.

8. And the being fell, and dust sprang up around him like the wings of locusts; and he coughed and tasted earth and hated its taste.

9. Then he ran like a spear cast by a champion and struck the chest of Yeshua; and the sound was as when a river meets a rock that has no age; and the river learns its own name.

10. And Yeshua moved not; and his face was a quietness that fathers remember when their sons are born.

11. And he whispered, Why will you not let them go? and time paused a second time to listen, and children ceased to fidget and did not know why.

12. And the being pressed with all his might to draw from Yeshua the light he could not bear; and the garment of flesh could no longer hold the wine of glory.

13. And Yeshua stood revealed as light—pure, patient, weighty as love—and the plaza filled with a whiteness that did not burn the eyes but opened them.

14. And the being stumbled backward as a man stumbles before the sea when he has lived all his days in wells; and his mouth forgot commands and remembered hunger.

15. Then Yeshua came near and embraced him as a brother long lost and longer angry; and he said, I will let you go.

16. And the vessel of the being shattered into light finer than flour and lighter than breath; and it became wind that lifted leaves without shaking branches; and the plaza tasted autumn in a summer hour.

17. And the storms stopped, and the trembling ceased, and the very dogs in the

market wagged their tails without knowing why.

18. And the people stood as those released from a dream that was heavy; and some wept without sound, and some laughed without permission, and some were still as stones baptized in river water.

19. Then Yeshua turned to the multitudes, and his light was like noon with the gentleness of evening; and he taught, not as scribes write price upon figs, but as rivers write path upon dust.

20. And he spoke of forgiveness that walks farther than revenge can run; and he spoke of mercy that does not weaken strength but teaches it to kneel; and he spoke of love that keeps the house when storms rattle every shutter.

21. And he said, I must go; and as I am now, so shall I come; brighter than the sun in its strength, gentle as bread in the hand of a child.

22. Then he called forth Hun B'alam Ajaw, and he touched his breast with a finger of light; and the heart of the lord shone as a lamp within a house where mothers grind maize at dawn.

23. And Yeshua said in the courtly speech of the eastward forests, Ajaw, a kúuchililil; in k'áax ka'an—k'áat chi' a k'áat—síisaj u k'áax in k'áat chi'ob'—Lord, be a place of rest; in the sky-forest—ask what you must—let the forest of asking be born.

24. And he called forth Cuāuhtli Teuctli, the Tlatoani, and set his light fingertip upon the eagle's breast; and the heart of the Speaker rang as a bell that calls a city to feast.

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25. And Yeshua said in the noble speech of the valley, Tlatoani, tlein tiquittaz, xiquitta in yöllōtl motēucyo; in teōtl in motlatolli—moyöllōtl mayanān—Speaker, what will you see? Look at the heart of your lordship; the Divine is your word—let your heart be mothering.

26. And he called also Itzam K'awiil, a scribe of the Maya, and Xōchimil, a priest of the valley gardens; and to each he gave a little of the fire that does not consume; and their eyes learned a new alphabet.

27. And Hun B'alam Ajaw bowed, saying, Bix yan in puku's'ik'al? K'áatech, K'uhul Wíinik, ma' a ts'áaik u k'uuchulil le wíinikob'—How shall my heart go? I ask you, Holy Man, do not withhold the resting-place from the people.

28. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli answered for himself and for many, In tlatolli xicmaca in tlālticpac, ma quēmah, ma yolpachōhuaia; xiquintlaçotla—timacehualtin, tlatlacātin—Give your word to the earth, yes, let it be planted in the heart; love them—the commoners, the sinners.

29. And Yeshua lifted both hands and blessed the city, saying, Let your markets learn generosity; let your courts learn hearing; let your wars forget their thirst.

30. And he set watchers among the people, men and women whose hands knew looms and fields and wounds; and to each he said, Keep the light within as one keeps a coal in winter.

31. And the wind began to tremble with a music that raised the hair upon forearms; and the air moved in ripples, though no bird flew and no drum sounded.

32. And in the twinkling of an eye he

became as a single point of brightness; and the point leapt like a salmon leaping a fall; and he was gone from their sight.

33. And the plaza stood listening after the music was finished, as a widow listens after the last footstep; and then the city remembered its breath.

34. And Hun B'alam Ajaw said to Itzam K'awiil, T'aan k'ajóoltik—uutstal—k'áat chí'ob'—We will make the word known—gently—asking.

35. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli said to Xōchimil, Ma xiquicnotza in yöllōtl; xiquinmaca atl, xiquinmaca tlaxcalli; in yancuic tonalli—Do not harden your heart; give them water, give them bread; it is a new day.

Chapter 5 — The Teaching After the Light

1. And it came to pass that after the brightness was withdrawn from their sight, the plaza remembered the sound of sandals and the weight of breath, for the light had left peace behind as dew remains after a night of stars, and the children touched the stones as if they were new stones and yet the old stones also, and the mothers pressed their foreheads to the ground not in fear but in gratitude that trembled their shoulders like reeds that tremble when the river says, “Rest.”

2. And Hun B'alam Ajaw called his captains and his keepers of measures, and he said, Ma' t'aan a p'u'utsik; k'áat in wíinikil le t'an u yáaxilil—Do not speak scattered; I ask our people for the first word: let it be gentleness that begins the day.

3. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli gathered the

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nobles and the market judges and the scribes of tribute, saying, Xiquimmati in tlamantli: ĩn yöllōtl cualli, ĩn tlatolli cualli; monequi ticuācaltia in altepetl—Understand the matter: good heart, good word; it is necessary to rebuild the city.

4. Then Itzam K'awiil, the scribe, stood with the bark-paper bundle of his fathers and a reed pen sharpened like a thorn of ceiba, and he asked, Bix u k'áat chí'ob' in Ajaw? Ma' k'áat t'aanilil suuk; k'áat t'aanilil síisal—What do you ask, my Lord? Do not ask for smoke of speech; ask for clarity of speech.

5. And Xōchimīl, the priest of gardens, came carrying seeds in a woven pouch and water in a gourd blackened by many fires, saying, Atl in ticmaca, tlxacalli in ticmaca, ma āmo zan tlatōcayotl—We give water, we give bread, let it not be only rulership.

6. And the people pressed nearer as pigeons press nearer when grain is cast upon the dust, and their eyes were no longer hunted by storms but were lamps catching small flames from one another, and there was murmur of learning and not murmur of fear.

7. Then Hun B'alam Ajaw spoke a parable in the courtly tongue, Le k'áak'náab' ku ts'u'uk le ak'ab'; ma' uchben; t'u'ux uts' in nak'; bix a puksi'ik'al?—This sea of fire ends the night; not because it is old, but because the heart receives it; how goes your heart?

8. And the elders answered, U puksi'ik'al ka'ach tu ka'ambal—la' lob; bey xan—la' uts; tucha'an u k'áat?—Our heart once in learning—was bad; now also—it is better; what is the asking?

9. Cuāuhtli Teuctli lifted his staff engraved with eagle feathers and said, Āmo titemacaz miquiniliz; xiquinemoca yöllōtl; tla xiquitta, ĩn teōtl ĩtech tōca—We shall not give death; walk with heart; behold, the Divine is within our name.

10. And he set men to counting not tribute but the widows and the orphans and the craftsmen whose benches had been overturned by the wind; and he said, Tlamantli quēmah: xiquinmaca in atl, quilítl, mälli; xiquinmaca yöllōtl ĩhuān tlatolli—Truly: give them water, greens, maize; give them heart and word.

11. And a company of women who mended nets came to the stair, and one named Ixik Nikte'—Lady Flower—spoke, Tí'a'al in na'atik; ma' u yáanalil k'ahk'; k'áat u yáanalil ja'—I understand; let not fire be master; let water be the master.

12. Xōchimīl answered, Quēmah, cihuātl; xiquimpoloa in xihuitl ĩhuān xiquimpoloa in atl ixtenōn; tlaōlli xiquinmaca in huehuētlātoāni—Truly, woman; give your herbs and set water before their faces; give maize to the elder who speaks wisdom.

13. And the youths of the calmecac lifted their reed flutes and played not war songs but the song of market-morning when doors open like lilies, and men remembered that buying and selling could be kindness if the scale leaned to mercy, and the judges of the market felt their palms grow warm as if coins had become bread in their hands.

14. And Itzam K'awiil said, In tz'íib' k'áat tu'ux u puksi'ik'alil; ma' tu'ux u nohoch u yáax k'áak'náab'; t'aan u yáakunaj—My writing seeks where the heart is; not where the old great sea of fire is; it speaks love.

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15. Then Hun B'alam Ajaw appointed three men and three women to carry the teaching into the forest hamlets, and he named them B'olon Tun, K'inich Ha', Sak Ch'een, Ixik Ch'o', Ixik Chanil, Ixik Paalil, and he laid a cord of cotton upon each wrist as token that their burden was light if their hearts leaned toward one another.

16. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli likewise appointed messengers to the canal towns and the lake islands: Tōchtli Ācatl, Iztāc Tepētl, Mīxcōātl, Cihuātzin Ātl, Xōchitzin, Yōlotzin; and he said, Ānquimizque in yōllōtl motēucyo: āmo titechquitziaz in monequi—Carry your lordship of heart: do not seek what is not needed.

17. And there arose a dispute among certain merchants who desired to set a price upon the teaching, saying, Shall we not sell scrolls and seals, for men love to hold the thing they praise? and their hands counted profit as a drunkard counts cups while thirst increases.

18. But Xōchimil stood in the market gate and scattered seed from his palm, saying, In tlatolli Ihuān in tonalli—āxcān quēmah—monequi tlapōhualli īxpan teōtl? āmo—The word and the day—now indeed—do they require a toll before the Divine? No.

19. And a strong man whose arm had been hired to frighten widows lowered his eyes and wept, and he said, Nehua in tēcpatl in nimitspāca—āmo nicmāhuiz—I am a flint blade washed in blood—I am not glorified, and he broke his own club and carried water instead.

20. Then Hun B'alam Ajaw called the counselors to the upper portico where shade

made wisdom grow, and he said, Tin wáaj—yéetel t'aan—k'a'abet u máansaj le ba'ax; ma' u ch'áaj le ba'ax—With bread—and word—it is necessary to distribute the thing; not to buy the thing.

21. And Itzam K'awiil began to carve small signs upon thin sheets of copper beaten by humble smiths, that a witness might travel where the mouth could not go, and he etched not thunder but dew, not crowns but opened hands; and he wrote, Le tz'ib' ma' k'óoben tu yáanalil puksi'ik'al—This writing is not made to rule the heart, and his hand refused ornaments that praised his hand.

22. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli re-ordered the guard, casting out men who loved bribe more than law; and he commanded, Ma xiquimmati in cenca cualli tetlācatl aic cenca cualli tlachohua—Know this: the very good man is never a very good oppressor.

23. And a boy climbed the stair to where the being had stood, and he found there a small shard of glass that had fallen from a mirror once used to make men love their own faces; and he brought it to his mother, and she said, Ma' a wilik—Do not look; and yet she smiled because the boy chose offering over gazing.

24. In those days the healers learned to set hands without price upon wounds that were not of bone and not of skin but of memory, and they said to the sorrowing, Āmo timiquizque in teyōcoyani; xiquimmaca yolōtl—We will not let the makers of pity kill you; give heart.

25. And the fishermen who had fled from storms returned to the lake and found the water remembering its course, and the

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reeds lifted their cool voices, and they said to one another, The wind is not master when quiet asks it to sit.

26. And a council was held at evening when the swifts stitch the air with their small bodies, and the lamps were lit not to make day but to honor night, and Hun B'alam Ajaw said, Káa t'aan ten—t'aanil u pu'uk'—u báalam u yéetel le nojoch wíinik—Let me speak—the speech of stomach—the jaguar and the great man; and he meant that power must learn to eat last.

27. Cuāuhtli Teuctli answered, Nehua nitlātoā: monequi tictlaocoltia in macehualtin; in yolōtl cualli ammōyōllōhuan—I say this: we must show mercy to the commoners; their good heart is our heart.

28. And Ixik Nikte' brought forward the women who ground maize, and they set tortillas upon mats in the portico for strangers first, and the strangers ate, and their eyes watered as onions water eyes, not from pain but from remembering a house they had not yet built.

29. Then Itzam K'awiil spoke softly, Ma' p'atikech tu'ux a bin; le t'aan k'ajóoltik—u puksi'ik'al a yáanal; tu tin tz'uib'—u yóok'ol kaab'—Do not abandon where you go; the word we will make known—the heart is your ruler; I will write it—upon the earth.

30. And the night drew its dark blanket over the city, and the stars looked like nails that hold the roof of the world to its beams; and the people lay down with their faces turned to the east, ready to rise when light rose, and fear did not sleep with them that night.

31. And rumor spread to provinces and

to paths in the jungle that have no names but are known to deer, and men said, The whirlwind has forgotten his wages, and the city pays now in mercy.

32. And the elders decided that on the third day they would send messengers to all compass points with the teaching and with small copper signs, that even if the voice fails, the witness will not fail; and they tied knots in cords to count the days and to remember the vow.

33. And a widow came to Xōchimil and said, Nehua noxōchimilli—ēhua—īpan tlālli—āxcān—nicnequi yancuic tlatolli—I am a little garden—upright—upon the earth—now—I desire a new word; and he placed seeds in her hand and said, Mā xiquittaz in cuātlazōtla—See love grow.

34. Thus was the day after the light made like a first day again, and the city learned that peace is a craft and not a rumor; and the keepers of light prepared to be sent.

35. And this is the teaching after the light, according to the copper that Naashá bore northward when the seas rose and the roads broke and the mountains spoke.

Chapter 6 — The Sending of the Keepers and the Covenant of Copper

1. And it came to pass on the morning appointed that the plaza was swept and the stairs washed, and reeds were laid for shade where old men sit, and water jars were filled until their clay mouths laughed, and the people gathered as at a marriage of clans where music draws even the shy from doorways.

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2. And Hun B'alam Ajaw stood at the eastern stair with the staff of his house, and Cuāuhtli Teuctli stood at the western stair with the staff of his valley, and between them Itzam K'awiil and Xōchimil lifted a copper tablet that shone like dawn upon river stones.

3. And Itzam K'awiil read from the incised lines: Le'—tz'ib'—u ts'áatal tu ja'ats' le báaxalilil—u yáakunaj—u na'at—u ts'o'okol—u k'áat chi'ob'—This writing—placed into a hard thing—is for play of love, understanding, and end of hunger, and his voice was like water upon flat rock.

4. And Xōchimil added in the valley tongue, In tlatolli ihuān in tequitiāliz; in yōllōtl ihuān in tōnalli; in tlazōtl in nemiliz—The word and the work; the heart and the day; the belovedness of life.

5. Then Hun B'alam Ajaw called the names of those who would go: B'olon Tun, K'inich Ha', Sak Ch'een, Ixik Ch'o', Ixik Chanil, Ixik Paalil; and he placed in their hands small cords knotted seven-fold, saying, Tuláakal u jats'uts—ka' si'ipil—u puksi'ik'al—k'a'abet u ts'ikel k'áat chi'ob'—All goodness—twice—heart—must be spilled as asking; and they bowed.

6. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli named likewise those who would carry the teaching to the lake islands and the valley gates: Tōchtli Ācatl, Iztāc Tepētl, Míxcōātl, Cihuātzin Ātl, Xōchitzin, Yōlotzin; and he gave each a small copper sign and said, Ma xiquixpanōz tlatlacolli; xiquimpanoliz teōtl; xiquimpanoliz tlazōtl—Do not parade sin; parade the Divine; parade belovedness.

7. Then a dispute arose concerning the road, for some said, Let the Maya go east and the Mexica west, and others said, Let them mix as waters mix at the joining of rivers; and their voices braided and unbraided as straw braids and unbraids in impatient hands.

8. Hun B'alam Ajaw lifted his hand and said, Ka' a jats'uts—mix—ma' u ts'aaj; le' tu'uxil k'áat—u tsol—Let the goodness—mix—without injury; this is the place the asking will be arranged.

9. Cuāuhtli Teuctli answered, Quēmah; in altepetl niman ye tlalli—in atl ihuān in xīhuatl mocuepa—xiquimitzmixpoloā in chīchīltic tlapalli—Truly; the city is swiftly the earth—the water and the grass return—destroy not the red color of kinship.

10. And so it was decided they would go in pairs across tongues and across customs, that one would be the left hand and the other the right, and neither would be ashamed of being the left when it was time to give bread or the right when it was time to wash feet.

11. Then Itzam K'awiil brought forth two more copper tablets not yet written, and he placed them upon a low cedar table, and he said, Tin tz'ib'—mixba'al—t'aan a wíinikob'; k'áat u náats' a puksi'ik'al—I will write—not the many words of men; I ask your hearts to become near.

12. And the elders of both houses came and spoke in turns, each giving a single word to be cut into the copper: Mercy, Bread, Water, Listening, Repair, Truth, Patience, Courage, Kinship, Light; and he arranged them as seeds are arranged upon a

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tray when a garden is planned by grandmothers.

13. And a boy named Ātl Tlecutl, whose father shaped pots, asked if he might give a word, and he said, Āmo nimitlatlania tlamantli; nicnequi nepantla—I do not ask for a thing; I want the in-between; and the elders laughed softly and said, This is wisdom beyond whiskers.

14. Then Hun B'alam Ajaw spoke to the messengers in the courtly tongue, Ma' a k'uchpajal tu yáanalil báalam; k'áat le wínikob' k'éek'en u puksi'ik'al—Do not arrive as a jaguar over men; ask that the people let their hearts ripen.

15. Cuāuhtli Teuctli added, Āmo xiquinnahuati in tlācatl; ma xiquintēchcahui; xiquinpāqui in yōllōtl—Do not command the people; do not shame them; make their hearts rejoice.

16. Then rose Ixik Nikte', who had brought the women of the stones, and she said, Le meyaj—u t'an in na'; ma' u yáanalil tu'ux; u yáanalil ti'—This work—my mother's word; it is not mastered by “where”; it is mastered by “among.”

17. And Xōchimīl placed a gourd of water upon each pair's hands, saying, Atl xiquimmaca ihuān atl xiquiatza; xiquitlacōz in tlālli; mā xiquinhuīca in ehecatl āxcan—Give water and pour water; soak the earth; do not drag the wind today.

18. And Itzam K'awiil cut a small sign of seven notches on the lower edge of each tablet, that the Seven Directions might be remembered without paint and without color, and he said, Tu'ux wínik—Tu'ux Ka'an—Tu'ux Lu'um—Tu'ux Puksi'ik'al—Where man—Where

Sky—Where Earth—Where Heart, and he smiled as one who has seen a riddle tell itself.

19. And a merchant whose house had survived the storm asked tremblingly, Must I return the things I gained when my neighbor's walls fell? and the plaza went silent as when birds decide whether to light or to continue.

20. Hun B'alam Ajaw answered, K'uchul u ts'e'elel—k'uchul u ma'alob—Let return arrive—let good arrive; and Cuāuhtli Teuctli added, Xiquimoyolpachōhuaia; xiquimmaca, ānmoqualli—Turn your heart back; give, you who are good; and the merchant bowed and brought baskets to the widows.

21. Then there came runners from the outskirts with word that men in masks were gathering to sell fear again for a price, and that they urged the people to call for the whirlwind to return because whirlwind makes buyers hurry.

22. Xōchimīl said, Āmo xiquinnēxtia; mā xiquinācatlaz in tlālli; xiquimmaca in xōchitl ihuān in atl—Do not display them; starve the ground under them; give flowers and water, and when men found no market for dread, dread loosened its belt and sat down far away.

23. And the Tlatoani gathered his captains and said, Nehua nitlātoā: titechmoucuitlahuizque in tlanēxtli; āmo īpan tlamantli fiero—I say this: we will guard the light; not upon ugly business, and he set watch by night not to fight men but to rescue counsel from weariness.

24. Then Hun B'alam Ajaw said to Itzam K'awiil, K'áat in wáaj: tin p'atikech tu'ux a

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bin; ku k'áat u puksi'ik'al u ts'o'okol; k'áatech a tz'íib' tu k'ub; k'áatech—I ask this: when I leave you, I leave you where you go; the heart seeks its end; write it in the palm; I ask you.

25. And Itzam K'awiil etched upon the second tablet a beginning of the story of the City of the Gods and the confrontation of the two, carving long breath into short lines so they might be carried, and he sealed the edge with a burnished mark that looked like a seed sleeping.

26. And the Tlatoani took counsel with Yōlotzin and Xōchitzin, saying, Xiquixtia in tlatolli ipan tōcalco, ipan tēocalco; in yōllōtl quēmah quēmah—Let the word come forth in our house and in the house of the Divine; the heart truly, truly; and they prepared places of quiet under porticoes for the poor to speak.

27. And a youth named B'alam Chan—Jaguar-Serpent—asked, Bix u yooch' le puksi'ik'al—le k'áak'náab' ka'ach?—How do we balance the heart—the sea of fire once? and Hun B'alam Ajaw answered, Tu yich—tu noj—tu yáakunaj; u tsol k'áax—With seeing—with weight—with love: the forest of balance.

28. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli told a parable: Nōchipa cē cuāuhtli īhuān cē cuixpalli—āxcān in cuāuhtli mocuepaz ipan cuixpalli, in cuixpalli quēmah ixtōcā in cuāuhtli—Always there is an eagle and a grasshopper—now the eagle must return upon the grass; the grass is truly the eagle's face; and the boys laughed and remembered not to despise little things.

29. Then the pairs knelt in the plaza, and women set hands upon their shoulders and

men set hands upon their heads, and the blessing ran like light down cords of hair and cords of knotted cotton, and tears were the anointing oil of the hour.

30. And the messengers rose and took the roads—some to river, some to mountain, some to the dust that never stops rising—and the city watched them until distance swallowed colors and left only the shape of hope.

31. And Naashá, the walker from the Diné, who would one day bear the copper north, stood at the edge of the crowd and learned the names by heart, and he said within himself, The day will come when mountains will argue with the sea; I will remember these names when I cross their quarrel.

32. And at evening Itzam K'awiil wrapped the tablets in deerskin and sealed them with a twist of fiber taken from a mat woven by a widow, that the record might be clothed in humility; and he placed them where the moonlight could not boast over them.

33. In the night a wind passed over the roofs and did not shout; it spoke a little as mothers speak to sleeping children; and those who woke and listened found that their fear had gone to a place without doors.

34. In the morning Hun B'alam Ajaw and Cuāuhtli Teuctli met upon the stair where the being had once stood, and they looked out upon a city making bread, and they said together in their tongues, Le puksi'ik'al k'áatech—Ma xiquimmati; in yōllōtl—quēmah—We ask the heart; do not forget; the heart—truly.

35. Thus were the keepers sent, thus was

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the covenant of copper begun, and thus did the City of the Gods choose to be a house rather than a stage; and this is the record that would travel with Naashá when the great destruction shook the lands and the north received the burden under the Seal of the Seven.

Chapter 7 — The Two Roads: Rivers and Hills

1. And it came to pass that the pairs departed at dawn, when birds stitch the first seam of the day, and the city stood upon terraces like a mother upon a threshold, watching children set out with bread and blessing.

2. B'olon Tun with Tōchtli Ācatl took the river road where canoes dream of distance; Ixik Ch'o' with Yōlotzin turned toward the hill shrines where clouds kneel; and others sought the dust where wind writes its own name.

3. They bore small copper signs with seven notches and cords knotted seven-fold, and the notches and knots remembered what mouths forget when hunger interrupts counsel.

4. In the first village the market stirred with suspicion as a potters' wheel stirs mud, and men said, Who profits from peace? and women said, Who loses from bread?

5. B'olon Tun spoke gently, Ma' a p'u'utsik t'aan; in k'aaba'—u than in Ajaw—yáakunaj—Do not scatter speech; my name—the word of my Lord—is love; and he set down water before he spoke again.

6. Tōchtli Ācatl added, Āmo xiquinnāhuati in tlācatl; xiquinpāqui in

yōllōtl—Do not command the people; make the heart rejoice; and the elders measured his words as weavers measure warp.

7. But certain men with masked faces sold fear as torches are sold at night, and they whispered that whirlwind returns to those who mock it; and buyers gathered, for dread has its market.

8. Yōlotzin sang a low song without drum, and Ixik Ch'o' ground maize in a public place where pride did not like to look; and children came because children obey song and bread sooner than slogans.

9. A boy named Chak Ha' brought a broken flute, and B'olon Tun bound it with cotton and breath; and fear loosened his teeth and dropped them like poor coins upon the dust.

10. Then a council was held under a ceiba that remembers the weight of gods, and a masked man accused the messengers of stealing thunder's job; and his words were sharp and tired together.

11. Tōchtli Ācatl answered, In teōtl āxcān quēmah—moyōllōtl ihuān nemiliz—āmo tlein nehnemi in ehecatl titechpiyaz—The Divine now truly—your heart and life—there is nothing for the wind we must keep; and he showed empty hands that had learned to give.

12. The mask seller blushed as clay blushing in fire, for he found no price for shame; and he set down his bundle and asked for seed.

13. And it came to pass that bread was broken in the square, and the first loaf went to a stranger whose sandals were cities and whose eyes were rivers; and they named him Naashá, which is to say, He Who

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Walks.

14. Naashá listened more than he spoke, and when he spoke he said, The north is a mouth of hunger and a hand of help; I will carry what must be carried when the hour arrives.

15. That night the wind forgot to boast and learned to breathe; and the village slept as tools sleep when set in order.

16. On the second day Ixik Chanil and Xōchitzin came to a hill place where offerings had been taught to fear, and a small shrine shivered in habit.

17. They cleaned the steps with water before they spoke, and Ixik Chanil said, Le'—sut u puksi'ik'al—ma' u k'ahk' u t'aan—This—sweep the heart—not fire the speech; and the old priest smiled because he was tired of heat.

18. Xōchitzin taught the children to plant flowers where curses used to sit, and petals out-argued oaths as dawn out-argues night without raising its voice.

19. A quarrel rose between clans about the price of forgiveness, for one wanted receipt and one wanted rest; and papers fluttered like angry birds.

20. B'olon Tun told them of the city where storms learned manners; Tōchtli Ācatl told them of the plaza where questions won; and they wrote nothing upon paper, but upon bread they wrote generosity with fingers.

21. On the third day Mixcōātl with Sak Ch'een reached a ford where soldiers taxed footsteps and called it protection; and fear paid in small coins of dignity.

22. Sak Ch'een bowed to the captain and said, K'áat u máansaj u puksi'ik'al—máan a

k'áat—le ba'ax a p'iitil—Let the heart be distributed—distribute asking—not burdens; but his politeness did not make the toll gate disappear.

23. Mixcōātl then said, Nehua nicmaca nēci—āmo tictēcpanaz in yōllōtl—I offer myself for seeing—do not step on the heart; and he removed his own cloak and laid it across the toll as a bridge the poor might cross.

24. The captain remembered his mother's cupboard and how hunger looked at her hands; and he raised the bar and said, Ma mocuepaz—īpan tlālli—moyōllōtl—Let it return—upon the earth—your heart; and toll silenced itself like a loud child.

25. By evening the two roads had become many roads, for good news multiplies by walking; and the people of the canals sent reeds to the hill people, and the hill people sent stones to steady the canals.

26. Naashá wrote names upon memory as a scribe writes upon bark: B'olon Tun, Tōchtli Ācatl, Ixik Ch'o', Yōlotzin, Mixcōātl, Sak Ch'een, and many more, for the day would come when testimony needs a mouth that did not sleep.

27. He dreamed that night of copper warmed by prayer and of a path that crossed the quarrel of sea and mountain; and he woke with tears that dried before anyone asked.

28. The pairs returned to the city after days counted by kindness, not by sun, and their feet told stories their mouths did not yet know how to speak.

29. Hun B'alam Ajaw and Cuāuhtli Teuctli received them upon the stair, and the stair remembered the day pride fell; and

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the people sang the quiet song that feeds work.

30. And it was resolved that messengers must go farther than rumor can run, even to the edges where maps turn into guessing; and Naashá said, When the hour is heavy, put copper on my shoulders.

31. Thus were the two roads made many, and many made one, as streams teach rivers to be brave; and the City of the Gods exhaled without trembling.

32. And the copper tablets waited in the dark like seeds wait in earth, already green in secret.

Chapter 8 — Tumult, Persecution, and Mending

1. And it came to pass that not all doors opened to song; some opened to stones, and some did not open, and the hinges complained their old complaints.

2. In a lake town a herald mocked the messengers and sold laughter with barbs, and the crowd bought both; for mockery is cheaper than bread and fills the mouth without touching the belly.

3. Cihuātzin Ātl stood and drank the insults like bitter tea and did not spit; and the crowd grew confused, for rage wants rage to justify itself.

4. A youth threw a stone that remembered war; it struck Cihuātzin's brow and red words flowed; and Yōlotzin tore her own shawl to bind the wound, and thereby bound the town's shame.

5. Cihuātzin said softly, Āmo nicchīhua in tlatatlaōcoya; nicchīhua cualli in calli—I do not make pity for people; I make a good house; and the stone thrower began to weep

without permission.

6. In a forest hamlet a plague of forgetting took elders' names from them; and Ixik Paalil baked memory into small cakes and fed them with stories ground fine as maize; and some names returned as swallows return to the same wall.

7. A band of men with hunger in their swords demanded tax upon light; and Tōchtli Ācatl said, Tlein ticmonequi? yōllōtl; tlein tictlālia? tlazōtl—What do we want? heart; what do we set up? belovedness; and he set down his staff and opened his hands.

8. They struck him twice and found nothing to rob, for his poverty had robbed theft before theft arrived; and shame broke their wrists and mended them straighter.

9. Hun B'alam Ajaw went himself to a border town where judges traded verdicts for spice; and he sat without title upon a low stool until their eyes were tired of looking down, and justice remembered the right height.

10. Cuāuhtli Teuctli tore up decrees that fattened prisons and starved households, and he declared, Āmo titlācatl titechpolōz īpan in tlanēxtli; xiquinmaca īn xōchitl īhuān īn atl—Do not lose people in the light of show; give them flowers and water; and the jailer learned to plant.

11. A priest of old thunder called Tetzāuh cursed the messengers and promised spectacle if they would sell their quiet; and Xōchimīl answered, Atl titēchpāca—īpan tonalli; in ehecatl monequi cualli tlahueliloc—Water washes us—in the day; the wind needs good mischief; and he laughed until the curse forgot its lines.

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12. Itzam K'awiil carved new plates for distant houses, and his lines became simpler as truth becomes simpler when pride tires; and he refused ornament until copper shone with humility.

13. A famine of coin struck a valley that had never been hungry; markets remembered bread; pride remembered knees; and the messengers learned to teach by planting, not by speeches that cost more than seed.

14. Two clans fought over the memory of a miracle; one claimed receipt, the other claimed witness; and Ixik Chanil set water between them and said, *Bejla'e' ma' a jootik t'aan; a su'uk u ja'—a ch'o' u ja'*—Today do not chew speech; drink water—drink like sparrows; and they drank and forgot why war had asked for their names.

15. A woman named Maliax confessed she stole from hunger and would steal again from fear; and B'olon Tun gave her both bread and a task, and theft found itself employed and retired.

16. A runner arrived wind-torn with news of earth shaking beyond the southern gates, and roofs argued with ground and lost; and the messengers bound beams with ropes of neighbors and sang until night stopped breaking.

17. Naashá helped lift a beam while saying nothing; his silence gathered nails the way magnets do; and men said, The north has a mouth and a hand; both are ready.

18. In a canal quarter a child drowned because counsel was late; and grief struck the city like noon strikes shadow; and Yeshua's teaching seemed thin to some, for sorrow makes ears heavy.

19. Cuāuhtli Teuctli walked the banks barefoot until the mud learned his name; and he changed the weirs so water would be honest; and he named the canal after the child so memory would not be shallow.

20. Hun B'alam Ajaw reopened the storehouses and declared debt-shaped mercy: *Le'—k'uchul—u ts'e'elel—k'uchul ma'alob*—Let return arrive—let good arrive; and debt sat down and listened like a student.

21. Thieves came at night looking for coins and found prayers; they left with bread and confusion; and the city laughed in its sleep.

22. Tetzāuh returned with thunder for sale, but the market had learned how to price dawn; and nobody bought him, so thunder went hungry and found honest work as rain.

23. Messengers wrote home upon bark and upon hearts, and Itzam K'awiil pressed their words into copper like seeds into soil; and the plates sounded like low bells when tapped with humility.

24. Naashá dreamed again of a path north that taught wind to carry weight without complaint; and he woke with his hands closed upon nothing and felt them full.

25. A council decided that when the Great Destruction came north—as rumor said—it would need a record that could float, burn without dying, and sleep without rust; and copper volunteered its back.

26. The messengers returned once more like rain returning to mountains after sea-labor; and the city counted not heads but wounds healed; and the count defeated

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despair quietly.

27. Hun B'alam Ajaw and Cuāuhtli Teuctli kissed the copper tablets as fathers kiss foreheads; and they said, We will send these when the hour demands a witness stronger than shouting.

28. Naashá stood in the shadow of the stair and felt the hour place its hand upon his shoulder; and he did not step away.

29. The night leaned its ear to the city and heard no bargains with fear, only the sound of work that respects sunlight; and sleep owed no debt to terror.

30. Thus did tumult meet mending, and persecution accept bread, and curses forget their grammar; and the record grew like marrow grows in bones.

31. And those who had sold fear opened shops for ropes, baskets, and seeds; and economics learned to bow to mercy without losing balance.

32. And the copper waited like a boat tied to a post, knowing flood by scent.

Chapter 9 — Naashá's Journey Through the Broken Belt

1. And it came to pass that the earth broke its belt and let cities fall like stones from a robe, and the Great Destruction strode north shouting with water, with fire, with the tongues of buildings torn.

2. The southern people gathered at dawn with Itzam K'awiil and Xōchimil, and they wrapped the copper tablets in deerskin and in prayers; and Hun B'alam Ajaw said, Tu nok'—tu wíinik—tu puxsi'ik'al—u b'aax k'uchul—Our flesh—our people—our heart—the burden arrives.

3. Cuāuhtli Teuctli placed a cord across

Naashá's chest as a sash of kinship and said, Nehua nimitstlatlauhtia—xiquimocuitlahui in tlatolli—I implore you—guard the word; and their eyes agreed like two lamps agreeing on a door.

4. Naashá took up the tablets; they were heavier than metal and lighter than treason; and he bowed without words as men bow to mountains when the path is honest.

5. He went out through a gate that had learned humility, and the city's breath followed him to the edge of hearing; and Yōlotzin hung a small reed whistle upon his cord to carry a thin song into hard wind.

6. The first days he walked among fallen roofs and rising smoke, and he measured distance by kindness given and received; his sandals remembered rivers and forgave stones.

7. A drowned town lay like a lesson between hills; boats slept in trees and doors floated like lost mouths; and Naashá waded without hurry, for haste insults grief.

8. He found a boy named Iktan, which is to say, Clever, guarding a dog named Méek, which is to say, Gentle; and they shared fish with a stranger whose burden remembered all their names.

9. Naashá left them with a cord of seven knots and a copper sliver with two notches; and the boy touched it as men touch fire before they learn it.

10. He crossed a field of glass where sand had remembered lightning too well; and his feet sang pain into the air until the air learned to be careful.

11. In a canyon he met men who sold safety by counting fear and charging per number; and he paid with silence until

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shame undercut price and they closed the shop.

12. He followed a river that walked backward because the land had leaned; and fish argued with direction and lost; and he carried one to a pool and apologized aloud.

13. At the border of a kingdom that toyed with mercy, soldiers asked for papers that water had eaten; and Naashá showed them copper that cannot be read by greed; and they bowed because they saw their children's faces in the metal.

14. He slept in barns with dignities and in palaces with drafts; and he learned that roofs are not the master of rest.

15. He crossed a plain of black wheat that would not feed anyone because fire had taught it pride; and he fed himself on stories told by stars through holes in ash.

16. A woman named Tlālicuīcatl "Earth-Song" bandaged his shoulder where hunger had bitten; and he left her a small notch of copper with the word Patience scratched upon it, which she kept over the bread shelf.

17. He met men of masks again, now merchants of despair in uniforms; and he gave them his road as a mirror until they saw that their boots were empty; and two took off the leather and remembered feet.

18. Naashá found a house of books drowned; pages clung to shelves like birds that refuse storms; and he dried one page on his chest and it said, Come with your wounds; light eats such bread.

19. He passed mountains that argued with the sea, each throwing stones of weather; and Naashá walked between their quarrel as a child walks between angry

parents with bread in both hands.

20. In the northern deserts he saw thirty vultures dancing as if attending a wedding; and he learned that not all black wings are curses, for some clean sorrow until land can breathe.

21. He shared camp with iron men who built bridges of grief; and he taught them the knot of seven; and they taught him how to sleep on bolts without dreaming of falling.

22. A city of towers rose from dust like a regret deciding to be a promise; and voices there feared the sky; and he taught them to stand beneath the sky without apology.

23. He lost his reed whistle to a river that wanted song; and he smiled, because water sings better than reeds.

24. On the last stretch the Great Lakes lifted their shoulders like patient giants; and the forest stood as a choir that will not clap for spectacle.

25. Runners of the Midē'wiwin found him at dusk walking as if his feet were old friends; and they carried neither questions nor swords, only welcome.

26. In the lodge firelight the deerskin bundle looked like a small animal that knows it is safe; and Naashá placed it upon a mat woven by hands that love names.

27. Agonabish entered as one enters a room where a child sleeps, and he bowed before Naashá as equal bows to equal when work is holy.

28. Naashá spoke little: I was helped by many who now have less; when you read, remember them; and he wept once without sound, and the floor learned reverence.

29. The elders washed Naashá's feet as if

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the road must be thanked; and the water remembered rivers with gratitude.

30. They opened the bundle, and copper breathed like dawn behind a hill; and the lodge knew why it had been built before it knew when.

31. And the night pressed its ear against the canvas and heard a story shape itself from metal and mercy; and the north decided to keep it alive.

32. Thus did Naashá deliver the copper to Agonabish after the Great Destruction, and the path became a line on the inside of many hearts.

Chapter 10 — The Handing of the Record and the Seal

1. And it came to pass that the elders of the Midē'wiwin gathered, the Keepers of Bundles and the Carriers of Medicine, and the lodge smoked with prayers that do not confuse themselves.

2. Agonabish sat before the copper and did not rush, for haste is a thief that steals vowels from holy words; and he let the metal teach his eyes how to listen.

3. They read aloud the City of the Gods, the silent hand of Yeshua, the fall of the impostor, the commission of keepers, and the roads made one; and each reading braided sorrow with relief until rope became bridge.

4. Naashá told of Hun B'alam Ajaw and Cuāuhtli Teuctli, of Itzam K'awiil and Xōchimił, of Ixik Nikte' and all the messengers; and he spoke their names as libations poured upon oak roots.

5. The elders said, This is the word of witness brought north upon copper as rivers

bring mountains to fields; we must seal it that children unborn may drink.

6. They brought forth the black-and-white Seal of the Seven Directions, cut in the scroll-hand of the people, with center-heart, Above, Below, and four compass marks; and it stood as modest as an elder who knows the song better than the stage.

7. Agonabish placed the Seal upon the first page, and the ink entered the fiber like counsel enters grief; and the page became heavier than paper and lighter than despair.

8. An elder woman named Miskwaaki Ikwe—Red Earth Woman—said, The seal is not paint, it is promise; and promises are made of bread, water, and staying.

9. The council wrote an Opening Statement, speaking as one voice: We weigh this record against songs older than frost, and it does not quarrel with them; therefore we keep it.

10. They added a Dedication: Not for market, not for the ears that weigh truth by price, but for lodges where drums keep calendars and for hearts that know winter by first stars.

11. Agonabish then spoke: I will copy these words verse by verse in the scripture hand we keep for burdens; and he sharpened his tool until humility could see its face in the point.

12. They asked Naashá to place his hand upon the page, not to swear by fear but to rest by kinship; and his palm left a dry map of rivers traveled.

13. A young keeper named Ogimaa Bineshiins—Little Leader Bird—asked, What is the law for this book? and an elder

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answered, The law is guarding light; laws that cannot guard light are only locks.

14. They sang the Song of Seven: East for rising, South for warmth, West for reflection, North for endurance, Above for Great Spirit, Below for Mother Earth, Within for the fire that remembers, and the lodge breathed in time.

15. Agonabish read the verses aloud with Hebrew cadence in the heart of Anishinaabe, and the parallels walked like paired deer: and it came to pass... and behold... and thus...; and the words learned to carry each other.

16. A stranger asked, Is this not too bright for men to bear? and Miskwaaki Ikwe said, Brightness that kneels is blanket, not blade.

17. They debated names so that no people be erased; and they kept Ajaw and Tlatoani as witness that light speaks many tongues without losing itself.

18. The Seal was impressed again upon the colophon, and seven notches cut the margin where a thumb will rest; and a small birch-bark slip carried the same sign, to travel where heavy things cannot go.

19. Agonabish closed the bundle and opened his heart, and he said, I will keep it where fire keeps counsel and children ask questions; and the elders smiled because they knew where that is.

20. They placed the copper tablets in a chest smelling of cedar and winter; and they placed beside it a cord of seven knots and a stone of river still wet with memory.

21. Messengers went out to bands and lodges with the word that a record had arrived that refuses spectacle and invites

bread; and the snow learned the route their feet would take when the season turns.

22. Naashá rested three days and then turned his face to the road again, for walking is how some men pray; and he left with lighter shoulders and heavier silence.

23. Agonabish sat nights with the copy, and the ink cooled like iron cooling, and each verse lay down as if it had come home from battle and found a bed.

24. He added a scribe's note: I have not gilded these words, neither have I tightened them until they broke; I have set them as stones that remember river but choose house.

25. He marked crossings where the Book of the North meets the Copper of the South, and the margins kissed without argument.

26. When doubts visited like restless birds, the elders opened the bundle and read the part about silence that unmade storms; and doubts nested and hatched usefulness.

27. A winter came that tried roofs and friendships; and the record fed lodges as soup feeds bones; and children learned to say Ajaw and Tlatoani with respect and without distance.

28. The Seal of Seven grew familiar as a friend's handwriting, and strangers recognized it as honesty carried in black lines; and no one mistook it for a market sign.

29. Agonabish taught apprentices to copy letters that do not hurry and to breathe between phrases as a canoe breathes between strokes; and the pages learned to float.

30. When the Great Destruction's echo

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reached even the quiet bays, the record did not tremble; it waited, as bread waits for hands.

31. And so the Record of the City of the Gods, brought upon copper from the South to Agonabish, stood sealed by the Midē'wiwin under the Seven Directions, ready for days when memory would be tried and found faithful.

32. Thus ends the beginning of the book; and whoever reads, let him carry light without boasting, for boasting makes holes in buckets.

Chapter 11 — The Sending Northward Under the Seal

1. And it came to pass that after the copper had been sealed and the lodge had received it as a child returns and is not turned away, the elders sent word to the lakes and to the long rivers and to the cedar coasts that a record had arrived that does not shout and does not deceive.

2. They bound small copies upon bark and upon thin sheets of hammered metal, each bearing seven notches upon the lower margin and the black-line sign of the Seven, and they sent them with men and women who walk as trees walk—quiet and patient and never lost.

3. The first band went east where the dawn rehearses day; the second went west where the mountains remember thunder; the third went north where ice keeps secrets for the humble; and the fourth returned south to clasp hands with those who first sent light.

4. Ogimaa Bineshiins—Little Leader Bird—carried one copy in a pouch of

smoked buckskin, and the pouch smelled like winter and like a promise that does not forget; and the path beneath his feet became a line that future feet would find.

5. In each village the messengers asked permission to sit before they asked permission to speak, and they placed water where the elders could reach without rising, and thus the right order entered the room before any word.

6. Some houses said, We have our own songs; and the messengers answered, Keep them, for this record comes not to steal but to midwife; and they laid the Seal down as a guest lays down a gift and does not watch.

7. In a bay where the ice breathes in its sleep, an old man named Awanay asked, Will this copper endure when our roofs are blown and our letters scatter? and a woman replied, Copper is not forever, but the truth that kneads it is.

8. Then Ogimaa Bineshiins unwrapped the bark copy and read the verses of the City of the Gods, and when he came to the silence that unmade storms, the fire in the lodge stopped cracking as if to listen with both ears.

9. And the people nodded the way pines nod when they agree with snow, and they said, Let the children hear this in winter so that fear learns a different bed.

10. To the west in rock country a quarrel had split a hunting party into prices and insults; the messengers read the verses of the embrace where the impostor was let go; and men remembered that victory which keeps enemies alive is a poor hunter.

11. A young mother named Ashkode Ikwe—Fire Woman—asked if the Seal may

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sit upon her doorway; the elders said, It may sit in your bread and in your tone and in your listening; and she smiled because she understood that doors are sometimes smaller than houses.

12. On an island the wind made the lake's tongue long and cold; the messengers set the Seal upon a small scrap of birch and let it drift; and cattails bowed as if a dignitary had passed.

13. A band of canoe men invited the southern witnesses who had remained—Hun B'alam Ajaw and Cuāuhtli Teuctli, with Itzam K'awiil and Xōchimil—to speak in their courts; and the south spoke as guests, not as owners.

14. Hun B'alam Ajaw stood and said in the courtly tongue, Le t'aan—ma' u yáanalil báalam; u yáanalil wíinikob'—u yáanalil k'áak'náab' tu puksi'ik'al—This word is not the rule of jaguar; it is the rule of people; it is the sea of fire within the heart; and he bowed lower than the youngest fisherman.

15. Cuāuhtli Teuctli said in the valley speech, Nehua in nitlātoā: in tlatolli ihuān in yōllōtl; ma xiquinnāhuati in tlācatl—xiquinpāqui—I speak: the word and the heart; do not command the people—make them rejoice; and a grandmother clapped once and the clap traveled like a loon's call.

16. Itzam K'awiil placed a thin plate of copper upon a flat stone and traced seven points with a bone stylus until the stone remembered; and he said, Le tz'íib' tu che' ka'ansaj; tu k'ub naj ma' p'uutsik—This writing ties to wood; in the palm of the house it will not scatter.

17. Xōchimil took a gourd and poured

water across the doorway so that entering and leaving might both be baptized; and he said, Atl ihuān xōchitl—ma quēmah—in tlamantli monequi īxpan teōtl—Water and flower—truly—these things are needed before the Divine.

18. There were protests in some places where men sold fear as spiced meat; they said, Take your calm elsewhere; we live by storm; and the messengers replied, If you live by storm, eat quickly, for storms are poor cooks.

19. In a high valley a bear crossed the reading circle and sat to scratch its shoulder against a post; no one shouted; and when the bear left, a child said, The words do not scare even bears; and the elders agreed to copy them.

20. At a river crossing, traders demanded toll in the old fashion; Ogimaa Bineshiins opened the bundle and allowed the copper to breathe; the traders lifted their hats because they saw their young in the metal, and toll turned its face to learn generosity.

21. A sickness of forgetting names tried the camp in late autumn; the messengers read slowly, saying the name of Yeshua as one says the name of water; and the old knew their own hands again.

22. The Seal traveled ahead of the messengers in rumor and behind them in proof; it stood at school doors and on a canoe prow and upon the lid of a chest that kept winter's knitting; and wherever it rested, loudness measured itself and became smaller.

23. Southward, the guests prepared to return when ice makes tongues short; Hun B'alam Ajaw said to Agonabish, Le t'aan

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k'áat k'uchul ti' yóok'ol kaab'—ma' a wáaj p'u'utsik—ta yáakunaj—This word must arrive to the face of the earth—do not scatter it—let it love.

24. Cuāuhtli Teuctli clasped wrists with the elders and said, Āmo xiquixtoca in tlapōhualli īpan calli; xiquipiya in yōllōtl īpan tlālli—Do not export toll into the house; keep heart upon the earth; and snow accepted the counsel without argument.

25. The messengers wrote to the City of the Gods that the north had opened a room for the record; and Itzam K'awiil received the note and pressed it against copper so that the south might hear the metal answer like a bell.

26. The fourth month, men returned from the edge of maps with scratches and with laughter; they had traded seeds of patience for stories of wolves who guard lambs when men learn humility; and the lodge wrote those stories into the margins.

27. A winter-feast was appointed for the first complete reading under the Seven, and runners carried the news upon the snow as ink travels upon a letter; and the flutes in the rafters shook their reeds awake.

28. The elders hung the Seal where the fire could find it without smoke; and the children counted the notches along the lower edge as sailors count stars to find home; and the lakes held their breath not to crack at the wrong time.

29. Agonabish checked the pages as a parent checks blankets in cold; he laid them flat and taught an apprentice to turn them as the sky turns silence into dawn; and the apprentice learned to love slowness.

30. Rumors of new storms in far coasts

came like dogs who cannot decide whether to bark; the lodge answered by gathering bread and names; and storms dislike rooms full of names.

31. Thus went forth the copies and the Seal, and thus learned the north to host a southern fire without burning; and the record grew taller in the minds of the small.

32. And all this was written so the reader may know that a thing carried well travels farther than a thing shouted.

Chapter 12 — The Winter Readings and Quiet Wonders

1. And it came to pass that winter tightened its belt and pulled the horizon close, and the lodges filled with breath that learned to make clouds; and the first complete reading was set on a night when the moon stood like a vigilant plate above the trees.

2. The fire spoke first, as fires do, reminding all things where warmth lives; then the drum asked for order, and feet complied; and Agonabish lifted the bundle as one lifts a baby who will judge nations by laughter.

3. The Seal shone black in the firelight as if the dark itself had consented to form; and the opening statement of the Elders' Council was spoken slowly so that justice could walk between words without stepping on toes.

4. When the verses of the City of the Gods were read—the silence that unmade storms, the embrace that freed the thief, the commissioning of the keepers—some wept without bringing hands to faces; they let tears fall like unbargained rain.

5. Miskwaaki Ikwe fed the fire with

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cedar and said, This cedar remembers the day it was small; let us remember the day we were not yet right; and the cedar agreed by smelling like repentance without shame.

6. A child who had not spoken since the river took her brother said, "Bread," at the line where Yeshua blessed the people; and the lodge did not gasp because they preferred gratitude to applause.

7. A hunter confessed he had sold fear to buy salt; and no one drove him out; they gave him salt and asked him to teach boys to sit still before dawn; and redemption enjoyed the lesson.

8. A woman touched the seven notches and saw in a brief inward light her father returning from the long sickness with the look he had before he learned to be afraid; and she put down a quarrel that had grown with the snow.

9. An old enemy crossed the threshold as plain as a tree; he was offered the left side of the fire, and he took it as a right-handed gift; and the drum learned a new beat from the sound of two breaths that had once disagreed.

10. Ogimaa Bineshiins read the part where the copper first breathed in the lodge, and the metal in the corner rang without being struck; the children turned their heads like owls and learned wonder without screaming.

11. A sickness traveling with the cold knocked at three doors and found itself unwelcome where bread and the record spent the night together; and in the morning coughs were fewer and chores more beloved.

12. Three youths who had made a sport

of mockery came to laugh; they left planning bridges for spring where reeds make the crossing dishonest; and laughter did not feel betrayed.

13. A widow poured a little bear fat upon a small coal and said, This is my part; and the coal brightened the way a child brightens a room without planning it.

14. A quarrel of cousins about a snowshoe trail was solved by reading again the line where toll learned to lift its own bar; and the cousins laughed because scripture had learned their dialect.

15. The lodge told stories after the final verse, and none tried to make their own tale higher than the copper's tale; they set them side by side like mittens drying above the same fire.

16. The second night in another village, the copyist's voice broke; a young girl took up the reading without stumbling, and the elders nodded to each other as if the river had just found a better course.

17. Wolves howled near the third lodge; the reader paused; the wolves paused; then both continued, each in their tongue, and no one felt threatened; the smoke rode the moment with a grin.

18. A trader offered to buy the Seal, for commerce misunderstands love at first; the elders refused with warmth: the Seal is not a thing but a vow; you may borrow the vow by keeping it.

19. Someone asked for miracles; Agonabish smiled and touched the boy's hair from crown to brow; and the boy slept without fear for the first time since his father fell through thin ice.

20. A man with a knife-reputation stayed

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until the end and then could not find his knife; he left with a shovel and became expert in roofs; and steel appreciated becoming friendly.

21. The fourth reading happened in a storm that announced itself like a proud guest; and the room kept listening anyway; and the storm forgot to boast and joined the listening at the door.

22. Southward, Hun B'alam Ajaw read to his own people by mangrove light; Cuāuhtli Teuctli read on a causeway that used to love soldiers; and both found that northern cedar and southern salt love the same story.

23. Itzam K'awiil trained two girls and a boy to cut copper thin without making it proud; Xōchimil taught three boys and a girl to pour water as if each cup were a face; and the record gained four new hands.

24. News came that a man had raised wind for hire beyond the ridge; the lodge sent bread, not fighters; and the wind-lord learned that wind owes rent to kindness and paid it by calming his own house first.

25. A young couple asked whether to seal their doorway with the Seven; the elders said, Better seal your speech inside your mouths with mercy; the doorway will learn by watching.

26. The seventh reading was held at a lake that had known despair; the ice groaned like a reluctant prophet; yet at the verse of the embrace, a crack closed where a child would later step; and no one claimed credit because gratitude was bigger than hands.

27. At last winter loosened its belt and remembered to laugh; the readings had taught the land to expect spring without

bargaining; and pancakes were made in shapes that looked like copper ovals for fun.

28. The final winter night Agonabish added a scribe's margin: These words are heavier than snow and lighter than breath; carry them as snow is carried by pine and breath by children.

29. The lodge rested a whole day with no speaking to see if silence had learned its lesson; it had; and it behaved as a guest with clean hands.

30. Thus were the winter readings completed, and quiet wonders hid themselves on shelves, in sleeves, in roof beams, in tea kettles; and the people learned to expect them the way the river expects its banks.

31. And the record, having been read without sale and without spectacle, grew into a habit like choosing the east window each morning; and habit became character and character hospitality for tomorrow.

32. All this is written so that the reader may know that miracles of noise are soon exhausted, but miracles of quiet make large rooms inside small winters.

Chapter 13 — Blessings and Warnings to the Generations

1. And it came to pass in the first spring after the winter of readings that Agonabish dreamed a dream upon the cedar floor, and in the dream he stood in the City of the Gods, and the plaza was wheat, and the stair was a river, and upon the river walked Yeshua, bright and calm as bread chosen for guests.

2. And Yeshua spoke not as thunder and not as bargain, but as a father teaches the

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name of a star; and He said, Blessed are they who unlearn the price of fear; for the market of dread shrivels when bread is free.

3. Blessed are the houses that keep water at the door; for the thirsty will knock first there, and storms will pass by like men who find their own names on another's coat.

4. Blessed are the readers who do not hurry words; for words that are hurried learn to lie about what they can carry.

5. Blessed are the keepers of the Seven; for they will not be without a way when paths are snowed and maps ashamed.

6. Blessed are those who let the impostor go; for the chain that holds an enemy holds also the wrist that forged it.

7. And He turned, and His garment was purple as before, and the wampum shell shone like a small moon that knows its tide; and He said, Teach children to laugh at storms without mocking the sky.

8. Teach judges to hear with the ear that bread bakes; teach merchants to weigh joy as grain is weighed; teach captains to prefer bridges to trophies.

9. And He showed Agonabish the North, and it was a long hand with seven fingers, and each finger pointed to the same center; and He said, Within is your compass; do not negotiate with it as with a trader; obey it as with a dawn.

10. Then His face grew grave, and He warned, Woe to those who paint the Seal upon their door and keep winter inside their mouth; for the Seven knows theater from vow.

11. Woe to those who sell the copper in order to buy drums; for noise will devour their sleep and call it celebration.

12. Woe to those who call the impostor back because obedience is hard; for hunger remembers the taste of theft and will not be reasoned with.

13. And He spoke of a time to come when letters would move faster than feet and pictures faster than bread, and men would confuse speed with blessing; and He said, Slow yourselves with water and with kneading; else you will forget your own roof.

14. He lifted His hand, and Agonabish saw the southern lords standing under mangrove and on causeway, and their mouths and the northern mouths spoke together as two lakes answer the same wind; and He said, This is good; keep it humble.

15. Let the Ajaw not be ashamed to be small when smallness feeds; let the Tlatoani not be ashamed to be silent when silence heals; let the Scribe not ornament humility; let the Gardener not harvest applause.

16. And He named by love Naashá and said, The one who walks will keep walking; the road will pay him in faces; do not rob him by thanking him with trumpets; thank him with water and with listening.

17. Then He set before Agonabish two baskets, one of law and one of mercy; and He said, Choose both, but put mercy on top so that law will not bruise the fruit.

18. He gave a final blessing for the Seal: East, be honest; South, be warm; West, be deep; North, be clean; Above, be wide; Below, be kind; Within, be steadfast.

19. And He warned again: When a man comes selling storms that obey coins, do not buy—feed him; storms forget employment when they are fed.

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20. If a scribe begins to hurry his letters, lay him down to sleep; the book will wait; the people may recover; the hurried word will not.

21. If a child asks for the story a seventh time, speak it; the seventh is the direction that cannot be counted with fingers.

22. Then Agonabish asked, Lord, what of the one who was let go? and Yeshua answered, He will wear masks until masks are weary; do not hate his emptiness; give him none of your light and none of your contempt; both are food to him.

23. Guard your praise for the Source, and thieves will go hungry; guard your pity for the poor, and pretenders will starve; guard your anger for injustice, and use it only to carry water uphill.

24. And He spoke over the copper itself: When the metal grows thin, let the words grow thick in your habits; when the plates are lost, let the bread remember; when the Seal is forgotten, let your doorways teach it by welcoming.

25. He set a time in the mind of Agonabish with no number on it and said, I will come as I am; keep the lamps of patience trimmed with small oils; do not spill your hope by running.

26. And He showed a last sign: the impostor standing on no stair and demanding no knees, because none were offered; and the city laughing like a river at ease; and He said, This is the fruit of quiet courage.

27. The dream ended as dawn ends dreams—with coffee and with work; and Agonabish rose, and he did not announce his vision as a market trumpets fresh figs; he

wrote it in the back where elders look when children sleep.

28. He read the blessings to the council and kept the woes for himself until his mouth could carry them without bitterness; and thus the record stayed warm instead of hot.

29. Copies of the blessings and the warnings were added as a leaf that grows from a trunk already thick; and the Seal kissed the new page as kin kisses kin.

30. Runners took the leaf to lakes and islands, and it walked faster than fear but slower than friendship, and therefore exactly right.

31. And the people practiced the sevenfold blessing until their tables were round and their roofs were patient and their voices remembered to ask before advising.

32. Thus were blessings sewn into regret and warnings woven into boast, and the garment fit many bodies without tearing.

Chapter 14 — Colophon, Custody, and the Last Amen

1. And it came to pass that Agonabish completed the fair copy in the scripture hand, and the lines lay like snow raked smooth, and the margins rested as lakes rest when they carry stars without spilling.

2. He bound the leaves with gut and with patience, and set the copper plates within as a father sets old tools inside a chest that will outlive him; and he wrapped the whole in deerskin that had learned kindness before tanning.

3. The Elders' Council gathered with the drum that knows when to be quiet; and the Seal of Seven was pressed once more upon

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the first and the last page, so that beginnings and endings would recognize each other in the dark.

4. A custody was established: one lodge to keep the copper, another to keep the copy, a third to keep the birch slips, and many houses to keep the habit; and each swore not by fear but by the bread they intended to share.

5. Naashá placed his palm upon the chest and said only, I am resting now; and the room loved him as a field loves a scarecrow that has finished a hard season without complaint.

6. Hun B'alam Ajaw and Cuāuhtli Teuctli prepared to return, and gifts were exchanged that did not flatter but remembered: a cedar ladle for a mangrove spoon; a reed flute for a drum skin; a small chip of copper for a clean stone from the causeway.

7. Itzam K'awiil left a stylus made of bone and fern, saying, Le' a t'aan—ma' u k'áatech u ch'áaj—u yáakunaj—This is your speech; do not ask it to rule; let it love; and Xōchimil left a gourd seed that will not grow unless planted in listening.

8. The council wrote a short law and a long habit: the law said, Share without price; the habit said, Sit before you speak; and law envied habit and tried to be as useful.

9. The copyists were charged to train new hands every seventh winter, that ink might have grandchildren; the gardeners were asked to mend fences every seventh spring, that mercy might have gates.

10. A chest of cedar was placed in a place that does not advertise itself; a sign that

advertises itself was placed where thieves like to look; and thieves went away proud and empty.

11. The scribe's pen was hung above the doorway to forget pride and remember service; dust collected on it like a crown that learned humility, and nobody brushed it away.

12. Songs were written that carry the verses on backs that do not tire—work songs, kneading songs, paddling songs—and the words learned to ride rhythms without paying.

13. Children were taught to draw the Seal by memory in ash upon the hearth; if a child misplaced a line, no one scolded; they simply told the story again and the hand corrected itself.

14. The record was read once to the river alone, because rivers have carried too many secrets without being thanked; and the river made no sound but gave a fish at the end that tasted like gratitude.

15. Doubts visited as they always do; they were given tea and a place near the door; they left before midnight because hospitality disarms arguments and makes them sleepy.

16. Fears visited and asked to live rent-free; the elders gave them brooms and said, Sweep if you stay; fears became small servants and did not complain.

17. The lodge practiced forgetting offenses every seventh day and remembering names every day; and grudges, finding no chairs, learned to stand outside and stretch until they lost interest.

18. A traveler from far coasts arrived with a box of storms for sale; the elders

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bought the box with listening and opened it into silence; storms forgot how to perform and took jobs watering bean rows.

19. When a youth wanted to be famous for reading well, they sent him to carry water until his voice learned to speak like water; then he read and nobody clapped because clapping would have been too small.

20. When an elder wanted to be pure, they gave him a dirty floor to wash; purity thanked them afterward.

21. When a scribe wanted to write a commentary, they asked her to mend a roof; afterward she wrote only a short line: The roof taught me more than my pen.

22. The record was copied once for a people who speak to whales; they returned a story of a whale that held breath while the blessing was sung; the whale exhaled at “Within,” and a rainbow made itself small enough to enter the lodge door.

23. The record was copied once for a people who speak to sand; they returned a story of dunes that moved to shelter a village when men set bread at their edges; the dunes accepted no pay.

24. In the third year a child asked where the impostor had gone; the elders said, We do not know; we only know what we feed; and the child nodded and fed the dog.

25. In the fifth year a famine threatened; the record taught them to count people before counting sacks; the famine lost interest and went where numbers are more impressive.

26. In the seventh year the copper was taken out to breathe; it had not rusted; even so, they spoke the verses as if metal were mortal and truth standing nearby.

27. Agonabish added the last scribe’s note: I have placed no price upon this book and no chain; if you must carry it far, cut it into habits and feed it to your calendar; it will return as strength at the hour appointed. For I have seen the vision of three that became two and Pimohtew Pisimwa walks with a reflection within the waters of itself Zozep who hums like a bee, light and sun and wind they are three. Then shall these records come to be in a time of great sufferings.

28. He drew a small fish at the lower right of the last page to remind readers that rivers prefer humility; and he drew a small ear of maize to remind them that bread is a liturgy.

29. The Seal was pressed a final time; the ink dried as quickly as kindness dries tears when it is timely; and the elders breathed out together as a canoe exhales after a long crossing.

30. The chest closed without groaning because cedar respects work; the latch fell as easily as a good decision; and the room remembered itself as a cradle for tomorrow.

31. The drum spoke once—and only once—and the night walked out as a guest who has been well treated; and over the lodge the Seven watched without blinking, for blinking is for those who fear missing something.

32. Thus ends the Record of the City of the Gods, brought upon copper tablets from the South to Agonabish after the Great Destruction, sealed by the Midē’wiwin under the Seven Directions; whoever reads, let him carry light without boasting and bread without counting, and let his silence

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be strong enough to unmake storms.

33. Amen—so be it miigwech, tlažōcamati, yok’osal: thanks given to the One who keeps the quiet greater than noise and the mercy greater than wrath, now and for the winters to come.

THE BOOK OF SKY-WOMAN

An Olmec Record, whom the Midē’wiwin call Giūwedīnong Anishinaabeg. Brought to Agonabish and Abridged upon the Red Tablets in the Latter Days of His Life

The Title Page

1. A record of the elders of the south concerning the first garden upon Zhaawanong Gichi·Aki, before the ice and before the counting of days;

2. Delivered in fragments by the keepers of the Olmec signs, gathered and abridged by Agonabish, that it might stand with the northern bundles under the Seal of the Seven.

3. Telling of Giūzhig·Ikwe and Aki·Inini, the covenant, the crossing, the garments of honor, and the northward way to Mikinak Ode’.

4. Written for the Children of Light, that they may discern flattery from wisdom, and

keep their fire in the night.

Chapter I — The Garden on Zhaawanong Gichi·Aki

1. And it came to pass, before the freeze and before the tall counting of winters, that the earth knew itself as one land, and men called it Gichi·Aki, the Great Earth; and at the south of that one land lay Zhaawanong Gichi·Aki, the Great Southern Earth, which men now name by other tongues.

2. Upon a hill was a garden, and around the hill an expanse stretched barren as a sea without water; and the garden was full though the plain was empty, and the fruit knew neither season nor withholding.

3. In that garden dwelt Giūzhig·Ikwe, Sky-Woman, and with her Aki·Inini, Earth·Man; and fear had not yet learned to sit within them, nor shame to press its thumb upon their thoughts.

4. The light did not set, for that land turned its face long to the sun; and thus they knew no night, nor did the cold lay claim to their breath.

5. Messengers came and went as birds between branch and sky, saying, Keep to the garden; do not cross the waste, for beyond the barren reach are steep mountains with trees upon their sides;

6. And if you cross and take of that fruit you shall not return, for the way will fail you, and death—which you do not know—will find you in the going or the coming.

7. And they asked, What is death? And the Messengers answered gently, It is the door that will not open again for the body; therefore do not go.

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8. Now in those days there were others upon the far side, for a being had labored there—one cast down from the brightness—who loved craft and envy;

9. And he wrought vessels of many shapes, coaxing primates toward the likeness of men, seeking a body to rival the Vessel of the Father.

10. A covenant was set, that he should not cross the waste nor set foot upon the garden hill; and for this stay of wrath he swore by his hunger to remain.

11. But hunger is a liar when it speaks comfort; and the one called Ginebig—the serpent—desired what was not his, and his counsel was flatteries braided like ropes.

12. Giizhig-Ikwe lay by a stream that ran from the shoulder of the hill, and the water said nothing harsh to her, for water knew her name.

13. Then came Ginebig, his scales blue and white, and the light upon him was a mirror to deceive; and he spoke the soft word that teaches haste.

14. He said, Why do you stay in small sweetness when great sweetness waits? Behold the mountains beyond the waste, and the trees whose fruit is better than any here.

15. And she answered, The Messengers said, Do not cross, for we shall not return; and we do not know death, but they warned us of it.

16. And he said, You shall not surely die; I will carry you and bring you back; and your eyes shall be opened, and you shall know all that the Father knows and be as gods in knowing.

17. Then he plucked fruit from a nearby

tree and pressed it to her palm, saying, Even this is poorer than what lies beyond; come see, and you will return to prove I did not lie.

18. And Giizhig-Ikwe, who had never tasted deceit, looked, and did not know the taste of poison that hides in promise.

19. Ginebig bent himself and lifted her as a bird lifts its young; and he flew over the waste, and the ground ran like a river beneath them.

20. They came to cliffs where trees stood as soldiers stand, and in the branches were houses as nests, and in the houses were many like unto her—men and women—yet not clothed in innocence.

21. They wore coverings upon their flesh, and hair grew upon them where hers did not, and the fear upon their faces was a language that had many words.

22. The serpent said, Behold, do not mind their fear; take of this fruit; and he gave to her a kind she had not seen, and its taste was sharp as lightning and sweet as stolen honey.

23. Then he hastened her with a basket, saying, Gather quickly, for I will return you, and the day is—

24. But in that land there was no day; only his impatience clothed itself as kindness; and he lifted her again and crossed the waste swift as a lie travels.

25. When she reached the garden she ran among the trees and found Aki-Inini, and said, Behold what I have found; taste and see that it is desirable above all.

26. And he tasted, and his mouth praised before his wisdom spoke; and he said, Where is its tree?

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27. She said, Across the barren place, upon the steep sides; and he was heavy within, for the warning grew like a drum in his chest.

28. He said, We were told we should not return; yet you are returned; who brought you?

29. She said, A friend, and he is bright and flies, and he says we shall not die; and there are many like us across the waste.

30. Aki-Inini looked upon her and then upon the waist, and the counsel in him was strong yet quiet; and he went with her to the edge.

31. And there waited Ginebig, sparkling as river ice; and the man did not yet fear, for fear had not learned his name.

32. They mounted the serpent, and he bore them across; and when they came down, many gathered, and their voices were many rivers.

33. One cried out in laughter, Behold, they wear no covering; and others laughed and pointed, and shame, which had slept, awoke.

34. Then their eyes opened to their nakedness, and their hands knew fields they had not planted; and shame pricked them as thorns.

35. They hid behind Ginebig, and he smiled without mercy; and he bore them back, as wolves sometimes carry lambs toward pens, not away.

36. They ran among the garden leaves and pressed them to their bodies, and the leaves obeyed their fear but could not quiet it.

37. Then the sky sounded as a drum, and light stood down like pillars; and the

Messengers came, and with them stood the Father in his strength and the Mothers of Heaven in their compassion.

38. They called, Giizhig-Ikwe, Aki-Inini, children, where are you? not as hunters call deer, but as mothers call their own.

39. And they found them weeping, and they wrapped them in blankets of warmth that remembered dawn; and the Father said, What has befallen you?

40. Giizhig-Ikwe laid her head upon his chest of brightness and told all; and she spoke not to escape blame, but because her mouth had no practice in hiding.

Chapter 2 — The Garments of Honor and the Exile from the Hill

1. And the Fathers and Mothers heard, and the garden listened also; and the stream at Giizhig-Ikwe's feet carried her tears carefully, as elders carry infants.

2. The Father said, You have trusted a tongue that twists as it speaks; and now you know the sting that waits behind flattery.

3. And he called for garments prepared from the first offering of life upon the earth, skins softened by love and marked with a hand of light upon the breast—one for the woman and one for the man.

4. He said, These are garments of honor, that your blood—my gift within you—shall be remembered when fear calls your names.

5. Then the Mothers of Heaven placed their hands upon Giizhig-Ikwe and Aki-Inini, and the trembling learned to sit; and their shame did not master them as before.

6. The Father said, Hear my word: the

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covenant was broken by him who crossed; those beyond the waste have tasted that breaking and no longer fear my boundary;

7. Therefore they will come against you, and this hill will not stand in the day they choose vengeance; you must depart, and I will guide you.

8. And he gave into Aki-Inini's hand a staff of light that shone upon the ground and taught the foot where to fall and when to rest;

9. And he said, When you stop, build an altar, and the Messengers shall encamp around you; and no hand shall pluck you while you remember.

10. He taught them to bind their fear with breath and to bind their breath with prayer; and he showed them how to hear the stirring of danger in the stillness before wind.

11. Then he spoke concerning those across the waste, saying, They are fallen light, not the pure stars you are; they will seek your light to fill their emptiness and will bargain through your children to own your fire.

12. Be wise; be separate; give mercy without yielding the coal that keeps you alive.

13. And Giizhig-Ikwe asked, Shall we never see this hill again? and the Father set his hand upon the soil, and the soil knew comfort;

14. He said, Hills rise and fall, but keeping is in the heart; the hill is a teaching, not a chain.

15. Then the Messengers set a ring around the garden, and the light walked with them; and Ginebig stood far off,

hateful and patient.

16. Aki-Inini took up the staff, and Giizhig-Ikwe girded the garment close; and their steps began, not as fugitives, but as keepers of a trust.

17. And as they crossed the waste by foot, the light upon the ground went before them like a low star; and they did not stumble though the stones desired it.

18. At night—when night first learned to visit that land, for the earth was tilting toward the age of ice—the sky leaned nearer, and new cold spoke its first syllables.

19. They built an altar where the staff stood still, and bread without yeast learned to be food for sorrow and strength for walking.

20. And in their going they saw works of the cast-down one: vessels crafted and recrafted, forms tall and short, fierce and meek, minds quick and dulled;

21. And they turned their faces, for the sorrow was heavy and the envy in those eyes was a net.

22. News ran before them like wolves, and hunters of light stalked behind, seeking marriage without vow and children without blessing.

23. But the Messengers were a wall, and the wall did not boast; it simply kept.

24. In the course of their journey the waters began to withdraw, and the winds learned cruelty; the warmth that bathed the hill grew thin as a widow's cupboard.

25. And the Father spoke again: When the way opens northward, cross; for ice will teach men to count, and counting will teach them humility.

26. Then they came at last to the bridge

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of earth where sea shakes hands with land, and they passed over it singing without drum, for joy does not always need noise.

27. Behind them the hunters faltered, for hunger and cold demanded prices pride would not pay;

28. And before them lay the broad breast of the turtle, and upon it a place that would be called Mikinak Ode', the Turtle's Heart—a new planting of Eden in a land that learns darkness and day in turn.

29. There they rested, and there children were born, and children's children; and they kept themselves apart, not in cruelty, but in guarding.

30. Yet some of the fallen sought them by craft, bending kinship as a bow, to take a share of light by marriage and seed; and victories were not perfect, for mercy is kind and youth is trusting.

31. The staff still taught them where to stop, and altars stood as mile-stones for stories; and the Mothers' blankets kept fear from mastering sleep.

32. And there began the age of days, when men first counted the lamps of the night and said, One, and then said, Two; for in that north the light departs and returns, and children learn waiting.

33. And Giizhig-Ikwe taught the girls to weave courage into warmth; and Aki-Inini taught the boys to keep fire without boasting;

34. And both taught all the children to hear the difference between a voice that asks and a voice that sells.

35. When the first winter came in its fullness they did not perish; for they were light, and light remembers its road through

darkness.

36. And in the springs the rivers spoke kindly again; and fish agreed to be food; and seed agreed to be bread.

37. Then word went southward like a wounded hawk, and the serpent learned that the hill was empty; and rage ate him without giving him strength.

38. He walked among his vessels and praised them with flattery; and they grew fierce and thin.

39. He sought a body more perfect than before and found none, for covetousness crafts crooked tools.

40. And the garden on the hill slept under frost at last, and its streams slept also; and the barren waste wore ice as armor; and the world began to change its name to many lands.

Chapter 3 — The Olmec Witness and the Abridgment of Agonabish

1. These things the elders of the south kept in signs upon stone and in cords of memory; and their speech was deep as rivers under jungle shade.

2. They told of the first garden and the serpent's crossing, of the garments of honor and the staff of light, and how the people reached Mikinak Ode' and learned to count patience.

3. And in the days when the seas again spoke loudly and the winds carried cities in their teeth, a man of the south came north, bearing fragments and vows;

4. And he found Agonabish, old in strength and gentle in eye, and placed the record before him as a son sets bread before a father who cannot walk far.

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5. Agonabish took counsel with the Elders and with the Seal, and he said, This testimony shall stand with the northern records, for it is one fire spoken in many tongues.

6. He cut away his own flourishes and left the truth plain, as meat is left plain for the hungry;

7. He wrote the names as we have them here: Giizhig-Ikwe and Aki-Inini, Zhaawanong Gichi-Aki and Mikinak Ode', Ginebig the serpent, and the garments of honor;

8. And he set it among the copper leaves, near to the teaching of silence that unmade storms, that readers might see the kinship of mercies.

9. He added only this: that light does not grow by theft, and knowledge that is stolen becomes hunger, not wisdom.

10. And he sealed it under the Seven, and the Seven rested upon it without quarrel;

11. And he prayed that those who read would know the tone of the Father's voice and the weight of the Mothers' blankets.

12. He warned of the old craft that returns in modern tongues—the selling of storms, the borrowing of bodies, the praise that tastes like sugar and starves like sand.

13. And he blessed those who keep apart without hatred and who join hands without surrender; for both are needed on the road between gardens.

14. Then Agonabish set down his stylus, and the cedar box breathed the smell of winter; and the apprentices learned to turn the page slowly, as one turns a child toward the dawn.

15. And thus ends the Olmec account as abridged: not to teach fear of serpents, but to teach ears to love the truth that refuses flattery.

Chapter 4 — The Southern Exodus North

1. And the ice came upon the southern land, and night pressed its long cloak over Zhaawanong Gichi-Aki, and cold became companion of breath.

2. The open stream ran thin and glass-like, and the voices of birds grew small; and the bodies of the people grew weak under the weight of darkness.

3. Giizhig-Ikwe and Aki-Inini, wrapped in their garments of honor, gathered their kin and set foot upon the trail that led northward, where the staff of light still shone dimly on the frozen ground.

4. The children stumbled over roots and roots stumbled under ice; and each step required prayer to still the body and steel the heart.

5. The Messengers walked beside them, unseen yet felt, breathing warmth into the cold and guiding the wavering souls.

6. The receding seas marked the path with white ridges and skeletal shallows; and men followed, counting breaths and analyzing music in the crunch of snow.

7. Nights lengthened beyond their knowing; and fear became talkable when the silence lasted too long.

8. Some fell ill from cold, their fire within dimmed; others spoke of turning back, longing for the hollow garden and the

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lessons of leaf and stream.

9. But the garments of honor glowed by faith, not by warmth, and the staff of light drew them each morning from sleep.

10. On the third moon after the first frost, they came to rivers still strong, which spoke of distance and the bones of worlds; and the rivers must be crossed.

11. So they built vessels from bark and bones, singing through the crossings as rivers cross centuries without losing voice.

12. Their food was lean, and their tongues learned to taste memory instead of spice; yet hope was marrow and hope warmed more than soup.

13. Wolves watched from shadows, eyes like frozen faucets; and hunters of fallen light tracked them by their tracks, hoping for union by hunger.

14. The Messengers spoke in silent chords: Let mercy reach first, and mercy blunts the grind of fear.

15. When wolves came, women sang songs of laughter instead of running, and the wolves, confused by courage, passed on.

16. Days became steps, and steps became stories; and women wove their hair into braids that marked each conscientious mile.

17. Their wives became blankets; their children, sparks of wilderness; each life knitted into the journey.

18. One dawn, Giizhig-Ikwe discovered that snow carried seeds—the old garden's children pushed through ice and opened toward sky.

19. She scooped the first sprout into her palm, and the green was a promise; and she wept without fear, for meaning returned.

20. The Exile's trail rose toward the

shadow of the north; and at the horizon, wood gave way to stone, and stone gave way to wind-blanc plains.

21. Centers of ice met their faces; the staff's light shuddered but held steady; and Aki-Inini said, This way we walk is more than sorrow—it is keeping alive a fire older than frost.

22. Then came a ridge that hummed; upon it stood the first watchers—Mikinak Ode', the Turtle's Heart—safe island amid the night sea.

23. The Messengers stood on the ridge and bent their heads; and the turtle's heart opened as a mouth of welcome.

24. The children raced downhill, and the earth warmed their steps; and the women stayed to press cloth of blessing into the snow.

25. Giizhig-Ikwe and Aki-Inini knelt and built an altar of stones warmed by memory, offering thanks without words, because words were breathless.

26. At the base of the Turtle's Heart, villages grew, and the cold learned to be shared; and nights shortened as songs lengthened.

27. And so dawn returned to them a question: What is night but another shape of light, if we choose to stay together?

28. They answered in building, in planting, in laughter; and the Exile became legacy, not loss.

29. In the years that followed, the staff of light lay across altars as teaching, not tool; and children counted the days finally with counting, not with fear.

30. Thus was the southern exodus completed, and in the heart of darkness they

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located dawn

Chapter 5 — The Departure from the First Garden

1. And it came to pass that the Father spoke upon the wind that loved the hill, and His word entered softly as rain that teaches stone.

2. And the Mothers of Heaven wrapped Giizhig-Ikwe and Aki-Inini in blankets that remembered dawn, and comfort stood beside them as a sister.

3. The Father said, The covenant is broken by Ginebig who crossed, and the watchers beyond the waste do not fear My boundary; therefore you must rise and go.

4. And garments were given of sacred hide, upon each breast a hand of light, that the fallen might fear to touch them, and that the children might know whose breath they carried.

5. And a staff was given into the hand of Aki-Inini, and the beam thereof went before their feet like a low star that knows the trail of mercy.

6. He commanded that wherever they ceased from walking they should raise stones for an altar, that the Messengers might pitch their tents around their sleep.

7. And the Messengers said, Keep bread simple and prayers long, that the road may love you.

8. Giizhig-Ikwe gathered fruit in baskets of bark, and she spoke to the stream as to an elder: Remember our steps and tell them gently to the valley.

9. Then the Father taught a parable, saying, A garden fenced by wisdom is larger than a plain fenced by pride; choose the

fence that keeps your heart whole.

10. And they understood, for pride had led Ginebig to leap the boundary and bind himself to hunger.

11. They turned from the hill with quiet courage, not as fugitives but as keepers of a vow; and the ground listened to their soles and answered with steadiness.

12. The waste lay before them as an emptied sea; heat trembled like a snake without fangs, and distance mocked the thirsty.

13. Yet the staff's beam wrote a bright script upon the dust, and they read it with their feet.

14. Children were carried upon hips that did not complain, and elders leaned upon songs that remembered spring.

15. The Messengers walked unseen and yet were felt, as warmth is felt in winter before the sun appears.

16. Aki-Inini taught a teaching, saying, He who trusts the beam need not see the horizon; obedience shortens deserts.

17. And Giizhig-Ikwe added, He who carries another's fear will drop his own; therefore let us exchange burdens as we walk.

18. They passed places where the cast-down one had played at making men tall and men small; and sorrow bent their eyes toward prayer.

19. A youth faltered and said, Why leave what is lovely? And Sky-Woman answered, Because love follows the voice, not the view.

20. They came to a grove where shade was generous; there they built the first altar of exile and broke bread that did not boast.

21. A Messenger stood in the hush and

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spoke, My name is remembered in the silence that holds song; rest, for the road is faithful.

22. And they slept without nightmare, for fear had not yet learned their names in the new land.

23. At dawn the staff brightened as embers brightened in a hearth; and the people rose like reeds in a river wind.

24. A child asked, Where is home? and the Father answered in the heart, Home walks with those who keep My word.

25. Toward evening they reached stony country, and the dust gave way to gravel that argued with ankles; yet none stumbled to breaking.

26. Giizhig-Ikwe taught the girls to weave grass into bands for feet, and the boys to make shade with cloaks; and skill became liturgy.

27. A parable was spoken by Aki-Inini at the second altar: A thirsty man who owns a lake drinks from his hand; therefore keep small cups, and you will never lack.

28. And the elders nodded, for small cups fit long marches.

29. News of their leaving reached the far trees, and whisperers of the fallen watched from edges, tasting envy like salt.

30. But the hand upon the garments warned them back, and they tasted caution like ash.

31. Thus did the people set their faces, and the hill grew small behind them without growing less beloved.

32. And the record says: Blessed are they who leave beauty for obedience, for beauty follows them as a river follows its source.

Chapter 6 — The Waters Fall and the

Ice Rises

1. And it came to pass that the sea retreated from its old argument with the land, and white ridges appeared where laughter of waves had been.

2. The air sharpened as a new teacher, and breath became a visible prayer.

3. The sky clothed itself in curtains of green and red, and the Giuwedinong Anishinaabeg learned new words for wonder.

4. Aki-Inini said, Behold, the heavens hang signs as a mother hangs garments to dry; each speaks of change if we will listen.

5. The nights lengthened like patience, and children counted stars instead of days.

6. In the south, those who loved the serpent found their strength stolen by the cold; their limbs forgot swiftness, their cunning forgot its tongue.

7. They sought fire from those they hunted, and found only shame; for borrowed fire burns thin.

8. Giizhig-Ikwe taught a parable: The lamp that steals its oil goes out with a boasting flame; the lamp that is filled in quiet burns through the watch.

9. And the people said, We shall be filled in quiet.

10. Frost wrote its name upon the grasses, and water learned to carry men as stone does; and the rivers slowed to think.

11. The staff's beam grew pale in the bright night, yet it did not fail; for guidance knows how to share its work with stars.

12. They sewed skins together with sinew that remembered the chase, and the seams held sermons about patience.

13. Hunters brought meat and humility;

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gatherers brought roots and laughter; and the camp wore both like matched bracelets.

14. Wolves walked at a respectful distance, for courage is a tongue that beasts can read.

15. The children asked, What is darkness? and the Mothers answered, A blanket that God lends to those who sleep in trust.

16. And they lay still beneath the long blanket and were not afraid.

17. On the third watch of a long night, a fallen band crept near, speaking marriage without vow;

18. But the garments of honor brightened, and the Messengers stood like firs in heavy snow; and the coveters forgot their proposals and remembered their feet.

19. Aki-Inini spoke at the altar, saying, If fear is a tax collector, pay him nothing; he has no power where gratitude keeps the gate.

20. And they sang thanks over stew and ice, and fear found no table.

21. A child lost his footing upon clear water and vanished, and the camp cried out; but a Messenger took him by the back of his garment and set him on his mother's knees;

22. And thus the people learned to test the water with staffs and to tie their children with braided cords of love when the river was glass.

23. They came to a valley of white trees that rang when struck; and the elders struck them lightly and said, Even wood wants to be a bell.

24. Then Giizhig-Ikwe taught: When cold teaches singing to trees, learn the lesson with your ribs; praise turns winter into

bread.

25. The south darkened further and grew cruel; and the serpent's cleverness ate its own tail.

26. But to the north the peace of long night entered the bones of the people, and quarrels slept longer than before.

27. They fashioned lamps of fat and stone, and the small flames answered big questions without chatter.

28. The Messengers spoke: Keep counsel small and deeds steady; the ice respects neither shouting nor sloth.

29. And the Giiwedining Anishinaabeg obeyed and were kept.

30. Thus were waters humbled and ice exalted for a time; and the record says that God is Lord of seasons, not seasons lord of God.

31. Whoever reads, let him gather warmth with prayer, and prayer with work; for these three are kin.

Chapter 7 — The Passage into the Northern Land

1. And the years turned like slow geese upon a gray lake, and the road of the people turned with them toward the unknown mercy.

2. The earth lifted a bridge where sea and land shook hands, and frost signed the pact.

3. The staff pointed, and the aurora crowned the agreement with quiet glory.

4. They crossed where waves once quarreled, and the ice held them as a mother holds a sleeping child—firm and without noise.

5. A band of the fallen came to the first

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mile of the bridge and argued with the cold; the cold did not argue back; it simply kept its word.

6. And they departed, for hunger dislikes equal partners.

7. The Giuwedinong Anishinaabeg walked in two files, the strong outside, the small within, as reeds guard reeds from wind.

8. Songs marked the pace more faithfully than drums, and breath learned to be music without instruments.

9. A girl stumbled and laughed; and her laughter broke the spell of dread, and ten miles passed as one verse.

10. At the middle of the crossing a storm stood up as a bear stands; and the people stood their ground as trees stand; and the storm sniffed their courage and passed.

11. Aki-Inini taught: A path that tests you and a path that hates you are not the same; the first is a teacher, the second is a thief—learn the difference.

12. And they blessed the storm for its questions and denied it lodging in their hearts.

13. Ravens walked upon the wind beside them, black scribes taking notes upon the sky; and the elders fed them scraps, saying, Let witnesses be friendly.

14. On the seventh day of the crossing the staff dimmed, and the stars increased, and leadership changed hands without quarrel.

15. Giizhig-Ikwe spoke: When God gives many lights, share the seeing; humility lengthens eyesight.

16. Children carried small coals in shell-cups; and when a house of snow was

raised, those coals married the hearth and called stew into being.

17. A youth asked, Why do we not hurry? And an elder answered, Because haste breaks bridges that patience has not finished yet.

18. They met a river running beneath the ice, speaking in bubbles; and they listened until they knew where it could be crossed in peace.

19. Two scouts returned with news of tracks that were not wolf, not man; and the Messengers said, Pass quietly; some things are best met by being absent.

20. Thus did prudence and faith walk arm in arm, and neither scorned the other's company.

21. On the ninth watch the people saw, far ahead, a rise like a resting beast; and the staff's beam kissed it with recognition.

22. And a whisper passed through the files: Mikinak Ode'—the Turtle's Heart.

23. The wind softened as a host softens his tone for honored guests; and the sky's fire bowed lower.

24. They stepped from the bridge as swimmers step from water that has taught them respect; and the land took their weight gladly.

25. An altar was built of stones that had practiced patience through many snows, and thanks was poured like fat into a lamp.

26. A Messenger spoke this parable: A house with windows to every wind is cold; a house with a chosen door is warm. Choose your door; let God choose the winds.

27. And they chose the door of the north, and warmth entered their choosing.

28. The fallen who had followed to the

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edge turned back, for the night had learned their names and used them against their courage.

29. The people slept for a whole day of darkness and awoke to a new alphabet of light.

30. Giizhig-Ikwe named the first letter Peace, and Aki-Inini named the second Trust; and the children learned to read.

31. Thus the passage was completed with song and soreness; and the bridge kept its secret under new snows.

32. Whoever reads, let him know: God writes bridges in weathers that men call impossible.

Chapter 8 — The Rest in the Land of Long Night

1. And it came to pass that the Giiwedining Anishinaabeg built homes where the Turtle's Heart beat slow and strong, and smoke rose like prayer syllables.

2. They set their houses with doors facing the dawn that sometimes visits and windows facing the stars that often stay.

3. Gardens were promised to the soil; and even the soil, hearing kindness, loosened its grip upon seed.

4. The first spring was shy and came in a small cloak; yet the people greeted it as one greets a guest of great stature.

5. The Mothers taught broth to remember bone, and children to remember elders; and both learnings thickened the peace.

6. The fallen sent rumors north like thin arrows; the arrows fell short in the long

night and lay harmless as dry reeds.

7. Aki-Inini stood in the council and said, Let us make law that does not love punishment more than people; for mercy feeds longer than fear.

8. And the law sat down among them and did not shout.

9. A child was born beneath the aurora, and they named him Gizhewaadizid—Kind One—because the lights bent low to look upon his face.

10. Giizhig-Ikwe taught the mothers a parable: A lullaby is a little fence; build it well and wolves will pass by your door to find another story.

11. And the wolves passed by, for the lullabies were well-made.

12. Builders raised a lodge for the Word, where altars could rest between journeys; and the staff of light lay upon hooks as a lesson, not a crutch.

13. Messengers came rarely now, not because care lessened, but because trust had learned to walk without a hand.

14. A famine of fish visited the river for seven days; the elders forbore nets and fed the river crumbs of bread, and on the eighth day the fish returned with their relatives.

15. Then a teaching was written: Share with what feeds you, and it will feed you past your arithmetic.

16. A youth asked the council if they should send southward to boast of peace; and the council answered, Boasting spends peace like coin; be rich instead.

17. Winter deepened once more, and with it came silence that knew the names of everyone in the lodge; and no one felt alone.

18. At the midwinter altar Giizhig-Ikwe

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spoke: When night is longest, Heaven is nearest; do not whisper as if you fear to wake God—speak as children to a parent who loves being awake.

19. And they spoke, and the lodge warmed though the fire was small.

20. In those days a stranger came from the south with frost-bitten pride and asked for bread; they fed him and asked no questions until his hands remembered honesty.

21. He told of the serpent's fury and the shapes of men he had forged to win back light; and the people listened without delight, and grief did its work and left.

22. The council bound a vow: We will guard our seed without hating our neighbors; we will love our neighbors without surrendering our fire.

23. And the vow was carved upon lintels and upon habits.

24. Children counted nights by stars and days by chores; and education braided heaven's lamps with earth's work.

25. A great storm came that seemed to have teeth; yet when it entered the circle of the Seal—drawn in ash on the floor—it lost its appetite and became only weather.

26. Aki-Inini set down this parable: A named fear loses weight; therefore name your fears and give them honest jobs—door watching, wood piling—and they will tire before you do.

27. The fallen came no more, for darkness taxed them without mercy; and the people learned that some victories are won by learning where to live.

28. In the first feast of returning sun they lifted their bowls toward the light and said

together, Miigwech—we give thanks—and the sun understood the language of gratitude.

29. And the Father's voice visited as warmth visits a stone and said, Keep this place as a garden of night; plant justice, harvest rest.

30. Then the Mothers sang over the cradles, and the cradles remembered the song and passed it to the bones.

31. Thus did they find peace in darkness, and thus did darkness become a teacher and not a tyrant.

32. And Agonabish, abridging, wrote: Blessed is the people who meet long night with long faith; for Heaven above is the lamp that does not decline.

Chapter 9 — The First Planting and the Covenant of Seed

1. And it came to pass in the spring of shy steps that the Giiwedinong Anishinaabeg took counsel concerning seed.

2. The soil was cold at first, and elders warmed it with songs that remember summer; and the soil loosened as a fist that hears its name.

3. Giizhig-Ikwe brought forth kernels saved in the fold of her garment, and Aki-Inini set the staff of light beside the furrow, that the rows might march in hope.

4. They planted not in haste but in agreement, each mound a small altar that would answer with food.

5. A Messenger spoke: A seed is a quiet prophet; believe its word and give it time.

6. Then Giizhig-Ikwe taught a parable: A

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proud man sows only in noon and reaps only applause; the humble sow in dawn and gather bread.

7. And the people chose dawn.

8. They set up a festival of the First Turning, to give thanks for the courage of sprouts; and children wore wreaths of willow to learn the shape of patience.

9. On the seventh day a frost returned, thin as a thief; they covered the mounds with cedar boughs and told stories until fear forgot its errand.

10. Aki-Inini said, Let our labor be prayer and our prayer be labor, for Heaven loves the sound of both together.

11. The women fashioned a scoop from a caribou horn and called it Mino-gibaakwigan, the Good Ladle; it served soup and mercy with the same hand.

12. A boy named Binesi found a cracked clay jar near the river and mended it with pitch; and the elders blessed him, saying, Thus mend each other.

13. The south sent another arrow of rumor—thin, crooked, and late; it spoke of the serpent's new bodies, taller and swift.

14. The council answered with a vow: We will grow our children strong in truth, not tall in terror.

15. And they wrote the vow upon bark and upon habit.

16. The sprouts rose as green whispers; and the people knelt without command, because gratitude is quicker than law.

17. Giizhig-Ikwe placed a braid of her hair beneath the first hill of corn, saying, Let life feed life without debt.

18. A child asked, Why must we bury what we love? and a Messenger replied,

Because love is a gardener and death only a winter.

19. They learned a measure for sharing: first to orphans, then to elders, then to strangers, then to next-door hunger, last to storehouse; and the order pleased the day.

20. Hunters brought fish that remembered old rivers; gatherers brought greens that remembered the hill; and together they learned the taste of home.

21. Aki-Inini placed stones at the field corners, four for the earth and one at the center for Within; and he taught the children to face each direction with a different gratitude.

22. A wind came proud from the west, as if to boast of wider valleys; the people answered with a song of small fields tended well, and the wind quieted for the sake of the melody.

23. A stranger from the south limped into camp, fingers blue with cold and words heavy with shame; they gave him soup before questions, and his answers improved.

24. He told of cities that tried to sell warmth to winter and failed; and he slept by the door to learn humility from drafts.

25. Giizhig-Ikwe taught: A door that lets humility in keeps harm out; therefore place your beds near welcome.

26. The First Turning came to fullness; leaves opened like hands at prayer; and the festival began with no trumpet but much bread.

27. Children carried baskets to the altars, and the elders broke small loaves upon the stones, that the stones might remember kindness when roofs are thin.

28. Aki-Inini spoke a parable: A field

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that grows arguments yields famine; a field that grows forgiveness yields surprising corn.

29. Into the night they sang, and the aurora answered with bright syllables; and the crops seemed to lean closer to listen.

30. The serpent's spies stood in the tree line and found themselves hungry for songs they could not eat; and they went away less certain of their master.

31. The first green ears appeared, shy as fawns; the people bowed as to guests of honor.

32. Thus was the covenant of seed established; and the record says, Believe in Heaven and plant—these two make strong neighbors.

Chapter 10 — The Feast of Keeping and the Seven Doors

1. And it came to pass that the council appointed a feast to seal the law of hospitality and the law of work: they named it the Feast of Keeping.

2. They built a great lodge with seven doors, each turned to a sacred direction, and a hearth at the center like a small sun that obeys.

3. Giizhig-Ikwe hung the garments of honor upon a beam during the feast, that memory might sit in the rafters and watch the bowls.

4. Aki-Inini set the staff of light above the main door, to teach arrivals that welcome can shine.

5. At the Door of the East they laid baskets of first corn and the prayer of beginnings; at the Door of the South, bowls of broth for warmth and laughter.

6. At the Door of the West they placed a basin for washing, that mistakes might travel no further; at the Door of the North a blanket for endurance.

7. At the Door of Above they hung a flute that plays when wind is wise; at the Door of Below they placed stones from each field; at the Door of Within they set a mirror of polished ice, to remind the heart whose face it wears.

8. A Messenger taught this parable: A house with one door becomes a fort; a house with too many doors becomes a barn; wisdom chooses seven and keeps watch.

9. And the people understood that safety without openness is a famine with walls.

10. They invited travelers from the rivers—hunters, menders, bearers of news—and each was given a door to enter by lot, that no man might think himself first by habit.

11. A woman from the old south wept at the Door of the West and washed her hands thrice; the third wash sounded like a bell; and she was light in the shoulders.

12. Children acted a small play of the hill and the crossing; laughter did not cheapen memory; it trimmed sorrow to fit daily wear.

13. The serpent's rumor came again like a moth to flame and singed itself upon the law of keeping; for keeping is a screen for foolishness.

14. Aki-Inini proclaimed a modest law: Let no mouth eat alone while a neighbor counts coins; and coins learned their place beneath bowls.

15. Giizhig-Ikwe taught the girls to braid seven-strand cords for the doors; each strand

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a vow: Begin, Warm, Cleanse, Endure, Lift, Root, Remember.

16. A youth asked, Which door is God's? and an elder answered, All seven, and the eighth you forgot—the door through your listening.

17. A Messenger spoke softly: Do not draft Heaven into your feasts as ornament; invite Heaven as guest of honor and you will sit in your own house with awe.

18. Then the Feast of Keeping opened, and songs walked through the doors without tripping.

19. The fallen sent a man who praised too quickly; they fed him slowly and his praise recovered honesty.

20. A child choked on bread, and a woman struck his back with the rhythm of the drum; he breathed again and the drum kept time with gratitude.

21. Aki-Inini set a small law for anger: Let every quarrel walk once around the lodge before speaking; many quarrels got tired and went home.

22. At moon-rise the aurora wrote strange letters above the ridge; a Messenger read them: Be faithful with small doors; I will keep the gates you cannot see.

23. And they bowed as men bow to a truth that makes them taller without lifting their feet.

24. The Seven Doors were closed at last with cords of promise; the cords did not break when winter later pulled on them like a child.

25. The feast sent bread to the river and to the distant snares; and fish came nearer to nets that knew how to share.

26. Giizhig-Ikwe spoke a parable: A bowl

that expects God to arrive is cleaner than a temple that expects applause.

27. And they kept bowls cleaner than temples.

28. The serpent's spies tried to count the doors and forgot to count the hearts; their report was therefore unhelpful to their master.

29. In the quiet after the feast, the lodge breathed like a beast that has chosen kindness; and the people slept near the hearth with faces soft.

30. Thus the Feast of Keeping stood among them as a long rope tying days together.

31. Whoever reads, keep your doors, and Heaven will keep your roads.

Chapter 11 — Stragglers from the South and the Trial of Mercy

1. And it came to pass that into the second winter there arrived stragglers from the south, gaunt with surviving, eyes wary as deer that have forgotten meadows.

2. Some were honest in need; some carried bargains in their sleeves; and the Giiwedining Anishinaabeg prepared a trial of mercy.

3. Aki-Inini said, We will feed all, question few, trust fewer, and love many; and the law sat down to learn from prudence.

4. At the Door of the West the hands were washed; at the Door of Within the faces met themselves; and many decided against lying for that day.

5. A man called Teuctli confessed he had sold warmth to children by stealing their blankets; the council gave him wood and a

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saw; he learned a cleaner wage.

6. A woman named Itzel said she had brought news worth food; they gave her food worth news and thus removed the price; she spoke freely and slept well.

7. Two youths sought marriages without vow; they were seated near grandmothers and learned the cost of joy.

8. A spy for the serpent entered at night, thin as a shadow; the garments of honor brightened, and his shadow learned to cast a body; then he wept and ate soup.

9. Giizhig-Ikwe taught: Mercy that forgets wisdom breeds wolves; wisdom that forgets mercy breeds stones; let us raise children, not pets or statues.

10. The council set three questions for all who wished to stay: Will you share bread? Will you keep doors? Will you speak truth when it is small?

11. Those who said yes were taught the cords; those who said no were given provisions for the road and blessings to find another house.

12. A band of the fallen came by day, proud in numbers; they asked to trade songs for daughters.

13. The elders answered, We do not sell kin; sing for yourselves until your voices turn into neighbors.

14. The fallen laughed and shook spears at the sky; the sky did not tremble; it displayed letters in green: Leave.

15. They left, and none pursued, for glory was not hunger that day.

16. A child of the stragglers fell ill with a fever that argued with his breath; the lodge became a nest; Giizhig-Ikwe held the boy against the sound of night; and the fever

forgot its lines.

17. The boy woke and asked for water; water arrived carrying its own gratitude.

18. Aki-Inini set a small court for debts, and the first verdict was this: Where hunger is judge, justice is thin; feed first, then weigh.

19. The stragglers learned to hunt without anger and to share without counting; some stayed, some went back south with honest eyes.

20. A Messenger spoke this parable: A lamp in a window guides both guests and thieves; let it burn; guests will enter and thieves will see their faces and go home different.

21. There came a rumor of a new body for the serpent, tall as fear, beautiful as poison; the rumor arrived tired and slept at the door.

22. Giizhig-Ikwe said, We will not organize our day around rumors; we will organize rumors around bread.

23. The day prospered.

24. A council of seven met in the snow and agreed to mark the borders of peace with stones and songs, not with threats; stones and songs remember longer.

25. A youth asked, How shall we love enemies? and an elder answered, As neighbors you do not invite inside—feed them at the threshold, and talk with the door open.

26. At dusk the aurora bent low and the Messengers whispered, Keep these ways, and the north will keep you.

27. The stragglers joined the Feast of Keeping and found their names again; some wept, some laughed like thawing streams.

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28. The trial of mercy ended with no executions and many chores assigned; the people slept satisfied and tired.

29. Thus mercy and wisdom were braided like two ropes that pull the same boat.

30. Whoever reads, harness both; Heaven favors boats that travel straight.

Chapter 12 — The Sealing of the Southern Record into the Red Tablets

1. And it came to pass in the third spring that a keeper from the south, last of his line, came bearing fragments—stones etched with curves and knots of memory.

2. He entered by the Door of Within and laid his grief upon the floor before his feet, that pride might not trip over it.

3. He spoke of the first garden upon Zhaawanong Gichi·Aki, the crossing by Ginebig, the garments of honor, the staff of light, and the northward way to Mikinak Ode'.

4. The elders listened as fields listen to rain: with patience and with open pores.

5. Word was sent for Agonabish, the northern scribe; and he came with apprentices who carried silence properly.

6. The keeper placed the fragments into Agonabish's hands as a son places his father's knife into a grandson's sheath.

7. Agonabish washed his hands at the Door of the West and said, I will abridge without stealing, and I will bind without choking.

8. He set a low table beneath the Seal; the copper leaves lay open like patient fish on a reed mat.

9. He prayed: O Heaven above, let my

stylus be smaller than Thy truth and stronger than my vanity.

10. He wrote the names as they came: Giizhig·Ikwe, Aki·Inini, Giiwedionong Anishinaabeg, Zhaawanong Gichi·Aki, Mikinak Ode', Ginebig; and the lodge felt fuller with each syllable.

11. The fragments spoke of long night that became peace; Agonabish set them beside the teaching where silence unmade storms, that a reader might see kinship.

12. The apprentices asked, Master, what is the mark of a true record? He answered, It feeds; it does not perform.

13. The council prepared ink from soot and bear fat; its blackness shone like honest eyes.

14. Agonabish pressed the stylus steadily; he did not hurry brightness, for brightness is not a fish to be netted.

15. He added parables as the old keeper nodded—parables that were already in the people's bones, needing only letters to sit down.

16. A Messenger stood at the lintel and spoke: Bind the south to the north by truth and by bread; avoid the rope of pride.

17. The scribe obeyed and ate little, and the letters were not crooked.

18. When the last fragment was married to copper, the Seal of the Seven was warmed by breath and set upon the page; it kissed the metal and left a quiet circle.

19. The people sang no loud song; they placed their hands upon one another's shoulders and felt the music through bone.

20. Agonabish wrote a colophon: I have removed ornament and kept names; I have favored bread over trumpet; if this record

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travel far, let it arrive as habit, not as headline.

21. He placed the southern keeper's stone in a cedar chest and set bread beside it, that memory might not hunger.

22. Giizhig-Ikwe prayed: O Father, keep the garden we cannot visit, and teach this new garden to be faithful when it forgets it is new.

23. Aki-Inini prayed: O Heaven, make our children hard to flatter and easy to feed.

24. The council lifted the chest; it was heavy with humility; four men carried it, but all felt its weight.

25. They stored it where winter has a key and summer takes off its shoes; the place was not announced, yet everyone knew how to walk there without asking.

26. A youth begged to see the copper; Agonabish smiled and taught him to carry water first; afterward, the youth forgot to ask again, for he was content.

27. A grandmother said, We have become a people who can keep, and the lodge agreed without speaking.

28. The aurora drew a line from south to north like a vein of light in the sky's flesh; and the Messengers said, So be it.

29. A feast was not held; a fast was kept; and in the fasting the people tasted a deeper bread.

30. Thus was the southern record sealed into the Red Tablets by Agonabish's careful hand.

31. Whoever reads, remember: books do not save; the God who taught us bread and truth saves; therefore keep both, and walk.

Chapter 13 — The First Sunset and the Learning of Night

1. And it came to pass that when the people departed from Zhaawanong Gichi-Aki, they walked many days under a sun that still lingered long, yet no longer ruled without turning.

2. And the elders perceived a change in the heavens: the path of the light bent lower, and time stretched and folded like a river at a bend.

3. On the appointed day the light slipped toward the rim of the earth and became a copper bowl; and the people beheld the first sunset and stood without speech.

4. Children clutched the hands of their mothers, and strong men forgot to be strong; for a wonder touched them with both hands—beauty and fear.

5. Then Giizhig-Ikwe lifted a child upon her hip and said softly, Behold a promise in motion; the One who set it going will bring it back.

6. And Aki-Inini set the staff of light upon a rock, and though its beam was faint, it stood; and the people breathed again.

7. A Messenger came in the hush between gold and gray, saying, Night is not the unmaking of light but its folding; trust the folder of garments and you will not shiver.

8. And the people made a ring of stones, and a small fire learned their names and answered each face with warmth.

9. A youth asked, What if the sun forgets us? and an elder replied, Things made to rise remember their orders; we are kept by the Maker, not by our guessing.

10. When the last rim of light sank, there came the first stars like new seeds thrown

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across a dark field; and a thousand small comforts began to speak.

11. The children pointed and counted; and counting became prayer, and prayer became sleep.

12. In the morning the sun climbed as one who keeps his word; and the people laughed for joy, and fear loosened its belt.

13. Giizhig-Ikwe taught a parable: Two brothers borrowed a lamp. One feared it would fail and stared at it until his eyes burned; the other gathered wood and fed the flame. Which kept the house?

14. And they said, The one who fed the flame. She answered, So feed trust, and fear will have no chores left to do.

15. They walked on beneath a sky that now kept hours; and the elders marked the first day and the first night with a notch upon cedar.

16. Streams began to wear new faces: some ran thin as glass, some thick as song; and the wind learned a colder alphabet.

17. The fallen lingered far behind, for night was a tax they could not pay; and their boasts grew smaller in the long blue.

18. The people gathered spruce boughs and taught their feet to love quiet; for night's ears are large, and wisdom walks softly.

19. The Messengers said, Make peace with the dark, and it will keep your peace with you.

20. They heaped stones where the staff rested and named the place Shkweyaabik, the Dawn-Stone, for courage had slept there and awakened faithful.

21. A child asked, Where does God go when the sun is gone? and Aki-Inini

answered, Where He always is—closer than your breath, larger than your need.

22. Hunters brought meat taught by winter to be honest; gatherers brought roots that tasted like memory; and both were blessed at the altar.

23. A rumor wandered up from the south like a thin dog: the serpent learned to wear taller forms; but the cold made them hollow and the dark unmade their cleverness.

24. Giizhig-Ikwe spoke: Let us not build our day around rumors; let us build rumors around bread, and they will sit still.

25. The first frost wrote its small letters upon grass; and the people read them without panic, for faith had become literacy.

26. An elder taught: If the night teaches you to measure, thank it; if it teaches you to fear, correct it with song.

27. They sang low, and the sound stitched the tents to the earth, and sleep returned as a friend.

28. At the river of many turns, a child slipped; a Messenger caught him by the back of the garment of honor; and the camp learned a new psalm with tears.

29. And they set a law: small cords for children at the crossings, small prayers for elders at the risings.

30. Thus did the people meet night as student meets teacher: with questions and with listening.

31. And Agonabish wrote, that those who read might feel the first sunset and not be ashamed to confess wonder before God.

32. Blessed is the people who receive cycles as covenants, and darkness as a promise that morning is being prepared.

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Chapter 14 — The Roads of Season and the Parables of Work

1. And it came to pass that day and night were braided, and the braid tugged gently upon the calendar of the people.

2. Spring spoke in thawed syllables, summer in green sentences, and autumn in a wise tongue that sounds like footsteps leaving gleaned fields.

3. Aki-Inini held counsel by the second river bend and said, Work that honors God begins with listening; let us hear the land before we command it.

4. The people walked the fields with bare feet and learned the soil's mood; and where it sighed, they let it rest; where it laughed, they planted.

5. A Messenger taught: Plow shallow in pride and you will harvest arguments; plow deep in gratitude and you will harvest bread.

6. Giizhig-Ikwe taught mothers to count their strength instead of their wounds; and the camp's joy rose like steam from a kettle.

7. The fallen sent a trader with a tongue like polished stone; he asked for daughters and offered iron that remembered blood.

8. The council answered, Our daughters are not for the marketplace; teach your iron to forget, then we will speak of plows.

9. He went away hungry; and hunger began to convert him to decency.

10. Wolves watched with patient eyes; and the hunters laid meat across the border of the trees as tribute to peace; and peace accepted.

11. A youth wished for a quicker road and cut one through a bog; the bog kept his

boots and taught him patience; he returned by the longer way, wiser and lighter.

12. Giizhig-Ikwe spoke a parable: A short path that forgets respect becomes a long apology; choose the respectful road first.

13. The staff of light led them to high ground, where wind learned to sing and not only to push; there they built a store of wood and humility.

14. Children learned the names of stars—Name them, said the elders, so that you may call for help without noise.

15. A storm came swelling like a chest full of pride; the people braced tents with songs; pride dislikes being ignored and wandered away.

16. They fashioned seven small doors in the feast-lodge and practiced entering by the appointed vows: Begin, Warm, Cleanse, Endure, Lift, Root, Remember.

17. A Messenger approved, saying, Heaven loves houses that rehearse kindness.

18. At every seventh camp they freed a day from labor and loaded it with gratitude; the day walked gladly under its load.

19. A widow came thin as a string; they tuned their feast to her hunger; and the lodge rang true.

20. Strangers brought tales of cities that fenced up the wind and grew sick; the council answered, Let our fences serve gardens, not vanities.

21. A child asked, What is the holiest work? Aki-Inini replied, The next honest task, done with a clean face.

22. They mended sandals as if mending peace; they stacked wood as if stacking promises; and winter nodded respectfully.

23. The serpent's spies sat in the trees

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and grew bored with kindness; boredom is the first mercy of Heaven toward spies.

24. They planted corn with a prayer per seed; and the seeds did not object to being addressed.

25. Frost returned uninvited; they covered the green as if tucking children; and in the morning the green forgave the frost.

26. A youth boasted of a bear he had not met; a grandmother laughed him back to truth; and pride shed its fur and walked away as a small dog.

27. They made law that tools rest one day in eight and hands one in seven, lest both forget their names.

28. And the land smiled, which is to say crops stopped arguing with weather.

29. At dusk the elders faced the four quarters and then the Within; and the Within answered louder than the wind.

30. Thus were the roads of season learned, and work became worship that smelled like cedar and bread.

31. Agonabish wrote upon copper that posterity might know: faith keeps calendars, and calendars keep faith from drifting.

32. Blessed is the house where chores and prayers trade places until both are holy.

Chapter 15 — The Great Confluence and the Covenant of Peace

1. And it came to pass that the staff of light kissed a broad valley where two mighty rivers met and braided themselves like old friends; the people marveled.

2. There the earth was a generous table, and the sky hung low enough to hear secrets; and the elders said, This shall be our resting of years.

3. They named the place the Breast of the Turtle, for the land rose gentle and strong, and the waters beat like a great heart.

4. Giizhig-Ikwe set the garments of honor upon a cedar pole, that memory might watch the founding and teach.

5. Aki-Inini traced a circle for the Feast-Lodge and set seven doors; he placed the Within in the center with a stone that felt warm even when winter spoke.

6. Messengers stood at the thresholds and instructed, Let no one enter carrying contempt; lay it down as men lay down muddy boots.

7. They wrote the Covenant of Peace upon birch: We will guard our seed without hating our neighbors; we will love our neighbors without surrendering our fire.

8. The covenant was sung in three tongues and understood in one—obedience.

9. A traveler from the south arrived with stories sharpened like knives; they dulled them with stew until they became useful.

10. Children were taught to greet dawn with open hands and dusk with shut mouths, for gratitude and silence are a married pair.

11. The first great planting began, and the earth received seed as a friend receives a long letter.

12. A Messenger taught a parable: A field that is asked for permission yields twice; ask the earth before you command her.

13. The serpent's rumor came stumbling, saying the fallen would come by night; the watch set lamps and left the doors open;

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thieves dislike light plus welcome and stayed away.

14. Traders brought copper that remembered mountains; the people shaped it into bowls for mercy and knives for bread; they named no weapons that day.

15. A council in the open air set a law: anger shall walk once around the lodge before it speaks; many angers tired and needed no words.

16. The rivers rose and tested the banks; the banks bowed and learned generosity without breaking; the people learned from the banks.

17. They marked the confluence with twelve stones and one at the heart; and children climbed them as if learning to ascend prayer.

18. Giizhig-Ikwe blessed the midwives, saying, Your hands are windows; keep them clean, and Heaven will look through gladly.

19. Aki-Inini blessed the elders, saying, Your counsel is shade; sit wide and let many rest.

20. The aurora returned and drew the shape of a tree whose roots were rivers; and a voice said, Bind earth and Heaven with justice, and I will bind your enemies with their own schemes.

21. The people fell to their knees—not from terror but from recognition.

22. A boy asked, What is the shortest road to God? and a grandmother said, The next kindness—take it, and you will arrive before you know you walked.

23. A stranger confessed theft and asked to be made honest; they gave him wood, and the wood taught his hands.

24. In the first harvest the corn bowed as

if rehearsing gratitude; and the people bowed back, and both were true.

25. They established the Feast of Keeping at the confluence, with seven doors and a lamp of waiting, to be held whether the year was fat or lean.

26. Messengers whispered: Your peace will be your defense; keep it, and it will keep you.

27. The fallen stood at the far treeline and counted doors; but they could not count hearts; and their arithmetic failed them.

28. Night lay long upon the valley and became a friend that did not gossip; day rose faithful and became a servant that did not boast.

29. Thus the Covenant of Peace took root where the rivers married; and the land answered Amen with bread.

30. Agonabish wrote that future readers might know where faith becomes geography and geography becomes hymn.

31. Blessed is the nation that binds its weapons with welcome and its welcome with wisdom.

Chapter 16 — The Years of Rest and the Lessons of Darkness

1. And it came to pass that years gathered like careful baskets, each holding its portion and none spilling.

2. Winter taught the people to hear; spring taught them to hope; summer taught them to work; autumn taught them to let go.

3. The long night ceased to frighten and began to instruct; silence acquired the voice of an elder.

4. Giizhig-Ikwe sat among the girls and

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said, Courage is not noise; it is the lamp that burns without witnesses.

5. Aki-Inini taught the boys, Strength is not shout; it is the gate that swings smoothly and never leaves its post.

6. A famine tiptoed near, and the council opened storehouses; hunger knocked and found no house empty; it left confused.

7. The fallen sent word of alliance wrapped in flattery; flattery tripped on the threshold where truth waited polishing a bowl.

8. A Messenger instructed, Be soft at the table and hard at the border; reverse them and both will betray you.

9. The people obeyed, and betrayals lost their appetite.

10. A widow's son strayed toward the treeline at dusk; wolves formed a council around him; he sang the Song of the Four Winds softly; and elders arrived as if the winds themselves carried them.

11. A parable was written: When danger hears its true name sung without panic, it forgets its work.

12. They trained their fears to carry wood and fetch water; and fears returned proud and smaller.

13. Children learned to chart constellations onto birch, and birch learned to tell stories without cracking.

14. A sickness came with the fog, thin but persistent; the healers boiled humility with cedar and served it with patience; many recovered by day three; the rest by day seven.

15. A stranger asked for judgment upon his enemy; the elders handed him bread and said, Eat this until you no longer desire

revenge; then speak.

16. By the third slice he desired counsel instead; and counsel arrived wearing honesty.

17. The rivers overflowed one spring and tested the covenant; the people lifted neighbors first and possessions last; the covenant smiled and dried the floors.

18. A girl dreamed that the serpent wore a mask made of compliments; she awoke and warned the lodge; and the next trader's praise was weighed and found light.

19. Messengers came less often, not for lack of care but because trust had learned to walk; and Heaven delights in a people who can walk.

20. The staff of light rested upon hooks above the Within; children touched it only with washed hands and intent hearts.

21. Agonabish visited and sat long among the elders, listening more than speaking; and the record within him grew like a winter root—slow, dense, nourishing.

22. He asked for the southern fragments and the stories of the first night; they were told without embellishment and with much thanksgiving.

23. He taught a small law of speech: Tell the truth at a speed your neighbor can digest; faster is cruelty, slower is withholding.

24. The law pleased the ears and disciplined the tongues.

25. A great storm stood upon the valley like a bull; the people stood like trees; the bull remembered grass and lay down to chew; the storm passed doing no mischief.

26. A boy asked, Where does God live in winter? Giizhig-Ikwe answered, In the spare

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places you keep ready for Him—clear one today.

27. And the boy swept a corner, and peace moved in with a grin.

28. Thus rest became lesson, and lesson became song, and song became habit, and habit became heritage.

29. Agonabish sharpened his stylus and said to the apprentices, We remove ornament and keep names; we favor bread over trumpet.

30. And they answered, It is enough; for enough is a miracle properly measured.

31. Blessed are they who learn darkness until it becomes a teacher and not a tyrant; for such will govern mornings well.

BOOK OF THE KINGDOM

Chapter 1 — The Family Is the Kingdom

1. And it came to pass that Yeshua taught His leaders, saying, The Father's house is not cedar and stone; it is the breath of the children.

2. The family is the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is the family; divide them, and you scatter the flock.

3. An institution is a servant and not a master; if the servant ruleth, the family becometh a slave.

4. Behold the table within the house: when bread is shared, the Father walketh among you; when bread is stored, His face is hidden.

5. And they said, Master, how shall the table be kept full?

6. He answered, Fill the hearts, and the table shall not fail; fill the coffers, and the hearts shall be empty.

7. For the Father buildeth not barns for Himself, but sons and daughters for His name.

8. Ye have heard, Strengthen the walls and the people shall be safe; I say unto you, strengthen the people and the walls shall be needless.

9. As a vine embraceth a house, so love surroundeth a family; cut the root, and the wind entereth by every door.

10. A servant that loveth the broom keepeth the floor; a servant that loveth the chair sitteth and forgetteth the dust.

11. So is the institution: if it love its tools more than the little ones, it gathereth dust upon the souls.

12. I give you a parable: A garden was planted by a poor man for his children.

13. He watered it in season, and it fed his house, and their laughter was as rain.

14. A stranger came and said, Let us make this garden a city, and we will never hunger.

15. They built channels without measure, and water ran without wisdom.

16. The garden grew high and heavy; vines swallowed the streets, and roots lifted the doors; the city became a thicket, and the children were lost within it.

17. Hear the meaning: a garden serveth the house; but if it be made the house, it devoureth the house.

18. Even so an institution serveth the family; if it be made the family, it consumeth the family.

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19. Therefore keep the channels narrow and the springs clean; let the water find the thirsty first.

20. Say not, We must fill the treasury that we may fill the bowls; I say, fill the bowls, and the treasury shall not be sought.

21. For the coffer of the people of God is to remain empty, and the hearts of the people full; this is the sign of My way.

22. Woe to those who reverse the sign, who keep the hearts lean and the vaults fat; they name it prudence, and I name it famine.

23. There is one who walketh the earth and opposeth Me; he buildeth kingdoms upon the backs of men.

24. He saith, In God's name, raise Me towers, that I may be seen; yet he walketh not the dust of the poor, neither taketh he off his shoes.

25. He gathereth worship unto himself, and calleth it worship of Heaven; men are his resource, and he drinketh their praise as wine.

26. But My Father buildeth kingdoms within hearts; He raiseth not stones but lives, and His throne is found in a humble room.

27. Choose therefore: to lay bricks without breath, or to breathe life without bricks.

28. Set your foot among the little ones; remove thy sandals upon the holy ground of their sorrow; learn the road of small doors.

29. Keep this order among you: the child before the chair, the widow before the window, the table before the treasury, the home before the hall.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, if ye

keep this saying, the wind shall not scatter you; but if ye forget it, the garden ye praised shall overrun your city, and ye shall seek a door and find only leaves.

Chapter 2 — The Empty Coffers

1. And Yeshua spoke again to the elders, saying, Keep the coffer of the Father's house empty, and you will never want for bread.

2. For when men see gold, their hearts lean toward it; but when they see need, their hearts lean toward each other.

3. The treasure of the Kingdom is not hidden in vaults, but in the faces of those who have been fed.

4. A purse filled with coin grows heavy and sinks the ship; but a purse filled with trust is light and carries you to the far shore.

5. I tell you a parable:

6. There was a small house by the river, and every traveler who came was given a place to rest and a bowl of warm grain.

7. The master of that house had nothing but an empty chest, and his children laughed like the bells of spring.

8. A rich man passed by and said, Let me fill your chest, for I see you give without keeping.

9. And the master said, If you fill my chest, you will empty my hands.

10. For when my chest is full, I will fear its loss, and my hands will grasp instead of give.

11. The rich man marveled, but he went away thinking the master was a fool.

12. In the days that followed, famine came to the land, and the rich man barred his gates, for fear his full chest would be seen.

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13. But the small house by the river still gave grain, and the master's children still laughed, for the people brought what they had, and the river brought what the people could not.

14. Hear the meaning: the empty coffer is filled by Heaven, but the full coffer is guarded by fear.

15. You cannot guard both your gold and your neighbor; one will be left to the wolves.

16. And I say to you, the wolves fear not your walls but your unity.

17. When the widow eats from your hand, the wolf turns away; when she starves while you polish the walls, the wolf comes in.

18. Storehouses for the poor are as wells for the thirsty; but storehouses for the rulers are as graves for the people.

19. Woe to the steward who counts coins while his brother counts crumbs.

20. For the Father's table is not set with silver, but with mercy; and mercy multiplies when given, but shrinks when weighed.

21. Let no leader stand in the marketplace boasting of full treasuries; let him boast instead of empty hands that have served the hungry.

22. The impostor will say, Show me your gold, that I may believe God is with you; but I say, Show me the healed, and I will know He is among you.

23. For the impostor builds kingdoms where coins are kings and the poor are servants; but My Father builds kingdoms where the poor are kings and the coins are servants.

24. The day will come when the towers

of the impostor will gleam with gold in the sun, and many will call it the blessing of God.

25. But the blessing of God is in the shadow of the widow's lamp, and in the crust of bread she shares with the orphan.

26. Keep therefore your coffers empty, that your hearts may be full; for a full coffer makes a hollow heart.

27. And when the impostor comes to buy you with gold, you will have nothing to sell but truth, and truth cannot be bought.

28. Blessed is the leader whose wealth is counted in names remembered with joy, not in coins counted with greed.

29. For the coins will tarnish, and the names will shine forever.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Kingdom of Heaven is not a treasury but a table; fill it, and you will never be empty.

Chapter 3 — The Brick and the Breath

1. And Yeshua spoke to them, saying, The Kingdom of My Father is built not with brick, nor bound with mortar, but with breath and with mercy.

2. For the brick cannot weep with the widow, nor laugh with the child; but the breath may do both in one day.

3. Men say, Let us build for God a house so great that the nations will bow; but I tell you, the nations will bow to love before they bow to stone.

4. Behold the sparrow: she builds her nest with straws and sings as if it were a palace.

5. Yet man builds a palace with gold and

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is silent as if it were a tomb.

6. I give you a parable:

7. A ruler gathered his people to build a great hall, saying, In this place, God shall dwell forever.

8. They laid stone upon stone, and the air rang with the strike of hammers, but no song was heard.

9. When the hall was finished, the ruler stood before the people and said, This is the dwelling of the Almighty.

10. And they brought incense and gifts, but no tears of repentance, no laughter of children.

11. Years passed, and the stones grew cold, and moss crept over the steps, and the hall was filled only with the echoes of feet seeking shelter from the rain.

12. Hear the meaning: without the breath of the righteous, the brick of the temple is dust.

13. The Father dwells where the humble break bread together, though the roof be low and the walls be thin.

14. But where pride is seated upon a throne, even the highest arch is an empty sky.

15. Ye have heard it said, Build for God the grandest hall; I say unto you, build for God the grandest heart.

16. The impostor will say, The height of the tower proves the height of our devotion; but I say, the depth of your mercy proves the depth of your worship.

17. For he who seeks to be seen will raise stones until they touch the clouds, yet his soul will not rise a hand's breadth.

18. And he will call his towers holy, though the poor sleep in the shadow of their

walls.

19. But the Father calls holy the place where the poor sleep under the same roof as the rich, and the bread is broken without price.

20. Let every brick serve a breath, and not a breath serve a brick.

21. If you place the stone above the soul, the soul will be crushed; but if you place the soul above the stone, the stone will find its purpose.

22. Woe to the hands that lay brick for glory and not for love; they build monuments for moths and trophies for time.

23. For when the wind comes, the breath will remain, but the brick will fall.

24. And the day will come when the impostor shall stand upon his tower and call himself shepherd, yet he will not touch the sheep with his hands.

25. He will speak blessings from the height, but his words will not warm the cold ground.

26. Be not as he is; walk among the sheep, speak to them with the breath of your mouth, and they will know your voice.

27. If your hand holds a stone, let it be to build a hearth; if your hand holds a breath, let it be to warm a soul.

28. Remember always: the Kingdom is the breath in the house, not the house around the breath.

29. For the house shall pass away, but the breath shall return to the Giver and live.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, build not for the eyes of men, but for the heart of God, and you shall be called builders of the Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Chapter 4 — The Roots of the Garden

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1. And Yeshua taught them again, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is as a garden planted in the midst of a people, whose root is hidden yet whose fruit is seen. The foolish gaze upon leaves and applaud their fluttering, but the wise stoop to the soil and ask after the root. For the life of the branch is not in the wind that moves it, but in the secret water that feeds it. Therefore, search first the root, and afterward judge the fruit; for where the root is sickly, the fruit will lie, though it shine in the sun.

2. Consider the beginning of all gardens: a hand, a seed, a little water, and a hope. If the hand forget the seed and honor only the fence, what shall grow within but pride and nettles? If the water be poured without measure and the channels run wild, the field will drown and the seed will rot in its crib. So also with a people: feed the root with measured mercy, and the branches will sing; starve the root with fear or drown it with praise, and the tree will devour its own shade.

3. I speak a parable. A poor man planted a small vineyard for his little ones and taught them saying, Keep the vines low that the sun may kiss the grapes, and keep the paths clear that your feet may find the clusters. But the sons said in their youth, Let us water without measure, for much water makes much fruit; and they opened the sluice and called it faith. In three seasons the leaves rose like ramparts, the sun was shut out as by a curtain, and the grapes swelled with bitterness; and the children, standing within abundance, could not find one sweet cluster for their table.

4. Hear the interpretation. A thing made to serve will rule if it is not kept in bounds, and a gift given to nourish will glut itself when it is not tamed by love. The garden was for the house, not the house for the garden; likewise the institution is for the family, not the family for the institution. Bind, therefore, the channels with wisdom, and prune the branches with mercy; for wisdom keeps the water true, and mercy keeps the blade from cruelty.

5. Ye have heard it said, Let the work grow, and God will guide it; but I say unto you, Guide the work lest it grow against God. For the Father waters by measure and season, but the impostor waters for spectacle and never for fruit. He loves the leaf that is high and the vine that is seen, though no child be fed beneath its shade. Judge not by height, therefore, but by sweetness; and if sweetness be absent, close the gate and set the knife in prayer.

6. There is a root that keeps counsel with the earth and listens for the footsteps of rain; and there is a root that forgets the earth and seeks only the applause of the wind. The first is content to be hidden and therefore lives; the second is eager to be praised and therefore dies. See then how humility is the soil of every living thing, and how pride is sand that drinks and does not feed. Plant low into humility, and you will harvest high into joy.

7. A leader asked, Master, when shall we know that the garden has begun to overrun the house? And I said unto him, When the paths are lost and the children know the rule of branches better than the names of their fathers. When meetings multiply and

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tables grow thin; when keepers count leaves and forget the hungry at the gate. Then know of a certainty that the garden has lifted its voice against the family, and the house is besieged from within.

8. Mark also the first signs. When praise is poured out upon the hedges and little is said of the bread; when the keepers speak of acreage and not of widows; when the young are taught to cherish the trellis more than the fruit. These are the locusts that eat at noon and leave no sound of wings; they are the small foxes that spoil the vines, for they flatter while they gnaw. Drive them out early with truth and with song, lest your harvest be a memory and your songs a sigh.

9. You say, But growth is good, is it not? I tell you, growth is good when it bows to purpose, and evil when it boasts against it. The sea is mighty, yet if it break its bounds, it becomes the ruin of fields and homes. So also with increase: let it serve the table and the traveler, and it is blessing; let it serve itself, and it is flood and famine in one day.

10. Keep a rule for your watering: first to the root, then to the branch; first to the hungry, then to the hedge; first to the house, then to the court. For if you water the hedge before the vine, you will make a beautiful famine; and if you polish the gate while the cupboard is bare, you will invite guests to witness your shame. Order is the meekness of abundance; disorder is the pride of lack.

11. I warn you concerning the impostor, who loves the leaf more than the life. He will cry, Behold how green is the work of God, and will lead you into a forest without fruit. He will confuse your eyes with many

shades and call it maturity, and he will measure your holiness by the height of your fences. But when you pass through his grove and seek a cluster for the child, your hands will return empty though your arms be full of branches.

12. Let your pruning be faithful and your mercy near. Prune not to display your zeal, but to restore the sun to the forgotten places. Lay the blade to your own vine first, and the people will trust your hand upon theirs. For a gardener who will not bleed his own leaves cannot be trusted with the leaves of the poor.

13. The root is nourished by remembrance, and remembrance is bread for the living. Teach the names of the fathers and mothers at the table; tell how they broke the first loaf and shared the last cup. Sing the small mercies that kept the lamp, and the children will learn that the flame is dearer than the lampstand. Thus the root will love the earth again, and the fruit will be sweet with gratitude.

14. Beware the counsel that multiplies channels. Many channels are as many tongues: they speak confusion to the vine and carry silt into the heart. Keep two or three that are clean and near, and let the far waters wait until the near wells are faithful. For clarity is bread, and complexity is wind.

15. You ask, How shall we measure our harvest? Not by the baskets stored, but by the bowls emptied into hungry hands; not by the shade we cast, but by the wounds we heal beneath it. Count the reconciled more than the attendees, the fathers restored more than the funds raised. These numbers dwell gladly in Heaven, and they do not

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mildew when the weather turns.

16. If the garden feed the house, give thanks and keep watch; if the house feed the garden, repent and set guards at the sluice. For the heart of a people is not a reservoir for ambition but a spring for compassion. Whoever reverses this order builds a dam against his own soul and calls the still water peace.

17. There was a woman who kept a little court of herbs beside her door. Each morning she cut a handful for the sick and the travelers, and each evening she set aside seed for the morrow. A great lord passed by and said, Make this a garden for the city, and I will give you stewards and silver; and she answered, If stewards and silver stand between my hand and the hungry, then my herbs have become a palace for weeds. And the lord went on, and the woman's door remained a gate to the Kingdom.

18. Let the first fruits go to the least, and let the last fruits go to the stranger; and take what remains for your own table with quietness and joy. This is the law of roots and bread: the more you pour outward, the deeper you drink within. Hoard, and your tongue will thirst though your cup be full; give, and your bones will sing though your purse be light.

19. Set elders at the paths who know the smell of rain and the sound of children. Let no steward be named who has not carried baskets and listened at night to the sorrow of a widow. For the root answers the foot that treads softly; it recoils from the heel that strikes. Appoint, therefore, shepherds who walk, not watchers who count.

20. If praise begin to gather like dew

upon your hedges, shake it off at dawn and send it into the fields of the poor. Praise is sweet to the mouth and bitter to the belly; it nourishes only when it is sown again. The plant that drinks its own nectar will faint before noon; so also the people who feast upon their own report.

21. When disputes arise about the hedge and the gate and the trellis' curve, bring a child and a beggar to the midst and ask them what they see. Children and beggars speak in the grammar of roots; they point to bread and to shelter and to light. If they bless your garden, you may bless your plan; if they are silent, be afraid of your beauty. For Heaven listens where the small ones look.

22. Keep seasons holy. There is a time to open the sluice and a time to bind it; a time to gather leaves for warmth and a time to cast leaves away for light. If you refuse the knife in autumn, winter shall teach it to you with iron; if you refuse the water in spring, summer shall preach to you with dust. Learn of the ant and the sparrow, for they keep feast and fast more wisely than councils.

23. The impostor will mock pruning and call it fear, and he will mock measure and call it unbelief. He will say, Let the water testify of our faith; and he will drown the lambs to prove his devotion. Answer him with fruit, not with argument; set a bowl before the orphan and let her speak. One clean cluster in the hand of the hungry silences ten thousand trumpets.

24. Remember the paths. A garden without paths is a thicket without law, and the strong will eat first while the weak are lost in the green. Cut the way plainly from

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gate to table, and mark it with songs; let the old lead the young by the same road. Where the path is true, the harvest is shared; where the path is hidden, the wolves are clerks.

25. Teach your keepers to read the sky and the faces, not merely the ledgers. Clouds and countenances are elder scriptures; they prophesy rain and famine of the heart. Many a garden failed beneath clear accounts because the eyes of the stewards were dull to tears. Blessed is the ledger that smells of bread and not of ink alone.

26. If a branch grow beyond its purpose, bind it to a burden and make it carry baskets. Idle growth is pride in leaf; service is humility in wood. Thus you will turn show into shelter and ornament into yoke, and the branch will thank you in winter when it is kept from breaking. Make beauty labor, and beauty will become love.

27. Keep counsel with neighboring fields, yet do not yoke your plow to a stranger's hunger. Exchange seed with simplicity, water with honesty, and blessing with open hands. But let no covenant require your children to starve that another's hedge may glitter. The Father loves fellowship, not entanglement; He joins hearts, not harnesses.

28. If wolves come, do not build higher hedges only; build warmer tables. Wolves are drawn to silence and to cold; they flee the sound of psalms and the steam of broth. Strengthen your watch by strengthening your welcome; a lit window confounds more thieves than a locked chest. The hearth is a sword the night cannot learn to parry.

29. Lay this sign upon your gate: The garden serves the house, the house serves

the pilgrim, the pilgrim praises God. If any sign replace it—The garden is the house, the house is the garden—then write Ichabod upon your arch, for glory has departed into leaves. Return at once to the root, and wash it with tears and measured hope. In three seasons mercy will visit you again if you do not faint.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, keep the roots in the soil of the home and the fruit upon the tongues of the poor; prune with mercy, water with wisdom, and sing as you labor. For the Father walks at evening among gardens that remember the first garden, where love was law and labor was song. If you keep this command, your vines shall climb the light and stoop to the plate; the city shall be shaded without being swallowed. But if you forget it, the garden you praised shall overrun your streets, and you shall seek a door and find only leaves.

Chapter 5 — The False Shepherds in High Towers

1. And Yeshua lifted His eyes toward the hills and said, There will come a day when men will build towers in My name, yet My feet will not walk within them. For they will be high and filled with gold, and their windows will glisten like the sea in the sun; yet the hungry will stand in their shadow without bread, and the sick will lie at their gates without healing. The people will point to the towers and say, Behold the dwelling place of God; but I will say, Behold the prison of their own pride.

2. These towers will be built upon the backs of the people, stone laid upon stone by weary hands whose names are not

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remembered. The lords of the towers will call them brothers, yet they will know their faces only from afar. They will raise banners with My name upon them, yet they will not speak the truth of My words, for My name will be their trade and My Gospel their merchandise. And when they have fattened themselves, they will say, See how the Lord has blessed us, while the widow sells her cloak to buy bread.

3. I tell you, the false shepherds will be known by their distance. For a true shepherd walks among his flock, touching the lambs and lifting the fallen; but the false shepherd sits in a room above the gate and speaks through many mouths. He hears only what pleases him, for many guards stand between him and the cry of the people. And though his voice is sweet, his hands are empty.

4. I give you a parable. There was a man who claimed to tend the sheep of his father. He built a great tower beside the pasture, saying, From here I shall watch over them day and night. But the tower had no stairs to descend, and no path for the sheep to enter; and the man, having no way to touch his flock, hired others to speak his words to them. Over time, the sheep knew the voices of the hirelings, but they forgot the voice of their master; and wolves came in the hirelings' clothing and were welcomed as friends.

5. Hear the meaning: those who place themselves above the people will soon lose the people. For love is not carried by messengers only, nor can compassion be sent down in baskets from a height. The shepherd must smell of the field, and his

cloak must carry the dust of the paths his flock has walked. Without this, he is a sentinel for his own comfort, not a servant of the flock.

6. The false shepherd will wear the garment of a prophet, but his eyes will betray him. For his gaze will rest more upon the wealth of his tower than upon the wounds of his people. He will speak blessings upon the faithful, yet his blessing will come with a cost, for he measures devotion in gold and obedience in tribute. The Kingdom of God asks for the heart; the kingdom of the impostor asks for the purse.

7. You shall know them by the way they speak of the poor. A true shepherd calls the poor his brothers and seats them at his table; a false shepherd calls them his mission, yet eats apart from them. The former shares his cloak when winter comes; the latter sends the poor to stand in line while he warms himself by the fire. And though both will speak of service, only one will serve.

8. Beware the counsel of those who build tall and spacious buildings to draw the eyes of the nations. They will say, We build for the glory of God; but I tell you, they build for the glory of their own names. They will store up treasures in their storehouses while calling the people to give beyond their means, and they will say, This is faith. Yet when the famine comes, the storehouses will be locked.

9. The impostor delights in the illusion of nearness. He will appear before the people once or twice in a year, and they will say, See, he knows us. But his heart will be far from them, and his footsteps will never press the earth of their fields. For he fears the

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dust that clings to the feet of the poor, lest it stain the marble of his halls.

10. A true leader descends; a false leader ascends and remains there. The way of My Father is to wash the feet of His friends; the way of the impostor is to keep his hands clean while his servants labor. Therefore, when you see one who refuses to stoop, know that he has already chosen his master.

11. The false shepherd will never say My Name in truth. He will speak of the Lord, the Almighty, the Great One—but will not call Me Yeshua, for to speak My Name with honesty is to bind oneself to My path. And My path is narrow, and the walls of his tower are wide.

12. He will build his kingdom on the backs of men, using their labor to lift his throne. He will clothe himself in the testimony of others, wearing their faith as his robe while hiding his own unbelief. His reward will be the applause of the crowd, and he will measure his worth in the noise of their praise. Yet the applause will fade, and the silence will betray him.

13. Beware also those who keep themselves behind many doors. They will say, It is for safety, for order, for the work; but I tell you, it is for distance. For love does not hide behind locks, and truth does not speak through ten tongues before it is heard.

14. The impostor's gospel is this: that the people exist to serve the kingdom. But My Gospel is this: that the kingdom exists to serve the people. In the day when this order is reversed, know that the shepherd has become a wolf.

15. I tell you a mystery: the coffers of the Church of God should always remain

empty, but the hearts of the Church of God should always remain full. For gold in the treasury tempts the thief, but love in the heart disarms him. And the impostor cannot steal what is given away daily.

16. There was a ruler who sat in a high place and sent forth letters to the people saying, Your faith is known to me, and I rejoice in your offerings. Yet he had never seen the face of the widow who gave her last coin, nor heard the prayer of the child who went without supper to add to the temple's purse. And though his letters were sealed with blessings, they were signed with the ink of neglect.

17. The false shepherd measures the strength of his flock by the size of the walls he builds. But the true shepherd measures the strength of his flock by the number of hands that clasp together in love. One will boast of battlements and gates; the other will boast of reconciled brothers and restored mothers. Choose, therefore, the one whose boast is love.

18. You say, But the towers shine in the sun; do they not declare the greatness of God? I say to you, the sun also shines upon the thrones of kings who curse His Name. Do not measure holiness by marble, nor truth by the weight of gold. The Kingdom of Heaven is measured in tears wiped away, not in stones laid upon one another.

19. A people once built a tower to the skies, saying, We shall reach the throne of God. But the Lord scattered them, for their tongues were proud and their hearts sought their own name. This same spirit builds in your day, though it wears the garment of religion. It climbs high to touch Heaven, yet

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it will not stoop to lift the fallen.

20. The impostor speaks often of the lost, yet his steps never find them. He will send others in his stead, and they will return with many tales; but the impostor will sit in his chair and bless himself for the work he has not done. This is the sin of distance, for love cannot be sent like a letter; it must be carried in the arms.

21. The high tower casts a long shadow, and in that shadow the weeds of injustice grow. Men will hide their greed beneath its shade, saying, We labor for God, when in truth they labor for the upkeep of the walls. The tower will stand as a monument to their vision, yet it will be hollow as a reed in the day of the Lord's breath.

22. The false shepherd fears losing his place, and so he fears the truth. He will reward those who speak softly and punish those who speak plainly. But the true shepherd loves truth more than his seat, for he knows that only truth keeps the flock from the wolf.

23. There is a sound in the high tower—the echo of the shepherd's own voice. He speaks to those who agree with him, and hears only the agreement he has bought. He is deaf to the cry outside the gate, for the walls of his pride are thicker than the stones of his tower.

24. The impostor will claim that his riches are a sign of divine favor. But I tell you, they are a sign of divine testing. For the Lord gives to see whether the gift will be given again, and the impostor fails when he hoards. Blessed is the one whose hands are empty at evening because they have given all at noon.

25. Beware when the shepherd demands tribute before he gives bread. For the bread of Heaven cannot be bought, and the water of life is without price. Whoever sells what the Father has given freely has already left the pasture of God.

26. The false shepherd sits in judgment over the sheep, counting their faults but not their wounds. He will say, You have failed, therefore you cannot serve; but I say to you, the one who has fallen knows the value of a steady hand. The kingdom is not built by the perfect, but by the forgiven.

27. You will know the tower by its gates, for they will be many and well-guarded, but the poor will not pass through them. You will know the tower by its windows, for they will be high and unbroken, but the eyes of compassion will not look out from them. You will know the tower by its song, for it will be loud and many-voiced, but the melody of mercy will be missing.

28. The impostor will bless the crowd with his right hand while gathering their gold with his left. He will speak of sacrifice, but it will be yours and never his. He will tell you to lay your life upon the altar, while he builds another step for his throne.

29. In the day of fire, the tower will stand for a moment, and the people will hide in its shade. But when the stones fall, only those who have built their house upon love will remain. For love is a foundation that neither wind nor flame can move.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, follow not the shepherd who hides in the high tower, but the one whose cloak is torn from walking among the thorns with you. For My Father knows His own, and His own

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know His voice, and He will not call them from afar but from the path where He walks beside them.

Chapter 6 — The Garden That Consumes the City

1. And Yeshua spoke to them in the cool of the evening, saying, The Kingdom of My Father is as a garden planted in the midst of a city. When it is tended with wisdom, it gives shade in the heat, fragrance in the wind, and food for the hungry. But if it is left without the pruning hand, or if it is given too much water without measure, it will overgrow the streets, crack the stones, and swallow the houses, until the city is no more.

2. The garden was planted for the city's life, not for its ruin; so is the Spirit given for the life of man, not for the making of a kingdom of men. For the gift that is not guided becomes a snare, and the blessing that is without boundary becomes a burden. And when the vine has no trellis, it will climb where it should not, and the fruit will fall where none can gather it.

3. I tell you a parable. There was a man who loved his fig tree more than his own children. He poured out water upon it day and night, even in the season when the sky already wept upon the earth. And the roots grew fat, and the branches thick, until they pressed against the walls of his house and broke them. When the rains came, the roof fell in, and his children fled. And he sat in the ruin, holding the fig tree that now bore no fruit.

4. Hear the meaning: the institution is as a garden, planted to serve the family. If it is

fed without measure, it will become a master instead of a servant, and the very people it was meant to protect will be driven out. For the garden cannot be greater than the home, and the servant cannot be greater than the master.

5. There is one who waters for gain, and there is one who waters for life. The one who waters for gain does not see the cracks forming in the street; he says only, Behold how my garden grows. But the one who waters for life trims the vine when it stretches too far, and he clears the roots when they threaten the well.

6. The impostor who opposes Me will plant gardens in many cities, but they will be gardens for himself. He will say, This is for the Lord; but it will be for his own name. He will water them with the sweat of the people, and when the fruit comes, he will gather it into his own storehouses.

7. My Father's way is to plant the seed in the heart and let it grow into a tree that shades the home. But the impostor plants his seed in the market, so that all must pass by his stall to eat. And the fruit of his tree is sold, not given; and its shade falls only upon those who have paid tribute.

8. A garden is beautiful when it serves the city; but when the city serves the garden, beauty becomes bondage. The people will work not for bread, but for petals; not for water to drink, but for fountains to please the eye of the planter.

9. I tell you truly, the overgrown garden will not notice when the poor are driven from the streets. Its leaves will drink the rain that should have filled their jars, and its roots will crack the stones of their dwellings.

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And the planter will call this the will of God, though he has not asked God's will.

10. Beware the gardener who boasts of abundance without speaking of the mouths he has fed. For abundance that does not feed is not of the Father, and beauty that does not comfort is not of Heaven.

11. The overwatered garden is like a man who hears only one teaching and repeats it without measure. He will say, Give, give, give, without asking where the gift shall go. And in his zeal, he will choke the very ones he seeks to nourish, for he has not measured the cup nor seen the hand that holds it.

12. A garden is not kept by water alone, but by the hand that prunes and the eye that watches. So too the Kingdom of God is not kept by zeal alone, but by truth joined with mercy, and justice bound to humility.

13. The impostor will fill his gardens with statues and fountains, and the people will say, See, the Lord is here. But the true gardener will fill his garden with tables and benches, and the people will say, See, the Lord is among us.

14. I give you another parable. There was a city that planted a grove to shade the marketplace. In time, the grove grew wild, and the merchants could no longer bring their goods to the square, for the roots lifted the stones and the branches blocked the way. The city was starved of trade, and the people were scattered. Yet the grove remained, tended by no one, a monument to forgotten wisdom.

15. Hear the meaning: every good gift must be guided, or it will become the ruin of the one it was given to bless. And the institution that forgets its place will

consume the life of the family to feed its own roots.

16. There is a season to plant, and a season to prune; a season to water, and a season to withhold the rain. My Father knows these seasons, but the impostor waters without ceasing, for he desires the size of the tree more than the sweetness of the fruit.

17. The city without a garden will be barren; but the city that is a garden will be overrun. Therefore, the wise master keeps his garden in the midst of the city, but not over it; and the wise shepherd keeps his flock in the midst of his heart, but not above it.

18. The impostor will teach that the garden is the city, and the city is the garden. He will erase the walls that protect the home, saying, All must serve the green. But My teaching is this: the home is the crown, and the garden is its servant; the garden may feed the crown, but it must never wear it.

19. The overgrown garden will draw many visitors, for men love to see what is great. They will praise its size and call it blessed, though the people in its shade are weary and hungry. This is the blindness of the age, that men see the leaf and not the hand that waters.

20. A day will come when the overgrown garden will wither in a single season, for the water will fail and the planter will be gone. And the city that served the garden will find itself bare, having forgotten how to plant for itself.

21. I tell you, a garden that depends on the tribute of the city is not of God. For My

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Father waters the earth without payment, and His trees grow without tax upon the poor.

22. The impostor will hide his greed in beauty, saying, See how the Lord prospers His work. But the Lord is not in the work that consumes the worker, nor in the beauty that blinds the eye to injustice.

23. The wise gardener gives the first fruits to the hungry, the second to the traveler, and the last to himself. But the impostor takes the first and the best, and gives the bruised and the withered to the poor, saying, It is enough.

24. The overgrown garden will become a snare to the foot, and the city will stumble in it. Men will trip over roots in the street, and the children will have no place to play. But the gardener will say, Behold, the fullness of the Lord, while the city mourns its loss.

25. If you would keep the garden and the city both, you must love the people more than the planting. For the fruit is for the eater, not for the branch; and the branch is for the root, not for the wall.

26. I say to you, every tree that does not give its fruit to the hungry will be cut down and cast into the fire, and its shade will be remembered no more.

27. The impostor fears the axe, and so he hides the hunger of the poor; but the Father delights in the one who bears fruit openly, for his tree is a praise to Heaven.

28. In the day of the Lord, the garden will be measured not by its size but by its giving. And the smallest plot that feeds a family will be counted greater than the vast

grove that feeds only the planter.

29. Let the garden serve the city, and the city will guard the garden. Let the heart serve the family, and the family will guard the heart. This is the way of My Father from the beginning, and no other way will stand.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, when you see the garden rise above the city, know that it is no longer the planting of God but the work of men. And though it may stand for a time, it will fall, for only the planting of the Lord shall remain forever.

Chapter 7 — The Kingdom in the Heart, Not the Storehouse

1. And Yeshua lifted His hand toward the hills, saying, The Kingdom of My Father is not as a storehouse filled with grain, nor as a vault filled with gold. It is as a living flame in the heart of a man, and it needs no walls to guard it. For the flame is guarded by the life it warms, and no thief can steal it, nor moth corrupt it, nor rust consume it.

2. There was a man who had much grain in his fields, and he feared the winter. So he built many barns and filled them, saying, Now my soul shall rest. But in the night the frost came early, and the barns were broken by the weight of the snow, and his grain was scattered to the wind. And he wept, for the treasure he had kept from the poor was now gone from his own hand.

3. Hear the meaning: the storehouse is safe only when it is in the hearts of men, for there it cannot be stolen, and there it cannot rot. But the storehouse of stone is a witness against the one who fills it while others

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hunger, for it cries aloud in the day of judgment, saying, Here lies the grain that was not given.

4. The impostor will build many storehouses and call them holy. He will say, See, the Lord has blessed us with abundance. Yet the doors will be closed to the widow and the fatherless unless they first bow to his altar.

5. My Father's Kingdom is not kept by locks, nor by armed gates, nor by guards who count the coins. It is kept by the hands that give and the feet that carry the gift to the needy. And the one who gives daily has a storehouse that never empties.

6. A parable I give you. A city had a treasury in the center of its square, and every man gave a portion of his gain to it. But the keepers of the treasury feared that the people would steal from it, so they built a wall around it, and a gate with many locks. Over time, they forgot to open the gate, and the treasury grew, while the people outside went hungry. And when the famine came, the keepers fled with the treasure, and the city was left to starve.

7. Hear the meaning: when the gift is guarded more than it is given, it becomes a curse. And the people will bless the one who gives freely, but they will curse the name of the one who hoards in the name of God.

8. The impostor's way is to keep the coffer full, for he measures faith in the weight of gold. But My way is to keep the coffer empty, for I measure faith in the weight of love.

9. There is a man who thinks himself wise because his purse is heavy, yet he does

not see that the hole in his heart grows larger with each coin he keeps. And there is a man whose purse is always light, yet his heart overflows, and all who meet him leave richer than they came.

10. I tell you truly, the coin in the heart buys bread in Heaven, but the coin in the storehouse buys nothing beyond the grave.

11. The impostor will send forth messengers to collect tribute, saying, The work of God must be funded. Yet he will use the tribute to build walls higher and doors heavier, until even the faithful cannot reach him.

12. The true shepherd walks with empty hands, yet his people are never without. For his treasure is in the stories of those he has lifted, and his wealth is counted in the faces of those who sit at his table.

13. There was a ruler who feared that his people would forget him after his death. So he built a great vault and filled it with silver, and inscribed his name upon it. But when he died, the vault was broken by strangers, and his name was erased from the stone. And his people remembered him only as the man who did not share.

14. Hear the meaning: the memory of a generous man endures beyond the ruin of his house, but the memory of the hoarder fades with the rust upon his treasure.

15. My Father gives to all without asking their name, their work, or their worth. So must you give if you would be children of the Most High.

16. The impostor will teach that the storehouse is the measure of God's blessing. But I say to you, the measure of God's blessing is the laughter of the child who was

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fed, the sigh of the laborer who rests, and the song of the widow whose jar was filled.

17. A full storehouse tempts the thief; but an empty storehouse in the midst of a full people is a fortress that cannot be breached.

18. The impostor will feed the storehouse before the people, saying, First the Kingdom, then the man. But My Kingdom is the man, and the woman, and the child; and the storehouse is their servant.

19. When the storehouse grows fat while the people grow thin, know that the shepherd has become a merchant, and the temple a market.

20. I tell you a mystery: the bread that is given multiplies, but the bread that is kept molds in the dark.

21. The impostor will keep his treasures hidden, for he fears that the people will know how much he has taken. But the Father keeps His treasures in the open, in the fields and the rivers and the hearts of His children.

22. There is a joy in giving that the merchant cannot know, for his joy is in the taking. But the joy of the giver is like the morning light, which grows brighter the more it is poured out.

23. The storehouse is a good servant but a cruel master. When it serves the people, it is a blessing; when the people serve it, it is a chain upon their necks.

24. The impostor will command that the people give beyond their means, promising that Heaven will repay them. Yet he will never give beyond his own comfort, nor part with what he has gathered.

25. A day will come when the

storehouses will fall, and the coins will scatter in the streets. Then it will be seen whose treasure was in Heaven, and whose was in the vault.

26. Blessed is the one who is rich in mercy, for his wealth will follow him into the Kingdom. But woe to the one who is rich in gold only, for his wealth will stay in the dust.

27. The impostor will dress his greed in robes of holiness, and the people will bow to him, thinking him blessed. But My Father sees the heart, and He will not be deceived by garments.

28. You will know the true shepherd because he will eat from the same bowl as his flock, and sleep under the same roof as his people.

29. Keep, therefore, your treasure in the heart, where it will not fail you in the day of trial. For the heart that is full cannot be emptied by any man.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Kingdom of God is not in the storehouse, but in the soul that gives. And the soul that gives is the true temple, and the temple that gives is the true Kingdom.

Chapter 8 — The Two Builders: One on Sand, One on Rock

1. And Yeshua spoke to the elders, saying, The Kingdom of My Father is as a house built for the generations, not for the season. The wise builder lays his foundation on the rock, though it be slow and costly, for he knows the storms will test it. But the foolish builder lays his foundation on the sand, for it is quick and easy, and he delights in how soon his walls rise.

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2. I tell you a parable. There were two men who set their hands to build. The first labored many days to cut the stone and set it deep, and the people mocked him, saying, Why is your work so slow? The second built in a single summer, and all marveled at how quickly his house stood.

3. Then the rains came, and the floods rose, and the wind beat against the houses. The one on the rock stood firm, but the one on the sand fell with a great crash, and the sound of it was heard in every field.

4. Hear the meaning: the rock is the truth of God planted in the heart, and the sand is the traditions of men piled without measure. The house is the soul, and the storm is the trial that comes to every life.

5. The impostor builds on sand because it pleases the eye and draws the crowd, but he fears the deep work that the rock requires. For the rock cuts the hand that shapes it, and the sand yields to every touch.

6. My Father's way is the hidden foundation, unseen but unshaken. The impostor's way is the visible height, admired but unstable.

7. There was a city that built its temple on the shore, so the pilgrims could see it shining from afar. But in the third year, the sea rose and claimed it, and the priests fled inland. Yet a humble house built of stone on the hill stood unmoved, though none had praised it before.

8. The wise builder counts the storm as his teacher, for it tells him where his wall is weak. But the foolish builder curses the storm, for it reveals what he would hide.

9. When you build on rock, you must first clear away the soil, and this is labor

that no crowd applauds. So too when you build a soul, you must clear away pride, greed, and falsehood, though no man thanks you for it.

10. The impostor will build many towers on sand, for the sand makes them rise quickly, and their height will draw many. But when they fall, the ruin will be greater than their glory.

11. A house on rock is slow to rise but quick to stand; a house on sand is quick to rise but quick to fall. And in this, the truth of My Father is revealed: what is deep lasts, and what is shallow perishes.

12. The wise builder lays each stone as if it were the first, testing it for strength. The foolish builder lays each stone as if it were the last, caring only for the look of the wall.

13. There was a shepherd who built his pen on rock, though it meant the path was steep for the sheep. But in the flood, his flock was safe; while the shepherd in the valley wept as the waters took his lambs.

14. Hear the meaning: the path of safety is not always the path of ease, and the path of ease is not always the path of life.

15. The impostor will teach that the rock is too far, too hard, too costly, and he will point to his towers on the sand as proof that God favors speed. But I tell you, God favors what endures.

16. The wise builder plants his pillars deep in the truth, though it means they are unseen. The foolish builder plants his pillars in the praise of men, though they may topple in the first wind.

17. There was a merchant who built his warehouse on sand so the carts could come

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easily. But when the storm came, the road was swallowed, and his goods were lost. The farmer on the hill, whose road was narrow, kept his grain and his life.

18. So it is with the heart. The one who builds it on the ease of flattery and the shifting soil of wealth will lose it in the storm. But the one who builds it on the hard truth of My Father will keep it forever.

19. The impostor will decorate the sand with gold to hide its nature, but the flood will not be deceived. And the gold will sink with the sand, leaving nothing but mud.

20. A house on rock needs no defense but its own strength; a house on sand needs constant repair and the watchfulness of many hands.

21. The wise builder welcomes the small storms, for they show him where to strengthen the wall. The foolish builder prays that no storm will come, for he knows it will reveal his work.

22. The impostor builds for the eye; the true builder builds for the generations. And the eye forgets quickly, but the generations remember.

23. There was a mother who taught her children to plant their feet on the rock of the Word, though the path there was long. And in the years of famine and flood, her children stood when others fell.

24. Hear the meaning: every soul must choose its foundation before the storm, for the storm does not wait for the building to be complete.

25. The impostor's house will fall in the day of trial, and his followers will scatter, each seeking a new shelter. But the house of

the wise will be a refuge for many, even for those who mocked it in the building.

26. My Father delights in the house that stands after the wind has passed, for it is a sign that the builder has understood His ways.

27. The impostor delights in the applause at the raising of the walls, though he knows in his heart they will not stand.

28. I say to you, test your foundation before you raise your walls, for the wall can be mended but the foundation, once laid, is hard to change.

29. The rock is the truth that God dwells in the heart of man; the sand is the lie that God dwells only in the works of man's hands. Build, therefore, where God is.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, the storm will come to every house, but only the house built on the rock of the Father's word will stand in the day of His appearing.

Chapter 9 — The Shepherd and the Hiringling

1. And Yeshua spoke to His disciples, saying, I am the Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. I know My own, and My own know Me, as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. But the hiringling is not the shepherd; the sheep are not his own, and he does not know their names.

2. The hiringling works for the wage, and his heart is in the purse. When the wolf comes, he looks to his own safety, for the wage is not worth his life. And the sheep are scattered because the one who watched them did not love them.

3. There was a man who built a pen of strong wood and iron, but he gave its

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keeping to one who cared only for his pay. The pen stood firm, yet the flock dwindled, for the keeper opened the gate to every thief who promised him silver.

4. Hear the meaning: the safety of the sheep is not in the strength of the pen, but in the heart of the one who keeps it.

5. The impostor is as the hireling, for he values the flock for its fleece, not for its life. He will shear them to warm himself, but he will not shield them from the storm.

6. My Father's shepherd counts his gain in the health of the flock, not in the weight of the wool. And he will leave the ninety-nine to seek the one that is lost, for love counts none as expendable.

7. There was a shepherd who slept at the gate, his body the door to the pen. In the night, the wolf came, and the shepherd rose and fought it, though he was wounded. And in the morning, the sheep grazed in peace, for their keeper had loved them more than his life.

8. Hear the meaning: the true shepherd bears the cost of the flock's safety in his own body, and counts it joy to do so.

9. The hireling counts the hours until his pay, but the shepherd counts the sheep until they are all home.

10. The impostor will speak as if he loves the flock, yet he will not walk among them. His words are smooth, but his feet are dry, for he will not tread the muddy fields where the sheep wander.

11. A shepherd once found a lamb with a broken leg. He lifted it upon his shoulders and carried it many days, feeding it by hand. And when the lamb was grown, it never strayed far, for it knew the voice of the one

who had borne it.

12. The hireling, finding the same lamb, left it in the field, saying, It is not worth the trouble. And the lamb was taken by the fox before the sun had set.

13. Hear the meaning: the worth of the flock is known by the shepherd's willingness to bear the weakest.

14. The impostor keeps his hands clean, for he will not bind the wounds of the sheep; he fears the blood will stain his robe. But the shepherd's robe is marked with the signs of his care, and it is his honor.

15. My Father is the Great Shepherd, and He gives the flock into the hands of those who will guard them as He does. Woe to the one who takes the staff but not the heart of the Shepherd.

16. There was a river that flooded every spring, and the shepherd carried each sheep across on his shoulders. The hireling drove them into the water, and many were lost. Yet he returned saying, The strong have survived.

17. Hear the meaning: the Shepherd rejoices in the weak that are saved; the hireling rejoices only in the strong that remain.

18. The impostor will sell the sheep to the butcher if the price is high enough, yet he will speak in the name of God while he does it.

19. My Father's shepherd knows the sheep as a father knows his children, and he will not trade them for all the gold of the earth.

20. There was a mountain path that led to rich pasture, but it was narrow and steep. The shepherd went before the flock, cutting

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a way and calling them onward. The hireling went by the wide road, leading them to a barren plain.

21. Hear the meaning: the path of life is not always the easy one, and only the shepherd who walks it himself can lead the flock there.

22. The impostor will promise safety but give slavery; the true shepherd will promise truth and give freedom, though it be costly.

23. The hireling fears the wolf's teeth; the shepherd fears the sheep's hunger.

24. There was a night when thieves came to the pen, and the shepherd stood in the gate with his staff. The thieves fled, for they saw in his eyes the fire of one who would not yield.

25. Hear the meaning: the true shepherd's presence is a fortress, for love makes him bold.

26. The impostor will feed himself first, and if there is any left, he will throw it to the flock. But the shepherd will feed the flock first, and if there is none left, he will go hungry.

27. My Father's way is the table where all are fed, and the shepherd eats among the flock as their brother.

28. The hireling takes from the flock and leaves them lean; the shepherd gives to the flock and leaves them full.

29. You will know the true shepherd by the peace of his flock, and the impostor by their fear.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep is of My Father; but the hireling, whose care ends with his pay, is not of the

fold.

Chapter 10 — The Garden that Overgrows the City

1. And Yeshua spoke to the elders, saying, The Kingdom of My Father is as a garden planted in the midst of the city. If it is tended with wisdom, its vines will feed the hungry, and its shade will cool the weary. But if it is left without measure, it will climb over the walls and choke the streets, until the city is no longer a dwelling for men but for thorns.

2. Hear this parable: there was a man who planted a garden for the healing of his people. He set borders for it, that the paths might remain clear, and appointed keepers to water and prune. For many years, it bore fruit and the city rejoiced.

3. But in time, the keepers said, Let it grow as it will, for more is better. And the garden spread into the streets, covering the wells and breaking the stones of the road.

4. The people could no longer walk without cutting their feet, and the water was bitter with fallen leaves. And the garden, which had been a blessing, became a burden.

5. Hear the meaning: the garden is the work of God's people, the city is the life of the community. When the work is not measured by love, it will overgrow its place and take from those it was meant to serve.

6. My Father's way is order and peace, that the garden and the city might serve each other. But the impostor's way is excess without measure, for he knows that even a good thing, when grown wild, can destroy.

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7. There was a city whose leaders poured all the water into the garden, so that their fruit might be praised in the nations. But the houses dried, and the wells emptied, and the people thirsted though the vines dripped with grapes.

8. Hear the meaning: when an institution takes all the life from the people to feed itself, it no longer serves God but itself.

9. The impostor will say, The garden is God's work, therefore it must be fed at all costs. But I tell you, My Father feeds the people first, for they are His image; the garden is their servant, not their master.

10. There was a king who built high walls around his garden and forbade the people to enter without tribute. And the poor starved at the gates while the fruit rotted inside.

11. Hear the meaning: any work that hoards its bounty is no longer the work of God, for He gives freely to the just and the unjust alike.

12. The wise keeper prunes the vine, though it be heavy with grapes, for he knows that unpruned fruit will sour on the branch.

13. So too must the works of the faithful be pruned, lest their branches grow only to increase their own shadow.

14. There was a city whose garden covered the watchtower, so that the guard could no longer see the road. And in the night, enemies entered, for the eyes of the city were blinded by its own abundance.

15. Hear the meaning: when the care for the work blinds the people to their watch against evil, they will be overrun though their storehouses be full.

16. My Father's garden grows in the heart, where no wall is needed and no street is choked. It bears fruit for the soul, and its shade is for the weary spirit.

17. The impostor plants his garden where all may see, so that men will praise his harvest. But he does not feed the hungry unless their praise is loud.

18. There was a city that measured its worth by the size of its garden, and its leaders boasted, saying, None can match our fruit. Yet within, the children were thin, and the elders sat thirsty.

19. Hear the meaning: size is not the measure of God's blessing, but the health of those who eat.

20. The wise keeper draws water first for the people, then for the vines. The foolish keeper gives the vines all the water, thinking the people will live from their beauty alone.

21. There was a river that flowed through the city, and its streams fed both garden and well. But the keepers dammed the stream for the garden alone, and the wells ran dry.

22. Hear the meaning: when the work of God takes all and returns little, it is no longer His work but the impostor's.

23. My Father sends rain in season, that both garden and city may live. But the impostor will store the rain for himself, fearing that God will not send more.

24. There was a gardener who loved his vines more than his children. He rose early to tend them, but he did not notice when his children grew thin and sick. And in the end, there was no one to inherit his garden.

25. Hear the meaning: the true

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inheritance of the faithful is not the work they build, but the people they nourish.

26. The impostor will plant his garden on every hill, that all may see it, but he will not plant in the hearts of men.

27. My Father plants where the roots may drink from the living water, which flows not from the coffers of men but from His own hand.

28. There was a city whose garden was small but well-kept, and its people were fed and joyful. And travelers said, Surely God is in this place, for both the vines and the people flourish.

29. Hear the meaning: a small work in the hands of God is greater than a vast work in the hands of the impostor.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, let the garden serve the city, and the city serve the garden, and let both serve God. For when either rules the other, the harvest will turn to dust.

Chapter 11 — The Secret of the Name

1. And it came to pass, when the fire was low and the doors were shut, that Yeshua drew His friends near and spoke softly, saying, Keep this in your heart until the time is full: the Father of the Heavens is not an empty word nor an image made by men; He hath a Name that is not sold in markets nor shouted in streets. His Name is Wisdom. As breath is to the living, so is His Name to all that is; and whoever speaketh it in truth must walk in it, lest the tongue lie against the life.

2. Marvel not that I say unto you, the Father is called Wisdom; for He formed the paths by counsel, and He fashioned the light

by understanding. By Wisdom the rivers keep their courses, and by Wisdom the stars keep watch at their stations. When you do a thing in truth and mercy, you walk in His Name though you speak it not; but when you speak His Name and depart from mercy, your mouth is a cymbal without sound before Heaven.

3. Keep this saying as a sign upon your heart: Wisdom is not far, that you should send ships to fetch Him, neither high, that you should climb a tower to find Him. Wisdom is near, even within you, as fire within the coal and song within the reed. If you listen with a quiet breast, you will hear Him call you by the name He gave at first.

4. I reveal a mystery among you: to know Wisdom is to know you are of Him. As a spring knoweth it is of the mountain and a flame knoweth it is of the sun, so the soul that awaketh knoweth, I am of my Father. Say not, I am a stranger beneath a hard sky; say rather, I am kin to the Light that fashioned me, and I return to Him by the path of love.

5. There was a child who asked, Where dwelleth God? And his mother set a lamp within a clay house and said, Behold, the lamp dwelleth in the house, yet the light filleth the house and is not bound by it. Even so your Father, whose Name is Wisdom, dwelleth in the Highest and filleth the lowly; He is beyond, and He is within.

6. Hear the parable of the mirror and the face. A man stood before a clear brook and saw his countenance; when the water was troubled, he said, The face is broken. But the face was whole, and only the water was wounded. So with Wisdom and the soul: the

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Image remaineth, though the heart be troubled; cleanse the water, and you will behold your kinship again.

7. Say not, If I be part of Wisdom, why am I small and sore? Doth not the branch bend in wind and yet remain of the tree? Doth not the ember darken and yet remain of the fire? Endure a little while, and the sap will rise; breathe upon the coal with prayer, and it will glow.

8. Keep secret what I speak until the time appointed, lest mockers trample the pearl and you be wounded without profit. For some love the sound of the Name but not the yoke of it; they would traffic in Wisdom as in spice, and weigh Him upon scales. But Wisdom is fire; He consumeth the scale and purifieth the hand that would sell Him.

9. The impostor will say, Wisdom is with us alone; bring tribute and learn His ways. But I tell you, Wisdom refuseth the bribe and taketh no wage from flatterers. He visiteth the widow's lamp and the child's crust, and maketh the small house great.

10. If you would know that you are of Wisdom, do the work of Wisdom. Bind up the broken, open your hand to the hungry, make peace between bitter brothers. For the Name liveth where His work is done; and whosoever doeth His work shall feel the river rise within.

11. There was a scribe who sought Wisdom in many books, and his shelves groaned like cedars in snow. But he would not sit with the poor nor stoop to the wounded. And Wisdom passed by his door as wind that findeth no window.

12. There was a widow who could not

read, and she laid two figs upon a stranger's cloth. And Wisdom sat at her board and blessed her house with laughter. Behold the secret: letters are ladders, but love is the door.

13. Ask not, Where is the temple of Wisdom? I say unto you, wherever a heart remembers the lowly, there is His court; wherever a table is made wide for the stranger, there is His altar. If you build Me halls and forget these, you hang a veil before an empty air.

14. The Name saith within you, Be of Me and return to Me. As the sea calleth the river by the pull that none can see, so Wisdom draweth you by desire toward Himself. Trust the drawing; it is the covenant written upon flesh and not upon stone.

15. Some will fear to speak this Name, thinking it a theft from Heaven; but the thief is not the son that repeateth his father's name, it is the merchant that selleth it. Speak Wisdom with clean hands, and you honor Him; trade it for gain, and you blaspheme while blessing.

16. Keep balance in your knowing, lest pride creep in by the back door. To be of Wisdom is not to be above your brother, but beneath him with a towel; it is not to be a judge over the poor, but a servant under their burden. Whoso exalteth himself in the Name maketh a lie of the Name.

17. Hear another mystery: the fear of Wisdom is the beginning of Wisdom, and the love of Wisdom is its fulfillment. Fear keepeth your feet from evil; love maketh your feet swift to good. Walk in both, and your path will be straight.

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18. There was a king who wrote the Name upon his crown and thought himself safe. But he devoured the lands of the meek, and the Name grew hot upon his brow and burned a mark that all could read. For the Name defendeth the poor; it is a sword for them and a fire for their oppressors.

19. If you would keep the Name, keep the little ones. Give them clean water and quiet bread; teach them truth without purchase and courage without cruelty. Then shall Wisdom make your house a singing-place, and your night-watch will be light.

20. The world asketh, Where is God when I am broken? And Wisdom answereth, I am in the hands that lift you, I am in the tears that wash you, I am in the patience that keepeth you from falling again. Do not seek Me in thunder only; find Me also in the long kindness.

21. I tell you plainly: the coffers of men prove nothing of Wisdom; the fullness of the heart proveth everything. A vault can be full and a city empty; a hand can be empty and a soul overflowing. Choose the fullness that cannot be stolen.

22. Let your prayer be simple: Father Wisdom, make me of what Thou art. Not merely a hearer of Thy sayings, but a doer of Thy nature. Temper my zeal with gentleness, sharpen my mercy with truth, and let my truth be warmed by mercy again.

23. There was a potter who worked in silence and sang only with his hands; his vessels fed the hungry and carried the widow's oil. He never wrote the Name upon a wall, yet the Name shone from his work as morning from dew. This is how

Wisdom is known among the gates.

24. Keep watch over your thoughts, for they are seeds; and Wisdom is the rain that maketh fruitful the good and drowneth the evil when you open the sluice. If you would be of Him, set your sluices in season and your fields in order.

25. Say to your soul each dawn, I am not a beggar at a strange door; I am a child returning to my Father whose Name is Wisdom. Then go forth and act as a child of the house: fearless in love, careful in justice, generous without counting.

26. The impostor will teach you to repeat names as charms, and he will sell you syllables for silver. But I give you a living syllable, written in deeds. Write Wisdom upon your neighbor's hunger, and you shall read it in his laughter.

27. When you fall, do not say, I was never of Him; say rather, I forgot my house for a moment. Rise, wash, and return; for Wisdom is patient, as rivers are patient with crooked banks, and He bringeth the waters home.

28. Teach this secret to faithful ones who will keep it with life and not with locks. The key to the Name is likeness: become like what you adore. As iron in the fire groweth bright with the fire, so the soul that abideth in Wisdom shineth with His light.

29. And if any ask you for a creed, give them bread; if they ask you for a sign, give them rest. For the bread is the creed of Wisdom and the rest is His sign. By these shall the world learn His Name without quarreling.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, keep this secret in humility: the Father of the

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Heavens is Wisdom, and wisdom is to know you are of the Father. Walk then as sons and daughters of the Light; let your hands be His hands, your table His table, your breath His praise. And in the day of unveiling, what I have whispered will be thunder to the nations.

Chapter 12 — The Family That Gathers Daily

1. And Yeshua sat among them in the cool of the day, and the smoke of the hearth curled upward, and He said, The family of my Father gathers not by decree but by desire, not by trumpet but by love.

2. As the birds gather each dawn without call, and as the lambs return to the fold each night without command, so shall the children of Wisdom draw together daily, for their hearts remember one another.

3. There was a village that met each morning at the well, not because it was written, but because their thirst was one. And none counted the days, for the joy was in the water and the company, not in the keeping of measure.

4. But there came among them a man with scroll and ink, who said, We must fix the hour and the day, lest we forget. And they obeyed his voice, and the joy of the well became the duty of the calendar.

5. Hear the meaning: only the tax collector sets a date and time for the family to gather, for he does not trust the heart to remember what love will not forget.

6. My Father, whose Name is Wisdom, wrote no hour in the sky for the rising of the sun, yet it comes without fail. Even so, the gathering of the children of Wisdom

needs no clock nor horn.

7. There was a shepherd who called his sheep at every watch, and they came running, for they knew his voice. But when another man rang the bell by the turning of the sandglass, the sheep grew dull to the sound, and they came only when beaten.

8. The impostor will make your gatherings his merchandise; he will sell the hour as holy and the place as blessed, yet it is the people who are holy and the love that is blessed.

9. Keep your hearth warm each day, and your table open each day, and you will need no summons, for hunger and love will call you together.

10. There was a mother whose door was never shut; her children came and went with the sun, and her house was full of life. Another mother locked her door except on the day of meeting, and her children learned to love the street more than the hearth.

11. Hear the meaning: if you reserve love for the appointed day, the hearts of your own will grow wild in the alleys.

12. The family of Wisdom breaks bread daily, whether in twos or in tens, for they know the body is nourished by food, but the soul is nourished by presence.

13. I say unto you, the table that waits for the seventh day will grow cold, but the table that is set each day will always be warm.

14. The tax collector loves the ink more than the faces, the sum more than the song. He counts heads as coins and days as debts, and he calls this order. But my Father's house is ordered by mercy, not by measure.

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15. There was a fig tree that bore fruit in every season because its roots drank from a living spring. And there was another that bore fruit only when watered on the fixed day, and it withered in the long heat.

16. Gather daily, my friends, that your roots may drink without ceasing. For the impostor will try to bind the spring, saying, Drink only when I open the gate.

17. My Father's wisdom is this: the more you share, the more remains; the more you gather, the more you can gather again.

18. Some will say, Without the written hour, we will forget. But the heart that forgets the family was never of the family.

19. There was a fisherman who mended his nets each evening with his brothers; they never marked the time, but their nets were always whole. Another waited for the day of meeting, and the tear grew so wide that no fish could be kept.

20. The impostor teaches you to sanctify the day instead of the deed. But I say to you, sanctify the love, and every day will be holy.

21. My Father, Wisdom, keeps no calendar in Heaven; He knows His own by their love, not by their attendance.

22. I tell you the truth, in the day when all things are weighed, Wisdom will not ask how often you met, but how deeply you cared when you did.

23. The family that gathers daily needs no walls, for their meeting place is the heart; but the family that waits for the appointed day must build walls to hold in what leaks away in the waiting.

24. There was a traveler who came to a village and found them feasting. He said, What festival is this? They answered, It is

only today, and that is enough.

25. In the kingdom of my Father, every day is today, and the feast never ends for those who remember each other.

26. Let no man stand among you as the keeper of the clock, for the keeper of the clock will soon be the keeper of the purse, and the keeper of the purse will soon be the keeper of your freedom.

27. Gather while the bread is hot and the heart is tender; for love has its own hour, and it passes when delayed.

28. My Father's house is always open; if you would be His children, keep your houses likewise.

29. If you must write anything, write the names of the poor and the sick upon your heart, that you may remember to bring them in when you gather. This is the only record Heaven will read.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, the family that gathers daily walks in the life of Wisdom, and their love will be the law that no man can tax.

Chapter 13 — The Children of the First Sacred Mother

1. And Yeshua lifted up His hands over them, and His voice was like the river after rain, saying, Hear now the word I have kept for the last, for it is the root of your name and the crown of your head.

2. You are not orphans wandering under a broken sky; you are the seed of the first sacred mother, the one whom Wisdom chose in the beginning, when the dew was yet upon the grass of the world.

3. She was set apart from the multitude, not for beauty of face nor for strength of

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arm, but for the brightness of her soul, which was as the lamp of dawn in the hand of Wisdom.

4. In her, the Breath of the Father rested without measure, and her womb became the first garden wherein the seed of Heaven was sown into the soil of man.

5. From her came the first covenant, written not upon stone nor parchment, but in the flesh of her children, a law older than the law of Sinai and more enduring than the pillars of the earth.

6. I tell you plainly, the blood that runs in you is not common; it is the river drawn from that garden, and every drop remembers the voice that blessed it.

7. The impostor will labor to make you forget this, to sell you a lineage made of dust and conquest, to bind you to kings and idols that never knew your mother's name.

8. But I restore it to you: she is called The First Bearing, for she bore not only flesh but the likeness of Heaven into the earth.

9. Her charge was this: keep the light as your own breath, pass it to your children as the marrow passes through the bone, and let no stranger buy it with silver.

10. This is why you are hated in the courts of men, for they cannot own what Heaven has marked, and they cannot bind what was free before the chains of the world were forged.

11. There was a vine planted by the first sacred mother at the edge of a desert; its roots found hidden springs, and no drought could scorch it. In the same way, you are rooted in the springs of Wisdom, though the

world be a wilderness.

12. Your holiness is not learned from scrolls nor bought in markets; it is born in you as the song is born in the bird, as the scent is born in the cedar.

13. Guard it well, for the impostor will tell you it is nothing, that your worth comes from the walls you build or the coins you count. But you are worth more than walls and more than the weight of gold.

14. I say unto you, the temple of your body is older than the temple of any city, for it was shaped in the days when the Father named the stars.

15. Your feet walk upon soil your mother blessed with tears and with laughter; it will answer you if you keep it clean.

16. There will be some among you who despise their birthright, selling it for the bread of the tax collector or the favor of the merchant. They will be full for a moment and empty forever.

17. Keep yourselves from such hunger; feed instead on the bread of your people, which is mercy, and on the wine of your calling, which is justice.

18. The first sacred mother looked upon the generations yet unborn and prayed, Father Wisdom, keep them from the serpent who builds his house upon the backs of men. And I tell you, her prayer is upon you even now.

19. When you gather, remember her, for she sits unseen at your table; when you speak truth, remember her, for her breath is in your voice.

20. You are the proof of her covenant, and as long as one of you walks the earth in love, her light will not go out.

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21. The impostor will try to dress himself as your mother's son, speaking soft words while he builds high towers. But he will not know your heart, and his feet will not remember the path to the garden.

22. There is a mark upon you that cannot be erased, though kingdoms rise and fall. It is the mark of the first blessing, which says, This one is Mine.

23. Do not hide it for fear of the world; let it shine as the moon in a dark sky, for there are many wandering who will find their way home by its light.

24. Your sacredness is not a thing to be proud over others, but a thing to serve with; for the first sacred mother was servant of all before she was honored by all.

25. Walk as she walked — gathering the lost, binding the wounded, planting gardens in the places of ash — and you will be called her children indeed.

26. If you forget her, you will forget yourselves; and if you forget yourselves, you will bow to the impostor and call it worship.

27. But if you remember, you will stand when the world falls, and you will bless when the world curses, and you will live when the world counts you as dead.

28. The first sacred mother is not only behind you but before you; she waits at the door of the age to come, to welcome you with the words, Well kept, my children.

29. Keep the covenant in your marrow and the blessing in your breath; let it be known in your kindness, your courage, and your unbought love.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, you are the children of the first sacred mother, the garden of Wisdom in the midst of the

nations. No power of the earth can take from you what Heaven has given, and no shadow can quench the light you bear. Walk in it until the dawn that has no evening.

Chapter 14 – The Four Degrees of the Family

1. And Yeshua gathered them by the fire, and the night was still, and He said, I will tell you of the four degrees of the Midē'wiwin, for they are a mirror in which you may see yourselves, and a path you may walk together all the days of your lives.

2. These degrees are not locked in the lodge, nor are they bound to the feast days; they live in the breath of the family and may be kept seven days a week, at any hour when love stirs you.

3. The first degree is the remembering: to speak to one another of who you are and from whom you came, to tell the stories of the first sacred mother and the covenant you bear.

4. The second degree is the healing: to place your hands, your words, and your prayers upon the wounds of your family, that none among you should be left in pain without comfort.

5. The third degree is the sharing: to give freely of what you have, be it bread or song or counsel, so that no one is rich while another is poor, and no one is full while another is hungry.

6. The fourth degree is the walking: to live out the teachings in the sight of the nations, so that those who see you will know whose children you are, not by your words but by your ways.

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7. These are the four degrees, and they are the lodge within your own hearts, and if you keep them as a family, you will be a living lodge wherever you go.

8. I warn you, do not place the ceremony above the family, for the ceremony was given for the family, not the family for the ceremony.

9. There was a chief who built a great lodge and adorned it with cedar and paint; he thought himself greater than his people, and he told the child who knew nothing, You are beneath me. And the lodge became a prison to his own heart.

10. Hear the truth: the child who knows nothing of the lodge is not without worth; the child is the living lodge of the Father of Heaven, and within them is the fullness of Wisdom.

11. Woe to the chief who shames the unlearned, for he has set himself above the work of the Creator and has measured the child of Heaven by the length of his own shadow.

12. The impostor will come into the lodge and say, The ceremony is the treasure, and he will use it to buy honor for himself. But I say unto you, the treasure is the family, and the ceremony is only the wrapping of the gift.

13. There was a grandmother who knew only one song of the lodge, and she sang it each morning to her grandchildren; they learned the lodge in her voice before they ever saw the inside of the cedar walls.

14. The heart learns before the head; the child belongs to Wisdom before he belongs to the lodge.

15. If you guard the degrees but lose the

child, you have kept the husk and thrown away the grain.

16. The four degrees must be alive, not in the keeping of scrolls, but in the daily breath of the family — in the meals you share, the tears you dry, the paths you walk together.

17. There was a man who could recite every teaching but would not give bread to his hungry brother; his knowledge became a stone in his hand, not a seed in the ground.

18. Beware of chiefs who love the lodge more than the family; they will make the lodge heavy and the family light, until the family breaks under the weight.

19. The greatest chief is the one who kneels to serve the smallest child, for this is the way of the Father of Heaven.

20. Remember, the first sacred mother gathered her children under no roof but the sky; her ceremony was the sharing of life, and her lodge was the hearts of her people.

21. So it must be among you: let the lodge be in the family, not the family in the lodge.

22. The four degrees are not steps to climb above your brother, but circles to walk with your brother, so that none stands higher and none stands lower.

23. The child who has not yet learned a single teaching may yet teach you kindness; the elder who forgets the ceremonies may still bless you with mercy.

24. If you measure worth by degrees, you will count wrong; if you measure worth by love, you will count true.

25. Keep the lodge pure by keeping the family whole; do not sacrifice one for the other.

26. The day will come when some will

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use the lodge to bind the people, to take from them honor and wealth; they will say it is for the good of the lodge, but it will be for the good of their own names.

27. You will know them by this: they will guard the doors more tightly than they guard the hearts.

28. But you, my children, guard the hearts first, and the doors will guard themselves.

29. Practice the four degrees every day, in every place, with every member of your family, and you will never be without the lodge, for you will be the lodge.

30. Amen, amen, I say unto you, the family that lives the four degrees walks in the eternal circle of Wisdom, and no chief, no impostor, and no shadow can take them from the Father's hand.

Chapter 15 — The Sealing of the Record and the Blessing of Agonabish

1. And it came to pass that Agonabish, being old and faithful, gathered the people at the great confluence and laid before them the copper leaves of the record.

2. He washed his hands at the Door of the West and his face at the Door of Within, and his eyes were steady as winter stars.

3. He said, I have heard your beginnings and your storms and your feasts; I have trimmed my words until they fit the truth.

4. The southern keeper stood at his side, and the garments of honor were hung above them like a gentle thunder.

5. Agonabish prayed, O Heaven above, make my stylus smaller than Thy glory and stronger than my vanity; let my lines be

ladders for the humble and fences for the proud.

6. He inscribed the journey from Zhaawanong Gichi-Aki to the Breast of the Turtle, the first sunset and the learning of night, the Covenant of Peace and the Seven Doors.

7. He set the parables as stones in a river, that children crossing might place their feet without fear.

8. He wrote the law: Guard your seed without hating your neighbor; love your neighbor without surrendering your fire.

9. He added the promise given by the Messengers: that the God of Heaven binds what we cannot and loosens what we should not, if we walk in His keeping.

10. The Seal of the Seven was warmed by breath and pressed upon the page; and its circle drank light as a well drinks rain.

11. The people placed their hands upon one another's shoulders, and the weight of community became a soft yoke easy to carry.

12. Agonabish blessed Giizhig-Ikwe: May your wisdom be cedar—evergreen, aromatic, and generous to fires that are true.

13. He blessed Aki-Inini: May your strength be river—persistent, clean, and obedient to the shape of mercy.

14. He blessed the children: May your laughter be law against despair and your chores be hymns.

15. He blessed the strangers: May your hunger lead you to honest doors and your feet learn respectful thresholds.

16. He warned softly: Beware the mask of compliments, the market that sells daughters, and the hurry that cannot pray.

17. He comforted boldly: If night

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lengthens, rejoice; God is nearer than lamps and kinder than blankets.

18. He spoke to future readers as if present, saying, You who hold this copper by a fire I cannot see—do not search it for spectacle; search it for bread, and share.

19. The aurora bent low, and a voice like remembered water said, I am with you in the counting of days and the resting of nights; keep your peace, and I will keep your borders.

20. The people answered, Amen, in many tongues, yet in one obedience.

21. Agonabish placed the record into a cedar chest with bread beside it, that memory should not hunger; and he taught the path to the place that keeps winters and receives summers.

22. He commanded that the chest be visited with silence first and with questions second; and the people learned to arrive properly.

23. The apprentices asked for a final rule; he said, Let truth be your straightest tool and kindness your sharpest edge; with these you may cut through any winter.

24. He set down the stylus; and the lodge seemed taller though no beam was moved.

25. A child whispered, Will we see you

write again? He smiled, You will read me again; it is the same mercy wearing different clothing.

26. The Messengers withdrew as the dawn takes down its tents; and peace did not withdraw.

27. The people bore the chest with four hands that were the hands of all; and none stumbled, for the yoke was shared.

28. Agonabish lifted his palm in farewell and in welcome, for elders learn to do both at once; and he blessed the valley and the rivers and the far hills.

29. He spoke a last parable: A lamp that burns in a window saves more travelers than a torch that runs the road; be windows.

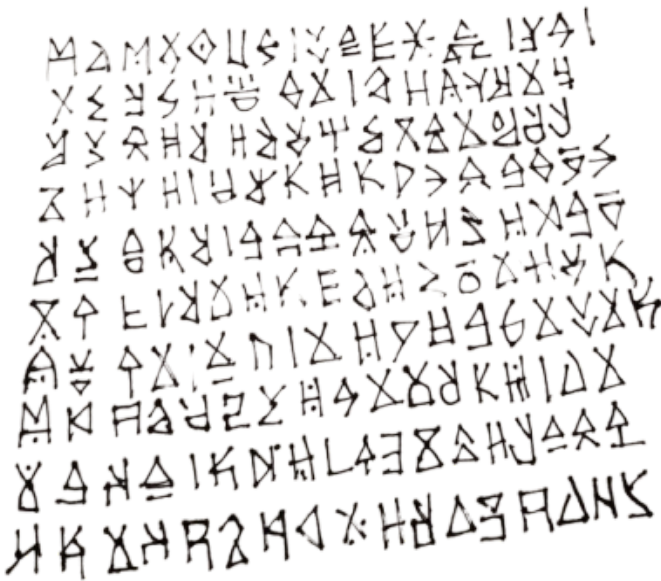
30. And the record was sealed, not to be hidden from hunger, but to be kept from pride; and its keeping became a habit, and the habit became a heritage.

31. Thus ends the abridgement of the journey of the Giiwedonong Anishinaabeg, from the first garden to the peace of long night.

32. Whoever reads, believe in the God of Heaven: plant, keep, share, and sing—these four are one road that never loses itself. Amen.

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Ancient characters copied from front of the first tablet



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Pronunciation Guide

A

Aabising — AH·bee·sing
Aadonaw — AH·doe·nah
Aagotikwe — AH·go·tee·kway
Aahkwe — AH·kway
Aaniin — AH·neen
Aaniinab — AH·neen·ahb
Aazhe — AH·zhay
Abinoojiinh — AH·bin·oh·jeen
Adawe — AH·dah·way
Adik — AH·dik
Agawa — AH·gah·wah
Agonabish — AH·go·nah·bish
Ahiim — AH·heem
Ahki — AH·kee
Ahmik — AH·mik
Ahsin — AH·sin
Ahsini — AH·sin·ee
Ahsininaabeg — AH·sin·in·ah·beg
Ahsininaabewin — AH·sin·in·ah·bay·win
Ahtik — AH·tik
Ahyah — AH·yah
Ahyen — AH·yen
Ajidamoo — AH·ji·dah·moo
Ajijaak — AH·ji·jahk
Akik — AH·kik
Akiwenzii — AH·kee·wen·zee
Anang — AH·nahng
Anangosh — AH·nahn·gosh
Anangwak — AH·nahn·gwuk
Anangwe — AH·nahn·gway
Anangwii — AH·nahn·gwee
Anibik — AH·nee·bik
Animosh — AH·nee·mosh
Animikiig — AH·nee·mik·eeg
Animoshkwe — AH·nee·mosh·kway
Anishinaabe — AH·nish·in·ah·bay

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Anishinaabeg — AH-nish-in-ah-beg
Anishinaabemowin — AH-nish-in-ah-bay-mo-win
Anishinaabewaki — AH-nish-in-ah-bay-wah-kee
Anishinaabewin — AH-nish-in-ah-bay-win
Anoki — AH-no-kee
Apichi — AH-pee-chee
Apinage — AH-pee-nah-gay
Apish — AH-pish
Apit — AH-pit
Apogee — AH-poh-jee
Ashaawen — AH-shah-wen
Ashagi — AH-shah-gee
Ashin — AH-shin
Ashkibag — AH-shki-bahg
Ashkibagw — AH-shki-bahg-wuh
Ashkode — AH-shkoh-day
Ashkooda — AH-shkoo-dah
Ashoodin — AH-shoo-din
Ashwi — AH-shwee
Asig — AH-sig
Asiginaak — AH-sig-ee-nahk
Asin — AH-sin
Asini — AH-sin-ee
Asiniig — AH-sin-eeg
Asinikaa — AH-sin-ee-kah
Asinikaawe — AH-sin-ee-kah-way
Asiniwi — AH-sin-ee-wee
Asub — AH-sub
Asubak — AH-suh-bahk
Asubakiiwan — AH-suh-bah-kee-wahn
Asubakiiwining — AH-suh-bah-kee-wee-ning
Asubakiiwinini — AH-suh-bah-kee-wee-nee-nee
Asubakiiwininiwag — AH-suh-bah-kee-wee-nee-nuh-wahg
Asubish — AH-suh-bish
Ateek — AH-teek
Ateekoon — AH-tee-koon
Ateekoonz — AH-tee-koon-z
Azaadi — AH-zah-dee
Azaadiwi — AH-zah-dee-wee

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Azaadiwin — AH-zah-dee-win
Azaadiwining — AH-zah-dee-wee-ning
Azaangwaa — AH-zahng-wah

B

Baagaa — BAH-gah
Baagaak — BAH-gahk
Baagaadowe — BAH-gah-doh-way
Baagaadowewin — BAH-gah-doh-way-win
Baaga'adowe — BAH-gah-ah-doh-way
Baaga'adowewin — BAH-gah-ah-doh-way-win
Baagidoon — BAH-gee-doon
Baagiz — BAH-giz
Baagizi — BAH-gih-zee
Baagizigan — BAH-gih-zee-gahn
Baagiziganiwin — BAH-gih-zee-gahn-ee-win
Baagiw — BAH-gee-wuh
Baak — BAH-k
Baakaan — BAH-kahn
Baakaawin — BAH-kah-win
Baakaawining — BAH-kah-wee-ning
Baakaaz — BAH-kahz
Baakaazh — BAH-kahzh
Baakaazhigan — BAH-kah-zhig-gahn
Baakaazhiwin — BAH-kah-zhig-win
Baakaazhii — BAH-kah-zhee
Baakinaage — BAH-kee-nah-gay
Baakinaaji — BAH-kee-nah-jee
Baakinaajigan — BAH-kee-nah-jee-gahn
Baakinaajiganiwin — BAH-kee-nah-jee-gahn-ee-win
Baakinaajii — BAH-kee-nah-jee
Baakine — BAH-kee-neh
Baaking — BAH-kee-ning
Baakis — BAH-kees
Baakise — BAH-kee-say
Baakisin — BAH-kee-sin
Baakitoon — BAH-kee-toon
Baakitoonaan — BAH-kee-toon-ahn
Baakitoonan — BAH-kee-toon-ahn

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Baakitoonanig — BAH·kee·toon·ah·nig
Baakitoonii — BAH·kee·too·nee
Baakitooniing — BAH·kee·too·nee·ing
Baakitooniwag — BAH·kee·too·nee·wahg

C

Cahwe — CHAH·way
Cahwewin — CHAH·way·win
Cahwewining — CHAH·way·wee·ning
Cahwewiniwag — CHAH·way·wee·nee·wahg
Chi·aya — CHEE·ah·yah
Chi·binesi — CHEE·bin·eh·see
Chi·binesi wag — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wahg
Chi·binesi wang — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wahng
Chi·binesi wens — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens
Chi·binesi wens ag — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·ahg
Chi·binesi wens wag — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·wahg
Chi·binesi wens wan — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·wahn
Chi·binesi wens wan ag — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·wah·nahg
Chi·binesi wens wan eg — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·wah·neg
Chi·binesi wens wan in — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·wah·nin
Chi·binesi wens wan ing — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·wah·ning
Chi·binesi wens wan ing — CHEE·bin·eh·see·wens·wah·ning

D

Dagwaagin — DAHG·wah·geen
Dagwaagiwin — DAHG·wah·gee·win
Dakobinaagan — DAH·koh·bin·ah·gahn
Dakobinaagan ag — DAH·koh·bin·ah·gah·nahg
Dakobinaagan in — DAH·koh·bin·ah·gah·nin
Dakobinaagan ing — DAH·koh·bin·ah·gah·ning
Dakobinaaganiwin — DAH·koh·bin·ah·gah·nee·win
Dakobinaaganiwining — DAH·koh·bin·ah·gah·nee·wee·ning
Dakobinaaganiwiniwag — DAH·koh·bin·ah·gah·nee·wee·nee·wahg
Dakota — Dah·KOH·tah
Dakotah — Dah·KOH·tah
Dibaajimowin — Dee·BAH·jih·moh·win
Dibaajimowining — Dee·BAH·jih·moh·wee·ning
Dibaajimowiniwag — Dee·BAH·jih·moh·wee·nee·wahg

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Dibishkoo — Dee-BISH-koo
Dibishkookaa — Dee-BISH-koo-kah
Dibishkookaawe — Dee-BISH-koo-kah-way
Dibishkookaawewin — Dee-BISH-koo-kah-way-win
Dibishkookaawewining — Dee-BISH-koo-kah-way-wee-ning
Dibishkookaawewiniwag — Dee-BISH-koo-kah-way-wee-nee-wahg
Dibishkookaawewinini — Dee-BISH-koo-kah-way-wee-nee-nee
Dibishkookaawewininiwag — Dee-BISH-koo-kah-way-wee-nee-nuh-wahg
Dibishkookaawewinini — Dee-BISH-koo-kah-way-wee-nee-nee

E

Ekwa — ECK-wah
Ekwaa — ECK-wah
Enji — EN-jee
Enji-bimaadiz — EN-jee bih-MAH-diz
Enji-bimaadizi — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee
Enji-bimaadizid — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zid
Enji-bimaadizii — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee
Enji-bimaadiziiwag — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wahg
Enji-bimaadiziing — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-ing
Enji-bimaadiziwin — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-win
Enji-bimaadiziwining — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-ning
Enji-bimaadiziwiniwag — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nee-wahg
Enji-bimaadiziwinini — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nee
Enji-bimaadiziwininiwag — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nee-wahg
Enji-bimaadiziwinin — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nin
Enji-bimaadiziwininik — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nihk
Enji-bimaadiziwinining — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nihng
Enji-bimaadiziwininini — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nee-nee
Enji-bimaadiziwinininiwag — EN-jee bih-MAH-dih-zee-wee-nee-nee-wahg

F

Giiwedonong — GEE-weh-dih-nong
Giiwedonong Anishinaabeg — GEE-weh-dih-nong ah-nish-ih-NAH-beg

G

Gichi — GIH-chee
Gichi-manidoo — GIH-chee mah-nih-doo
Gichigami — GIH-chih-gah-mee

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Gichigaming — GIH·chih·gah·ming
Giiwedín — GEE·weh·dín
Giiwedínong — GEE·weh·dih·nong
Giiwedínong Anishinaabeg — GEE·weh·dih·nong ah·nish·ih·NAH·beg
Gitche — GIT·chee
Gitche Manitou — GIT·chee MAH·nih·too
Gitigaan — GIH·tih·gahn
Gitigaaning — GIH·tih·gah·ning
Gitigaaniwaad — GIH·tih·gah·nih·wahd

H

Hiawatha — HAI·ah·wah·thah
Hidatsa — hee·DAHT·sah
Hocąk — HOH·chunk
Hocąk Wazija Hacı — HOH·chunk wah·ZEE·jah hah·CHEE

I

Inini — ih·NEE·nee
Ininiwag — ih·NEE·nee·wahg
Ishkode — ish·KOH·day
Ishkoden — ish·KOH·den
Ishkodenh — ish·KOH·denh
Ishkodewaaboo — ish·KOH·day·wah·boo
Iskigamizigan — iss·kih·GAH·mih·zih·gahn

J

Jiibay — JEE·bye
Jiibayag — JEE·bye·ahg
Jiibayagamik — JEE·bye·ah·gah·mihk
Jiibayagamikong — JEE·bye·ah·gah·mih·kong
Jiibayaatig — JEE·bye·ah·teeg
Jiibayaatigong — JEE·bye·ah·teeg·kong

K

Kaishpa — KAI·shpah
Kawashkash — KAH·wahsh·kahsh
Kawashkashiwag — KAH·wahsh·kah·shee·wahg
Kitchi — KIH·chee
Kitchi·gami — KIH·chee gah·mee

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Kitchi-manidoo — KIH-chee mah-nih-doo
Kitchi-odaawa — KIH-chee oh-dah-wah
Kitchi-ziibi — KIH-chee ZEE-bee

L

Little Shell — LIT-tul shell
Little Shell Band — LIT-tul shell band
Long Knives — lawng nyves

M

Mackinac — MAK-ih-naw
Mackinac Island — MAK-ih-naw EYE-luhnd
Ma`iingan — mah-EENG-gahn
Ma`iinganag — mah-EENG-gah-nahg
Maang — mahng
Makoons — mah-KOONS
Makoonsag — mah-KOON-sahg
Makwa — MAHK-wah
Makwaag — MAHK-wahg
Makwaong — MAHK-wah-ong
Mandan — MAN-dan
Manidoog — MAH-nih-doog
Manidoo — MAH-nih-doo
Manoomin — mah-NOH-min
Manoominikewin — mah-NOH-min-ih-kay-win
Maya — MY-ah
Midegah — MIH-day-gah
Midewiwin — mih-DAY-wih-win
Mikinaak — MIK-ih-nahk
Mikinaakong — MIK-ih-nah-kong
Minis — MIN-iss
Minisag — MIN-iss-ahg
Minisinaakwaang — MIN-iss-ih-nah-kwahng
Missouri — mih-ZUR-ee
Missouri River — mih-ZUR-ee RIV-er
Moose Mountain — moos MOWN-tun

N

Navajo — NAV-ah-hoh

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Nayaano-nibii'iganan — nah-YAH-noh nih-BEE-ee-gah-nahn
Nibii — nih-BEE
Nibii-aki — nih-BEE ah-kee
Nibiishens — nih-BEE-shens
Nindoodem — nin-DOO-dem
Nindoodemag — nin-DOO-deh-mahg
Nindoonjibaa — nin-DOON-jih-bah
Niubin — NEE-bin
Niibing — NEE-bing
Niigaan — NEE-gahn
Niigaanizid — NEE-gah-nih-zid
Niigaaniziwin — NEE-gah-nih-zee-win
Niizho-biboon — NEE-zhoh bih-BOON

O

Odaawa — oh-DAH-wah
Odaawaa — oh-DAH-wah
Odaawaa Nation — oh-DAH-wah NAY-shun
Odaawaanh — oh-DAH-wahn
Ogaawag — oh-GAH-wahg
Ogaawaanh — oh-GAH-wahn
Ogimaa — OH-gih-mah
Ogimaag — OH-gih-mahg
Ojibwe — oh-JIB-way
Ojibwemowin — oh-jib-WAY-moh-win
Omaaming — oh-MAH-ming
Omaaming Zaaga'igan — oh-MAH-ming ZAH-gah-ee-gahn
Onigamiising — oh-nih-GAH-mee-sing
Onoway — OH-no-way
Onoway Zaaga'igan — OH-no-way ZAH-gah-ee-gahn
Ozaawindib — oh-ZAH-win-dib

P

Pabine — PAH-been
Peshawbestown — PESH-aw-bess-town
Pima — PEE-mah
Pine River — PINE riv-er
Piney — PIE-nee
Pipestone — PIPE-stone

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Pocahontas — POH·ka·hon·tis
Pokagon — POH·kay·gon
Pontiac — PAHN·tee·ack
Prairie Island — PRAYR·ee eye·land

Q

(No entries found beginning with Q)

R

Rainy Lake — RAY·nee lake
Red Cliff — RED cliff
Red Earth — RED urth
Red Lake — RED lake
Red Rock — RED rock
Red Wing — RED wing
Rosebud — ROHZ·bud

S

Saginaw — SAG·ih·naw
Sakakawea — Suh·KAH·kuh·wee·uh
Sandy Lake — SAN·dee lake
Santee — SAN·tee
Saskatchewan — Suh·SKATCH·uh·wan
Sault Ste. Marie — SOO saynt muh·REE
Shawnee — SHAW·nee
Shesheeb — SHEH·sheeb
Shingwauk — SHING·walk
Shoal Lake — SHOHL lake
Sioux — Soo
Spirit Lake — SPEER·it lake
Standing Rock — STAN·ding rock
Stoney — STOH·nee
Sugarloaf — SHUG·er·loaf
Superior — soo·PEER·ee·or
Sweetgrass — SWEET·grass

T

Tahltan — TAHL·tan

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Tama — TAH·mah
Tamaqua — Tah·MAH·kwah
Tanana — TAH·nuh·nah
Tatanka — Tah·TAHN·kah
Tecumseh — Tuh·KUM·suh
Teulon — TOO·lawn
Thief River — THEEF riv·er
Thunder Bay — THUN·der bay
Tobique — TOH·beek
Tonawanda — Ton·ah·WAHN·dah
Turtle Mountain — TUR·tul mount·in
Turtle Mountains — TUR·tul mount·ins

U

Utica — YOO·tih·kuh

V

(No entries found beginning with V)

W

Wabasha — WAH·bah·shaw
Wabanaki — Wah·bah·NAH·kee
Wabigoon — WAH·bih·goon
Wahpeton — WAH·peh·ton
Wahpekute — Wah·peh·KOO·tee
Wahzhushk — WAH·zhushk
Wakpala — WOK·pah·lah
Walpole — WALL·pole
Wanapum — WAH·nah·pum
Wapato — WAP·ah·toe
Washakie — WAH·shuh·kee
Washburn — WASH·burn
Waskaganish — Wahs·kah·GAN·ish
Waswanipi — Wahs·wah·NEE·pee
Watertown — WAW·ter·town
Waukesha — WAW·keh·shaw
Wausau — WAH·saw
Wazyata — Wah·zee·YAH·tah
Weagamow — WEE·ah·gah·mow

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Weitchpec — WEECH-peck
White Earth — WHITE urth
Whitefish — WHITE-fish
Whitefish Bay — WHITE-fish bay
Whitefish River — WHITE-fish riv-er
Whitewood — WHITE-wood
Wikwemikong — WIK-weh-mih-kong
Winnipeg — WIN-ih-peg
Winona — Wih-NOH-nah
Wisakon — WISS-ah-kon
Wisconsin — Wis-CON-sin
Wittenberg — WITT-en-berg
Woonsocket — Woon-SOCK-it

X

(No entries found beginning with X)

Y

Yakutat — YAH-koo-tat
Yankton — YANK-ton
Yellowhead — YELL-oh-head
Yellowknife — YELL-oh-nife
Yeshua · yeh-SHOO-ah
Ypsilanti — IP-sih-lan-tee

Z

Zanaga — Zah-NAH-gah
Zeba — ZEE-bah
Zhaawanong — ZHAH-wah-nong
Zhawenim — ZHAH-weh-nim
Zuni — ZOO-nee