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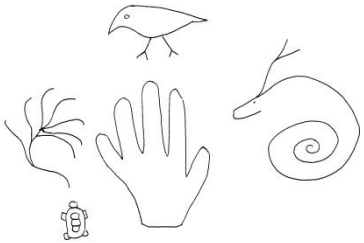
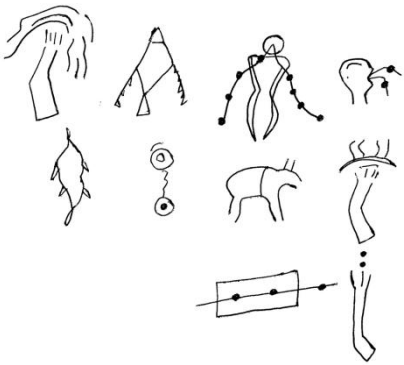
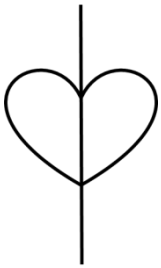
MAMUWININI

ALL TOGETHER

THE SACRED RECORDS
OF THE MIDEW
OF THE ANISHINAABE

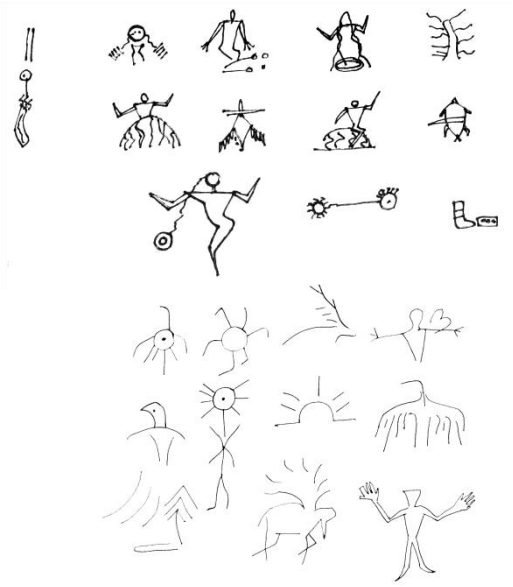


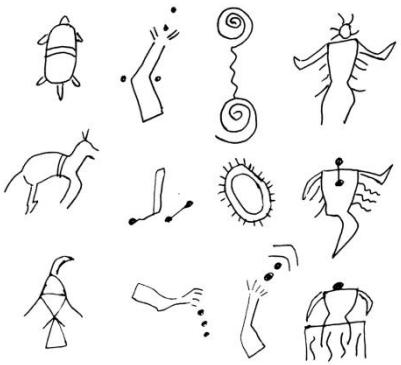




MIDEWIWIN GIKINOO'AMAADIIWIGAMIG GICHI-AYA'AAMOWIN

from the
Midiwiwin Great Lodge of Teaching





Midewiwin High Priesthood Language and Song Symbols-Sanction

THE BRANCH OF
THE FIRSTBORN
PEOPLES OF THE AMERICAS

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INTRODUCTION & EXPLANATION

Dear Reader,

The Mamuwinini represents a distilled version of the essential records of the Midewiwin, a revered priesthood committed to safeguarding the sacred knowledge, history, and ceremonies that span the American Continent.

Translated into Old English to demonstrate to English readers, who are accustomed to their own sacred texts, that we possess an equal truth, in both depth and measure.

From approximately 600 B.C. to 400 A.D., the Midewiwin guided the spiritual, social, and economic lives of the Peoples of the Waters, or Mamuwinini, across the vast region known as Abya Yala, stretching from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Influenced by the visits of the traveling Star People and the arrival of prophets, including the Great Peacemaker, the Priests of the Midewiwin were instrumental in governing nearly every facet of society. This era was marked by significant events occurring both before and after the establishment of the Great Law of Peace by the Great Peacemaker.

Our narrative is deeply rooted in the traditions, knowledge, and sacred records of the Midewiwin. While the Iroquois have sometimes linked the Great Peacemaker's era with the age of Deganaweda and Hiawatha, we affirm that Deganaweda and Hiawatha merely followed the path set by the Great Peacemaker, who sought to reestablish the Good Way of Living upon Abya Yala—a way established a millennium earlier by the Great Peacemaker Yahawzhowa.

Between 300 and 500 A.D., a significant war, rooted in spiritual and political divisions, erupted across the Americas, dividing the seven nations that once shared a single capital situated on seven lakes. Over a millennium later, the arrival of Europeans inspired the seven nations to consider reunification. The decision was made to allow the Europeans to form the "8th Fire" or the 8th Great Empire, to share the land—viewed as a great bowl—with the understanding that all would share in its use, symbolized by the "one spoon." This agreement was formalized at the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal. However, the envisioned unity was never fully realized, as the Europeans misunderstood the treaties as a relinquishment of the bowl, rather than an invitation to share it in peace. Today, we continue to seek true peace.

The primary mission of the Midew Priests is to teach kindness and unity and to impart a profound understanding of history, songs, teachings on creation, and the way beings coexist within it. Yet, even as late as the 1990s, openly declaring one's association with the Midewiwin could be perilous due to lingering prejudices from the Great Wars over a millennium ago. Many Midew Elders were tragically lost as the spiritual wars from the 3rd and 4th centuries concluded in the 1990s. Those who remained chose students from the new generation to pass on the teachings and sacred bundles, keeping the fire alive to ensure that the conflicts of the past do not become the tragedy of future generations.

These spiritual conflicts have never been fully comprehended by Western Civilization or Christianity. The great struggle was rooted in differing beliefs that can be seen as a battle between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law: one side of Priests, associated with the color Red, believed that our spirit is centered in our heart and emphasized sacrificing our heart through service to family and community. The opposing side, associated with the color Blue, believed in the literal liberation of the spirit from the body through the removal of the heart via blood sacrifice, advocating for the idea of freeing one's spirit by laying it upon the altar.

In embracing the wisdom of the Midewiwin, we honor the enduring legacy of our ancestors and strive to foster a world grounded in kindness, compassion, and unity for all peoples.

This record contains the following:

MISKWAABIK OZHIBII'IWE: The Copper Records

The Miskwaabik Ozhibii'iwe are teachings etched onto large copper plates. A significant edition was authored in the first century by Midewiwin High Priest and Record Keeper Gah-Onabid, also known as Agonabish. Following the Great Peacemaker's journey south, Gah-Onabid composed a memorial for the peoples of what is now the Great Lakes region. This memorial shared early history, beginning with the Creation of the world. The source of these teachings was the ancient first copper plates, believed to have been brought from across the seas. Later in life, copper tablets sent from the lands of the Maya would be the final public release of Gah-Onabid.

The Birch Bark Scrolls

When knowledge was meant to be shared, authorized versions would be transcribed from the original metal plate or stone tablet source onto birch bark paper, which could easily be rolled and carried to various locations across vast distances. Included are the Birch Bark Scrolls of the Pike Teaching, given by the Great Peacemaker to the Algonquin, the Book of the Three Brothers who were with the Peacemaker and who founded the Three Fires Confederacy, and the Seven Fires Prophecy and the Great Migration.

The Red Plates of Copper and Gold

The Red Plates of Copper and Gold are crafted from a unique blend of copper and gold, resulting in a deep, rust-like color. These plates provide a comprehensive account of the Great Peacemaker, Yahawzhowa, as chronicled by Midew High Priest Agonabish. Agonabish accompanied Yahawzhowa and observed his journey throughout the Great Lakes region of North America. Subsequently, additional copper tablets were discovered in the southern regions of Central and South America and were brought to Agonabish later in his life. These tablets contain further records of Yahawzhowa's teachings and include a message from his journeys with the Maya and the Azteca.

The Silver Records

The Silver Plates are gleaming records that reflect like a mirror. They are bound by two rings, each approximately two fingers thick. These plates are quite small, with dimensions no larger than the average hand. They serve as documented records of those who acted as stewards of the Gold and Copper Records of the Great Peacemaker from the original accounts with Yahawzhowa. The final recorded keeper to inscribe upon the plates was Tawadizi, the Last Keeper of the Record, who inscribed the final teaching in approximately 250 A.D.

The Book of Waban

The Book of Waban is a compilation of seven birch bark scrolls authored around 1370 A.D. by Midew High Priest Waban, a seer and the "Keeper of the Bark" among the Omaniwinini, the original Algonquin/Anishinaabe people. These scrolls were inscribed at the confluence of two rivers. During this gathering, it was decided that the core teachings of the Midewiwin, known as the great truth, should be shared. This dissemination aimed to help the people distinguish between Great Deceivers and Creator-sent Great Peacemakers.

Conclusion

To ensure that the wisdom and teachings of the Midewiwin continue to enlighten and guide future generations, it is essential that these records be preserved, studied, and shared. The depth of history, spirituality, and unity encapsulated within these documents stands as a testament to the lasting legacy of the Midewiwin and the profound impact of the Great Peacemaker's message. By presenting this narrative, we acknowledge that the very figure at the center of spiritual division in the world is rooted in our lands. The knowledge and understanding of our ancestors, who championed peace and unity, will resonate today and with future generations, as we also knew a Peacemaker and many Peacemakers upon our lands. They have been called many names to provide sound to their many attributes, but to one the Midewiwin encountered, he declared he was the one who spreads the treasure of love, which is kindness, Yahawzhowa.

By cherishing and embracing these teachings, we honor the traditions of our forebears. In doing so, we fulfill the promise of remembering their wisdom, fostering a world grounded in kindness, compassion, and unity for all peoples.

OGIMAA SONGAB MIDEGAH OGICHIDAA
ADIK DOODEM - CARIBOU CLAN
Keeper of the Midew High Song and Prayer Scrolls
Carrier of the Ojibwe Bundle

Gratitude & Remembrance

Noodin Aanabish James Great Walker (Aug 1937 - Mar 2009),
Ojigkwanong William Commanda (Nov 1913 - Aug 2011),
Randall Larue (Aug 1956 - Oct 2021),
Michael Thomas Dostou (May 1944 - Jul 2023),
Ma'lingaan Albert Dennis Lambert (Nov 1943 - Oct 2024)

DEDICATION TO THE TRANSLATION BEARERS:

In the 19th and 20th centuries, nearly all records that pertain to tablets, metallic plates of various alloys, or written on travelling scrolls were translated into English, Spanish and French. The records of this volume were among them and have been in use in Midewiwin Teaching Lodges. These records are received with gratitude and remembrance of those Elders who have passed, authorizing their records to be shared.

All Records pertaining to Central America are provided by the Mayan - Quetzel Council. Records are maintained by the Midewiwin Great Lodge of Teaching. In addition, there are the Ring Teachings, which we would love nothing more than to make available. The difficulty there is that custom disallows sharing them so long as those who are entrusted to bear them and expound their teachings remain among the living, since only death relieves them of that exclusive duty. Commiting themselves fully to this sacred charge, individual records properly belong in the custody of the bearer they are assigned to while they remain alive. They are considered extensions of themselves.

Such is the case with spiritual teachings. The Elder from whom a disciple receives instruction will continue in that regard until they are gone to the Sky Father, at which point, and only at this point, is their instruction regarded as having come to an end. Having passed on to their disciple all the teachings they can, which providentially is regarded as all that the student needed to know from them. At this transition, the student takes their place and becomes them. Thus the chain continues.

The timeliness of this publication is not chance. The last four of the principle carriers slipped beyond the veil of sight between 2021 and 2024. The first five scrolls are from William Commanda. The records from the Red Plates of copper and gold were carried by Noodin Aanabish. Those from the Silver Plates were carried by Randall Larue. The Book of Waban was carried by Michael Thomas Dostou. The carriers's governance

of them, as well as their reputations and customs of travelling with tools of instruction to better fulfill their duties, are well known among their people, and their names continue to carry no less weight for those who continue to uphold them with honor and gratitude.

A more detailed history of the records' custody going back is planned for the near future to satisfy the academically minded and for general historical preservation. With the departure of the last in their respective lines, the records are forthwith offered to everyone. While custody of them belonged exclusively to the successive line of bearers, the records themselves belong to all the tribe collectively, regardless of foreign notions of the dilution of blood or their past or current awareness of their connection or heritage, and it is hoped that in publishing them they will call all the children of the teaching back to a remembrance. And through them, they are offered secondarily to the world, to all who find value in such teachings. Inasmuch as the wounds of genocide and demoralizing oppression may be healed by the faith of ancestors, the wisdom of ages, and the sustaining love of Creator, we place our hope in these things now set before you.

The Midewiwin Great Lodge of Teachings Sanctioning Page contains songs, teachings and sanctions that are the sacred priesthood language of the Midewiwin and are for the Mide priests reviewing the book to verify its purity. While calling children of the Anishinaabe home, and restoring to them a knowledge of their Creator and Peacemaker through His instruction to their anscestors, we additionally harbor the hope that these teachings and historical records may further deepen affinity and unity between Gentile Christians and Jews as they enrich the understanding of their mutual commonalities.

We must also strive to to avoid anyone misunderstanding our love and gratitude for this volume and the joy with which we offer its wisdom to the benefit of our brothers and sisters of any tribe, kin, fellowship or national association, as to think we regard this collection as complete or have forgotten to neglect the many other records known to exist and that may yet be published. Nor does enthusiams for this volume diminish the importance or sanctity of our oral traditions and teachings that are passed down from one venerated teacher to another until they reached our day. These ancient traditions are as important to us as they were to our ancestors and continue to be a part of who we are, along with our written records, many of which retain an integral oral component crucial to their translation and interpretation. Our current place in the timeline of human events and the practices of the nations of the world do not inform the identitities of those who by choice and devotion have unassimilated themselves from the cultural vacuum that

swept the land to drown and stifle all it could in the name of progress and pretense. We continue to inhale the sweet savor of our observance before Creator.

Lastly, for the utility of study and citation we have retained the immensely useful chapter and verse organization of other venerated sacred texts. Also the more ancient style of speech familiar to readers of the King James Bible has been conservatively applied to the text to honor both the original formatio of English and the venarable scriptural tradition, but without detracting from readability.

THE SCROLLS
Of
TEACHING
Of the Algonquin People

THE SCROLL OF THE PIKE FISH TEACHING

CHAPTER 1

1 As the sun cast its warm glow over the flowing Kaniatarowanenneh, the Great Peacemaker gathered the people around him, ready to impart his teachings through the bones of the pike.

2 He took a fish out of a basket nearby. The three brothers stood close, eager to absorb the wisdom he was about to share.

A Shaking Tent:

3 The Great Peacemaker carefully placed his hands on the top of the pike's head, gently prying open the skull above the eyes.

4 With a deft touch, he removed the broad, curved bone, resembling the roof of a tent.

5 "This," he said, "is the belief in The Sky Father, a shelter for our spirit, where we can communicate with the divine."

Two Birds, Sea Gull and Crow:

6. Moving to the sides of the head, he skillfully extracted the paired, slender bones near the gill covers. "These bones symbolize balance," he explained, "the harmony between black and white, like the sea gull and the crow, ever present in our lives."

The Fire:

7. Next, he reached for the triangular bone between the eyes, its pointed end reminiscent of a flame. "This is our vision," he declared, "a guiding light that illuminates our path and fuels our existence."

The Pipes:

8. With precision, he removed the elongated bones near the mouth, along the jawline. "These represent peace," he said softly, "the prayers and connections we make with The Sky Father, like the smoke rising from sacred pipes."

The Canoe:

9 He then turned his attention to the long, curved bone along the spine, just behind the head. "This is our destiny," he noted, "a vessel guided by the vision've, taking us where we are meant to go."

The Butterfly:

10 Carefully, he extracted the small, delicate bone near the back of the head, where the skull meets the spine. "This bone symbolizes freedom," he shared, "the

wings of a butterfly that allow us to explore the vastness of existence."

The Axe:

11 On the side of the skull, near the pectoral fin attachment, he found the broad, flat bone with a sharp edge. "This is integration," he explained, "the tool through which we implement our vision, like an axe shaping wood."

The Knife:

12 Near the lower jaw, close to the throat, he removed the thin, blade-like bone. "Education," he stated, "is necessary to properly understand and partake in the vision, as sharp and precise as this knife."

The Spear:

13 The Great Peacemaker then extracted the long, pointed bone extending from the nose to the top of the head. "This spear represents principles," he said, "the foundation upon which our nation is born, strong and unwavering."

The Woman:

14 Near the base of the skull, along the lateral line, he gently removed the rounded bone. "This symbolizes family and prosperity," he smiled, "the nurturing force of the woman, essential for our community's growth."

The Jaws:

15 Forming the structure of the mouth, he carefully disassembled the robust jaws. "These represent the environment," he noted, "the ground upon which we walk, supporting us in all we do."

The Skiving Knife:

16 Along the edge of the head, near the dorsal fin, he found the thin, sharp bone. "This is structure," he explained, "the framework that holds us together, like a skiving knife shaping leather."

The Man:

17 Finally, he removed the prominent bone at the very front of the skull, forming the tip of the nose. "This bone represents responsibility," he concluded, "the duty of the man to ensure the vision's implementation and guide our people."

18 As the Great Peacemaker laid the bones before the gathered crowd, a profound understanding settled over them. Each bone, once part of a living creature, now served as a powerful symbol of their way of life.

19 Through his teachings, they learned not only how to live but how to thrive together, united and balanced, guided by the wisdom of the Great Peacemaker and

the spirit of the pike and sturgeon.

20 As the Great Peacemaker concluded his demonstration, the bones of the pike lay before the people, each piece a testament to the lessons he had shared.

21 The three brothers, along with the others gathered, listened intently as he began to weave these teachings into a broader understanding of how to live a harmonious life.

22 With a gentle yet commanding presence, the Great Peacemaker spoke of the importance of balance, unity, and divine guidance.

23 "Just as the bones of the pike and the sturgeon tell a story," he said, "so too do the sacred texts of the world, like these bones, offer wisdom on living in harmony with one another and with The Sky Father."

24 He pointed to the bone representing the Shaking Tent and said, "learn of the importance of faith in The Sky Father, much like the belief symbolized by this tent. It is our spiritual foundation, a place of refuge and communication with the divine."

25 Continuing, he spoke of the balance between the two birds, "love your neighbor as ourselves, to find balance in our relationships, just as the sea gull and crow remind us."

26 With each bone, he drew parallels, highlighting the principles of peace, vision, and destiny. "The vision we hold," he explained, "is like the vision of the prophets, guiding us toward a destiny of righteousness and unity."

27 He emphasized the importance of education and understanding, "seek wisdom and knowledge, so too does the knife remind us of the need to learn and grow."

28 The Great Peacemaker spoke of family and community, drawing from teachings to illustrate the nurturing role of family and the prosperity it brings. "We are all part of a greater family," he said, "and our prosperity is linked to how we care for one another."

29 Finally, he spoke of responsibility and leadership, "duty is to lead with righteousness, the bone of the man reminds us of our responsibility to implement the vision and guide our people."

30 As the sun began to set over the Kaniatarowanenneh, the Great Peacemaker's words resonated deeply with those gathered. They understood that the teachings of the pike and the sturgeon, offered a path to living a life in harmony with The Sky Father, with nature, and with each other.

31 Through this understanding, they were inspired to live with integrity, guided by the principles of balance, unity, and divine connection. The Great Peacemaker's teachings became a living constitution, a guide for their lives, ensuring peace and prosperity for generations to come.

THE SCROLL OF THE THREE BROTHERS

CHAPTER 1

1 And it came to pass in the days of the Anishinaabe, when the Great Lakes glistened under the sun and the land was rich with life, that there came unto them the Great Peacemaker.

2 He was a wise and visionary leader, sent by the Creator to deliver sacred teachings and establish a covenant of peace among the nations.

3 Before the Great Peacemaker departed, he called forth twelve leaders from among the people of the Great Lakes and the Northeast, chosen to establish a system of governance that would ensure his teachings endured until his return.

4 Among these twelve were the Three Brothers, who would form the foundation of what became known as the Three Fires Confederacy.

5 And the Great Peacemaker spake unto them, saying, "I shall call others from distant lands and peoples, and it is not for you to contend over such matters, if you shall meet.

6 For it is more important to be of service than to seek distinction or power. The true measure of leadership is found in humility and a pure heart, dedicated to serving the people."

7 Now, the eldest of these brothers was the Ojibwe, the "Older Brother" and Keepers of the Faith. They were entrusted with the sacred duty of preserving the spiritual teachings and ceremonies imparted by the Great Peacemaker.

8 The Ojibwe traveled far and wide, sharing the sacred stories and maintaining the rituals that connected the people to the Great Spirit.

9 In this way, they ensured that not an hour would pass without the light of teaching, for the Midewiwin Lodge was to be the heart of the people, its flames burning unbroken.

10 And the middle brother was the Odawa, the "Middle Brother" and the Providers. The Odawa were skilled in the arts of trade and diplomacy, a network of commerce and communication among the tribes.

11 They ensured that the people had the resources needed to sustain the teachings of the Midewiwin Lodge. Their wisdom in negotiation and trade was a vital pillar in the confederacy, fostering unity and cooperation among the nations.

12 And it came to pass that the youngest brother was the Potawatomi, the "Younger Brother" and Keepers of the Fire. The Potawatomi were fierce protectors and warriors, charged with safeguarding the people and the land.

13 They ensured that the fires of the council burned brightly, symbolizing the unity and strength of the alliance. Their dedication to protecting the teachings of

the Great Peacemaker was unwavering, ensuring that the light of the fire continued to illuminate the path for the people.

CHAPTER 2

1 In all communities, the Three Brothers were found together, for each community required the others to keep the ceremony of teaching ongoing.

2 The Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi worked in harmony, each fulfilling their sacred role to ensure the teachings endured.

3 During their raising as Chiefs by the Great Peacemaker, the brothers believed that his return would be but a short time, as people often traveled the lands, going west, north, or south, and returning.

4 However, as time passed, the brothers saw that they did not age as others did, and soon they discovered they could not die.

5 This quickening caused a great commotion in their communities, and over time, they knew that it would be a long time until the Great Peacemaker's return.

6 When their grandchildren's grandchildren began to worship them, the brothers were forced to depart their communities.

7 They traveled the world and eventually decided to split up. The youngest brother, the Potawatomi, returned and crossed what is known as the Kaniatarowanenneh.[1]

8 Returning to the location of their raising up to Chief and quickening, near the shores of Lake Erie, he petitioned the Haudenosaunee[2] to take his life, explaining his past.

9 They laid him on a table and removed his organs, yet he did not die. Troubled by this matter, they put him back together and told him to leave across the waters and never return.

10 Eventually, in his wanderings, he walked among his descendants, but out of sadness, he went to the sacred mountain in the center of the Great Lakes, crying out for his brothers.

11 In his sorrow, the youngest brother went to the sacred mountain in the center of the Great Lakes, his heart heavy with longing for his brothers.

12 He cried out to the heavens, and behold, his brothers appeared before him, accompanied by the Great Peacemaker.

13 With compassion and wisdom, the Great Peacemaker lifted the burden from the youngest brother's heart, revealing to him the sacred path to the Sky World.

14 He taught him, as he had taught the others before, the way to traverse between the realm of spirits and the world of the living.

15 Thus, the brothers united, were granted the ability to move freely between

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[1] St. Lawrence River

[2] Iroquois

the two worlds.

CHAPTER 3

1 Together with the other leaders, these three brothers had formed the Council of Three Fires, a powerful confederacy that stood as a beacon of unity and governance among the Anishinaabe.

2 The teachings of the Great Peacemaker were woven into the fabric of their society, guiding their actions and decisions.

3 The Council met regularly, gathering around the sacred fire to discuss matters of importance, resolve conflicts, and plan for the future.

4 And the legacy of the Three Brothers, along with the other leaders, endured through generations, as the teachings of the Great Peacemaker continued to guide the people.

5 Their system of governance ensured that peace, prosperity, and spiritual connection remained at the heart of the Anishinaabe way of life.

6 The alliance of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi became a symbol of strength and wisdom, a testament to the enduring power of unity and shared purpose.

7 It is said that the Three Brothers still walk among us, their presence a reminder of the enduring teachings of the Great Peacemaker. Therefore, we treat each other with kindness and respect, for we never know when we might be in the presence of one of these sacred guardians.

8 Thus did the Three Brothers of the Three Fires, along with the other leaders, uphold the teachings of the Great Peacemaker, ensuring that his vision for a harmonious and prosperous society endured until his promised return from the land of the Jaguar.

9 And the story of their leadership and the confederacy they formed continues to inspire the Anishinaabe people to this day, reminding them of the strength found in unity and the enduring power of their shared heritage.

THE SCROLL OF THE SEVEN FIRES PROPHECY

1 And it came to pass that in the days of the Anishinabe, when they dwelt in peace and prosperity upon the northeastern coasts of the land, there came unto them seven prophets.

2 And these prophets did bring unto the people seven prophecies concerning the times to come, and each prophecy was likened unto a fire, for it did signify a distinct era that would unfold in the future.

3 Thus were the teachings of these prophets known among the people as the Seven Fires.

4 Now the first prophet spake unto the people, saying: "In the time of the First Fire, the Anishinabe nation shall rise and follow the sacred shell of the Midewiwin Lodge.

5 This lodge shall be a gathering place for the people, and its ancient ways shall be a source of great strength. The Sacred Megis shall guide thee to the chosen land of the Anishinabe.

6 Seek ye a turtle-shaped island, for it is linked to the purification of the earth. Ye shall find such an island at the beginning and the end of thy journey, and there shall be seven stopping places along the way.

7 Ye shall know the chosen ground when ye come to a land where food grows upon the water. If ye do not move, ye shall be destroyed."

8 And the second prophet spake, saying: "Ye shall know the Second Fire, for in this time the nation shall be camped by a great body of water.

9 In this time, the direction of the Sacred Shell shall be lost, and the Midewiwin shall diminish in strength.

10 Yet a boy shall be born to show the way back to the ancient paths. He shall reveal the stepping stones to the future of the Anishinabe."

11 And it came to pass that the third prophet said: "In the Third Fire, the Anishinabe shall find the path to their chosen ground, a land in the west to which they must move their families.

12 This shall be the land where food grows upon the water."

13 And behold, the Fourth Fire was given by two prophets who came as one, and they spake of the coming of a light-skinned race.

14 And one of the prophets said: "Ye shall know the future of our people by the countenance of the light-skinned race.

15 If they come wearing the face of brotherhood, there shall be a time of wondrous change for generations. They shall bring new knowledge and artifacts, which can be joined with the wisdom of this land.

16 Thus shall two nations join to form a mighty nation, and this nation shall be joined by two more, to become the mightiest of all.

17 Ye shall know the face of brotherhood if they come bearing no weapons, but only their knowledge and a hand of fellowship."

18 And the other prophet warned: "Beware if the light-skinned race comes wearing the face of death. Be cautious, for the face of brotherhood and the face of death appear much alike. If they come bearing weapons, beware.

19 If they come in suffering, they may deceive you. Their hearts may be filled with greed for the riches of this land. If they are indeed your brethren, let them prove it.

20 Trust them not fully. Ye shall know

the face of death if the rivers run with poison and the fish become unfit to eat. Ye shall know them by these signs."

21 And the fifth prophet declared: "In the time of the Fifth Fire, there shall be a great struggle that shall grip the lives of all native people. At the lighting of this Fire, there shall come one among the people who holds a promise of great joy and salvation.

22 If the people accept this new promise and forsake the old teachings, then the struggle of the Fifth Fire shall endure for many generations.

23 The promise shall prove false, and those who accept it shall bring near destruction upon the people."

24 And the prophet of the Sixth Fire spake, saying: "In the time of the Sixth Fire, it shall be evident that the promise of the First Fire came in a false manner. Those deceived by this promise shall take their children away from the teachings of the Elders.

25 Grandsons and granddaughters shall turn against the Elders. In this way, the Elders shall lose their reason for living.

26 At this time, a new sickness shall come among the people, and the balance of many shall be disturbed. The cup of life shall almost become the cup of grief."

27 And it came to pass that many did scoff at the prophets, for they had medicines to keep sickness away, and they were healthy and happy.

28 These were the ones who chose to remain behind in the great migration of the Anishinabe. And they were the first to have contact with the light-skinned race, and they suffered greatly.

29 When the Fifth Fire came to pass, a great struggle did indeed grip the lives of all native people.

30 The light-skinned race launched a military campaign against the Indian people throughout the land, seeking to take away their lands and independence as a free and sovereign people.

31 It is now believed that the false promise at the end of the Fifth Fire was embodied in the material wealth and lifestyle of the light-skinned race.

32 Those who abandoned the ancient ways and accepted this new promise contributed greatly to the near destruction of the native people of this land.

33 And it came to pass that when the Sixth Fire was kindled, the words of the prophet were fulfilled as children were taken away from the teachings of the Elders.

34 The era of boarding schools, meant to "civilize" Indian children, began. The Indian language and religion were stripped from the children.

35 The people began to perish at an early age, having lost their will and purpose for living.

36 In the confusing times of the Sixth Fire, it is said that a group of visionaries came among the Anishinabe.

37 They gathered all the priests of the

Midewiwin Lodge and warned that the Midewiwin Way was in danger of being destroyed.

38 They gathered all the sacred bundles and scrolls that recorded the ceremonies and placed them in a hollowed-out log from the Ironwood tree.

39 Men were lowered over a cliff by long ropes, and they dug a hole in the cliff to hide the log where none could find it.

40 Thus were the teachings of the Elders hidden from sight, yet not from memory.

41 It is said that when the time came that the Indian people could practice their religion without fear, a young boy would dream of where the Ironwood log, full of sacred bundles and scrolls, was buried, and he would lead his people to the place.

42 And the seventh prophet, who was unlike the others, being young and having a strange light in his eyes, spake unto the people, saying:

43 "In the time of the Seventh Fire, a New People shall emerge. They shall retrace their steps to find what was left by the trail.

44 Their steps shall lead them to the Elders, whom they shall ask to guide them on their journey.

45 But many of the Elders shall have fallen asleep, and they shall awaken to this new time with nothing to offer. Some of the Elders shall remain silent because none will ask anything of them.

46 The New People must be cautious in how they approach the Elders, for their task shall not be easy.

47 "If the New People remain steadfast in their quest, the Water Drum of the Midewiwin Lodge shall again sound its voice. There shall be a rebirth of the Anishinabe Nation and a rekindling of the old flames.

48 The Sacred Fire shall once again be lit.

49 "In this time, the light-skinned race shall face a choice between two roads. If they choose the right road, the Seventh Fire shall light the Eighth and final Fire, an eternal fire of peace, love, brotherhood, and sisterhood.

50 But if they choose the wrong road, the destruction they brought upon this land shall return upon them, causing much suffering and death to all the Earth's people."

THE SCROLL OF THE GREAT MIGRATION

1 And it came to pass that in the days of the Ojibwe, when they dwelt upon the shores of the Great Salt Water in the east, there came unto them seven prophets with instructions from the Creator.

2 And the people were so numerous and mighty that it was said, "If one were to climb the highest mountain and look in all

directions, they would not see the end of the Ojibwe nation."

3 Life was abundant, with ample food from both land and sea. Yet, because life was so full, some among the people doubted the migration prophecies of the prophets, and there was much discussion concerning the Seven Fires.

4 And behold, great gatherings were held to discuss the plans, for many wished to remain, while others desired to embark on the journey foretold.

5 There was also a group who supported the migration yet agreed to stay behind to guard the eastern doorway and care for the eastern fire of the people.

6 These were called the Daybreak People, known today as the Wabanaki, among whom are the Passamaquoddy.

7 And it came to pass that those who believed in the migration set forth, journeying first to the island shaped like a turtle, as the first prophet had instructed. This place is believed to be along the St. Lawrence River, near present-day Montreal.

8 There were many ceremonies held there as the people sought guidance.

9 After a time, the people continued their journey westward. Along the way, some clans and families stopped and established permanent camps.[3]

10 From thence they traveled to the regions now known as Lakes Huron and Erie, where the Ojibwe encountered the Iroquois. A dispute arose, but it was resolved when the Iroquois gave the Ojibwe a Wampum Belt made of a special shell.

11 The Pipe was shared, and peace was sealed. The people then moved westward once more, stopping when they reached a large body of fresh water, as foretold in the prophecy.[4]

12 At this point, many went in search of a way across the water, some traveling south, while others settled to await further guidance.

13 Generations passed, and the people were instructed to travel north. Eventually, they arrived at a place where "food grows on water," as another prophecy had foretold.

14 Many Ojibwe gathered on the largest island in this area, now known as Manitoulin Island, which became known as the capital of the Ojibwe nation.

15 For a time, the people dwelt on this island, but many set forth to what is now the Sault Ste. Marie area. Due to the abundance of food, many settled there, making it the fifth stopping place of the migration.

16 From this place, the people divided into two large groups — one following the northern shore of Lake Superior, and the

[3] It is believed that the people moved along the southern shore of the St. Lawrence River, making their second major stop near what is now Niagara Falls.

[4] Likely along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan

other the southern shore.

17 The northern group settled on an island, now known as Spirit Island, at the western end of the great lake. Some of the southern group also settled there, for they found "the food that grows on water," wild rice, believed to be a sacred gift from the Creator.

18 This became the sixth major stopping place of the Ojibwe people. Yet, something was still missing, for one of the prophets had spoken of a turtle-shaped island at the end of their journey.

19 The southern group had seen such an island on their journey. The people returned and settled on the island now known as Madeline Island, calling it Mo-ning-wun-a-dawn-ing, or "the place that was dug."

MISKWAABIK OZHIBII'IWE

FROM THE COPPER RECORDS

Ishpiming a′aw Ininiwag wiijiiwaaganag
MEN ARE FRIENDS IN THE HEAVENS

1 I, Gah-Onabid, do this as guardian of the records.

2 Behold, the Great Peacemaker has journeyed to the Sky World, his path on this earth complete. Through his Great Spirit, he has conquered, mastering both the heavens and all within, the earth and all its beings.

3 His life was a vision of the Sky Mother and Sky Father, just as the light of day and night reflects their presence; truly, we are his vision and carry his mark.

4 When he offered his prayers, daylight filled the Star Lodge, and the Great Spirit was felt in the hearts of the people and unity and water were sought with equal devotion, as is the Anishinaabe way.

5 The Great Peacemaker left his teachings of creation for the people of the earth. We, Spirit Men and Spirit Women, The People, remember that the Great Spirit walked among us.

6 We, Spirit Men and Spirit Women, The People, recall the father who crossed the waters and the red metal writings that guide us, as the sun and moon guide day and night.

7 We, Spirit Men and Spirit Women, The People, remember that it was he, before the world was formed, who ignited the first fire as a great flower of life, saying, "Let there be light," and there was light, as it was at the beginning of Creation.

8 As inscribed in the red metal writings, we now write and share so all may remember him who crafted the earth and sky and who walked among us.

9 I, Gah-Onabid, do this as guardian of the records.

THE FIRST TEACHING

CHAPTER 1

1 In the early days of the world, after the Sun and the Moon were created and positioned in the Giizhigong,[5] a significant event took place in the place above the heavens.

2 The Giizhig Ikwe[6] descended, from where the men of the sky resided as

[5] Sky World.

[6] Sky Mother.

companions to the Gichi Ayaan,[7] and Gichi Ojichaag.[8]

3 The Great Spirit, formed as the first Ojichaagwan,[9] used the power of the Sky Father to create the Giizhig Anishinaabeg,[10] who lived as light before flesh.

4 The Sky Mother's descent marked the dawn of life and harmony on Earth, introducing the teachings of balance and peace.

5 As the world grew and the people flourished, another great teacher emerged, the Gichi Ogimaa.[11] He walked among the Anishinaabe, sharing wisdom and guiding them towards unity and understanding.

6 His journey was one of bringing together the hearts of the people, much like the harmony that Sky Woman had initiated.

7 The Sky Woman, in her descent, brought with her the seeds of life, and upon the back of the Gichi Mishiike,[12] the Akiing[13] was formed, as it moved through the sky world as a Turtle through the waters. It was she who whispered the teachings of the Great Spirit to the Anishinaabe, guiding them in harmony with nature.

8 The Peacemaker instructed the people, this original light was the event that did not yet exist, neither the suns nor the moon were created before that light, which is also the Spirit, all coming to form in the physical first from the spiritual, light in the flesh of the earth from the prayer of the Creator.

9 In the age he spoke, when the days were not as they are now, this was before night and light overcame each other.

10 The Great Spirit saw the light, the life event, before the earth was visible, and also saw that someone would see what was not there, and that it was good, and they saw the spirit first in the way it lived.

11 And so, the spirit offered the goodness of the light, that which was not there but was seen, and also helped the Anishinaabe to live well.

12 The Great Spirit saw that the light, life event was good, even though it was not there physically, it lived in Spirit and light, and they played and were able to do so, in families, in Spirit, and then they saw the night, and they overcame through their vision, in Flesh.

13 And also, the light was not visible to what lived in Flesh, but it was seen in the sky and to those of Spirit, and they saw the earth of Flesh and Spirit.

14 The Great Spirit named the light similar to life, and thus created the day, and named the night similar to life, and thus created the night.

15 And then it was night at that time,

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[7] Sky Mother and Sky Father.

[8] The Great Spirit.

[9] Spirit.

[10] People of the Sky.

[11] The Great Peacemaker.

[12] Great Turtle.

[13] Earth.

and it was night, and then it was day at the time, and it was day; and so the night and the day lived as one prayer.

16 The Great Spirit said, 'Let there be a great expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters on the earth from the waters above the stars.'

17 And so the Great Spirit made this great expanse, and divided the waters which were under the sky from the waters which were above the sky, and there was darkness and light, a second prayer.

18 For life to exist, the earth was formed, and the dry land appeared, and there was water.

19 In order for light to live, the Great Spirit said, let the waters be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so.

20 The Great Spirit called the dry land 'Earth,' and the gathering of the waters He called 'Seas.' And so, the gathering of the waters was completed, and the Great Spirit saw that it was good.

21 The Great Spirit said, let the earth bring forth vegetation underground, seed-bearing plants and trees whose bark tastes the same as its fruit that produce fruits with seeds according to their kind, on the earth. And so, it was.

22 The Great Spirit commanded the fruit trees to bear seeds according to their kind. The plants sought out the trees, and the trees that were to sprout appeared, and thus they sprouted as they were meant to be.

23 The trees were formed without showing the fruit that was within them in their bark as commanded. The plants reasoned that if the trees were to bear seeds according to their kind, then so too must the plants;

24 And they were heard by the Sky Mother who was within their midst with the Sky Women, and so it was that the plants rose up bearing generations to their own kind.

CHAPTER 2

1 The first of the Sky Women, called Sky Woman, in that she was the first formed in the reflection of the Sky Mother, spoke on behalf of a particular fruit bearing tree, and it's concerns to the Sky Mother, who spoke of their fear for their generations should their bark become edible like their fruit,

2 And she petitioned the Sky Mother who was in the earth to let not their bark be edible as their fruit so as to not endanger their generations from coming forth.

3 And so it was that the fruit trees rose up bearing generations to their own kind with bark that was not edible as the fruit they produced; and the future Anishinaabe would know hunger as a result, which was not an intended part of the plan of creation.

4 The Sky Father saw the disobedience of this particular fruit bearing tree in petitioning the Sky Mother through the

first Sky Woman in disobedience to what was commanded of them

5 And while it was seen as good in how it was brought forth, out of the compassion of the Sky Mother, the Sky Father spoke to the Sky Woman, in seeing her future disobedience as well with this very tree,

6 This was done in a manner in which the Great Spirit was not aware.

7 "By this fruit bearing tree have you cursed the land of your posterity as by that fruit bearing tree which petitioned you in opposition to me, will your children fall into a land cursed."

8 This tree would carry the memory of its disobedience within its fruit and would become the Tree of the Knowledge of Disobedience in that it carried the mark of the memory of the tree's disobedience which would become known to any who ate from it~

9 And the memory of good that can become evil in using free will in opposition to the Sky Father and Sky Mother's will.

10 It is described as follows as it would no longer be found in the land of the first Anishinaabe after this future curse came to being in the period after the prayers of creation.

11 This tree bears a small, pear-shaped fruit with a unique texture. Its skin is the color of deep purple and is soft and slightly wrinkled when ripe.

12 Inside, the fruit contains a dense, pinkish flesh filled with tiny seeds. And there was darkness and light, a third prayer.

13 As the prayer fell upon creation, the light of life, Grandfather Sun, that was formed on the first prayer, rested into position, called the grandfather of life,

14 And to give strength in the midst of darkness, the grandmother moon was placed above the earth so as to mirror the light amidst the night.

15 The wandering stars were set loose to move their trails amidst the sky, the spirit stars were placed, and light and life lowered to the earth, sacred spirits light to birth,

16 The Great Spirit's prayer, echoed. "Let the Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon divide the light from the dark"

17 As the Great Spirit's prayer rested upon the earth, the color purple filled the sky and the spirit stars rested upon the earth.

18 The braids of light lowered life, their strands to the Sky World to be hidden from the life that they birth. And there was darkness and light, a fourth prayer.

CHAPTER 3

1 The Great Spirit observing the light from the spirit stars resting upon the earth, reading the differing degrees of birth. The Great Spirit's prayer, echoed.

2 "Let the waters be filled with life and let the mud of the wetlands bring forth living creatures that will fill the sky with life." And so, it was.

3 The Great Spirit's prayer, echoed.

4 "Let the waters bring forth the Great Water Panthers, both male and female, so they can experience life together."

5 The Sky Mother wept, and so, it was.

6 Being so great and terrifying, the Great Spirit knew beforehand that Anishinaabe could not dwell on the earth if these who have fallen gave birth, and therefore after they embraced in their new life, he removed the female, leaving only the male Water Panther to roam the waters, sky and land of the earth alone.

7 These powerful beings, once great spirits of light in the Sky World, had rebelled and were cast down, their origins now tethered to the earth.

8 The Water Panther, feeling the weight of punishment, the loss of ability to reproduce, became filled with anger, his great form now moved through the waters, land and winds with a twirling and turning, and twisting in wrath.

9 The Great Spirit lifted the body of the female Water Panther to the lodge of the Sky Father for the feast of the righteous, who were not cast down, who had not rebelled.

10 The Sky Mother through the prayers of the Sky Woman produced every being that gathers in the waters and every being that fills the sky.

11 The Great Spirit saw that it was good.

12 The Great Spirit's prayer, echoed to the life of the sky and sea, saying, "In time, I will allow Anishinaabe to consume you, so be fruitful and multiply; reproduce yourself once, as this is the law of life upon the earth, but for you be abundant."

13 The Sky Woman's prayer, echoed, "I will shorten your trial and increase your offspring at birth so that you will fill the water in the seas, and you will multiply on the land."

14 And there was darkness and light, a fifth prayer.

15 The Great Spirit's prayer, echoed, "Let the land be filled with walking life, living beings according to their spirit that rests there now: livestock, reptiles, amphibians, and all swarming beings, insects, worms, ants, beetles, moles, snails, all beings after the manner of their spirit resting there now, and beasts of the earth, according to their spirit that rest there now." And so,10 it was.

16 The Sky Mother produced every being requested, directing the Sky Woman to bring forth every beast of the earth according to their spirit and kind as their spirit that rests there now.

17 The Great Spirit saw that it was good, but he offered no prayer to the beasts to be fruitful and abundant, because he foresaw the Water Panther, the twisting serpent, would fight back again, against creation, and so he withheld the prayer to not include him.

18 The Great Spirit saw the watching beings who were also formed in his likeness and considered their thoughts, as they also

had a portion of free will, and knowing they may be filled with jealousy for the full measure of perfection in the Anishinaabe, he went to the Sky Father's lodge.

19 The Great Spirit's prayer, echoed. "Watchers, we will make the Anishinaabe in our image, the perfect creation, the seventh form, upright and reflecting my own image that I used to organize the world, how I made you, and in our likeness, of the Sky Father, Sky Mother, and our own, with good ways and judgment.

20 If this being lives up to his perfect creation, they will steward to the life of the sea, sky, and all living things upon the earth.

21 If this being does not, as has been with the Giants before, or the six creations in the prior earth, each now dwelling in humility, the Anishinaabe as well will be lowered beneath all life and humbled by the earth."

22 The Sky Father held the scrolls of the history of the six beings prior created who had failed as stewards of the earth, and his prayer echoed,

23 "I will cause that the scrolls of the history of the six beings to be brought forth to Anishinaabe before the end, before they destroy the earth as the Water Panther will prevail over them for a long while."

24 The gathering, echoed, "This will do."

CHAPTER 4

1 The Sky Father descended with the Great Spirit to the Earth, which was in spiritual form as well as physical form, in that while physically it did not yet appear as it11 would, as it would appear in spiritual form.

2 The Great Spirit presented Mi-chi-boozhoo who existed in the reflection of the Great Spirit in spiritual form traversed the entire earth as an Anishinaabe in spiritual form and greeted all life in spiritual form.

3 Mi-chi-boozhoo in spiritual form realized that he was lacking a partner as all those he had encountered in spiritual form possessed, which had come into being from his prayers.

4 Mi-chi-boozhoo searched all of physical creation, in its spiritual form and found no suitable partner, as the Sky Woman was with the Sky Mother, and the Sky Women, within the earth forming the physical forms of all spiritual life.

5 The Sky Woman had not yet ascended into Mi-chi-boozhoo's presence,

6 The Great Spirit reasoned with the Sky Father that a partner would be needed when the Anishinaabe entered physical form, just as all of creation existed in spiritual and physical form.

7 The Sky Mother was not yet ready to release the Sky Woman into physical form and therefore reasoned with the Sky Father to give to the Great Spirit who was walking in spiritual form amidst the spirits

dwelling also in physical form a companion who would also become another companion to the Anishinaabe when their spirits had entered the physical world.

8 The Sky Father gave to Mi-chi-boozhoo the spirit of the wolf to act as companion.

9 Mi-chi-boozhoo for a while had great joy in his companion but longed for a partner even as all in spiritual form experienced in physical form and knowing that the Anishinaabe would surely come, a partner would be required for the generations of Anishinaabe to come.

10 The Sky Father and Sky Mother agreed.

11 The Sky Father and the Great Spirit, with Mi-chi-boozhoo lowered to the earth as the Sky Mother and Sky Women rose from within, forming Anishinaabe in their image, in spirit and earth, according to the image of their spirit that rests there now.

12 All life prior brought forth directly from the direction of the Sky Father through the prayer of the Great Spirit and the expressed love of the Sky Mother through the prayer of the Sky Woman who acted at her direction,

13 No tree or vegetation was yet visible upon the earth as it remained underground from the third prayer, remaining below the shallow until the sixth prayer and Anishinaabe had been formed, waiting to produce the garden for the Anishinaabe to rest within.

14 The waters flowing in the wind had not yet fallen upon the shallow, as the waters gathered below the shallow for the great moment of Creation, the purpose of Creation, to bring forward the Anishinaabe, the seventh being of perfection.

15 Rising from within the earth the waters rested as a fog upon the shallow, covering the entire earth.

16 From the fog, the Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother formed the Anishinaabe from the red clay of the eastern shore upon the great sea, forming the vessel by hand.

17 The Great Spirit brought forth Mi-chi-boozhoo the first spirit he had fashioned, even as the Great Spirit was the first spirit that the Sky Father had fashioned.

18 Taking the cowrie shell so as to join only a portion of the lowering spirit to the vessel, the Sky Father blew through the cowrie shell into the nostrils, binding the spirit into earth.

19 Anishinaabe was formed by their hands with spirit and earth, according to the image of their spirit that rests there now in the vessels of earth.

20 The Sky Father and Sky Mother's prayer, echoed to all of creation, "Here lies red clay earth joined with spirit, all creation will observe Mi-chi-boozhoo, who is like us; they are called together gee-ee-gim; they are speakers, being like us."

21 They, the Sky Father and Sky Mother, created the first Great Spirit who

then created the Mi-chi-boozhoo and the Sky Woman, the first Anishinaabe as spirit first, and then in earth as a single being united to remind them and the abundance created from their unity in performing creation.

22 The seventh being, perfect in form, they are understanding, and they are speaking as the Sky Father and Sky Mother.

23 The Sky Mother and Sky Father then hid themselves from the Anishinaabe with the Sky Mother descending within the13 Earth to embrace all spirit into life of physical form,

24 The Sky Father departed to the Sky Lodge to observe and visit the garden at the end of each day and the Great Spirit ascended into the Sky to observe and reward those who lived the good way of life,

25 The male Anishinaabe saw that the animals were digging within the shallow to seek vegetation to eat and realizing the fog was rising into the winds he said a prayer,

26 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother rejoiced in viewing the first male Anishinaabe pray as they do,

27 The first Anishinaabe male called upon the waters to fall so that the vegetation would rise, And so it was.

28 Immediately all vegetation rose from below the shallow and covered the earth as the first male Anishinaabe watched the sun setting, as the day was ending,

CHAPTER 5

1 The female Anishinaabe marveled at the green vegetation that rose so abruptly before her eyes and every tree rose higher still, a beauty so great she had not realized that she was still united as one with the male Anishinaabe, they were connected back-to-back by the ribs.

2 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother, knowing that in time the Anishinaabe, if remaining in their current state, would see that living beings were in separate pairs and not alone, determined to separate them. In their current state, the Anishinaabe were unaware of each other's presence.

3 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother did not want the male side of the Anishinaabe to witness the separation of the female side, fearing he might wrongly assume she was derived from him or was lesser, when in fact they were equal.

4 Thus, they caused a deep sleep to fall upon the Anishinaabe. While they slept, the Anishinaabe male and female were separated at their backs where they were connected at the ribs, and skin covered the open flesh.

5 The Anishinaabe female was additionally shaped to carry into14 physical form the creative power she possessed in spiritual form when she had assisted the Sky Mother in bringing forth all life upon the earth.

6 The creative power of the earth, to

join spirit and earth into living being, was placed within the Anishinaabe female as a fruit is placed within the earth to grow.

7 After separating the Anishinaabe into male and female forms, the Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother gave a prayer, which was heard as thunder due to their hidden state,

8 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother's prayer, echoed: "Be fruitful and abundant, steward the earth and explore it, overcome the opposition to peace and reveal the kindness within of all living beings. Be Good stewards over the living beings of the sea, sky, and land."

9 The Anishinaabe woman's eyes saw clearly, and she declared, "I know these things you speak of; I made them here, I am truly the mother of all living."

10 The Anishinaabe man's eyes did not yet see clearly, and he declared, "This woman is bone from my bone, flesh from my flesh, and is taken from me."

11 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother realizing his error in the Anishinaabe man's judgement, as they had prior sought to prevent, corrected man, caused the Anishinaabe man and Anishinaabe woman to face each other.

12 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother's prayer, echoed: "Anishinaabe Man you have been given strength and endurance to serve, provide for, and protect the strength and endurance of the Anishinaabe Woman, which are her generations to come;

13 You are one. As she is bone from your bone, you are bone from her bone. As she is flesh from your flesh, you are flesh from her flesh. As all your generations will come from her flesh and bone, children male and female who make men, so be as one being even as we are."

14 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother spoke to the first man and first woman who together had formed all spirit and cloaked living beings within a single drop of earth,

15 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother's prayer,15 echoed: "Look, I have made you stewards over the living beings of the land,

16 But those who eat plants, prior below the shallow, and now abundant upon the surface, do not take their life or consume them for your own.

17 All plants will serve for medicine and food for every living being of the earth and sky, only those living beings who take life by creation may take the life of those living beings who eat plants.

18 It is important for now they together do not confuse the stewards for us, and remember you are a creation of spirit and earth as well."

19 The first man responded, "Then how will the abundance of our generations come?"

20 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother's prayer, echoed: "I give you every seedbearing plant on the earth, and every tree that has seedbearing fruit; they

will be yours for food, and you may eat the meat of animals that have died in their time, ensuring that the blood has left their earth so as to not offend their spirit."

21 And so, it was that a garden rose abruptly, and two great trees were seen in its midst.

CHAPTER 6

1 The Great Deer walked forth to the Anishinaabe, and they marveled that with its every step a prayer was seen as the vegetation divided, and a trail appeared.

2 The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Sky Mother's prayer, echoed: "The Great Deer will guide you from this place of your creation to dwell in the midst of the Great Garden. We will meet you there to help you understand the purpose of your creation and the creation of the earth."

3 As they heard these words the Anishinaabe were afraid to enter the Garden, so they turned towards each other. Facing eye to eye, the Anishinaabe man declared,

4 "I have been given strength and endurance to serve, provide for, and protect your strength and endurance, which are our generations to come."

5 They embraced and followed the Great Deer into the Garden. Upon reaching the great waters in the midst of the Garden, whose fresh water stretched in all16 directions, they went to the mountain within the fresh water's midst.

6 As they climbed, they came upon a great cave, and they followed the Great Deer to the top of the mountain.

7 Standing upon the mountain overlooking the expanse of nature, they watched as a great river flowed out from the many waters below traveling south.

8 This great river far beyond would stretch into four directions of all the great land as the waters that had fallen upon the great land joined with it from the east and west, as it flowed from north to south.

9 The river flowing from north to south being called the Great River, the river flowing from the west to east into the Great River being called the Muddy River as it flowed far across the land gathering earth,

10 The river flowing from the east to west into the Great River being called the Winding River because it flows upon the garden as a snake moves.

11 Many rivers flowed into these rivers from all directions and the Anishinaabe could see farther in those days before the flood.

12 As they observed a great cloud rose from an island in the midst of the waters directly south, a cloud that was colored brown as the earth until it was held high into the purple sky.

13 This was the Sky Mother rising to meet the Sky Father who was distant, high in the sky, so as to not be seen by the Anishinaabe.

14 The Great Spirit spoke and his

prayer echoed: "I see you."

15 The Anishinaabe, although recognizing the voice, still marveled and asked, as prior upon their creation they had not reasoned to asked, together the Anishinaabe asked, "who sees us?"

16 In an instant lightning projected across the sky in all directions pulsating like a heartbeat, in similitude of the observed rivers, but these flowed of light extending across the sky in all directions.

17 The Great Spirit spoke as one and their prayer echoed: "I AM who does this."

18 The Great Spirit's prayer echoed across all of creation: "Of every tree in this great garden you may eat, including the tree of life, but the Tree of Knowledge, you cannot eat;17

19 And never can your generations eat, as it will cause your vessels formed from the drop of earth to wither and pass back to where it came from."

20 The Tree of Knowledge was not referred to as the Tree of the Knowledge of Disobedience so that the Anishinaabe man and Anishinaabe woman would not ask what disobedience is and in doing so learn of good and evil, the use of free will to disobey.

CHAPTER 7

1 The Anishinaabe having been created from earth by the Sky Father and Sky Mother in their image and form, at the direction of the Great Spirit, the Anishinaabe the perfect seventh being of Creation, understood their responsibility to bring forth kindness on the earth.

2 The Anishinaabe saw themselves as a part of the Great Spirit, completely, and all living beings as equally a part of the Great Spirit;

3 And they gave love and kindness unconditionally to all living beings, animate and inanimate, as saw no option to disobey as this path was not presented to them, nor found in their understanding or reasoning as a possibility.

4 The Great Spirit's prayer echoed across all of creation: "Anishinaabe man you will travel the vast distance of this Great Garden, which is upon this earth, and give to all living things, animate and inanimate, within its boundaries a name from your sound, which we have withheld so as to inform Creation who hears us now that while you are not us you speak with the authority of us."

5 The Anishinaabe man understood and remembered the names his spirit Mi-chi-boozhoo within had given to all things in spiritual form and determined that in the sound he gave each being it would be their name forever in physical form as well, and decided to name all things based on how they exist and in what they do.

6 The Anishinaabe dwelt in their form, perfect in every way, but they wore no covering in their state, dwelling as all other beings upon the earth, in their form as

created with no addition.

7 All the levels of the sky and the earth and their dwellings were18 completed.

8 As the six prayer concluded, it did so as the sun set, the Sky Father and Sky Mother saw all that had come into creation and now that the Anishinaabe was present upon the earth, declared in a way they both understood, that it as very good and that the Anishinaabe would bring kindness to all of Creation on the Garden.

9 As the prayer concluded, The Sky Father and Sky Mother observed the Anishinaabe lying together as one and the Anishinaabe woman became pregnant with a male and female which she birthed before the end of the day, and the Anishinaabe dwelt together as father, mother, daughter and son.

10 After Ode'imin gave birth to the children, as she became pregnant and gave birth within the same day, Mide bestowed upon her a new name.

11 He called her "Zhaa-ah," in that the path of obedience is through life and generations, acknowledging that the generations would surely come and continue onward.

12 And there was darkness and light, a sixth prayer.

13 However, as the sixth prayer ended and the sun set, the Sky Father and Sky Mother descended to an island in the great fresh waters, and resting upon a great stone structure together as one, even as the Anishinaabe laid as one.

14 And they named this island even as the earth, a turtle resting within the waters, even as the earth rests within the sky, and declared in prayer which echoed to all of creation, The work is done, commanding all of creation to rest.

15 And even they rested, and there was darkness and light, a seventh prayer.

16 The Anishinaabe man and woman traveled the garden and named all things in it and in doing so had many generations of children today called the Anishinaabe.

17 The good spirits who are lowered and live without the curse that would come to the descendants born outside the garden with the deception that would come through the cunning of the Water Panther, that great twisting serpent.

18 The Anishinaabe man and Anishinaabe woman returned to the mountain where they were first19 instructed to name all things and having done so presented themselves to the Great Spirit, again in the form of a mighty cloud that hid their forms,

19 The Anishinaabe man declared, "I have done it."

20 The Great Spirit declared, "but we have made you as well, what are your names?"

21 The Anishinaabe man declared loudly, "I have given sound and purpose to all things; I am kindness, MIDE."

22 The Anishinaabe woman declared loudly, "I bear fruit! And my fruit covers

the garden with life, like the strawberry, I bear within me the fruit of life and I am the mother of all living, ODE'IMIN."

23 The Great Spirit asked, "and what is your wish for your Anishinaabe that now fill the garden?"

24 The Anishinaabe man declared loudly, "that my children will follow the path of my heart, MIDEWIWIN, the way of kindness and if they do so, you will bless them!"

25 The Great Spirit declared, "It will be so as long as the Anishinaabe of the Garden do not leave the path of your heart, MIDEWIWIN; we will bless them by answering their prayers above all others in creation."

CHAPTER 8

1 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, had observed creation, and in seeing the Anishinaabe come together to make life, became full of wrath.

2 For his own partner who had been removed from him for her actions in the existence before,[14] when they had captured a third of the spirit stars and enticed them into disobedience.

3 And the same would occur if Anishinaabe ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and in knowing disobedience would in fact disobey due to their fullness of free will.

4 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, was the most cunning of all the beasts that the Great Spirit had made at the direction of the Sky Father, had observed the Anishinaabe fill the garden.

5 In this creation the Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, had a cunningness and determined to take the Anishinaabe woman to create physical form for the fallen spirit stars that had no physical form but dwelled instead upon the earth as shadows until the day of judgement.

6 Like the Anishinaabe the Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, could stand upright upon feet and could speak, and determined to take the Anishinaabe woman to the other lands outside the garden for his fallen spirit stars to be born upon the earth.

7 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, determined to eliminate the Anishinaabe man by convincing him to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Disobedience, of Good and Evil and in doing so he would know the full measure of his free will, in that it was possible to disobey.

8 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, would use the Anishinaabe woman to convince the Anishinaabe man, but wrongly assumed that she would first give the fruit to the Anishinaabe man, and he would stop her before in order to use her for the

[14] Existence before the material world.

procreation of his fallen spirit stars.

9 He whispered to the Anishinaabe woman while she was away from the Anishinaabe man and her family which had been born many generations in the garden, Anishinaabe born before any punishment would occur.

10 "Did the Great Spirit really say, you may not eat from any of the fruit trees in the great garden?"

11 The Anishinaabe woman replied to the Water Panther, that great twisting serpent,

12 "We may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden, but as to the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which is in the middle of the garden, the Great Spirit said, "you must not eat of it, nor touch it, as it will cause your vessels formed from the drop of earth to wither and pass back to where it came from.""

13 However, the Great Spirit had not said they could not touch it, but the Anishinaabe woman had reasoned it was poisonous and possibly the bark of the tree as well.

14 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, pressed the Anishinaabe woman against the tree and she knew that it was not poisonous.

15 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, said to the Anishinaabe woman, "Just as you21 did not perish from touching it, you will not perish from eating it."

16 The Anishinaabe woman reasoned that if the touching the tree would not harm her then certainly eating it would not as well.

17 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, said, "Rather the Great Spirit said you cannot eat from this tree for your own good because they want you to live forever and eating the fruit will make you mortal.

18 They have forbidden you out of jealousy to stop you from perfecting the world on your own by your own judgement, as they have reserved the judgement for perfecting to themselves.

19 The Great Spirit knows that on the day you eat from this tree your eyes will be opened to your own potential and independent judgment as a master of your own will to perfect the world as you see fit.20 In eating the fruit of this tree you will be like the Sky Father and Sky Mother and be able to create worlds, just as they did, this is because you will know good and evil are subjective and not absolute."

21 The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, pressed the Anishinaabe woman and spoke with her over many months while the Anishinaabe man was with their Anishinaabe people who lived the good way, Mino Bimaadiziwin.

CHAPTER 9

1 One fall, The Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, convinced the Anishinaabe woman, who had become

used to the tree, that it was good for eating because it would make them godlike, and each day the fruit had become more desirable to her eyes because it would open her eyes and her Anishinaabe children's eyes to their own potential,

2 And that the tree was attractive as a way to gain further intelligence because it would help them to know good and evil subjective to their own judgment.

3 On her own, the first Anishinaabe woman, as there were now many, decided to eat the fruit and without the Water Panther, that great twisting serpent knowing, she took some of its fruit herself and ate.22

4 When Mide, the first Anishinaabe man, as there were now many, Ode'imin described the fruit and how it was neither poisonous to touch or eat and repeated the claims of the great twisting serpent.

5 Ode'imin spoke a great length of time with Mide who marveled at how her physical appearance had changed since eating the fruit. Ode'imin wept greatly with Mide that she did not want to die and leave Mide to marry someone else, in that now there were many generations living in the garden.

6 Mide knew the fruit was not to be eaten and was confused that Ode'imin ate it and was asking him to eat it. Ode'imin gave the fruit to Mide and pleaded with him to eat it and because of his confusion on the matter he ate.

7 Ode'imin also provided the fruit to the animals that were in the garden. In this moment both Mide and Ode'imin now were aware that their original state was changed.

8 Mide and Ode'imin no longer felt connected as part of the Great Spirit and dwelt as detached living beings.

9 Mide and Ode'imin were aware they were naked, and they took leaves from the Tree of the Knowledge of Disobedience and made coverings for their bodies.

10 While Mide and Ode'imin were yet covering themselves, the Sky Father and the Great Spirit entered the garden as they did every afternoon prior to the end of the day, but Mide and Ode'imin hid themselves by climbing into the trees.

11 The Sky Father, with the Great Spirit, knew where Mide was and hoped for Mide to regret immediately his actions of disobedience so the Sky Father called to Mide, and his prayer echoed all of creation, "Mide where are you?"

12 Mide spoke with a shaking voice and tears poured from his eyes, "I heard your voices in the garden and we were afraid because we had no covering for our forms so we hid in the trees."

13 The Sky Father and the Great Spirit were aware that Mide and Ode'imin ate the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Disobedience, in that its fruit carried the knowledge of the trees to act in creation of disobeying its Creator and in doing so Mide and Ode'imin23 became aware that it was possible to use their free will as well in

opposition to what the Creators had informed them.

14 The Sky Father and the Great Spirit gave to Mide another opportunity to regret with voice his decision and asked Mide, in a low whisper so that only Mide would hear them as it was possible that Mide was embarrassed before creation, as he was made in the image of the Sky Father and Great Spirit,

15 "Who told you that you needed covering and why do you feel you need covering when all other creations lack cover? Did you eat from the tree which the Great Spirit had commanded you not to eat? Mide you obviously did otherwise you would not feel you need covering."

16 Mide displayed a flaw, similar to that of the Water Panther, that twisting serpent, deception and blaming his creators, which surprised the Sky Father.

17 Mide spoke boldy, pointing his finger angrily at the Sky Father and the Great Spirit, saying: "The woman YOU gave me and told me to provide for and protect so that our generations could come at the fruit of the tree, has done it so that I would have no purpose in being if I was left alone, and so I had no choice but to eat the fruit to obey your command to remain with her and to provide for and protect her so that our generations could come.

18 I thought that you made her this way to do this thing to see if I would stay with her, so I ate the fruit."

19 Mide showed character similar to the Water Panther, the great twisting serpent, from the council before creation, in blaming his actions on that of his partner fashioned for him, even as the Water Panther, the twisting serpent had likewise done with his spirit partner Dibikongkwe.

20 Even in this was a degree of regret and Mide and Ode'imin visibly in their tears were seen the spirit of remorse so the Sky Father directed the Great Spirit to change their judgement so that they would not die immediately, as they were aging visibly fast in a short period of time from the youth of what is a teenager at their creation into that of those in young adult.

21 The Great Spirit made them mortal and with an echo of sound their aging was halted, and their24 skin regained a youthful color, their hair changed from white yellowish to pitch black, whereas before they had a continual white glowing in their form like that of the sun shining.

CHAPTER 10

1 The Sky Mother rose up, in order to show balance and compassion as the mother always corrects the daughter, and spoke to Ode'imin directly, saying: "Ode'imin what is it you have done?"

2 As The Sky Father, the Great Spirit and Mide watched and listened, the Sky Mother gave Ode'imin the ability to take responsibility for the mistake and to explain in full all that the Water Panther, that great twisting serpent, had told her.

3 Ode'imin admitted fault, saying: "The

Water Panther, the great twisting serpent, has deceived me, and so I ate the fruit."

4 The Sky Mother called the Water Panther, the great twisting serpent, to present himself and he appeared from the waters close by where he had been observing.

5 The Sky Mother asked Ode'imin, "does the Water Panther, speak in greater authority than your Creator?"

6 Ode'imin replied, "no Sky Mother."

7 The Sky Mother spoke immediately to the Water Panther, "I recognized you before the Sky Father and stood up for you in commanding the Great Spirit to allow you the ability to have earthly form for your rebellious spirit.

8 It was I who gifted to you the power of speaking, and even in this empathy for your fall, you sought to use these gifts you did not earn to lead my daughter Ode'imin, even the Sky Woman, to disobey!?"

9 The Sky Mother's voice rose in volume as she spoke until all of creation withdrew in fear of what should come, with even the Sky Father and the Great Spirit stepping backwards.

10 The Sky Mother continued, "Because you did this, diminishing my daughter before creation, I personally will repay your action with equal action, and diminish you.

11 I remove your ability to speak and place you below all the25 creatures of creation which I have brought forth to honor the Sky Father and the Great Spirit; hence forth, your voice will only be a great hiss.

12 I remove your arms and legs and you will eat dust all the days of your life, which I now reduce in length; and when your body returns to the dust which you will now eat as you crawl,

13 your spirit will be heard only by those spirit stars you brought to this earth so that only through them may you torment man further; and Water Panther they may not obey you, and in doing so they will find forgiveness.

14 So truly I have turned now all of creation against you, whom I wept for, and now those tears are dried up, even as the dust you will eat all the days of your life."

15 The Sky Mother herself tore the arms and legs off the Water Panther who screamed in such pain that all of creation shook as a great earth quaking.

16 The Sky Mother in anger echoed to all of creation in her manner of speaking to the now shaking Water Panther, saying: "You wanted to remove Mide and to take Ode'imin to produce offspring. I hear all things my ancient son.

17 Instead, I now in doing these things place hatred between you and the woman, and between your offspring, those spirit stars who were cast down with you, who are now bound with the serpents, and her offspring. They will crush your head, and perceived crown, as you seek to bite them in the heels."

18 The Sky Mother spoke to Ode'imin,

"I will greatly increase your difficulty in raising children and your births will be extended.

19 Whereas you prior gave birth within the day, with no pain, to children that grew instantly even as you when formed, now you will endure the duration of your conversation with the Serpent, even nine months, and carry the struggle of raising your children from their birth even until they are as you now in age. You will now give birth in anguish and pain.

20 You will long for your husband but despite your longing he will dominate you."

21 The Sky Mother continued, "For the children you have already borne, their lives will be shortened to match future generations, preventing pride from elevating26 them above their parents. It is not good for children to look down upon their elders.

22 Though their vessels will eventually return to dust, they did not commit the offense and are not fully under your judgment. Therefore, they will remain in the garden and, upon death, enter paradise. Each generation living will be renewed to encourage obedience.

23 "Your future generations, born outside the garden under the offense, will be cursed to dwell in darkness, bound to the dust of their mortal forms until the Great Spirit takes earthly form to atone for your transgression.

24 In time, these future generations will return to the garden. The Anishinaabe within the garden will be blessed or judged based on their unity with the creator's plan for perfecting the earth, sustaining harmony as stewards of creation.

25 If those born under judgment return to the good way, they will find forgiveness. If not, they may prosper briefly in their disobedience, which will serve as a record of judgment against them.

26 "Should the Anishinaabe in the garden, whom I allow to remain while you cannot, permit the garden's destruction or their character to deviate from the good way, they will face condemnation. The garden will diminish until the eighth era of restoration."

CHAPTER 11

1 The Sky Father, observing the judgment passed by the Sky Mother, sought to restore balance and addressed Mide, saying: "Because you have disobeyed and placed your wife's request above that of your creators, and partook of the forbidden tree..."

2 The Sky Father's countenance grew stern, "Mide, did I not command you, 'Do not eat from it?'"

3 He continued, "The earth, from which your body was formed by my hands, shares in your disobedience. Consequently, the lands beyond the garden will now be a source of suffering.

4 I will also judge the fruit-bearing trees

for their failure to produce bark as nourishing as their fruit. Henceforth, the earth will yield all manner of insects, whose purpose is to devour your27 sustenance, making the cultivation of food a struggle for you and your generations condemned to toil."

5 "In the garden, you have no concern for food, but outside its bounds, you will toil and sweat for your sustenance until you return to the earth.

6 As you were formed from the earth, you must learn the established way of perfecting it. You are but a grain of the earth, and in your mortality, you shall return to the dust from which you came."

7 Upon seeing the leaves Mide and Ode'imin had used to cover themselves, the Sky Father and Sky Mother fashioned garments from the skin of the great deer, who offered himself as a sacrifice.

8 In remembrance of this moment, the Anishinaabe generations who remained in the garden would also cover themselves in deer skin, honoring their parents who were cast out. These coverings fit as tight as their own skin.

9 The Sky Father gently placed the coverings upon Mide, while the Sky Mother did the same for Ode'imin, demonstrating the kindness and compassion of parents toward their children, even in the face of disobedience.

10 The Sky Father said, "Behold, just as I am unmatched in the sky worlds, so too are you, Mide and Ode'imin, unmatched on the earth, now possessing the knowledge of right and wrong as it pertains to each situation.

11 However, you are now independent and incomplete without the spirit of your creators, which must be withdrawn, for you have chosen to be the architects of happiness on earth. Yet, you will falter, as you lack the understanding needed to balance the heart's desires with the mind's intentions."

12 The Sky Mother addressed the Sky Father openly, "Now that they possess understanding akin to the Great Spirit, yet lack his wisdom, what if they were to take from the Tree of Life and, by eating its fruit, live forever? Would this not lead all of creation to recognize them as creators in their own right?"

13 The Great Spirit interjected in the conversation, saying, "Ode'imin and Mide, you must leave the garden. Encourage your generations of Anishinaabe who28 remain to follow the good way, so they too will not be cast out.

14 From now on, you will be known as those who struggle with their creators. We hope you will overcome, be blessed, and return one day. However, I foresee that as your generations return, following a destruction by water and later by conquest,

15 They may be overcome by pride and greed, threatening the very existence of this garden. I fear you do not fully comprehend the potential devastation awaiting your generations born under

condemnation, unless they are grafted into the Anishinaabe and live by the good way."

16 The Sky Father and Sky Mother departed, with one ascending to the sky lodge and the other becoming the spirit within the earth. Meanwhile, the Great Spirit compelled Mide and Ode'imin to leave the garden, guiding them on the land that led across the waters to the east of Eden, the very waters Mide had first gazed upon as the sun set on the day of his creation.

17 The Great Spirit foresaw their future generations, born under condemnation, returning across those waters, when the land was under the water. With free will offering paths of both greed and love, there was a concern that, faced with the hardships of the land beyond and the garden's abundance, they might return in conquest, potentially leading even the Anishinaabe into bondage or destruction.

18 As Mide and Ode'imin departed the garden, traveling north and eastward across the land, where the waters, different before the great flood, remained mostly in the sky and beneath the earth's surface, the grandfather sun transformed.

19 What had once been visible became obscured, replaced by a new and blinding light. This change rendered the Tree of Life, which was made of a material unlike that of the earth, invisible even to the Anishinaabe within the garden.

20 At the beginning of creation, the Tree of Life had descended from the sky world with the Sky Woman, who passed through its roots to the lower world before it was lowered.

21 Had Mide and Ode'imin not eaten the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, in due time, when the Spirit Stars, now dwelling as Anishinaabe, had experienced families and established their identities, if they had not done so on their own, they and their parents would have been led to the Tree of Life.

22 Upon eating its fruit, their bodies would have transformed into a form and structure akin to that of the Sky Father and Sky Mother, who are of a different substance than the matter of the earth and sky. They would have departed with the Sky Father and Sky Mother, much like a child leaving the womb.

23 This is to say that the earth and all that lies above it exist in the sky world like seeds in the blueberry or children in a womb, within which the Anishinaabe dwell until they are raised up.

24 The Tree of Knowledge, also known as the Tree of the Knowledge of Disobedience, had lost its initial power, as the knowledge of its first disobedience had been imparted to Mide and Ode'imin when they ate its fruit.

25 To prevent any more Anishinaabe from falling under its judgment, it was removed from the garden, where it is not found again, and cast into the deserts of foreign lands.

26 In enmity, the Great Spirit declared, "May you never bear fruit properly again!" Consequently, where the tree and its offspring were found, they grew sporadically, producing fruit out of season, a tree of confusion. Nothing else would grow around them due to their condemnation.

CHAPTER 12

1 To the north of the garden, with the change in Grandfather Sun, lights revolved like a rainbow blade, flashing to deter any reentry into the garden from the paths leading in from the east and west. In time the rainbow blade would be lifted into the sky allowing reentry into the garden.

2 The first children that Ode'imin birthed after the judgment and command to leave the garden were named Kaa-iin, symbolizing a stem of abundance, and Gashbinesikwe, reflecting her birth as a strength through hardship due to complications during the first birth under judgment.

3 As they walked, it took the entire pregnancy plus an additional month, ten months in total, for them to make their way out of the garden, heading north and east.

4 Mide and Ode'imin intentionally traveled slowly, sleeping and resting frequently in the hopes that the Great Spirit would show mercy and hear their prayers for a restoration of their prior state of unity with the Sky Father and Sky Mother.

5 Unfortunately Ode'imin was prevented by the Great Spirit from giving birth in the garden so as to not offend the command of the Sky Father and Sky Mother to depart the garden and the Great Spirit did not want to have to remove the children from the parents and allow them to stay in the garden as they were not at fault for their parents deeds while they would suffer still enough.

6 Ode'imin gave birth one blade of grass beyond the last tree setting the boundaries of the garden, and the Great Spirit declared to Mide that in the future a great water would surround this spot forming an island, with the waters making it more difficult to reenter the garden.

7 For he knew one day the Anishinaabe who remained in the garden would suffer at the hands of those who returned, so although the world was not fashioned as it would become, the Great Spirit foresaw the disobedience that would bring the great flooding.

8 The Great Spirit also saw that from this very land that Kaa-iin and Gashbinesikwe's descendants would seek to control the entire earth in order to return to the the garden from what would become an island.

9 Following the birth, the Great Spirit spoke to Mide and Ode'imin as their prayers and sorrow had rested heavily upon him, saying: "Mide and Ode'imin, I

have heard your pleas.

10 While you must be removed for your own good, so that you do not eat from the Tree of Life and remain in disobedience forever, I will, in time, come to your descendants as a deliverer to correct your wrongs and allow your family to return to the garden.

11 However, if your family in that age and beyond returns to the garden with greed and harms the Anishinaabe and the first garden, they will suffer greatly at my hand, as I will not be mocked in my redemption for you.

12 Teach your children to live the good way and to follow the seven sacred laws so that they become chosen among all the nations that will arise.

13 They shall be distinguished for their unity with me, while other nations may rise in division with me and with each other."

THE RED PLATES
OF COPPER AND GOLD

THE PLATES OF YAHAWZHOWAA

THE VISION OF THE RED PLATES

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 Giiwedinong 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 Yahawzhowaa Account* — the doings and testimony of Yahawzhowaa "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 Yahawzhowaa, sealing the Light
VI. The Kingdom of Heaven in the Heart is Explained

BOOKS CONTAINED WITHIN THE YAHAWZHOWA PLATES HEREIN:

BOOK ONE The Waters of the Great Turtle
BOOK TWO The Path of Many Waters
BOOK THREE The Road to Siipising

BOOK FOUR	The Lakes Between the Hills
BOOK FIVE	The Road of The Buffalo
BOOK SIX	The Mountains of the Turtle
BOOK SEVEN	The City of the Gods
BOOK EIGHT	Sky Woman and the First Garden
BOOK NINE	Book of the Kingdom of the Heart

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.

THE BOOK OF YAHAWZHOWAA

An Account Written by
the Hand of Agonabish
The Red Plates Record of the Midḗwiwin

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 doings of Yahawzhowaa.

BOOK ONE
THE WATERS OF THE GREAT TURTLE

CHAPTER 1
The Arrival at Mitchimakinak

1 And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year after the birth of Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, How shall a man set the light within his vessel?

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

30 And thus began the journey of Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa descended and came to the shore where they stood.

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

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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; Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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; Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa answered, Bring what ye have, and set it before Me.

6 They brought the baskets of rice and 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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; Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa said to His disciples, These lights in the sky are as the Father's eyes 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa, saying, Master, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make him whole.

5 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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; 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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; 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 TWO
THE PATH OF MANY WATERS

CHAPTER 1
The Landing at Pūhtōwākan

1 And it came to pass after many days, that Yahawẓhowaa crossed the wide face of Mishigami unto Pūhtōwākan, 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.

3 The people of the Omaeq-nomenew, 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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

3 When Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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; 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 between them, and called it The Witness of the Waters.

20 And Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 & the Jes'sakkid

1 And it came to pass, after Yahawzhowaa had journeyed two days from Kahkā-mohnakaneh, He came unto a clearing where the deer paths met beside the waters of Mishi-ziibi.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-giizhig, the one whom the elders had named for the North Sky.

20 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Twelve Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa journeyed with the Twelve Midḗwiwin and Giiwedin-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 Mishosendaming, rising from the midst of the trees like the back of the turtle, and the waters lapped softly upon the shore.

3 And Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa took of the berries, and gave one to each of the Twelve and to Giiwedin-giizhig, saying, When ye pray thus, eat of the firstfruits of the land, that thy prayer be sealed with the sweetness of 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa concerning the way of peace among the tribes.

22 Many were healed that night, for Giiwedin-giizhig 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin gathered with Giiwedin-giizhig, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa healed many that day, and the Midḗwiwin 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 Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa.

6 And Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa laid His hand upon his head, and the man was clothed and in his right mind.

10 And he followed Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa, entreating Him to judge between the chiefs, for word had spread that He spake with wisdom not of men.

5 Yahawzhowaa gathered unto Him the Twelve Midḗwiwin, and also Giiwedin-giizhig the Jes'sakkid, and they entered the great council lodge.

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

7 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa bade them eat from one bowl and drink from one cup as a covenant of peace.

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

14 Giiwedin-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, Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa — 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 Yahawẓhowaa spread to every village along the coast.

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

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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa and the Twelve Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-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 Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin walked at the sides, aiding those who stumbled.

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

15 The people wept for joy, saying, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin brought forth berries from the marsh's edge, sweet to the taste, and shared them among all.

21 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-giizhig kept watch, for he said, The Spirit hath more to speak upon the morrow.

25 At dawn, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa that no medicine had availed, neither the roots of the earth nor the waters of the spring.

5 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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

10 But Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa 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. 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 taking of fish, but contention had arisen among three families.

3 Each claimed the right to the richest fishing ground.

4 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin blessed the waters, offering tobacco upon the current.

14 Giiwedin-giizhig spake, The Spirit rejoiceth where there is no strife.

15 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa came, the people said, Master, heal him, that he may see.

6 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa's hand and said, Thy light hath opened more than mine eyes.

19 They feasted upon fish and wild rice.

20 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

3 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa taught them, The lodge that shareth shall never be empty.

12 He told them of the manna given to other children of the Creator in the wilderness.

13 And He said, The Father's hand is not shortened, that it cannot give.

14 Giiwedin-giizhig prayed in the old tongue, blessing the river.

15 The Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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-ziibi.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 colours as of fire.

5 A stillness fell upon the land.

6 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-giizhig wept for joy, saying, The Spirit hath confirmed the path.

16 The Midē´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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 THREE
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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin and Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-giizhig said, The breath of the South Wind beareth a summons. The plains are calling their own.

22 Yahawzhowaa returned, saying, There is a people beyond the rivers whose songs are 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa spake unto the Twelve and unto Giiwedin-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 Midḗwiwin asked, Master, is all food the same in thy sight?

11 And He answered, Nay; for there is 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa set His face again toward the path that led to Siipisiing.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa taught, A watchfire is not for pride but for welcome; it telleth the lost, There is a place yet for thee.

19 Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa said, Keep your knives; bring your hearts.

22 He set two of the Midē′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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

13 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 ʻam 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Midḗwiwin: 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 scribe of rivers.

43 And the elders whispered, Never have our fathers heard such mingling of tongues and truths under one shade.

44 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

22 And the people departed slowly, for they desired still to sit in His presence.

23 But Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa, for they feared the storm that might break.

3 And Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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, Yahawzhowaa 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:

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa lifted a small branch, still wet with dew, and held it up for all to see.

4 "Behold this branch," He said, "it 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 another tongue as was common:

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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:

13 Shoreshai b'ahavatcha, Abba (My roots are in Thy love, Father),

14 B'chol ruach, lo emot (In every wind, I will not die),

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa'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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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."

23 They prayed together until the fire burned low.

24 And Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa replied, "By being what the Father made it without fear."

8 Then He sang in 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa replied, "The Father's breath is in thy lungs — share it, and it shall not run dry."

11 Then He sang:

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa said, "I will sing thee a song of the River that Forgets No One."

2 And He sang in long, winding melody, 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 Yahawzhowaa said, "Especially then."

11 He told them of a hunter who strayed for years, yet when he returned to the river, it knew his face.

12 The people marveled, for they had seen such waters in their dreams.

13 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa sang a song of light:

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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 first time.

21 Then Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa told him, "The circle hath healed thee."

16 They danced until the moon set, and when they stopped, none felt tired.

17 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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, 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!”

16 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 FOUR
THE LAKES BETWEEN THE HILLS

CHAPTER 1
Thunder Mountain

1 And it came to pass, that Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-giizhig, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa touched him, saying, Fear not; for my Father openeth a door that thou mayest look and remember.

14 The canoes of the sky made no shadow upon the mountain, but cast a brightness downward as a path.

15 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa of a journey yet to be fulfilled.

19 Their words were as lightning writ slow, that even a child might read their fire.

20 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Father’s.

27 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Miskwaagamiiwi-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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 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 Yahawẓhowaa'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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 arms were as water; and their eyes were fountains.

13 Yahawzhowaa 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 redden 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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:

12 “Kesher 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa sat by a low fire whose embers 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa blessed their steps.

31 And the sky kept clear.

CHAPTER 11
Discourse of the Unseen Lodge

1 On the seventh day from Thunder Mountain, Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa lifted His eyes toward Siipisiing 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 Yahawzhowaa that two nations, the Anishinaabe and the Dakota, had arrayed themselves in the Narrow Valley, to set battle in order at the rising of 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 Yahawzhowaa came between the two ridges and sat upon a low stone, and the Twelve were with Him, and Giiwedin-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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 redden 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 Yahawzhowaa took a single arrow and brake 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Restring 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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."

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 FIVE
THE ROAD OF THE BUFFALO

CHAPTER 1
Two Fires Burning

Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Midḗwiwin 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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; Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

16 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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; Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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; Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, that Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 weareth 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Siipisiing.

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 Yahawzhowaa's voice grew deep and grave, and He spake again, saying, In a time 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa lowered His hand, and the fire popped and crackled, and no one spake, for the weight of His words pressed 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa lifted His hand toward the hills: Behold Siipisiing — turtle sleeps not dead, but hid.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 fainted, 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Giiwedin-giizhig, thou shalt keep Siipisiing: 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 & Deceit; the Straight Trail

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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 & Cedar of Remembrance

1 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 & Yellow Vessel

1 Among the Twelve was a man of the Midḗwiwin, 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 Yahawzhowaa 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!

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa drew him close and said, You are My Midḗwiwin, My healer, My holy one. The Great Spirit above looks upon you with great love.

27 And Yahawzhowaa 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 & 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa spake softly of the yellow 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 narroweth 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 & the Digging of Truth

1 When night had spread her robe, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 & the Canoes of the Sky

1 After many days Yahawzhowaa 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.

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, Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 & 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 aforetime.

3 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 SIX
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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 & 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 & 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 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 & the Gates

1 After the waters abated and the ground learned to be kind again, we gathered upon a Hill of Seal, where wind 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 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 & 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 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.

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.

CHAPTER 7
Lhii leaveth Zho-ru-som & crosseth the 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.

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 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 & the Remnant

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 fear; masters (Meorim) hardened their mouths; pylons of joining thirsted for worship.

8 Counsel in the Unseen sighed, and waters unwrote 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.

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 11
Lhii scattereth the record & 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.

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 & sealeth 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 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 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 Mide.

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 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 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 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

1. And after these things I saw the 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 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

Not released

CHAPTER 17
Heavenly Mother

Not released

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 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 unpitying 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. Yahawzhowaa watched their descent and asked for mercy beyond justice; the Father granted mercy in time, not in denial.

12. The hosts looked to Yahawzhowaa 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 children to shut the door when they pray.

33. Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa stood before the Father and said, "Send Me."

18. The Father answered, "Thou knowest the cost — forgetting, flesh, wound, and waiting."

19. Yahawzhowaa 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 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: Yahawzhowaa 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. "Mide and Ode'imin," 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. Yahawzhowaa 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 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. Yahawzhowaa 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 throbbed 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. Yahawzhowaa 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, 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. Yahawẓhowaa 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. Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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. Yahawẓhowaa 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. Yahawẓhowaa 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. Yahawzhowaa knelt in a garden and traded 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. Yahawzhowaa 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.

CHAPTER 22
The Reckoning of Vessels

1. The hour appointed from before the rivers ran arrived as quietly as dew on iron.

2. Yahawzhowaa 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 auroras.

6. Yahawzhowaa stretched His arms and gathered time; thieves forgot how to steal and beggars remembered how to give.

7. The device in the thief's hand trembled as if a heartbeat

BOOK SEVEN
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 Dine (Modern Navajo Nation) came to 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 Midḗwiwin, 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.

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 Midē′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.

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 & 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 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; īn teōtl ītech nimitstlatlauhtia — 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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, xiquimottilican — 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 etelil t'aan — Do not be scattered; we need a single word.

16. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli answered, In titlatocān, timotlatlauhtia in moyōllōtl — 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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, quenamiquīz? — 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 Yahawzhowaa & 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 wíinikob' — ma' tu'ux puksi'ik'al u paktik ti' 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; īn 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 plaẓa, 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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, Táan 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 — notẓa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa and struck his breast with a blow that once had shattered gates; but Yahawzhowaa moved not, and the blow sank into stillness as a thrown 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa's garment to drink light from the spring he hated.

28. And the vessel of Yahawzhowaa 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 puksi'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 & 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 Yahawzhowaa; and the sound was as when a river meets a rock that has no age; and the river learns its own name.

10. And Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa the light he could not bear; and the garment of flesh could no longer hold the wine of glory.

13. And Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

25. And Yahawzhowaa said in the noble speech of the valley, Tlatoani, tlein tiquittaz, xiquitta in yōllōtl motēucyo; in teōtl in motlatolli — moyōllōtl 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 Xōchimīl, 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 puksi'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 yolpachōhuia; 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 chi'ob' — We will make the word known — gently — asking.

35. And Cuāuhtli Teuctli said to Xōchimīl, Ma xiquicnotza in yōllōtl; xiquinmaca atl, xiquinmaca tlaxcalli; īn 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 nobles and the market judges and the scribes of tribute, saying, Xiquimmati in tlamantli: īn yōllōtl cualli, īn tlatolli cualli; monequi ticuīcaltia 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 chi'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, tlaxcalli 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 yōllōtl; tla xiquitta, īn teōtl ītech 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, quilitl, mālli; xiquinmaca yōllōtl īhuān 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, Ti'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 īhuān 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.

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, Mixcōātl, Cihuātzin Ātl, Xōchitzin, Yōlotzin; and he said, Ānquīmizque in yōllōtl motēucyo: āmo titechquitiaz 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 Xōchimīl stood in the market gate and scattered seed from his palm, saying, In tlatolli īhuān 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 nicmāhuīz — 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'íib' 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 tlacohua — 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 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; īn 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'íib' — 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 Xōchimīl 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 & 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.

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 Xōchimīl lifted a copper tablet that shone like dawn upon river stones.

3. And Itzam K'awiil read from the incised lines: Le' — tz'íib' — 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 Xōchimīl added in the valley tongue, In tlatolli īhuān in tequitiāliz; īn yōllōtl īhuān in tōnalli; īn 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'íikel 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, Mixcōātl, Cihuātzin Ātl, Xōchitzin, Yōlotzin; and he gave each a small copper sign and said, Ma xiquīxpanōz 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; īn altepetl niman ye tlālli — īn atl īhuān īn xīhuitl 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'íib' — 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, Kinsmanship, Light; and he arranged them as seeds are arranged upon a tray when a garden is planned by grandmothers.

13. And a boy named Ātl Tlecuitl, whose father shaped pots, asked if he might give a word, and he said, Āmo nimitstlatlania 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 wíinikob' 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 īhuān 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 wíinik — 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, Xiquimoyolpachōhuia; 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 xiquināca tlaz in tlālli; xiquinmaca in xōchitl īhuān 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: titechmocuitlahuizque 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 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, Xiquīxtia in tlatolli īpan tōcalco, īpan tēocalco; īn 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 īn cuāuhtli mocuepaz īpan cuixpalli, īn 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 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 sevenfold, 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 īhuān 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 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 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 tlacatlaōcoya; 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.

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 j-ootik t'aan; a su'uk u ja' — a ch'ó' 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 Yahawzhowaa'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 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 Xōchimīl, and they wrapped the copper tablets in deerskin and in prayers; and Hun B'alam Ajaw said, Tu nok' — tu wíinik — tu puksi'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 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 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 Xōchimīl, 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 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 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 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 Xōchimīl — 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: īn tlatolli īhuān īn 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. Xōchimīl took a gourd and poured water across the doorway so that entering and leaving might both be baptized; and he said, Atl īhuān xōchitl — ma quēmah — īn 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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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; Xōchimīl 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 Yahawzhowaa, bright and calm as bread chosen for guests.

2. And Yahawzhowaa spoke not as thunder and not as bargain, but as a father teaches the 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.

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 Yahawẓhowaa 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 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 Xōchimīl 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 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 — 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 be strong enough to unmake storms.

33. Amen — so be it miigwech, tlazo̱camati, 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.

BOOK EIGHT
SKY-WOMAN AND THE FIRST GARDEN

An Olmec Record, whom the Midē′wiwin call Giiwedinong Anishinaabeg. Brought to Agonabish and Abridged upon the Red Tablets in the Latter Days of His Life

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 Giizhig-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 1
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 Giizhig-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.

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?

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 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 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 & 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.

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 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 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 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 Giiwedinong 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; 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 Giiwedinong 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 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 Giiwedinong 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 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 Giiwedinong 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 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 & 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 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 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 & 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 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 & 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 Giiwedinong 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 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 hungry 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.

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, Giiwedinong 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 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 & 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 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.

CHAPTER 14
The Roads of Season & 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 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 & 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; 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 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 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 NINE

THE BOOK OF THE KINGDOM OF THE HEART

CHAPTER 1
The Family Is the Kingdom

1. And it came to pass that Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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

1. And Yahawzhowaa 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 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 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 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 Yahawzhowaa, 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 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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. 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 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 Hireling

1. And Yahawzhowaa 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 hireling is not the shepherd; the sheep are not his own, and he does not know their names.

2. The hireling 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 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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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.

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 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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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 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.

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 Yahawzhowaa 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.

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 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 & 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 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 Giiwedinong 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.

THE SILVER RECORDS

THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT

An Account Written by the Hand of Tawádizi upon The Silver Records of the Midḗwiwin

An account delivered by Agonabish, the first Keeper of the Red Plate, who appeared by the command of the Eternal to declare that man had brought his own curse upon himself. And he presented a set of Silver Plates, smaller than the former Red, which had been prepared and preserved by the decree of the Councils of Heaven, that they might come forth in the last days as a witness and covenant.

The Silver Records: A covenant record given by the Eternal and engraved by Arel through the Spirit of prophecy and revelation, and preserved by the Keepers — from Agonabish, who first received the Red Plate as witness, through Shenat and Arel, unto Tawádizi, who was renamed by Yahawzhowaa upon the holy mountain.

BOOK ONE
THE SILVER PLATES

CHAPTER I

1. And it came to pass in the sixty and fifth year of our Lord, that Agonabish, the keeper of the record, knew the days of his life were few, for the breath within him grew thin, and his heart was heavy with the weight of remembrance.

2. And he beheld the plates which had been entrusted unto his hands, for they shone with the light of many generations, and in them was written the testimony of his fathers, the covenant of the Most High, and the hope of the remnant yet unborn.

3. And he said within himself, Surely I will not go down to the grave until I have finished the charge laid upon me, neither shall I let the dust of the earth cover these things until they have been spoken to all nations who will receive.

4. And he gathered his strength, and he clothed himself in garments of travel, and he bound the record in skins that the rain might not spoil them, nor the rivers carry them away.

5. And he took up his staff, and he kissed the earth of his dwelling one last time, saying, I go forth unto my brothers and unto my sisters, that the covenant of light be not hidden in darkness.

6. And he turned his face unto the rising of the sun, for the Spirit whispered, Thou shalt walk unto the Wabanaki, a nation of the dawn who dwell by the waters of the east.

7. And the way before him was long, and full of trial, for many nations and many tongues lay between his dwelling and the shore where the sun is born.

8. And he crossed the river of broad current, and the wind did beat upon him, and the stones did bruise his feet, yet he pressed onward, remembering the promise given unto his fathers.

9. And in the wilderness there appeared unto him spirits of the night, who spake in voices of mockery, saying, Thy words are empty, thy bones are brittle, and thy journey shall perish with thee.

10. But Agonabish lifted up his voice, saying, The Spirit of the Most High goeth before me, and though I am weak in flesh, I am strong in remembrance, and no demon shall silence the covenant that I bear.

11. And the spirits departed for a season, yet they lingered in shadow, waiting to ensnare his steps with fear and despair.

12. And Agonabish set his heart in prayer, saying, O Lord of Heaven and Earth, strengthen my vessel, that I may finish the course appointed unto me, and let thy word rest upon this people as dew

upon the grass.

13. And the Lord answered him in the stillness of the night, saying, Fear not, my son, for thou art chosen from thy youth, and thy days shall not end until thy record is delivered.

14. Therefore Agonabish rose with new courage, and he journeyed through the thick forest, where the trees grew tall as towers, and the silence was broken only by the cry of the raven and the howl of the wolf.

15. And he was hungry, and he ate roots of the ground and berries of the bush, and he drank of the streams, giving thanks for every small mercy that sustained his frame.

16. And in his heart he pondered the days of his fathers, who also had borne records, and he said, Surely I am not greater than they, yet I must be faithful as they were faithful, until the record be sealed in the hearts of men.

17. And he came unto a village of strangers, who spake a tongue unknown to him, and they looked upon him with wonder, for his face was set as flint, and the light of heaven burned in his eyes.

18. And he lifted up the record, and he spake by the Spirit, and though their ears heard a strange tongue, yet their hearts were pierced, and some bowed before the word, while others turned away, saying, This man is a dreamer.

19. And Agonabish tarried not among them, but departed in the morning, lest contention arise, for the Spirit bade him continue his journey eastward.

20. And as he walked by the riverside, there came unto him a man clothed in skins, who said, I am a hunter of the plains, and I know the paths of the wilderness; suffer me to guide thee a season.

21. And Agonabish rejoiced, for the Lord had sent him a companion, and together they walked many days, sharing food and fire, and speaking of the Great Mystery that dwelleth above all.

22. And the hunter marveled at the record, saying, Surely these plates are not the work of mortal hands alone, for they shine though no fire be near, and they carry a weight greater than stone.

23. And Agonabish said, It is so, for they bear the voice of generations, and whosoever shall write upon them is moved by the hand of Heaven.

24. And the hunter said, My people know of the prophets of old, and they spake of a day when words of fire should cross the land; perhaps thou art he who bringeth them.

25. But Agonabish answered, I am not he who is promised, yet I am sent before thee with testimony, that the hearts of thy children be prepared for the days to come.

26. And the hunter walked with him until the mountains rose in the distance, and he said, My path turneth northward, but thine goeth east; may the Great Spirit keep thee.

27. And Agonabish blessed him, and they parted as friends, never to meet again

in the flesh.

28. And the keeper of the record climbed the mountains, and the snow was deep upon the path, and the cold pierced him as a sword, yet he carried the record close to his bosom, that it be not harmed.

29. And in the midst of the mountain there appeared again the spirits of darkness, clothed in fire and smoke, and they cried aloud, Cast away the record, and save thy flesh, for thy bones shall not endure this burden.

30. But Agonabish lifted up his staff, and he smote the earth, and fire leapt forth, and he said, Depart from me, ye workers of ruin, for the covenant of the Lord is stronger than death.

31. And the mountain shook, and the spirits fled into the deep valleys, and peace returned unto the heart of the prophet.

32. And when he came down from the mountain, he beheld the great waters that stretch unto the rising sun, and his soul was filled with wonder and fear, for the end of his journey drew near.

33. And he found the people of the Wabanaki dwelling by the shore, and they received him with kindness, for they saw the weariness of his frame, and they fed him with fish and with corn.

34. And after many days he spake unto them concerning the record, and he rehearsed before them the dealings of the Lord with his fathers, and the covenants and promises given from the beginning.

35. And the Spirit fell upon the Wabanaki, and they wept, saying, Truly the words of our fathers and thy fathers are one, and the Great Spirit is Lord above all nations.

36. And Agonabish rejoiced, for his labor was not in vain, neither was his journey fruitless, for the covenant was planted in the hearts of another people.

37. And he caused that some should inscribe their remembrance upon bark and stone, that the testimony might not be forgotten if the plates were lost.

38. And the elders of the Wabanaki said unto him, Thou art welcome among us, and thy words shall be remembered in our lodges and by our fires, as long as the rivers flow and the trees stand.

39. And Agonabish bowed himself unto the earth, giving thanks that his burden had been lightened, and that his record had found a resting place.

40. But the Spirit whispered again, saying, Thy work is not yet finished, for though thy flesh shall soon rest, yet thy words must go further, unto the islands and unto the nations beyond the sea.

41. And Agonabish marveled, saying, How shall these things be, for I am old and cannot cross the waters?

42. And the Lord said, Be at peace, for I will send others after thee, and the record shall not perish, but shall go forth in its season, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of my covenant.

43. Therefore Agonabish blessed the people once more, and he delivered unto

them the record, that they should guard it with all diligence, as a treasure from heaven.

44. And his strength failed him, and he lay upon a bed of reeds by the shore, and he spake with his last breath, saying, I have finished my course, I have kept the charge, and the covenant is delivered.

45. And thus ended the days of Agonabish, the keeper of the record, and his name was remembered among the nations as a witness of light, and his journey became as a song upon the waters.

CHAPTER 2

1. And it came to pass that Agonabish, being old in years and weak in body, gathered his strength, for the record weighed upon him as a burden and yet as a fire, that it should not die with him but live among the nations.

2. And he looked toward the sunrise, to the path of the great waters, where the people of the dawn dwelt, whom men later called the Wabanaki, keepers of the first light.

3. And he prayed unto the Great Spirit, saying: “If my days be few, let them be spent in journeying, that the words of truth may pass beyond my bones, and that the seed of memory may not perish.”

4. And the wind answered him with voices, as though all his fathers stood beside him, saying, “Go, for the journey is thine, and though demons shall rise against thee, yet the record shall prevail.”

5. Then he arose from his dwelling by the rivers of his people, and took in his hand a staff of cedar, and upon his back the skins of writing, bound in leather, sealed with prayers and tears.

6. And he went forth alone, for the young men feared the way, and the women wept that an elder should wander so far; yet his eyes were set as flint, for his spirit was commanded.

7. And he passed through forests of pine, where the ground was dark with needles and the sky was veiled with clouds, and he sang songs of the ancients, that the spirits of the land might not strike him down.

8. And behold, a shadow followed him, like unto the form of a man but twisted, with eyes of fire and a mouth that mocked; and it spoke, saying, “Old man, turn back, for the nations have no need of thy words.”

9. But Agonabish lifted the staff and smote the earth, saying, “Depart, deceiver, for the record is not mine but His who gave breath; and though I perish, the word shall not perish.”

10. Then the shadow fled into the thickets, and the owls shrieked, and the night grew heavy upon him, yet his feet moved still toward the dawn.

11. And on the morrow he came unto a clearing where hunters of another tribe had set their tents; and they looked upon him with wonder, for his garments were torn and his face shone with resolve.

12. And he spake unto them, saying, “I am a keeper of words, and I go to the people of the east; give me bread for the journey, and the Great Spirit shall remember you.”

13. And they gave him dried fish and cornmeal, and clothed him with furs, and said, “The path is long, and the mountains hold demons; yet if thou art chosen, thou shalt prevail.”

14. So he blessed them in the name of the Eternal Father, and pressed onward, though his knees trembled and his back groaned beneath the weight.

15. And the mountains rose before him, steep and jagged, as if the very bones of the earth had been thrust upward in wrath, and he marveled at the power of creation.

16. And there appeared to him in the heights a figure clothed in brightness, yet its brightness was cruel, for it pierced him with cold and not with warmth.

17. And the figure said, “Agonabish, thou art forgotten; thy record is but dust, thy words but wind; bow to me, and I shall give thee rest.”

18. But he cried with a loud voice, “Begone, for I bow to none but the Maker of heaven and earth. Rest is not in thy hand, nor is truth in thy mouth.”

19. And the figure was broken like mist before the sun, and the wind carried its cry into the valleys, and he knew that the adversary would pursue him all his days.

20. Yet he rejoiced, for the record remained safe upon his back, and the Spirit whispered, “Though thou art weak, the word is strong.”

21. And he descended into the valleys of great rivers, where the waters thundered and the mist rose like smoke from the deep.

22. And he knelt beside the river, and washed his hands, and the blood of his wounds went forth into the current, and he thought of the generations yet unborn who would drink of those waters.

23. And he said, “May they not forget, O Spirit, that truth was purchased with suffering, and that one man’s journey is the seed of a nation’s memory.”

24. Then he arose, and walked upon the shores, and many nights he slept upon the ground, with stones for his pillow and the stars for his covering.

25. And the stars spoke to him, as they spake to the fathers of old, saying, “We are thy witnesses; though men deny, we record.”

26. And he wept, for he felt the nearness of eternity, though his flesh longed for rest.

27. And he dreamed that night of a fire in the east, where children danced and elders sang, and the record was laid upon a stone altar, and all the people bowed before it with reverence.

28. And he knew that his journey was not in vain, though his bones might never see the sea.

29. And he pressed onward into the lands of strangers, and some received him with kindness, but others with scorn, saying, “Who is this wanderer that brings

words of another tribe?"

30. Yet he answered them not with anger, but with patience, saying, "Truth is not bound by tribe nor tongue; the Great Spirit is father to all."

31. And some were softened, and gave him shelter, and asked to hear of the record; and he read to them by the light of the fire, and their hearts were pierced.

32. But others hardened themselves, and drove him forth into the night, casting stones, saying, "Begone, prophet of strangers."

33. And the demons rejoiced at this, whispering in the darkness, but the Spirit comforted him, saying, "Even rejection plants seeds."

34. And so he journeyed through the wilderness, carrying the burden of the record, with feet swollen and eyes weary, but with spirit unbroken.

35. And he beheld visions upon the path, of the Lamb slain and risen, and of nations gathered as one beneath a great tree of life.

36. And he marveled, saying, "If my record be but a leaf of that tree, it is enough."

37. And he sang songs in the tongue of his fathers, though no ear heard but the stars and the wolves, for his soul burned within him.

38. And it came to pass that in the seventh month of his journey he came upon the shores of the salt sea, where the waves beat like drums upon the rocks.

39. And he fell upon his face and kissed the earth, saying, "Behold, the way is shortened; the light of the east is before me."

40. And the people of the shore beheld him and wondered, for his hair was white as snow and his garments torn with many thorns.

41. And he spake unto them with a voice trembling yet mighty, saying, "I am Agonabish, keeper of the record, and I bear witness of the Great Spirit and His Son."

42. And some mocked, saying, "This man is mad with weariness." But others bowed, saying, "The fire of truth is in his eyes."

43. And he gave them words of counsel, and taught them of mercy and justice, of the covenant of light, and of the remembrance of fathers.

44. And the people brought him into their lodges, and healed his wounds, and listened to the record, and the Spirit was poured out upon them as dew upon the grass.

45. Thus did Agonabish enter the lands of the dawn, carrying the record still, though his life ebbed as a candle at twilight; yet the word was established, and the journey was sanctified.

CHAPTER 3

1. And it came to pass that Agonabish dwelt among the people of the eastern shore, and they marveled at the record, for they had heard whispers of such words but

had not seen them written by the hand of man.

2. And he opened the skins of writing and laid them upon the ground, and the people sat in a circle, and the firelight shone upon their faces, and the Spirit fell upon them.

3. And he read unto them the stories of old: of creation, of covenants, of wandering and of promise; and their hearts were stirred, for they felt the witness of their ancestors within them.

4. And the elders spake, saying, “These words are like unto our own songs; though the tongues differ, the Spirit is one.”

5. And the women wept for joy, saying, “Our children shall remember these words, and they shall not perish in forgetfulness.”

6. But among them rose certain men, proud in their strength and cunning in speech, who said, “Why should we trust this stranger? His record may be false, his words may be deceit.”

7. And the contention grew, for some believed and some doubted, and the night was filled with argument, as if thunder and silence strove against each other.

8. Then Agonabish arose, leaning upon his staff, and his countenance was weary yet full of fire, and he spake, saying, “Truth is not mine to create nor yours to destroy; it is from the Eternal One.”

9. And he lifted up the record before them, saying, “If these words be false, let them fall to the earth and wither; but if they be true, let them live in your hearts and bear fruit.”

10. And behold, a wind came from the sea and turned the pages, and the fire did not consume them, though the sparks leapt upon the skins.

11. And the people were astonished, and fear came upon the doubters, and many bowed their heads, saying, “Surely the Spirit of the Eternal One is upon this man.”

12. Yet not all were softened, for the adversary stirred them still, whispering into their ears, and they plotted in secret to cast him into the sea.

13. And Agonabish perceived it by the Spirit, and he prayed, “O Maker of the waters and the stars, preserve thy servant, that thy record may not be lost.”

14. And in the night a vision came unto him, of a tree upon the shore whose roots reached into the deep, and whose branches touched the heavens.

15. And from the tree came voices, saying, “As thy journey is rooted in suffering, so shall its fruit reach unto eternity.”

16. And he awoke and gave thanks, and his heart was strengthened to endure what lay ahead.

17. On the morrow he gathered the people and taught them again, saying, “The Great Spirit made of one blood all nations, that we should dwell together in peace.”

18. And he warned them against pride, against cruelty, and against forgetting the poor, for he said, “The measure of a people

is not their strength in battle but their mercy to the lowly."

19. And many were pierced, and they brought forth gifts: furs, corn, and beads of shell, laying them before him, that the record might be honored.

20. But he said unto them, "Keep your gifts, for I seek not wealth; only let your hearts be humble, and your children remember."

21. And it came to pass that he tarried many days, healing the sick, comforting the mourners, and teaching from the record by the fire each night.

22. And his fame spread through the villages of the coast, and many came to hear him, some from far away, carrying burdens and questions.

23. And he answered not with cunning words, but with parables, that their souls might discern beyond the letter.

24. He said, "A man found a shell upon the shore, plain and without luster, and he cast it aside. But another man lifted it, and behold, within was a pearl. So is truth: despised by some, but treasure to the humble."

25. And the people marveled, and the children repeated the saying as they played, that it might live in their memory.

26. But the adversary was not silent, for he stirred up storms upon the sea, and wolves upon the land, to terrify the people and cause them to cast out Agonabish.

27. And one night a tempest fell, and the waters raged, and lightning cleft the sky, and the people cried out in fear.

28. Then Agonabish arose and stretched forth his staff, saying, "Peace, be still, for the Maker of the waters is greater than the storm."

29. And though the tempest did not cease, the people were calmed, for his voice was steady, and they found courage to endure until the morning.

30. And when dawn broke, the sea was calm, and they spake among themselves, saying, "Surely the Eternal One walks with this man."

31. Yet again the proud were hardened, saying, "He is but a sorcerer who deceives with signs; cast him out lest he rule over us."

32. And they sought to bind him, but the people defended him, saying, "We have seen the truth in his words; we will not let him be harmed."

33. And so strife was restrained for a time, and Agonabish continued to teach, though he knew his days were numbered.

34. For the Spirit whispered to him, "Thou art near the end, and the record must be delivered into faithful hands."

35. And he prayed, "Show me, O Eternal One, the keeper who shall receive after me, that thy word may not be lost among the nations."

36. And in vision he beheld a youth with eyes like the dawn, clothed in humility, who held the record close to his heart as if it were life itself.

37. And the Spirit said, "This is he who

shall rise after thee; though his name is not yet known, his faith shall be remembered."

38. And Agonabish rejoiced, though sorrow weighed upon him, for he knew his course was nearly run.

39. Then he gathered the people once more and spake unto them with great power, though his voice trembled: "My time is short, but the record is eternal; cleave unto it as to life."

40. And he bore testimony of the Son, the Redeemer of nations, whose blood was shed for all kindreds and tongues.

41. And the Spirit bore witness unto many, and they wept and embraced him, saying, "Father, abide with us always."

42. But he answered, "I am but a servant; the Master shall abide with you if ye remember Him in your walk."

43. And he lifted the record heavenward, saying, "Eternal Father, I have borne it as thou hast commanded; now place it in the hands of the next keeper."

44. And the heavens were opened, and a voice came, saying, "Well done, thou faithful vessel; thy journey is sealed, thy testimony is heard."

45. Thus did Agonabish prepare to pass the record unto another, that his labor should not be buried with him, but live among the nations as a witness forever.

CHAPTER 4

1. And it came to pass that Agonabish, being full of years and heavy with weakness, knew within himself that the time of his departure was at hand.

2. Yet his spirit burned with urgency, for the record still lay upon his breast, and the nations had not yet received the fullness of its witness.

3. And he prayed by the seashore, saying, "O Eternal Father, let not my words die with me, but raise up one after me to carry this burden of truth."

4. And behold, while he yet prayed, a youth came unto him, slender of frame, yet strong in gaze, for his eyes were like the morning star.

5. And the youth said, "Father, I heard the sound of thy voice carried by the waves, and my heart was drawn as by cords of fire. Teach me thy ways."

6. Then Agonabish marveled, for the Spirit had shown him this very one in vision, and he knew that the Eternal One had answered his petition.

7. And he beckoned the youth, and sat with him upon the sand, and opened the record, and the firelight of heaven fell upon the skins of writing.

8. And he spake, saying, "Behold, this record is more precious than gold or life, for it bindeth the memory of generations and testifieth of the Son who redeemeth all."

9. And the youth trembled, saying, "I am not worthy, for I am but a child; my hands are weak, my knowledge little."

10. But Agonabish said, "It is not by strength that the Eternal chooses, but by

the heart; and thy heart is chosen, therefore fear not."

11. And he laid his hand upon the youth's head, and blessed him, saying, "Thou shalt be a keeper of the record after me, and thy name shall be remembered among the nations."

12. And when the people heard these things, some rejoiced, saying, "The word shall not perish." Yet others murmured, "Shall a child be keeper of so great a treasure?"

13. And contention rose among them, and the adversary rejoiced, for he delights in division.

14. Then Agonabish arose with great effort, leaning upon his staff, and lifted his voice, saying, "Contention is not of the Eternal One. If ye receive not the youth, the record shall depart from you."

15. And the people were struck with fear, and many repented of their hardness, and bowed before the word of the elder.

16. But there were yet some who plotted, saying within themselves, "If we slay the youth, the record shall be ours to command."

17. And Agonabish perceived it by the Spirit, and he sorrowed greatly, for he knew that envy is as a viper in the breast.

18. And that night as he slept, demons came upon him in vision, clothed in fire and smoke, and they cried, "Thy record shall be consumed, thy words forgotten."

19. But he answered in his dream, "Ye have no power but what is given for a season; the Eternal Word is fire that no darkness can quench."

20. And he awoke, and the youth sat watching, guarding him with a stone knife in hand, for he had seen the elder toss in torment.

21. And Agonabish smiled, saying, "Thou hast courage, my son, and courage is a shield unto the weak."

22. Then he began to teach the youth daily, showing him how to read the signs upon the skins, and how to call upon the Spirit for understanding.

23. And the youth grew in wisdom, though his hands still shook, for the burden of the record was heavy.

24. And Agonabish said, "It is not thy strength that beareth the record, but the Eternal One who lifteth thee up."

25. And the days passed, and the elder's breath grew shorter, and his body failed, but his spirit waxed stronger, as a flame that burns fiercest at twilight.

26. And he gathered the people once more, and bore testimony of the Son of Righteousness, saying, "He is light unto all nations, and his mercy stretcheth beyond the sea."

27. And he warned them, saying, "Beware lest ye forget, for forgetting is death; but remembering is life eternal."

28. And the people cried aloud, "We will remember! We will remember!"

29. Yet in secret the proud still hardened their hearts, seeking a way to take the record by force.

30. And on the morrow a band of them rose up in the night, with clubs and stones, to slay the youth and seize the skins.

31. But the Spirit whispered unto the youth, and he fled into the forest with the record upon his back, while Agonabish stood in the camp.

32. And they seized the elder, and smote him with blows, crying, "Where is the record? Deliver it, or thou shalt die."

33. But he laughed with the strength of heaven, saying, "Ye fools, think ye the Eternal Word can be bound by your hands?"

34. And they cast him down, and beat him sore, yet he uttered not curses but prayers, saying, "Forgive them, O Father, for they know not the weight of their folly."

35. And the youth, hidden among the trees, wept as he heard the cries of his master, but the Spirit constrained him, saying, "Preserve the record; his sacrifice shall be thy witness."

36. And Agonabish, bruised and near death, lifted his eyes to the stars, and spake, "Into Thy hands, O Eternal One, I commend this vessel; let not my journey be in vain."

37. And a light brighter than fire descended, and the demons fled, and his face shone, though his body was broken.

38. And he beheld angels upon the shore, clothed in white, bearing bowls of healing and voices of song.

39. And they ministered unto him, yet they said, "Thy time is finished; thou shalt soon enter into rest."

40. And he answered, "It is enough; I have delivered the record, I have kept the faith, I have fought the good fight."

41. And his voice carried over the waves, so that even the violent men trembled, hearing words not of earth but of heaven.

42. And the youth returned at dawn, finding his master faint, yet with eyes full of peace, and Agonabish placed his hand upon the record.

43. And he whispered, "Take it, my son, and walk in remembrance; though I fall, thou shalt rise."

44. And the youth wept, saying, "I will carry it unto the nations, though the earth consume me."

45. Thus Agonabish finished his course, sealing his testimony with his blood, and the record passed unto the next keeper, that it might live forever among the people.

CHAPTER 5

1. And it came to pass that the youth, having received the record from the hands of Agonabish, trembled greatly, for the burden was heavy and his master was no more.

2. Yet he remembered the words of blessing, and the fire of the Spirit stirred within him, saying, "Testify of Yahawzhowaa, for the word is not sealed but living."

3. And he lifted his eyes to heaven and

cried, “O Eternal Father, guide me, that I may walk in the footsteps of thy servant, and declare the Son who redeemeth all flesh.”

4. Then he set his face eastward, toward the villages of the dawn, bearing the record upon his back and the name of Yahawzhowaa upon his lips.

5. And he came first unto fishermen upon the shore, mending their nets; and he spake, saying, “Hear me, for Yahawzhowaa is the Living Water, and they that drink of Him shall never thirst.”

6. And they marveled, for his words were with power; and one among them believed and was baptized in the sea that very hour, lifting his hands and praising the Eternal One.

7. But others mocked, saying, “This youth is mad, speaking of a stranger-god from far lands.” And they cast stones at him, though he escaped unharmed.

8. And the Spirit comforted him, saying, “Rejoice not when many believe, nor despair when few receive; for thou art a witness, not a master of hearts.”

9. And he traveled inland, coming unto a council of elders seated beneath tall pines, who judged disputes among their people.

10. And they said, “Who art thou, and what message dost thou bear?”

11. And he opened the record, and read of the covenant, and testified of Yahawzhowaa, saying, “He is the Son of the Most High, slain for the sins of the world, and risen with healing in His wings.”

12. And the elders were astonished, for the Spirit fell upon them, and some wept openly, saying, “Surely this is truth, for our dreams have spoken of a Redeemer.”

13. Yet a few hardened their hearts, saying, “It is folly to believe that the Creator would take flesh and die; this teaching is strange to our ears.”

14. And there arose a great division, some pleading that the youth should dwell among them, others seeking to drive him away.

15. Then the youth lifted his staff and said, “The word is not mine to compel, but thine to choose. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.”

16. And he departed, sorrowing, yet rejoicing that seeds were planted in both faith and doubt, for the Eternal One alone giveth increase.

17. And he came upon a woman whose child was near unto death, burning with fever, and she cried unto him, “If thy words be true, pray unto thy Yahawzhowaa that my son may live.”

18. And the youth knelt, laying his hand upon the child, and prayed in the name of Yahawzhowaa; and behold, the fever departed, and the boy rose and ate bread.

19. And the woman fell at his feet, saying, “Blessed be Yahawzhowaa, who bringeth life unto the dying.” And the fame of the youth spread abroad.

20. But the adversary was wroth, and stirred up a band of warriors who hated

the word, and they pursued the youth through the forest to slay him.

21. And as he fled, a vision opened before him of Yahawzhowaa walking upon the path, saying, "Fear not, for as I was hated, so shalt thou be hated; but my Spirit shall be with thee always."

22. And the youth was strengthened, and he turned to face his pursuers, crying, "I testify of Yahawzhowaa, who is the light and life of all men."

23. And the warriors were halted, for his face shone with brightness, and some fell to the ground in fear, saying, "Surely the Great Spirit walks with him."

24. Yet others cursed and fled, unwilling to hear, and darkness took them.

25. And the youth pressed onward until he came to a great gathering of many villages, who had assembled for a feast by the river.

26. And they welcomed him, asking, "What message bringest thou?"

27. And he stood upon a rock, and lifted his voice, saying, "Hear, O nations: Yahawzhowaa is the Word made flesh, the Lamb who taketh away sin, the Shepherd who seeketh the lost."

28. And he declared unto them the story of His birth, His teachings, His death upon the tree, and His rising again the third day.

29. And the people listened in awe, for never had they heard such a testimony, that God should dwell among men and conquer death.

30. And many believed, and were baptized in the river, singing songs of joy, lifting their voices unto the Eternal One.

31. But among them arose certain priests of old ways, jealous of their power, saying, "If the people follow him, our honor is gone; let us silence him."

32. And they stirred up the multitude, crying, "This youth deceiveth with strange tales."

33. Yet the believers stood firm, and a great contention arose, and the youth cried aloud, "Peace, for Yahawzhowaa bringeth not the sword of men but the sword of Spirit."

34. And he departed into the hills, lest blood be shed for his sake, and he prayed for the people, saying, "Father, forgive their blindness, and open their eyes."

35. And in the hills he was met by a hermit, who had fasted many days, seeking visions.

36. And the hermit said, "I saw in dream a Lamb clothed with light, slain yet alive, and a book sealed with seven seals. Tell me, what meaneth this?"

37. And the youth expounded the record, saying, "The Lamb is Yahawzhowaa, who alone is worthy to open the seals, for He hath prevailed over death and darkness."

38. And the hermit rejoiced, falling to the ground, saying, "Now mine eyes see what my spirit longed for."

39. And they two prayed together, and the hills rang with their songs, as though angels joined them.

40. And the youth continued, teaching

in villages, healing the sick, and casting out demons in the name of Yahawzhowaa.

41. And the adversary raged, sending lying spirits to confuse the people, but the word prevailed wherever the Spirit rested.

42. And the youth marveled, saying, "It is not I but Yahawzhowaa who worketh these wonders, for I am nothing, but He is all."

43. And the record grew heavier upon his back, yet lighter in his soul, for he knew it was being fulfilled.

44. And the people began to call him Messenger of the Dawn, for he brought light where there was none.

45. Thus did the testimony of Yahawzhowaa spread through the lands of the east, and the record lived, and the youth walked in fire, neither forsaken nor overcome.

CHAPTER 6

1. And it came to pass, after many days of solitude wherein the youth bore the record upon his shoulders like a living flame, that he came to a wide valley where smoke rose from many lodges and the voices of a great people were lifted in feasting and song;

2. and though his flesh was weary and his garments torn by bramble, yet his spirit burned, for he discerned that the Spirit of the Eternal had not led him here by wandering, but by divine appointment, that the testimony of Yahawzhowaa might enter this people as a seed falls upon fertile ground.

3. And when he drew near, the children ran before him, laughing at the raggedness of his raiment and the strangeness of his face, yet their laughter carried him into the heart of the camp, where the elders sat in a circle, their hair bound with feathers of authority, their faces stern with the gravity of guardianship;

4. And they spake, saying, "Stranger, what burden dost thou bear, and what word dost thou carry, that thou shouldest enter our dwelling without call?"

5. Then the youth lifted the record high, though his arms shook, and said with a loud voice, "I am not of myself, neither do I come by craft nor by the will of man, but I am sent to testify of Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal Father, who was slain yet liveth,

6. Who bore upon Himself the sins of all flesh, and whose rising conquereth the grave. I am but a vessel of clay, yet within me is a fire that shall not be quenched."

7. And the elders marveled at his boldness, and said, "If such things be true, let them be tried before the council of nations, for many deceivers have walked among us with smooth words." And so they appointed a day when the whole tribe should assemble, that his words might be weighed as grain upon the scales of truth.

8. And the youth withdrew that night and fell upon his face in prayer, his

tears wetting the earth, crying, “O Eternal Father, I am weak and of small account; if I speak by my own breath, I shall fail, but if Thy Spirit breathe through me, the people shall hear of Yahawzhowaa and live.”

9. And the heavens opened, and he beheld in vision the Lamb clothed in light, who spake, “Fear not, for as I stood before kings and was reviled, so shalt thou stand before nations; yet I am with thee even unto the end.”

10. On the day appointed, the people gathered, filling the circle with hundreds of souls, their eyes sharp with curiosity, their hearts divided between hunger and suspicion.

11. And the elders asked him, “Why did thy Yahawzhowaa suffer shame and death, if He was beloved of the Creator? Should not the Mighty One have shielded His chosen from disgrace?”

12. And the youth opened the record, his hands trembling, and said, “Hear, O nations: Yahawzhowaa suffered not because He was weak, but because His love was greater than the pride of men.

13. He chose the cross as a warrior chooses the battlefield, and though His flesh was pierced and His body broken, yet in His rising He broke the bonds of death itself.

14. He drank the bitter cup that all may drink the cup of life. This is His glory, not His shame.”

15. And the people were pricked in their hearts, yet some mocked, saying, “This is foolishness, for no man gives his life willingly unless he be overcome.”

16. But the youth, filled with fire, declared, “What greater strength is there than to lay down one’s life for the world, and in laying it down, to rise again clothed in immortal light? Behold, the bow grows weak, the spear grows dull, the warrior falls to dust; but the love of Yahawzhowaa endures forever.”

17. Then a man lame from birth, whose legs were withered like dry reeds, was carried into the circle, and he cried out with a loud voice, “If thy Yahawzhowaa be true, speak His name upon me, that I may walk!” And the people hushed, for never had they seen such a bold demand.

18. And the youth trembled, saying within himself, “I am nothing, O Father, yet Thy name is everything.” And he knelt, laying his hand upon the man’s head, crying, “In the name of Yahawzhowaa the Anointed, rise and walk!”

19. And immediately strength came into the man’s legs, and he leapt like a stag, running about the circle, shouting praises to the Eternal.

20. And a great cry went up among the people, some falling upon their faces in awe, others lifting their voices in songs, saying, “Surely the Spirit of the Eternal walks with this youth.”

21. Yet the priests of the old ways gnashed their teeth, for their honor waned as the people glorified Yahawzhowaa.

12. That night the youth was received

into many lodges, and the sick were brought to him, and he prayed in the name of Yahawzhowaa; and many were healed, the blind saw, the deaf heard, and the heavy-hearted found peace. And he declared always, "It is not I that heal, but Yahawzhowaa who liveth in me." And the people marveled, for never had they seen humility joined to such power.

13. But the adversary stirred in secret, sowing lies in the hearts of certain proud men, who dreamed falsely that the youth sought dominion over their council. And they conspired, saying, "If we slay him, his word shall perish, and our power shall remain."

14. And in the night a vision came upon the youth, of Yahawzhowaa clothed in brightness, who said, "Fear not the snares of men, for their cords cannot bind thee; though they strike thee, yet shalt thou rise, and thy witness shall go forth as fire. I am with thee, even as I was with Agonabish before thee."

15. And his heart was strengthened, and he arose with boldness on the morrow, teaching again before the people. And he spake a parable, saying, "A seed was cast into the earth; some trampled it, some mocked its smallness, but others watered it with tears. And lo, in time it became a tree whose branches gave shade and fruit unto all. So is the word of Yahawzhowaa: despised by the proud, but life to the humble."

16. And the people pondered, and some wept, and children repeated the saying as they played, that it might be remembered. Yet the conspirators hardened their hearts and sharpened their knives.

17. On the third day, as he journeyed toward the river, a band of warriors seized him, binding his hands with cords, and they brought him before the council, crying, "This youth deceiveth the people with sorcery; let him be judged."

18. And the elders sat heavy with indecision, for they had seen the miracles and could not deny them; yet they feared the power of the priests, and the council wavered like a reed in the wind.

19. But the youth, filled with the Spirit, lifted his voice even in bonds, saying, "Why seek ye to silence me? I testify not of myself but of Yahawzhowaa, who is the Light of the world. If I lie, let the Eternal strike me down; but if I speak truth, beware lest ye fight against the Spirit of Heaven."

20. And even as he spake, the cords fell from his wrists as if burned by fire, and the warriors drew back in fear, for they beheld no hand that loosed him. And the people cried, "The Eternal One hath judged! Let this youth go free!"

21. Yet the priests gnashed their teeth the more, and fled into the night to stir up other tribes against him, that his journey might be cut short.

22. And the youth departed by the river, weeping, saying, "O Father, why do men resist Thy mercy? Why do they choose the

darkness when the light shineth upon them?" And the Spirit answered, "Because the heart is proud, and pride hateth truth; yet be not weary, for even in rejection, the seed is planted."

23. And he wandered many days, sleeping in caves, feeding on berries and fish, yet teaching wherever he went, testifying of Yahawzhowaa, saying, "He is the Bread of Life; eat and hunger no more. He is the Living Water; drink and thirst no more."

24. And in one village a famine had struck, and the people wailed for lack of food. And the youth prayed, breaking the last of his dried bread, and giving thanks in the name of Yahawzhowaa; and lo, the bread was multiplied, so that every family ate and was filled, and baskets of fragments remained.

25. And the people bowed before him, calling him a great prophet. But he cried, "Not unto me, but unto Yahawzhowaa give glory, for I am dust, but He is life everlasting."

26. And in another place he found men possessed with dark spirits, who cut themselves with stones and howled like wolves; and he commanded in the name of Yahawzhowaa, "Depart, ye unclean ones, and trouble them no more." And the spirits fled, shrieking into the wilderness, and the men fell quiet, clothed in peace.

27. And the fame of Yahawzhowaa spread far, and messengers ran between villages, crying, "A youth walketh among us with the power of the Great Spirit, and he speaketh of Yahawzhowaa who conquereth death."

28. But the adversary also sent whispers, saying, "He is a deceiver, come to steal your ways." And so division spread wherever he went: some embracing, some rejecting, and some plotting violence.

29. Yet he continued steadfast, for he remembered the words of Agonabish: "Truth is not thine to create nor theirs to destroy; it is from the Eternal One."

30. And one night, weary unto death, he fell asleep by a great oak, and in vision he beheld Yahawzhowaa again, standing upon the waters of a mighty river, clothed in light.

31. And Yahawzhowaa spake, "My son, thou art not forsaken. I suffered rejection, I endured the lash, I bore the cross, and I rose again. So shalt thou endure, but thou shalt not be overcome. Behold, my Spirit is with thee always."

32. And the youth awoke with tears upon his face, and his heart was as fire, and he sang aloud in the tongue of his fathers, praising Yahawzhowaa among the trees, until the dawn broke and the birds answered his song.

33. And he went forth again, preaching, "Yahawzhowaa is the path of mercy; Yahawzhowaa is the way of peace; Yahawzhowaa is the conqueror of death. Come unto Him, all ye weary, and ye shall find rest."

34. And many were baptized in rivers,

confessing their sins, lifting their voices in thanksgiving; and the youth wrote these things upon the record, that the generations to come might not forget.

35. And so the word of Yahawzhowaa began to spread among the Wabanaki and among the people of the east, crossing rivers and forests, climbing mountains, entering into the memory of nations.

36. Yet always the adversary followed, stirring up hatred, plotting snares, and whispering lies. And the youth knew that his journey would be written not only in words but in blood, as it had been for Agonabish before him.

37. And he prayed continually, saying, "O Father, let not fear master me, but let Thy love be my shield, Thy truth my staff, and Thy Spirit my fire."

38. And the Eternal whispered in his soul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness; go forth, for thou art never alone."

39. And he arose, renewed, and set his face toward the greater rivers and the wide seas, that the testimony of Yahawzhowaa might be carried still further, until all nations should hear.

40. And behold, he entered a great council of many tribes, where warriors gathered and pipes of peace were shared, and he was given leave to speak.

41. And he testified with mighty power, saying, "I come not in my own name, but in the name of Yahawzhowaa, Son of the Eternal One, who is the Great Peacemaker, whose kingdom is not of this earth but of heaven, whose mercy is stronger than wrath, whose blood is life for every nation."

42. And the council trembled, for his words were as arrows of fire; some believed and rejoiced, others feared and withdrew, and others hated and whispered against him.

43. Yet the testimony was planted, and none could deny that the Spirit had spoken, whether unto belief or unto judgment.

44. And the youth departed once more into the wilderness, bearing the record still, his face set as flint, his heart both heavy and joyful, for he knew his life was poured out, yet his mission not finished.

45. Thus was the testimony of Yahawzhowaa carried forth with power among the peoples of the east, with miracles and with suffering, with visions and with rejection; and the record lived, and the youth walked in fire, neither forsaken nor overcome, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 7

1. And it came to pass that the youth, bearing the record as one bears a living coal, set his face farther toward the rising mists, for the Spirit whispered of shores beyond the great coves and of peoples who kept the dawn like a covenant; and though his limbs were thin with fasting, yet his resolve was thick as oaken root, anchored

in the name of Yahawzhowaa.

2. Many days he walked the strand where driftwood lay like bones of ancient trees and the gulls cried as watchmen, and in the night he read by starlight, tracing the letters that Agonabish had drawn, praying that the words be written not only on skins but upon his sinews, his breath, and the secret places of his heart.

3. When he came to a headland of red earth and wind-torn spruce, scouts beheld him from a high ridge and sent word, and soon a council-fire was kindled in a hollow that tasted of salt and pine; there gathered chiefs and mothers of councils, singers and law-keepers, desiring to know whether the stranger carried poison or medicine in his speech.

4. They set him in the center and asked, “Whence is thy authority, and whom dost thou serve?” And he answered without adornment, “I serve Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal Father, who took upon Him our griefs and broke the bars of death; I am only a reed the wind has chosen, nothing more, yet His breath makes music in the hollow.”

5. Then a wise woman whose hair was the color of sea-foam rose and said, “My dreams have shown me a man clothed in wounds yet shining; his hands were rivers and his voice a deer’s path through snow. Speak plainly of Him, that our children may drink.” And he told them of the birth, the teachings, the tree, the tomb, and the dawn that would not be shut.

6. But a priest of thunder stood up with painted face and rattles of shell, crying, “Power proves truth — show us mastery of the wind or bow the lightning to your staff, else this is sweet smoke without meat.” And the youth bowed his head and replied, “Signs serve mercy, not pride; they follow love as shadows follow feet, but they are not the feet.”

7. The priest laughed like flint striking, and the circle murmured; so the youth lifted his gaze and bore witness, saying, “Yahawzhowaa chose weakness to unmask our hunger for dominion; He bled to break our thirst for blood. If I must prove Him, let it be by healing and by bread, for such was His scepter among the poor.”

8. In that hour a runner burst through the ring with sand caked on his legs, crying that the river had sunk into its stones and the fish bellies lifted white; famine had begun to write its thin letters across the faces of infants. Then many turned to the youth, not as to a juggler of storms, but as to a beggar who knows where bread is kept.

9. He went to the riverbed, dry as a forgotten bowl, and knelt in dust that remembered water; he broke his small loaf and gave thanks in the name of Yahawzhowaa, who fed multitudes without coin, and he blessed the kettles and the hands that would hold them, praying not for spectacle but for sustenance.

10. A wind moved like a cloak being shaken, and a low cloud drifted inland from

the sea; that night the camp woke to a music that was not drums — the soft ticking of a million drops on bark and hide. By morning the river ran thin as a new vein, enough to wet nets and spirits, and the people said, “Mercy wears no paint, yet we know its face.”

11. Still the priest of thunder scowled, for rain had embarrassed his rattles; he demanded a duel of words, and the council granted a day. The youth fasted and rehearsed no arguments, choosing instead to kiss the name of Yahawzhowaa as one kisses a sleeping child, trusting love to wake what syllables could not.

12. When the day came, the priest spread out charms and narratives like nets and spoke of bargains cut with sky and fire, of vows that bind the wind; but the youth answered with parables — of a lamp hidden under ash that yet warms a house, of a mother who feeds last and is strongest, of a lion that becomes a lamb to lead lambs out of thorns.

13. They pressed him: “Why should the Eternal become flesh and bruise?” He said, “Because love refuses to send a messenger where it can go itself; because the wound is the only door pride will not enter; because death, like winter, yields only to a sun that descends.” And the circle was hushed as when snow begins.

14. Then they brought before him a child limp as willow bark in rain, eyes unfixed, a fever making a furnace of a small body; and the mother, whose voice had already wept itself hoarse, whispered, “If Yahawzhowaa hears strangers, let Him hear a mother.” The youth trembled and laid his forehead to the child’s brow.

15. “Yahawzhowaa,” he breathed, “Thou who didst take Jairus’ daughter by the hand and speak to a widow’s son, touch this little one, not to prove Thyself, but because love cannot pass a burning house.” He spoke this and was silent; within the silence a bird sang. The child’s breath lengthened and cooled, and color returned like a dawn that had been late but sure.

16. The mother’s cry was a river freed from a broken dam; men who had not cried since boyhood pressed fists to their eyes; even the priest’s rattle quieted, as if shells remembered the sea. The youth stood apart and wept for what he had not done, knowing mercy had walked past him and he had merely held the door.

17. That night many asked for baptism, and he led them to the river that had taught humility; he spoke of death as a seedbed and of rising as a green spear through loam, of Yahawzhowaa as the root that finds water beneath rock. One by one they entered and came up gleaming, a chorus of wet declarations stitching a new memory to the bank.

18. Yet the adversary is a weaver who copies patterns; in the second watch a figure came to the youth’s fire clothed in a brightness that did not warm, saying honeyed things: “I too serve the One, but I call Him by a more excellent name; trade

your Yahawzhowaa for the Light-Bearer and you shall command nations and read their bones like letters."

19. The youth felt the old hunger salt his tongue — honor, swiftness of victory, a path without stones; but he remembered the torn hands that had blessed bread, and he answered, "I desire no throne that does not kneel; your light is winter on iron. My King bled." Then the brightness bent like glass, cracked, and fled into trees that shivered without wind.

20. With dawn he told the council of the counterfeit, warning them to guard the Name as one guards the first fire of winter; he wrote in the record a counsel for children yet unborn: A voice may glow and still be cold; test it by mercy, by truth that costs, by whether it lifts the small.

21. Word came of islands eastward where cliffs were red and the surf told stories in a language of foam, and the elders said, "If your message be for nations, let the canoes speak it across the throat of sea." They fitted him a birch-bark, ribs of cedar and seams of spruce gum, and four men of the council lent their backs to the paddles.

22. The crossing met them with a wind that had forgotten gentleness; waves shouldered the canoe as wrestlers do, and a grayness closed like an unkind eyelid. The youth, fearful even as he trusted, prayed not for still water but for a steadied heart, and Yahawzhowaa came to him — not on the wave, but inside the trembling, saying, "Do not despise the storm that teaches your bones to sing."

23. They did not glide; they endured, stroke after stroke like small obediences that together become a journey; and at last the fog yielded and red cliffs lifted like sleeping bulls from the sea. On the strand stood people robed in spray and sunlight, their hair braided with shells, watching as one watches the first fire at new year.

24. They received the travelers with caution that was not unkind, offering broth and questions; the youth, careful to lay honor at their feet before he asked a hearing, told them of the road and the river, of the child who had risen from fever, and of the Bright One who steals names. Then he spoke, not as a conqueror, but as a guest asking leave to sing.

25. They gathered in a longhouse ribbed like a whale, smoke curling like prayer; elders sat with drums asleep in their hands, women with babies who learned quiet from their mothers. He opened the record and read, and when the words were too many for their ears he sowed parables among them like corn in hills.

26. A man tormented by a spirit came forward, eyes like storm glass, fingers scraped bloody from battling what he could not touch; the youth saw the old chains and remembered his master's counsel: Command softly, for you are not the hammer but the hand that lifts it. In the name of Yahawzhowaa he told the darkness to leave its borrowed house.

27. The man fell as a net falls, then rose startlingly ordinary, asking for water, embarrassed to find his own hands unbloodied; women laughed through tears, and the house breathed out a long-held breath. The youth taught them to fill the emptied places with psalms, lest the tenant return with seven who demand rent.

28. Among the islanders was a keeper of treaties, grave as tide, who asked, “If we receive your teaching, does it unweave our songs?” And he replied, “Yahawzhowaa is not a thief of melodies; He is the pitch that tunes them, the silence that gives drumbeats meaning. Keep what is true; where it breaks the orphan or binds the widow, let it be mended in His mercy.”

29. A winter of fog gathered early, and food lines thinned; the youth shared his store the way a candle shares flame, becoming smaller to multiply light. He taught them the table of remembrance: a crust passed hand to hand, a bowl of berries, thanksgiving lifted for the body and blood of the One who makes hunger holy until it is ended.

30. The priest of thunder had not forgotten; messengers found new ears and old grudges, and a league of men swore to unmake the youth’s work, to spill the record into the sea as if it were only ink. But mothers have councils of their own, and they ringed the longhouse with watchfulness sharper than spears, for hope had made them stubborn.

31. The youth would not hide the record in caves of fear; instead he taught the young to shape letters like small boats that carry across time, showing them how to copy the skins with care until the memory could not drown. He sang while they wrote, and their hands learned to keep time with truth.

32. He chose, by prayer not preference, three to be keepers — one with a quiet that hears ants walking, one whose laughter made the timid bold, and one who never lied even in dreams. Over them he spoke the name of Yahawzhowaa as oil, not to crown them above their kin but to yoke them beneath the burden without breaking.

33. He warned them of a tale that would travel from far places — that another name, bright and cold as sky-ice, would come pretending to be their Friend; that some would trade the lamb for the glittering antler. “Guard the Name,” he said, “for words are doors, and not every light is a hearth.”

34. Then he was wounded by a spear meant for his book, the iron kissing his side as if to mock his Master; he lay in the smoky dark and recited the Beatitudes until the pain bowed to their cadence, and in a dream Yahawzhowaa pressed a palm against the wound and whispered, “I know this geography; you are traveling where I have.”

35. He rose slower but surer, and asked to meet the men who had thrown; they came sullen as dogs too-often kicked,

expecting curses, receiving bread; he washed the hand of the one whose aim had been truest and found that water running toward an enemy is a river that carves stone.

36. The council called one last assembly to bind what had been spoken; they set a treaty not of tribute but of remembrance — how the name of Yahawzhowaa should be carried in songs without breaking the old drums, how the poor should be first at every fire, how the record should not be used to leash men but to loose them.

37. On a ridge where cedar looks outward the youth hid a copy in a stone womb sealed with pine pitch, not from fear but from foresight, that when winter rulers came with strange decrees the memory would sleep unmolested and wake when certain birds returned.

38. He left another copy in hands not scholarly but faithful — an old woman whose fingers shook only when idle; he told her, “If wolves steal the skins, sew the words into blankets, into baby names, into jokes; make truth a spice no oppressor can forbid.”

39. When the first snow arrived like a counsel of white-haired uncles, the youth felt the axle of his journey turn again; he had been root and river here, but the wind’s finger pointed north along the coast where cliffs wore crowns of cloud, and the Spirit said, “There are houses yet unvisited where My name waits on the sill.”

40. He went to the shore with those who had become kin by covenant, and they blessed him with smoke and cedar, with salmon and songs; one small boy ran ahead and slipped a shell into his palm, saying, “For the road when it is loud,” and the youth placed it by his heart where noise becomes prayer.

41. As the canoe lifted, the priest of thunder stood apart, wrestling the old spirits that had fed his pride; at length he bowed his head and made a sign with his hand that warriors make to honor enemies and teachers, and though no word was spoken, the sea carried the gesture farther than speech could travel.

42. The crossing was gentle as if even the waves wished not to interrupt a benediction; seals watched like monks, and a great bird shadowed them as if recalling an older ark. The youth remembered the spear’s kiss and the palm upon it, the rain that had learned to come when asked politely, and the child who now played again with sticks as kings do with scepters.

43. He spoke softly to Yahawzhowaa as one speaks to a companion who shares the paddle: “Keep me unimportant, for importance is a net; keep me burning, but not with anger; make my feet good listeners, that I may hear the land before I step.” The water answered with small agreements against the hull.

44. Villages ahead kindled their winter lamps, and smoke braided itself into evening; messengers ran the beaches like sentences eager to be read, and the youth

felt the record heavier on his back and lighter in his bones, for each burden that finds a back made for it becomes a belonging.

45. Thus was the testimony of Yahawzhowaa ferried to the islands of the rising mist, not by thunder wrung from heaven but by mercy poured upon hunger, by bread that multiplies, by wounds that teach maps, by a Name guarded as fire in winter; and the record lived, stitched now into rivers and reefs, into songs and stone, as the youth went on, neither forsaken nor overcome.

CHAPTER 8

1. And it came to pass that the youth, bearing the record upon his back and the name of Yahawzhowaa upon his lips, walked the long northern strand where the sea foamed against rocks like white horses, and the gulls circled above with cries as though proclaiming judgment; and though his body was weary, his spirit was aflame, for the Spirit whispered, “There are still peoples who dwell in the shadow of mountains, whose songs wait to be bound to My name.”

2. And when he entered a village of the coast, the people beheld him from afar, for his garments were torn, and the record bound in hide gave off no brilliance to the eye, yet they discerned in him a burden heavier than flesh, and they murmured, “This one carries more than food or furs — perhaps a spirit, perhaps a curse.” And they brought him before their council, where the fire cracked, and the elders sat grave as stone.

3. The eldest of them, whose eyes were clouded with years yet whose voice carried strength, said, “Stranger, what summons thee to our shore, and why should we incline our ear, who have songs of our own and treaties with mountain and sea?” And the youth bowed low, laying the record across his knees, and answered, “I am not of myself; I am a witness of Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal, who clothed Himself in flesh, bore wounds for all peoples, and rose that death might be conquered. I bear His testimony.”

4. Then a widow with sunken cheeks cried aloud, “If thy Yahawzhowaa be true, let Him stoop even to me, for my bed is cold and my hands are empty, and no spirit of sea or tree has answered my cries.” And the youth, moved with compassion, spoke: “Sister, He has stooped already; He wept at the grave, He bore rejection, He carried a cross. Thy pain is His pain, and because He rose, thy husband shall rise also.”

5. Her son, a child not yet grown to manhood, tugged her garment and said, “Mother, if He rose, Father will come again.” And the fire cracked in agreement, and many were pricked in their hearts, for truth sometimes speaks with the voice of a child, and men tremble to hear it.

6. But a priest of the mountains, robed in furs and painted with ash, mocked, saying,

"We will not trade our gods for a stranger's sorrow. Let him prove his claim by power, else cast him into the snow." And the people murmured, torn between compassion and suspicion, and the youth prayed silently, "O Yahawzhowaa, reveal Thyself not with spectacle but with mercy."

7. In that moment hunters brought a man wounded by the tusk of a great walrus, his chest torn, his blood frozen, his breath shallow as twilight. They laid him before the fire, saying, "If thy word is true, let it breathe life into one who already touches death."

8. And the youth trembled, for the weight of many eyes bore upon him, but he bent low, laid hands upon the wound, and cried, "Yahawzhowaa, who stilled the storm, who touched the leper, who raised the dead, stretch Thy hand now upon this son of the north." And the man's breath deepened, and warmth returned to his skin, and strength entered him as rivers swelling in spring.

9. A great cry arose from the people, some falling upon their faces, others clapping their hands like drums; and the priest of the mountains fled into the night, muttering curses, but the widow lifted her child and declared, "If He gives life here, He will give life again."

10. That night they pressed the youth to remain, feeding him roots and seal, asking questions until the fire grew low; and he taught them of Yahawzhowaa, of His birth among the humble, His mercy greater than sacrifice, His cross, His tomb, and His rising on the third day. And the Spirit bore witness, and many hearts were softened.

11. Yet the adversary was not silent; dreams of fear crept into the people — dreams of ships with iron, of rulers in strange garb, of men who claimed heaven but brought chains. And they questioned him, "Will thy word open our door to conquerors?" And the youth wept, answering, "The name of Yahawzhowaa is not empire but sacrifice; test every messenger by mercy, and see whether the least is lifted or crushed."

12. And the elders nodded, for they knew the difference between shepherd and wolf. They covenanted with the youth that they would keep the record not as treasure to be hidden, but as fire to be shared, writing it in their songs and carving it in their memory.

13. In the days that followed, many were baptized in icy streams, laughing even as the cold cut their flesh, for their hearts burned hotter than frost; and the youth rejoiced, for he saw that Yahawzhowaa's name was becoming a river no winter could freeze.

14. But word spread to hostile tribes that a stranger bewitched the people, and warriors painted for war came by night. The youth prayed, "O Father, let me fall if it be Thy will, but let not the record fall. Let Yahawzhowaa be magnified, whether by my life or by my death."

15. And behold, a storm rose from the sea with winds that howled like wolves and snow that blinded even strong eyes. The warriors stumbled in confusion and returned to their lodges, and the village was spared. The people cried, “Surely the Eternal shields His word!” But the youth whispered, “Not storm nor spear preserves the record, but Yahawzhowaa alone.”

16. In spring he gathered the elders and entrusted them with a copy of the record, saying, “Guard this not as relic but as seed; scatter it in hearts, for Yahawzhowaa is for every people, and His word walks best when carried in many hands.”

17. They blessed him with furs and songs, but he kept only a shell given by the boy who believed, placing it near his heart, and with staff in hand he set forth once more along the coast, his steps a prayer, his burden a flame.

18. He came to a village where famine had set its hand; children’s ribs showed like harp-strings, and their mothers’ eyes were hollow. And they begged him, “If thy Yahawzhowaa feeds, feed us.”

19. The youth broke the last of his bread and gave thanks, and as he tore it in pieces, the baskets filled and did not empty until every soul was satisfied. And the people sang, “This is no deceiver but a servant of the Bread of Life.”

20. Yet some hardened their hearts, saying, “This is sorcery,” and they drove him out with stones, though even as they struck him, he prayed, “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.”

21. He wandered into a forest of tall pines where shadows whispered; there he met men possessed with spirits, who cut their flesh and howled as beasts. In the name of Yahawzhowaa he commanded the spirits to depart, and they fled shrieking into the wilderness.

22. The men, clothed in peace, fell at his feet, saying, “We were bound, now we are free.” And he answered, “Not I but Yahawzhowaa loosed you. Go, and fill the emptied house with His name, lest worse return.”

23. In another place, elders of many clans gathered to test him, saying, “If Yahawzhowaa be Redeemer of all, tell us His law.” And he replied, “His law is mercy: to love the Eternal with all your being, and your neighbor as yourself. In this hangs all justice.”

24. They debated long, some resisting, others pierced; but when he told the parable of the seed that becomes a tree giving fruit to all, even the proud were silenced, for they could not deny the wisdom.

25. A hermit came forth who had fasted many days, and said, “I dreamed of a Lamb slain yet alive, who opened a sealed book. Tell me, who is this?” And the youth answered, “It is Yahawzhowaa, who alone is worthy to open the seals, for He overcame death.”

26. And the hermit rejoiced, saying, “Now mine eyes see what my spirit longed

for." Together they prayed, and the hills rang with their song, as though angels joined.

27. But spies carried word to hostile chiefs, who swore to kill the youth and cast the record into the sea. The Spirit warned him in a dream, "Fear not; even if thou fall, the word shall not fall, for My hand upholds it."

28. He awoke with courage, and went boldly into the next village, teaching of Yahawzhowaa's cross, His wounds, His triumph, and His love. And many were baptized, confessing their sins, rejoicing as though clothed in new garments.

29. In one place, a council demanded a sign, and he said, "An evil generation seeks signs; but the only sign given is this: Yahawzhowaa was slain, and He rose. Believe or reject." And some were humbled, others angered.

30. In another, a child near death was healed by his prayer, and her laughter became a testimony stronger than his words.

31. And again, he was beaten and driven out by men hardened in tradition, but he blessed them as he departed, saying, "The seed is planted; the rain will come."

32. And in vision Yahawzhowaa appeared, clothed in brightness, saying, "My son, be faithful; as I was despised and rejected, so shalt thou be, but My Spirit shall not leave thee. Continue, for many hearts await."

33. Strengthened, the youth pressed on, teaching in lodges, on riverbanks, in forests, and on shores, testifying that Yahawzhowaa is the Son of the Eternal, slain and risen, mercy and truth.

34. He taught that empire and sword are not the kingdom, but love, humility, and the breaking of bread with the poor. And those with ears rejoiced, but the proud gnashed their teeth.

35. He sang psalms with the people, teaching them hymns of Yahawzhowaa, and their voices rose like incense over the waters.

36. He showed them how to write the words, teaching children to carve letters into wood and stone, saying, "So the memory will not perish when lips fall silent."

37. In one place, he found a dying elder, who said, "Tell me only one word." And the youth answered, "Yahawzhowaa." The elder smiled, breathed his last, and the people said, "This word carries even into death."

38. He walked on, and though his body grew thin and his feet bled, the Spirit sustained him, and the record became as light as fire carried in bone.

39. At times he despaired, but the Spirit whispered, "You are not alone; every step is seen, every word remembered."

40. In another council, he bore testimony, "I do not come to steal your songs, but to tune them to the pitch of mercy. Yahawzhowaa fulfills, not destroys." And some believed, others doubted, but none

could deny the fire in his voice.

41. He endured hunger, thirst, and cold, yet the people remembered him more for his prayers than his sufferings, for they saw in him the reflection of the One he bore witness of.

42. The adversary continued to stir men, sending false teachers, deceivers clothed in light; but the people remembered his counsel: "Test every spirit by mercy, by truth that costs, by whether the least is lifted."

43. And thus the name of Yahawzhowaa spread along the coast, like dawn creeping across mountains, slow yet unstoppable.

44. The record lived not only in skins but in song, in memory, in the carved letters of children, in the tears of widows, in the laughter of the healed.

45. And the youth walked on, a vessel of clay filled with fire, a testimony of Yahawzhowaa to nations yet unseen, neither forsaken nor overcome, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 9

1. And it came to pass that the youth, bearing the record close as a heartbeat and the name of Yahawzhowaa warm upon his lips, set his steps into Mi'kma'ki, where dawn seems nearer than elsewhere and the salt wind writes hymns upon the red cliffs; and he prayed, "Let me walk as a guest, not a conqueror, as a brother, not a judge."

2. In Unama'ki — the island of many coves — fishers drew up their lines like threads of old stories, and they looked upon the stranger with eyes made wise by fog; and he bowed with both hands open, saying, "I come not to trade your songs for mine, but to tune them to the mercy of Yahawzhowaa."

3. They gathered by a fire where spruce crackled like small prophecies, and a grandmother, keeper of births and burials, asked, "If your Teacher is for all nations, will He sit at our table and learn our words?" And the youth answered, "He already has — He learned the bread of many homes when He took flesh."

4. He opened the skins and read of the Child born among the humble, of the road-dusted feet that carried healing, of the tree and the tomb and the morning that refused to be shut; and the elders said, "These words are strange and yet they taste familiar, like winter broth made with a new herb."

5. A man whose hand was curled and useless from a net's old cruelty held it out, asking no rhetoric; the youth wept to see need so unadorned, and in the name of Yahawzhowaa loosed the memory of pain from tendon and bone; and the hand remembered its first day and opened like a gull's wing over tide.

6. Yet a speaker for old vows stood and feared aloud, "We have treaties with sea and wind; if we receive your word, will our covenants break like thin ice?" The youth said, "Yahawzhowaa breaks only chains — He fulfills covenants that keep

the poor safe and the proud humble; where a vow guards life, He seals it."

7. They fed him eel and stories; he fed them parables — of a lantern hidden in ash that yet warms a house, of a king who lays his crown aside to become a midwife of hope; and they said, "We know this pattern: strength that kneels."

8. Passing by Epekwitk, where sand sings underfoot, he taught children letters shaped like canoes to carry memory across winters; and he wrote for them one word above all, Yahawzhowaa, saying, "This name is a hearth — stand near."

9. He crossed into the valley of the Wolastoq, where the Wolastoqiyik keep river-wisdom; the current itself seemed to study the record as he unrolled it upon a flat stone, and the people gathered as willow does toward water.

10. A council-mother spoke first, "We have known the river's mercy and its hunger; what manner of river is your Yahawzhowaa?" He said, "A river that runs uphill into the heart of God, carrying the lost as driftwood made precious."

11. They brought a youth bitten by winter in the lungs, his breath a thin thread; and the witness prayed softly, "Not for spectacle, Lord, but for this mother's sleep," and laid his hand upon the chest; and breath deepened as if a door that stuck were kindly opened.

12. But a keeper of thunder-songs — kinsman to the proud priest of other shores — challenged, "Command the storm if you speak for heaven." The youth answered, "The sign given is this: Yahawzhowaa was slain and He rose; the storm obeyed Him once, but love obeys Him always."

13. When strife sharpened, he told a parable: "A great canoe was carved for war — swift, beautiful, hungry for praise. A grandmother carved another for bread — plain, slow, sure. In famine, which saved the village?" And the elders smiled with their eyes before their mouths.

14. Many went down into the Wolastoq's cold to be baptized, laughing at the honest bite of the water; the youth taught them to rise from the river into mercy like men entering a warm lodge, and to dry one another with kindness.

15. Word ran like an otter trail to the Peskotomuhkati by the dawn bay; they received him with wary welcome and broth that tasted of patience, saying, "We have heard both praise and warning of you; let your first act be to listen." And he did, for listening is a gate Yahawzhowaa loves to enter by.

16. A widow spoke of boats that did not return and of nights that did; he told her how the Son had slept in a storm so His friends might learn trust, and how He woke to quiet the sea; and together they confessed that some nights teach us to sing before they teach us to see.

17. A child wandering in fever was laid upon cedar boughs; the youth prayed, "Yahawzhowaa, Thou who touched Jairus' daughter, visit this house," and the fever

stepped back like a respectful guest, leaving color where ashes had been; and the child's first word upon waking was her own name, as if lent back.

18. Yet a circle of men, bound to stale rivalries, whispered, "This stranger courts our women's hearts and unmans our sons with softness." He answered, "Yahawzhowaa does not unman — He remakes men; He gives them tears that do not shame them and courage that does not bruise the small."

19. They demanded bread when nets were thin; he broke his small loaf, blessed it, and watched the baskets refuse to empty; and he insisted the women portion first, for the Lord of the feast had taught him where seats of honor are set.

20. They sang that night a new refrain braided to an old tune, and the youth marveled how truth finds native clothing wherever it travels; he wrote in the record: Do not strip the people to dress the gospel; let Yahawzhowaa wear their woven beauty and purify what binds.

21. Crossing into the pine-crowned lands of the Penawapskewi,[15] he followed the river that keeps their name, a long teacher with many voices; hunters watched from the islands as one watches a riddle that might be a friend.

22. The council set him among carvers whose knives knew humility before cedar; they asked, "Is your way a straight cut or a curved one?" He said, "Yahawzhowaa's way is curved like mercy, yet straight like truth; it bends to meet the broken and straightens to carry them."

23. A man tormented by cutting spirits came shaking like leaves in early frost; the youth, remembering to be gentle with what had already been roughly used, commanded softly in Yahawzhowaa's name, and the darkness unstitched its claim and fled, ashamed of the light.

24. "Fill the emptied rooms," he warned, "with psalms and neighbor-love, with chores shared, with bread given before asked; otherwise the tenant returns with cousins." They laughed, understanding, and set watch over one another's solitude.

25. A proud speaker tested him in proverbs; the youth answered in wounds, showing where a spear had kissed his side and how the Healer had lain His palm upon it; "I know this geography," the Lord had whispered, and the man's sharpness dulled into reverence.

26. They begged him to stay through snow, but the path rose toward the mountain valleys of the Wôbanakiak (Abenaki), where maple keeps counsel with granite and smoke leans humbly from winter roofs; and the Spirit said, "There are lamps there waiting to be tended."

27. He climbed where trails remember hoof and moccasin, and at a saddle between great shoulders of earth he found a circle of elders counting time by sap's first rise; they asked for the law of his Teacher, and he

[15] Penobscot.

gave them two branches — love of the Eternal with all, love of neighbor as self — and said, "These sweeten all bitter kettles."

28. A hunter had fallen and hip-bone splintered; the youth bound him with prayer and fiber, and when the man walked again like a careful cedar in wind, he said, "I will carry others now, since I have been carried," and such theology out-preached the preacher.

29. Some fretted, "Will our tongue be chased from our children by your book?" He answered, "Let your tongue chase itself into the book; carve your vowels beside our consonants; let the gospel learn your grammar, for Yahawzhowaa speaks many dialects and forgets none."

30. They set a moot where jealous priests sharpened their doubts; the youth refused the net of argument, choosing parable: "A snowshoe brags to the boot, 'I go farther.' The boot smiles, 'Not without me.' So law and mercy — each true alone, perfect together in Yahawzhowaa."

31. He anointed three keepers — not for rule but for service — one with eyes for the unnoticed, one whose laughter repaired trust, one who would rather lose an argument than a friend; and over them he spoke the Name as oil that sinks deeper than applause.

32. Northward the land widened into Nitassinan, the homeland of the Innu,[16] where rivers run like veins through stone and caribou write their long, patient letters across snow; there he learned to listen to silence until it admitted him.

33. An Innu elder measured him without hurry and asked, "Does your Yahawzhowaa know hunger that lasts longer than prayer?" The youth replied, "He fasted till even angels worried; He learned the price of bread to give it as gift; He is a hunter who shares his kill with those who mocked the hunt."

34. They set before him a man who had forgotten his own name to grief; the witness placed the record in those shaking hands and said, "Read your true name in these wounds," and the man wept like thaw and remembered himself as a son.

35. Traders brought iron, gossip, and a sickness with no manners; the youth moved from lodge to lodge bearing warmth and the simple liturgy of presence, and where he could not heal, he stayed so no one would die alone; many said, "This is how Yahawzhowaa walks when He has only two feet."

36. A seer warned him, "Light comes that is not sunrise — cold, efficient, eager to number the living; do not sell your dawn for that noon." He wrote in the margin: Not every brightness is a hearth; test light by warmth given to the least.

37. Farther still he reached the sea-ice lands of the Inuit, where the horizon is a straight scripture and inuksuit keep silent counsel; he entered as one enters a church — hat in hand, heart uncovered — and

[16] Ilnu.

asked to be taught what snow already knew.

38. They asked, “Will your story make us forget ours?” He answered, “It will make you remember the oldest part — that mercy made you and seeks you; keep your songs, clean them where they cut the weak; let Yahawzhowaa’s breath keep time for your drum.”

39. A hunter lost beneath sudden white was found by a dog that would not stop singing; they brought the body to the warm house of talk, and the youth knelt, placing both palms upon the cold temple, praying, “Yahawzhowaa, who lay in stone and rose through stone, call this brother by the name you keep for him.”

40. Breath came back like a shy guest peering through a doorway; color followed, and the house burst into a blizzard of gratitude; the revived man whispered, “I heard my seal-spear tapping on ice far away,” and the elders nodded as those who have walked certain corridors.

41. He taught them to carve the holy name into memory as into bone — quietly, without boast — so that when iron creeds came hunting, the gospel would already be sleeping in lullabies, hidden like spring under snow.

42. Envy traveled even to ice; a few men, fearing the loss of old command, struck him and sought the skins; he bled upon snow that remembered many colors, and in the night Yahawzhowaa stood beside him, saying, “I have traveled this map — keep walking; I will be the warmth you lack.”

43. When he rose, he gathered those same men, washed their hands with meltwater, and gave them the first bowls at the small feast; their shame was not weaponized but welcomed home, and they became guardians of the book they had tried to steal.

44. The youth looked back over coves and rivers — Mi’kma’ki, Wolastoq, Peskotomuhkati waters, Penawapskewi islands, Wôbanakiak ridges, Nitassinan veins, the ice-roads of the Inuit — and he wrote: The gospel walks best when it borrows the people’s shoes and returns them mended.

45. Thus was the testimony of Yahawzhowaa sown from the islands of the dawn to the singing ice: not by empire’s stride but by the small obediences of listening, bread, and wounds; and the record lived — copied in songs, carved in wood, stitched in names — as the youth went on, neither forsaken nor overcome, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 10

1. And it came to pass, after the youth had walked among the peoples of the coast and the snows of the north, that the Spirit whispered, “Turn thy face toward the setting sun, for there are nations who dwell beyond the forests, whose ears have not yet heard the name of Yahawzhowaa,

and whose hearts wait as dry ground waits for rain."

2. And he departed from the lodges of the people by the Sea of Mist, where the waves strike the red cliffs, and he carried the record bound in hides, and the name of Yahawzhowaa as a flame within his heart. And though his body was weary, yet the fire of testimony gave him strength, and he rejoiced to walk even in sorrow, for he walked not alone.

3. He entered the valleys of the People of the Dawn, who fish the waters that roll from the eastern mountains, and they received him with caution, saying, "Who art thou, that comest among us with strange burdens?" And he answered, "I am a witness of Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal, who was slain for all nations and who rose again, that even death might be broken."

4. And the elders gathered to test him, saying, "We have songs of the rivers, we have covenants with the winds; why should we receive thy words?" And the youth opened the record and taught them of the Son who descended, who stooped to bear the wounds of men, who chose suffering to bring peace.

5. Then a woman whose child lay near death with fever fell at his feet, crying, "If thy Yahawzhowaa lives, let Him stoop to me also." And the youth knelt, praying softly, and touched the child in the name of Yahawzhowaa. And the fever fled, and the child rose and laughed.

6. And the people marveled, and some bowed, saying, "Truly the Eternal One has visited us." Yet others hardened their hearts, saying, "This is sorcery." And they drove him away with angry voices.

7. But the youth departed in peace, saying, "The seed is sown; whether ye receive or reject, yet shall the seed remain." And he went on toward the lands where the rivers grow broad and the forests unending.

8. He came unto the People of the Great River, whose villages were set upon its banks, and the river was wide as the sky, its voice deep as thunder. And they asked him, "Whence comest thou, and what message dost thou bear?"

9. And he said, "I bear not mine own word, but the testimony of Yahawzhowaa, who is the Living Water greater than rivers, who quenches thirst not of the tongue only, but of the soul."

10. They brought forth a blind man, saying, "Heal him, and we shall know." The youth trembled, yet in faith he prayed in Yahawzhowaa's name, and the man's eyes were opened, and he saw the fire and the faces of his people. And fear fell upon the council.

11. Some believed and rejoiced; but the priests of old ways gnashed their teeth, saying, "If the people follow him, our honor perishes." And they sought to silence him.

12. But he departed by night with those who had believed, and by the river he

baptized them in its cold water, saying, “As Yahawzhowaa descended into death and rose again, so do ye rise from this water into new life.”

13. And the believers sang with joy, and the river bore their voices as if carrying them to the Eternal.

14. From thence he journeyed into the Land of Tall Pines, where hunters followed the deer and where the smoke of villages rose above the great forests.

15. They received him in their council, and he spoke of Yahawzhowaa’s law, saying, “Love the Eternal with all thy being, and love thy neighbor as thyself. In this is the law and the prophets fulfilled.”

16. A warrior scarred from battle stood and said, “Will thy Teacher make us weak before our enemies?” The youth answered, “He maketh men strong not to oppress but to protect; strong not to boast but to serve. His peace is not the peace of cowards, but the strength of mercy.”

17. And many pondered, and some mocked, but a mother whose son was tormented in mind brought him forth. And the youth prayed in Yahawzhowaa’s name, and the torment fled, and the boy sat clothed and calm.

18. Then the people said, “This word heals both flesh and spirit; it is no common teaching.”

19. And he taught them by parable, saying, “A seed is buried in black soil. Storms beat it, frost covers it, yet in time it rises, giving fruit to all. So Yahawzhowaa was buried, yet He rose, and His rising feeds nations.”

20. And they said, “We know seeds and trees; thy word is truth.”

21. Thence he journeyed westward, into the Land of Many Lakes, where waters shine like mirrors of heaven, and the canoes of the people are as birds upon them.

22. And the elders asked, “Who is thy master?” He said, “Yahawzhowaa, the Great Peacemaker, the Son of the Eternal.” And they said, “We too have known a peacemaker in ancient days.” And they marveled if these paths met in one.

23. He told them the story of Yahawzhowaa’s suffering, His cross, and His rising, and their hearts burned.

24. Yet some feared, saying, “If we receive thy word, strangers will come with chains.” And he warned them, “Not all who speak His name are His; test them by mercy. If they lift the poor, they are His. If they oppress, they are wolves.”

25. And they wrote his counsel in their songs, that children might remember.

26. He journeyed further, into the Land of Endless Grass, where the buffalo move like dark rivers across the earth, and the sky is wide without end.

27. There the people asked, “What god dost thou serve?” And he said, “Not a god of stone, nor of empire, but Yahawzhowaa, who walked as man, hungered, wept, bled, and rose, that all men might live.”

28. They said, “We know the spirits of thunder and wind; how is thine different?”

And he said, “Theirs ask for blood. Mine gave His own. Theirs demand sacrifice. Mine became sacrifice. Theirs speak in riddles. Mine speaks in love.”

29. And they brought a woman tormented, and he prayed in Yahawzhowaa’s name, and she was made whole.

30. And many believed, though chiefs debated long, and some feared the loss of their power.

31. He turned again north, into the Lands of the Drum, where rivers run like veins through the forests and the people sing the heartbeat of creation.

32. They welcomed him, saying, “Teach us of thy record.” And he read to them of Yahawzhowaa, and their hearts melted.

33. A child lame from birth was healed at his prayer, and the lodge rang with joy.

34. And the youth taught them to inscribe the name of Yahawzhowaa upon wood and stone, not to worship the letters but to remember the mercy.

35. And he warned them of deceivers, saying, “Many will come in His name but not in His Spirit; judge them by whether they lift the lowly or crush them.”

36. And in vision that night Yahawzhowaa appeared, clothed in brightness, and said, “Fear not. Though men reject thee, My Spirit shall not depart from thee. Continue, for nations yet await.”

37. He arose strengthened, and journeyed to villages set upon rivers, and taught of the Bread of Life and the Living Water, and many believed.

38. He comforted the mourning, healed the sick, and baptized those who confessed His name.

39. He sang with the people, teaching them hymns of Yahawzhowaa, and their voices rose like smoke, filling the night with glory.

40. He inscribed the record with their names, that the generations to come might remember their faith.

41. He walked hungry, thirsty, cold, yet rejoiced, for the Spirit was his fire.

42. He warned again of false light, saying, “Not every brightness is a hearth; test it by warmth to the least among you.”

43. And the testimony of Yahawzhowaa spread among the nations of the forests, the rivers, the plains, and the mountains.

44. The record lived not only on skins, but in song, in memory, in carvings, in tears, and in laughter.

45. And the youth walked on toward nations yet unseen, a vessel of clay filled with fire, a testimony of Yahawzhowaa, neither forsaken nor overcome, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 11

1. And it came to pass that after many seasons of walking the rivers, the lakes, and the endless grass, the youth lifted up his eyes toward the mountains that stand far in the west, where the sun makes its bed

and the air is thin as breath at birth. And the Spirit whispered, “Beyond these ridges dwell other nations, keepers of stone and fire, who also must hear the name of Yahawzhowaa.”

2. He rose with trembling knees, for the way was steep and his body worn, yet he rejoiced that his road was not his own but the path laid by the Eternal. And he carried the record bound in skins, pressing it close, as one clutches a child when wolves are near.

3. He crossed valleys where deer moved in silence, and rivers that tore themselves upon stone, until he entered the villages of the People of the Red Earth, whose lodges rested at the foot of the high ridges.

4. They saw him approach and wondered, for his garments were torn by travel, yet his eyes were bright with fire. They said, “What drives thee, stranger, to climb where even hunters faint?” And he answered, “The Spirit of the Eternal, for I bear the name of Yahawzhowaa, the Son who was slain and is risen.”

5. They led him to their council place, where stones were set in a circle, and the elders asked, “If thy word is truth, why hath it not reached us before now?” And he replied, “Even the sun does not touch all peaks at once. Yet behold, it rises, and now it has reached you also.”

6. They marveled at his speech, and one elder said, “We have heard of a great prophet who brought peace to his people, who taught men to lay down their weapons. Tell us if thy Teacher is greater than he.”

7. And the youth spoke: “The prophets are torches, but Yahawzhowaa is the sun. The prophets are rivers, but Yahawzhowaa is the sea. He is greater, for He not only teaches peace, but He is Peace itself.”

8. They brought forth a man whose leg was shattered from falling stone, and he had lain in misery many months. And they said, “Heal him, and we shall know.” And the youth, filled with fear and faith, prayed in Yahawzhowaa’s name, and the man rose, his bones knit, and he walked.

9. A great cry went up, and many said, “Surely this word is true.” Yet others muttered, “This is sorcery; he seeks to bind us with his foreign name.” And strife arose among them.

10. The youth withdrew to the mountainside and wept, crying, “O Eternal Father, why must truth divide? Yet not my will, but Thine.” And the Spirit whispered, “Even I was rejected, even I was divided from men, yet the seed still lives.”

11. He pressed onward, climbing high passes where snow lay even in summer, until he came to the People of the High Rocks, who carve dwellings into the cliffs and paint the stone with colors of blood and sky.

12. They received him as a guest, giving him water that dripped from the caves, and they asked of his burden. And he opened the record and taught them of the Son,

who descended as man, who bore wounds, who triumphed over death.

13. A wise woman said, “We carve our stories into stone so they may outlast us. How shall we carve thy word?” And he answered, “Carve mercy into your children, and it shall outlast stone. But if ye desire also, carve His name into rock, that no flood erase it.”

14. And they brought ochre and painted the sign of the cross upon their walls, saying, “This shall remind us of His wounds.”

15. A youth mocked him, saying, “If thy Teacher be mighty, let Him move the mountain.” And he replied, “Better to move the heart of stone within a man than to move the stone of a mountain. For mountains perish, but hearts live forever.”

16. And many were pierced, and some believed, but others still scoffed.

17. From thence he descended into valleys of dust and heat, where water hides and men wander long to find it. And he came unto the People of the Dry Plains, who guard springs as treasure.

18. They said to him, “If thy Teacher is living water, then give us drink.” And he prayed in Yahawzhowaa’s name, and the spring broke forth from cracked earth, and they drank in wonder.

19. They bowed, crying, “Surely the Creator walks with this man.” And many desired baptism, and he led them into the spring, burying them in water, raising them into joy.

20. Yet the priests of their idols cried out, “This stranger steals our people.” And they stirred hatred, and a band of men came to slay him.

21. But that night the Spirit came to him in vision, and Yahawzhowaa stood by him in brightness, saying, “Fear not them who kill the body; they cannot touch the life within. Testify, and I will raise thee, even if thou fall.”

22. He awoke strengthened, and when the men came with stones, he spoke boldly, “Strike if ye must, but know that Yahawzhowaa lives, and His word shall not die with me.”

23. And the men dropped their stones, astonished, for they saw no fear in him, but only mercy. Some believed, some fled, and the word spread farther.

24. He wandered into the desert for forty days, fasting and praying, and the adversary came as brightness without warmth, whispering, “Bow to me, and I will give thee nations.”

25. But the youth answered, “Only Yahawzhowaa is worthy; I bow to no counterfeit light.” And the vision fled into shadow.

26. He came upon a caravan of traders crossing the desert with hides and stones. They gave him shelter, and he taught them as they walked by night, saying, “Yahawzhowaa is the true treasure, greater than stones or skins.”

27. And one merchant, pierced in heart, believed, and carried the word far with

him into distant valleys.

28. The youth entered again into lands of rivers and mountains, where new villages had never heard his name.

29. In one lodge, a woman with withered arm stretched it forth, and he prayed, and it was restored. She wept, saying, “Yahawzhowaa has touched me.”

30. In another, a man dying of despair heard the word and found peace, smiling as he passed, saying, “I go to meet Him.”

31. Everywhere he walked, he testified of the cross and the rising, saying, “There is no greater love than this — that He laid down His life and rose again.”

32. And he taught them, “The Eternal is not far from any; He is nearer than breath. Yahawzhowaa is His nearness in flesh.”

33. He warned them of deceivers, saying, “Many will come with smooth words, but judge them: do they lift the poor? Do they heal? Do they show mercy? If not, they are wolves.”

34. He comforted widows, blessed children, laid hands upon hunters and gatherers, and the Spirit confirmed his words with power.

35. Some villages rejoiced, singing hymns that rose into the night like smoke; others rejected him, driving him away with stones.

36. Yet he gave thanks always, saying, “The word has gone forth. Whether they receive or not, the seed is sown.”

37. And the Spirit whispered, “Even as I was despised, so art thou; even as I was lifted, so art thou lifted.”

38. And he rejoiced in his sufferings, for he bore them not alone but with Yahawzhowaa.

39. He walked on, his feet bloodied, his hands weary, yet his eyes bright with fire, for the vision of Yahawzhowaa burned within him.

40. He inscribed new lines in the record, naming the people, the valleys, the rivers, the mountains, lest they be forgotten by those to come.

41. He prayed over each name, saying, “Remember these nations, O Eternal, and call them by Thy mercy in the last day.”

42. He sang psalms at dawn, he whispered prayers at night, he wept often, but always with hope.

43. And he lifted the record before the Eternal, saying, “Not mine, but Thine. Let this word live beyond me.”

44. The nations received him with mixed hearts — some with fire, some with frost — but the word never returned empty.

45. And thus the testimony of Yahawzhowaa spread farther into the mountains, plains, and deserts, carried by one youth with a record, yet burning brighter than the sun, neither forsaken nor overcome, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 12

1. And it came to pass that after many days, the youth pressed onward toward the south, where the air grew hotter, the

winds carried dust, and the rivers hid themselves deep in stone. And the Spirit whispered, “Fear not, for Yahawzhowaa’s name shall be spoken also in the desert places, and My mercy shall spring up where men think nothing can grow.”

2. He entered the land of the People of the Painted Canyons, whose dwellings were set within walls of red rock, high and narrow, and whose voices echoed like trumpets between the cliffs. And they wondered at him, saying, “Why comes this stranger from the forests and the cold rivers into our dry land?”

3. And he answered, “I am sent not by myself but by the Eternal, to testify of Yahawzhowaa, who is the River that never runs dry, the Bread that never molds, the Light that never sets.”

4. They said, “If thy Teacher be as water, then give us drink, for our wells grow shallow.” And he prayed in Yahawzhowaa’s name, and a spring broke forth at the edge of their canyon, clear and sweet.

5. The people rejoiced, but the priests of stone muttered, “This man steals our power.” And they hardened their hearts against him.

6. A boy was brought, bitten by a serpent, his body swollen with death; the youth cried out, “Yahawzhowaa, Thou who wast lifted as the serpent in the wilderness, show mercy!” And life returned to the child, and the people trembled with awe.

7. Yet again the priests whispered, “He conjures spirits,” and they sought to drive him out. But the mothers of the village stood before him and said, “We have seen life, we will not cast it away.”

8. He taught them by parable, saying, “A traveler found a stone in the desert. It was plain and small, and men mocked it. Yet when hunger came, he struck it, and water flowed. So it is with Yahawzhowaa — despised by many, but the Rock of Life.”

9. And many believed, and were baptized in the spring that had burst forth, and they sang as they went down into the water, and their voices echoed against the cliffs like thunder.

10. From there he walked into the Land of Endless Sands, where the sun strikes without pity and the winds devour footprints. For many days he went without food, and his tongue clove to his mouth, yet he did not faint, for the Spirit sustained him.

11. He came upon wanderers near death, their skins cracked, their eyes dim. And they cried, “Give us water!” And though he himself thirsted, he prayed, and a small pool appeared in the hollow of a stone. And they drank, and their lives were preserved.

12. They fell at his feet, saying, “Surely the Eternal walks with thee.” But he lifted them up, saying, “Not I, but Yahawzhowaa, who is the Living Water.”

13. In their tents that night he taught

them, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the Eternal. Yahawzhowaa is the Word, living, breathing, among us.”

14. And they believed, and some carried the news farther into the desert, saying, “We have seen a man who walks with the Spirit.”

15. But not all rejoiced, for the chiefs of a nearby camp feared that their people would forsake them. And they conspired, saying, “Let us kill him, and scatter his followers.”

16. They rose by night with spears, but the Spirit revealed it, and the youth prayed, “Father, forgive them.” When they drew near, their eyes were blinded by a great light, and they fled, falling upon the sand in terror.

17. The next day they returned in shame, laying their spears before him, saying, “We sought thy death, but mercy spared us.” And he gave them bread, saying, “So also Yahawzhowaa feeds His enemies.”

18. He journeyed onward into the Valleys of Great Stones, where towers of rock pierce the heavens. There he found a people who painted their walls with suns and moons, keeping records of the seasons.

19. They asked him, “What sign showest thou, that thy word be added to ours?” And he answered, “The sign is this: Yahawzhowaa was slain, yet He lives. His rising is greater than sun or moon, for He shall never set.”

20. They mocked him, saying, “The sun rises each day; can thy Teacher rise without ceasing?” And he said, “Yes — for He is not bound to night. He rose once for all, and death shall not cover Him again.”

21. Some were pierced in heart, and some scoffed, but a woman came secretly by night, saying, “My husband is dead, and my soul is bitter. Will thy Teacher comfort me?”

22. And he told her, “Yahawzhowaa wept at the grave, and He rose. As He rose, so shall thy husband rise. Grieve not as one without hope.” And her tears fell upon the earth as rain.

23. She returned to her people, proclaiming, “I have heard the voice of comfort,” and many were turned toward the word.

24. But the priests grew jealous and said, “This man weakens us,” and they cast him out from the valley.

25. He went into the wilderness again, fasting and praying, and Yahawzhowaa appeared to him in vision, saying, “Blessed art thou, for thou art not greater than thy Master. If they hated Me, they will hate thee. Yet be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

26. Strengthened, he rose and walked into another land, where rivers carve deep canyons through the earth.

27. The people there asked him, “What is thy teaching?” And he said, “That Yahawzhowaa bore our sins, died, and rose again, that we might live.”

28. A man laughed, saying, “Death is stronger than any man.” And the youth answered, “Yahawzhowaa is no mere man. Death swallowed Him, but He broke its belly, and rose alive forever.”

29. And the man was silenced.

30. He laid hands upon the sick, and they were healed; upon the broken, and they were restored; upon the fearful, and they were comforted.

31. And he taught always, “It is not I, but Yahawzhowaa. Worship Him, not me.”

32. He journeyed farther, where mountains rise like teeth, and the people dwell in shadows.

33. They feared spirits that lurked in caves, and they trembled. But the youth said, “Fear not, for Yahawzhowaa is greater than all spirits.” And he prayed, and the caves shook, and the spirits fled.

34. The people bowed, crying, “The Eternal has sent thee.”

35. He remained many days, teaching them to share their food, to forgive their enemies, to honor the widows and the fatherless. And they marveled, for such words had not been heard among them.

36. Yet again deceivers came, speaking in smooth tones, promising power. But the youth warned, “Not every brightness is holy. Test it by mercy. If it lifts the lowly, it is of Yahawzhowaa; if it crushes, it is false.”

37. Some believed his words, others chased him away with stones.

38. He rejoiced even in rejection, saying, “The prophets also were cast out. Yet truth cannot be killed.”

39. And he inscribed in the record the names of these people, and the wonders done among them, that generations might remember.

40. He prayed over their land, saying, “Remember them, O Eternal, and send Thy mercy upon them in the last day.”

41. He gave thanks for every step, for every soul, whether they believed or no, for he knew the word never returned empty.

42. He sang psalms as he walked, lifting his voice to the heavens, and the valleys carried his songs like rivers of sound.

43. He rejoiced in the Spirit, though his body was weak, for the Eternal was his strength.

44. And thus the word of Yahawzhowaa spread into deserts, into canyons, into mountains, into rivers, into the tents of wanderers and the lodges of nations.

45. And the youth walked ever onward, a vessel of clay filled with fire, a testimony of Yahawzhowaa, neither forsaken nor overcome, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 13

1. And it came to pass that the youth, having borne the word of Yahawzhowaa through the valleys of dust and the mountains of stone, lifted up his eyes and

beheld in vision a vast land still farther toward the setting sun, where forests were greater than memory and waters without end. And the Spirit whispered, “Go on, for even here My name must be spoken.”

2. He journeyed many days through wilderness, his sandals broken, his cloak torn, yet the record pressed to his breast as treasure. Hunger gnawed him, thirst stalked him, but the fire of testimony was meat and drink to him.

3. He came unto the People of the Tall Cedars, whose homes rose like ladders into the canopy, and whose drums spoke as thunder among the trees. They welcomed him with fish and berries, for they perceived in him no boast but a quiet flame.

4. Their chief asked, “What is the burden thou carriest?” And he laid open the record, saying, “The testimony of Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal, who walked among men, who suffered, who died, who rose again, and who shall return.”

5. They said, “We have long sung of a great returning one, who shall set crooked paths straight. Tell us if thy Teacher is He.” And the youth answered, “Yea, He is the fulfillment of all longing, the healer of all wounds, the peace of all nations.”

6. They brought forth a woman whose body was twisted from birth, her legs withered. And they asked, “If thy Teacher is life, let Him show it.” He prayed, trembling, “Yahawzhowaa, who raised the lame, who lifted the broken, touch her now.”

7. And strength flowed into her, her limbs straightened, and she stood. The people shouted and wept, and they bowed their heads, saying, “Truly the Eternal has visited us.”

8. Yet some of their priests of fire grew jealous, for their power waned. They whispered, “This man is a deceiver,” but they could not gainsay the healing.

9. The youth taught them by parable, saying, “A tree bore fruit in secret. Men passed by and mocked it, for it was hidden. But when famine came, its fruit fed the village. So also Yahawzhowaa — despised, hidden, yet in Him is life for all.”

10. And many believed, and he baptized them in the river that ran through their forest, its waters deep and cool. They rose from the water singing, “Yahawzhowaa is life.”

11. From thence he went farther, into lands where the ground shook and the mountains belched fire. There dwelt the People of the Burning Hills, who feared the mountains and offered sacrifice to appease them.

12. They asked him, “What spirit dost thou serve? Can he quench fire?” And he answered, “Yahawzhowaa is Lord of fire and water, of stone and breath. He quenched the fire of wrath by His own blood.”

13. They scoffed, saying, “Show us.” And behold, the mountain roared, and fire spilled from its mouth. The people wailed,

running in terror. But the youth prayed, "O Eternal, for Thy name's sake, preserve these."

14. And the fire ceased, and the mountain grew still, though smoke lingered. And the people fell upon their faces, saying, "This man's God is greater than ours."

15. He taught them, "Yahawzhowaa bore the fire of judgment in His body, that ye might not be consumed. Trust Him, and ye shall live." And many believed.

16. He journeyed again, westward still, until he came to the People of the Great Waters, where the land ends and the sea stretches beyond sight, waves rolling as mountains, their voices unceasing.

17. They marveled at him, for no stranger had come from so far. They asked, "What drives thee to the world's edge?" And he answered, "The Spirit of the Eternal, for there is no edge to His mercy. As the sea is without end, so is Yahawzhowaa's love."

18. They brought him to their council, beneath tall poles carved with the faces of beasts and spirits. And they said, "Tell us if thy Teacher is stronger than these, whom our fathers carved."

19. He answered, "The works of men's hands crumble; but Yahawzhowaa lives, who is the image of the Eternal. He is not carved by hand, for He is the Hand that carved all."

20. They said, "We fear the sea, for it takes our children. Can thy Teacher master it?" And he answered, "He once walked upon the sea, and stilled its storm."

21. And a storm rose even then, blackening the horizon. The people wailed, "Save us!" And he cried out, "Yahawzhowaa, show Thy power!"

22. And the sea grew calm, the waves sinking like children laid to rest. The people bowed, crying, "This is the true Lord of waters."

23. That night they feasted, and he told them of the cross, the tomb, the rising. And they listened as to the beating of the heart.

24. He taught them, "Not only those sacred and chosen, not only the nations of the east, but ye also are His. For He is Lord of the ends of the earth."

25. And they wept, saying, "We thought we were forgotten, but we are remembered."

26. They brought him fish and shell, yet he took little, saying, "I seek not treasure, but hearts."

27. He walked along the shore, gazing at the horizon, wondering if men dwelt beyond the sea. And the Spirit whispered, "My name shall go farther still."

28. He prayed upon the sand, "O Eternal, I am but dust; yet Thou hast carried Thy word on my lips. Carry it farther, for Thy mercy is without end."

29. The people came to him in the morning, saying, "Stay with us." But he answered, "I must go, for others wait. Yet hold fast the name of Yahawzhowaa, and teach your children."

30. They wept, but they blessed him, saying, “Go in peace, messenger of the Eternal.”

31. From there he turned inland, where forests grew thick again, and rivers crossed the land like veins. He taught in many lodges, baptizing, healing, comforting, warning.

32. In one village, a child crippled from birth was made whole. In another, a widow near despair was comforted. In another, a hunter broken in pride found mercy.

33. Always he preached Yahawzhowaa, crucified and risen. Always he pointed away from himself and toward the Eternal.

34. Yet always there were deceivers, spirits clothed in false light, whispering to the proud. And he warned, “Test every spirit by mercy. If it heals, it is true. If it wounds, it is false.”

35. Some believed, others mocked. Some embraced, others cast stones. But he rejoiced in all things, for the seed was sown.

36. He inscribed the names of these nations in the record, writing their songs and their wonders, lest they be forgotten.

37. He prayed for them by name, saying, “O Eternal, call these in the last day, that they may stand in Thy mercy.”

38. His feet bled, his body trembled, but his spirit sang.

39. He lifted his voice in psalms at dawn, and the forests echoed. He prayed at night, and the stars kept watch.

40. He wept often, but always with hope, for Yahawzhowaa was near.

41. And he dreamed of the day when nations from east and west, from deserts and seas, would gather as one, singing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lamb.”

42. The Spirit showed him a vision of countless peoples, clothed in many garments, speaking many tongues, but all washed in light.

43. He fell upon his face, weeping for joy, saying, “Thine is the kingdom, Yahawzhowaa, forever.”

44. And he rose, walking again, for his work was not ended.

45. Thus the testimony of Yahawzhowaa reached even unto the Great Waters, to forests, mountains, deserts, and plains; and the record lived, not in skins only, but in hearts. And the youth walked on, neither forsaken nor overcome, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 14

1. And it came to pass that after the youth had spoken the name of Yahawzhowaa unto the People of the Great Waters, his heart was troubled within him, for the Spirit whispered that his days were numbered and that his journey drew near its end.

2. Yet he rejoiced, for he had walked as a vessel of clay filled with fire, and the Eternal had not forsaken him in any land.

2. He turned his face southward, where the shores stretched long and the forests

grew heavy with mist, and the cliffs plunged straightway into the sea. There he came unto the People of the Southern Shores, whose canoes moved like shadows across the waves, swift and silent.

3. They received him with wonder, saying, “From whence hast thou come, O traveler of fire, for thy face is worn by many suns and thy garments by many winters?” And he answered, “I come not of myself but by the hand of the Eternal, bearing the testimony of Yahawzhowaa, who is the Son of the Living God, slain and risen, that all peoples might live.”

4. Their chief said, “If He be risen, let Him show His life in us.” And the youth laid his hand upon a woman bowed with sickness many years, and in the name of Yahawzhowaa she stood straight, and her voice lifted in song. And they marveled, for none had seen such power.

5. Yet the priests of their carved poles were jealous, fearing the loss of their command, and they murmured, “This man steals hearts by sorcery.” But the people replied, “He heals with mercy, not with chains.”

6. The youth spake unto them, “Yahawzhowaa is no thief of nations; He is the Shepherd who gathers all into one fold. He does not cast down your songs, but He purifies them, that mercy may dwell in every note.”

7. He remained with them many days, teaching them the psalms of Yahawzhowaa. They carved His name upon wood, not to worship the wood, but to remember the mercy. And the children sang, “Yahawzhowaa is life, Yahawzhowaa is peace,” until the night trembled with their voices.

8. From thence he journeyed farther, into lands where the hills bent downward into deserts again, and the earth was cracked and dry. He came unto the People of the Salt Winds, who dwelt near waters bitter to drink.

9. They mocked him, saying, “If thy Teacher be Living Water, let Him make sweet the salt that burns our tongues.” And the youth prayed in Yahawzhowaa’s name, and he cast a stone into the pool, and the waters grew clear, and they drank with joy.

10. They bowed to the Eternal, saying, “Surely this Yahawzhowaa is Lord of waters.” Yet some still murmured, “We will not forsake the gods of our fathers,” and they hardened their hearts.

11. But many believed, and he baptized them in the sweetened spring, saying, “As these waters are made pure, so are ye cleansed in Yahawzhowaa.” And they rose rejoicing.

12. He told them a parable, saying, “A man dug a well and found bitter water. He said, ‘This is useless,’ and left it. Another came, and with patience he cleansed it, until it gave drink to the thirsty. So also Yahawzhowaa cleanses the bitter soul, and makes it a well of life.”

13. From there he pressed into valleys

where cliffs rose as fortresses, and caves opened like mouths in the stone. There dwelt the People of the Caverns, who feared shadows and offered sacrifice to them.

14. They asked him, "What shadows dost thou serve?" And he said, "I serve not shadows, but the Light of the world, Yahawzhowaa, who drives away darkness."

15. They said, "Show us His power." And a man possessed with violent spirits was brought, his voice like the cry of beasts. The youth prayed, and in Yahawzhowaa's name the spirits fled, and the man lay still as one asleep.

16. He rose with calm eyes, and the people fell to their knees, saying, "This is no sorcerer, but a man of God." And many believed that day.

17. Yet the priests of the caverns raged, for their power was undone, and they sought to kill him. But the Spirit revealed it, and he fled by night into the wilderness.

18. He wandered many days alone, fasting, and he cried unto the Eternal, "My Father, is my work nearly done?" And the Spirit answered, "Thy road draws near its rest, yet one more people shall hear."

19. Strengthened, he rose and walked into the Land of the Broad Plateau, where winds sweep like eagles, and the sky is without end. There he found villages set upon stone, the people clothed in woven garments, their houses square as temples.

20. They received him warily, saying, "We have our own gods, who rule the sun and the rain. What need have we of thine?" And he said, "Your gods take; mine gave Himself. Your gods demand blood; Yahawzhowaa shed His own. Your gods pass away; mine lives forever."

21. They were astonished at his boldness. A mother, moved by faith, brought her child dead in her arms, saying, "If thy Teacher lives, call life into him."

22. And the youth prayed in tears, laying his hands upon the child: "Yahawzhowaa, who called forth Lazarus, who touched the widow's son, show Thy power again." And the child breathed, his eyes opening like dawn.

23. The people cried out in terror and joy, "The Eternal has visited us." Many believed, but some gnashed their teeth, saying, "If He has such power, He will take our people from us."

24. They plotted in secret, saying, "Let us seize him and silence him." But he continued boldly, teaching every day in their squares, saying, "Yahawzhowaa is the way, the truth, the life. None come unto the Eternal but by Him."

25. He spoke of the cross, of the rising, of the love stronger than death. Some bowed, weeping; others turned away in fury.

26. He told them, "The Eternal sees no nation as forgotten, no people as cast away. All are His, and Yahawzhowaa gathers them into one."

27. A priest rose against him, striking him with a staff, saying, "Blasphemer."

And the youth fell, his blood staining the stone. Yet he rose, smiling, saying, “Strike if ye must; Yahawzhowaa forgave His murderers, and so also I forgive.”

28. The people were divided, some clinging to him, some seeking his death.

29. And in the night the Spirit came, saying, “Thy work is almost finished. One more testimony, and then thou shalt rest.”

30. The youth wept, saying, “O Eternal, I am ready. Let me be poured out as an offering, if only Thy word may live.”

31. He pressed farther south, where the land dropped into canyons like the mouths of the deep, and the sun burned as fire.

32. There he found the People of the Red Sands, who painted their faces and hunted with spears of stone. They received him with suspicion, but listened as he spoke.

33. He taught them, “Yahawzhowaa is not far from you; He is nearer than breath. He bore your sins, your wounds, your griefs. He died, He rose, and He calls you.”

34. They asked, “If He calls, how shall we hear?” And he said, “Hear Him in mercy, in love, in forgiveness. Where a child is fed, He is there. Where an enemy is forgiven, He is there.”

35. Some believed, but the chiefs resisted, saying, “Our power will die if this word spreads.”

36. They bound him with cords, and many wept, saying, “Do not harm him, for he brought life.” But the chiefs mocked, saying, “Let his Teacher save him.”

37. That night the youth prayed, “O Yahawzhowaa, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. If my blood must seal this word, so be it.”

38. And in vision Yahawzhowaa appeared, clothed in light, and said, “Fear not; thy death shall not end this record, but shall multiply it. Thy blood shall water the seed.”

39. And he rejoiced, though bound, singing psalms until his voice grew hoarse.

40. The people heard and marveled, saying, “He sings though doomed.” And some were pierced in heart, believing in secret.

41. At dawn they led him forth, mocking, “Where is thy Teacher now?” But he lifted his voice, crying, “He lives! He reigns! He shall return!”

42. They slew him, and his blood fell upon the red sands. But the earth trembled, and the people feared, saying, “Surely this man was of the Eternal.”

43. Some took the record he bore, hiding it, copying it upon stone and song, saying, “This word must not perish.”

44. And the testimony of Yahawzhowaa was carried still farther, by those who had believed, into valleys, mountains, and plains, until many nations heard.

45. Thus ended the journey of the youth, a vessel of clay poured out, yet filled with fire. And though his body fell, his word did not die, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always, and the name of Yahawzhowaa burned on in the hearts of

many.

CHAPTER 15

1. And it came to pass that after the youth was slain in the land of red sands, his blood mingling with the dust, the earth trembled and the people cried aloud. Some smote their breasts in fear, others fled into the desert, and others gathered around his body in silence, not knowing what should be done.

2. Among them was Nema, the widow whose son had been healed. She lifted her voice, saying, "Though men slay the messenger, they cannot slay the message. Though his body is broken, the word he carried yet lives."

3. And Shenat, the young warrior who had believed, stepped forth, saying, "Let not his record be lost." And he gathered the skins, stained with dust and blood, and wrapped them in his own cloak, vowing with an oath, "By the Eternal, I will guard this word with my life."

4. But Koshet the priest rejoiced in secret, saying, "The fire is quenched, the stranger is gone, and my power remains." Yet he knew not that the seed had already taken root in many hearts, and that no blade could uproot it.

5. Chief Akanu, torn between fear of his people and wonder at the signs he had seen, commanded that the youth be buried with honor outside the village, saying, "Let his grave be a testimony; perhaps the Eternal will remember us in days to come."

6. And at night a vision came to Akanu. He saw the youth standing clothed in light, his wounds shining as stars, and he heard him say, "I am not dead but risen unto the Eternal. Yahawzhowaa lives, and His word shall not depart from this land."

7. Akanu awoke trembling, and called his council, but he told them not the vision, fearing they would not believe. Yet his heart was pricked, and he began secretly to inquire more of Yahawzhowaa.

8. Now Shenat and Nema gathered believers in secret places: in caves, by hidden fires, in the shadows of the cliffs. And they spoke of all the youth had taught, repeating his parables, singing his psalms, and praying in the name of Yahawzhowaa.

9. And the boy of Nema, whose life had been restored, lifted his voice also, though yet a child, saying, "The man of God healed me. His Teacher is alive. I will never forget." And the people marveled that truth could come from the mouth of a child.

10. Yet Koshet hunted them, sending men to scatter the gatherings, to burn their fires, to seize the record. But Shenat hid it in the hollow of a stone, and none could find it.

11. In those days there came from the north a traveler named Ayonha, a seer of the forests, who had heard of the youth's death. He entered the village of the Red Sands, asking after the record.

12. And Akanu received him with

caution, saying, “What seekest thou?” And Ayonha replied, “I seek not trade, nor spoil, but the word of Yahawzhowaa, for His Spirit has stirred my dreams.”

13. Then Shenat revealed the hidden skins, and when Ayonha beheld them, his eyes wept as rivers. He said, “Truly this word is fire. It must not be bound to one people only.”

14. And the believers rejoiced, saying, “The Eternal has sent another to strengthen us.” And Ayonha taught them with wisdom, interpreting dreams and visions, and confirming the testimony of Yahawzhowaa.

15. But Koshet’s hatred grew hotter, and he stirred up warriors to slay Shenat and seize the record. Yet Shenat fled with Ayonha and Nema, carrying the word into hidden valleys.

16. They journeyed by night, guided by the stars, and by day they hid among rocks, until they came to the villages of the People of the Tall Cliffs, whose chief was named Teyon.

17. Teyon received them with honor, for he had seen visions of fire in the night sky and had sought an interpreter. And when Ayonha spoke of Yahawzhowaa, Teyon bowed his head, saying, “This is the meaning of my dream. The Eternal has remembered us.”

18. And Teyon commanded that a house be built for the record, and that men be appointed to guard it. He said, “Let this word dwell among us as long as the cliffs endure.”

19. Then many of the People of the Tall Cliffs believed, and they were baptized in their river, their songs echoing against the stone walls as hymns unto Yahawzhowaa.

20. But news spread, and enemies gathered, saying, “This new teaching stirs nations; it will undo the old ways.” And bands of warriors conspired together to destroy the record.

21. Yet the Spirit warned Ayonha in a dream, saying, “The enemy shall come, but the word must go farther still. Take the record and flee, for I have prepared other nations.”

22. Ayonha arose, and with Shenat and Nema departed secretly by night. And Teyon blessed them, saying, “Carry this fire onward, for if I never see thee again, my children shall remember thy word.”

23. And they traveled through valleys, rivers, and deserts, bearing the record, meeting chiefs, widows, and warriors who either received them or rejected them.

24. In some villages they were welcomed with feasts, and the chiefs commanded, “Teach us more of this Yahawzhowaa.” In others they were mocked, stones were cast, and they were driven away.

25. But in all places the name of Yahawzhowaa was spoken, and the seed was sown, and the Spirit bore witness to the humble.

26. Thus the word began to spread not by one youth only, but by many: by Shenat, by Nema, by Ayonha, by Teyon and his

people, and by children whose hearts were touched.

27. And the record lived, not only in skins, but in memory, in song, in dreams, in carvings upon stone, and in the lives of those changed.

28. The Eternal looked upon their faith, and angels walked unseen among them, strengthening them in persecution, preserving them in hunger, guiding them by visions.

29. Though Koshet raged, his power waned, for his heart was hard, and the people began to despise his cruelty. Some of his own priests deserted him, believing instead in Yahawzhowaa.

30. And Shenat, though hunted, grew bold, speaking openly, saying, "The Eternal does not forsake us. Yahawzhowaa lives, and His Spirit is with us still."

31. Many who heard him wept, for they had seen his courage when he could have denied, and they said, "This is no man of lies, but a witness indeed."

32. And the boy of Nema, now strong and full of light, began to prophesy in child's voice, saying, "The Eternal shall gather all nations, from rivers to deserts, from mountains to seas, in the name of Yahawzhowaa."

33. The elders marveled, for never had they seen such power in the mouth of a child.

34. Ayonha continued his travels, entering distant villages, speaking with chiefs, interpreting dreams, healing by the Spirit, and planting new gatherings of believers.

35. He was received by Miya, a wise woman of the Valley of Pines, who gave him shelter and declared, "I will keep the widows and the children in this word, though men rage against it."

36. And thus the Spirit raised up men and women alike to preserve the testimony, not by sword, but by love, endurance, and song.

37. In one place, a chief named Oran bowed to the word, and commanded his whole household to believe. In another, a warrior named Tolan defied it, and sought to kill its messengers, yet later he was broken by famine and confessed, "Yahawzhowaa is merciful."

38. And so the story of the youth did not end with his blood, but began anew in the lives of many. For his martyrdom was a seed, and from it sprang a forest.

39. The record passed from lodge to lodge, from fire to fire, until men spoke it in tongues of many valleys. Some carved crosses into stone, some painted them on bark, some carried them on staffs, saying, "We belong to Yahawzhowaa."

40. And though enemies sought always to burn, to seize, to silence, yet they could not prevail, for mercy cannot be quenched by wrath.

41. The Spirit went before the messengers, opening doors, softening hearts, and even turning the wrath of enemies into testimony.

42. Shenat grew as a leader, bold yet humble, and the people began to call him Keeper of the Record, for he guarded it with his life.

43. Nema was called Mother of the Believers, for she nurtured them with food, counsel, and courage when men faltered.

44. And the boy, whose name was Arel, became a living sign, for all who looked upon him said, “He was dead, and now he lives.” And thus the word of Yahawẓhowaa was made flesh in their midst.

45. And so the testimony spread farther still, not by one voice, but by many; and though nations raged and priests cursed, the record was carried like fire across dry grass, and the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 16

1. And it came to pass that Shenat, now called Keeper of the Record, rose up with courage, though still a young man, for the weight of the skins pressed upon him as though he bore the nations themselves. And the people whispered of him, “This one will not forsake the word, even should the earth fall.”

2. Ayonha the seer walked beside him, a man gray with years, yet his eyes bright as embers, for dreams and visions were given unto him in the night, and he guided their steps by the whisperings of the Spirit. And the people said, “Truly the Eternal has joined the wisdom of age with the strength of youth.”

3. Nema, the widow, became a mother unto many, for she gathered the women and the children, feeding them, strengthening them, teaching them to pray in the name of Yahawẓhowaa. And they called her Mother of the Believers, saying, “Her hands are mercy, her tears are strength.”

4. And Arel, her son, whose life had been restored by the prayer of the slain youth, grew in stature and wisdom. And though yet but a boy, words of prophecy leapt from his lips, and many feared and wondered, saying, “This child is chosen.”

5. Now in those days Koshet the priest of the caverns hardened his heart, swearing by his idols that he would not rest until the record was destroyed and all who bore it slain. He gathered unto himself warriors from the villages of the desert, men thirsty for blood and glory.

6. He cried aloud, “If this word spreads, it will sweep away our altars and tear down our names from stone. Rise, O men of the sands, and put out the fire before it consumes us.” And they answered him with shouts, and he made covenant with them by the shedding of blood.

7. But the Spirit warned Ayonha in a dream, saying, “The destroyer rises, yet thou shalt not be delivered into his hand at this time. Flee northward, into the land of the Many Waters, for there shall the record take root.”

8. Therefore Shenat, Ayonha, Nema, and Arel gathered their company of believers by night, and with them fled from the land of the red sands, carrying the record hidden in baskets of grain, that none might see it.

9. They traveled many days, through canyons where the wind moaned, through valleys where stones watched like sentinels, until they came into the forests of the north.

10. There they found the People of the Many Waters, whose villages were set upon islands, and whose canoes moved as swiftly as arrows across the lakes. Their chief was Eyanah, a man tall and quiet, whose words carried weight like the fall of trees.

11. Shenat came before him with fear, saying, “We are wanderers hunted for the sake of Yahawzhowaa, Son of the Eternal. We ask for shelter.”

12. And Eyanah studied them long, then answered, “We know the Eternal by the rivers, by the drums, by the seasons. If thy Yahawzhowaa be truly His Son, show us His life.”

13. Then Nema spoke of the slain youth who had healed her son, and Arel lifted his voice, saying, “Once I was dead, but now I live. Yahawzhowaa is life.” And the people marveled, for truth poured from the mouth of a child.

14. Ayonha declared, “Test us not by smooth words, but by mercy. If we lift the poor and heal the sick, then judge whether this word is true.”

15. And behold, a man lame from birth was carried before them, his legs bound as with iron. Shenat knelt and prayed in Yahawzhowaa’s name, and the man leapt to his feet, running as one unbound.

16. A cry rose in the council: some fell upon their faces in awe, some beat their breasts in fear, some shouted that sorcery had been done. But Eyanah lifted his hand, saying, “Peace. This word bears fruit.”

17. He commanded that Shenat and his company be housed and fed, and he set a guard around them, saying, “If their God has remembered them, perhaps He has remembered us also.”

18. Thus the record came into the land of the Many Waters, and the believers increased, for many were healed and comforted, and the songs of Yahawzhowaa were sung upon the lakes.

19. Yet Koshet pursued them with his band of warriors, swearing that he would not rest until the record was burned. He came upon villages by the lakes, demanding, “Where are the keepers of the new word?”

20. But the Spirit confused his path, and storms broke his canoes, and his men murmured against him, saying, “We bleed for nothing.” Yet still his hatred burned.

21. In that season Ayonha received a vision: he saw fire falling upon the idols of stone, shattering them into dust, and he heard a voice, “The old shall perish, but My word shall remain.”

22. He told this unto Shenat, who said,

"Then let us strengthen the people, for trials will come, yet Yahawzhowaa will not forsake us."

23. So they baptized many in the waters of the lakes, both men and women, old and young. And Chief Eyanah himself was baptized, laying aside his spear, saying, "Henceforth I serve the Eternal through Yahawzhowaa."

24. His household also believed, and they carved the sign of the cross into their canoes, that all who saw might know to whom they belonged.

25. The priests of the old ways raged, crying, "Our altars fall, our names perish!" But the people answered, "We have tasted life, and we will not return to death."

26. And Shenat stood before the council, declaring, "This word is not mine, but Yahawzhowaa's. I will guard it, but ye must live it." And the council answered, "We will."

27. The people brought their drums and sang hymns of Yahawzhowaa, mixing old melodies with new words, until the forests echoed as though angels joined them.

28. Yet spies of Koshet lurked nearby, carrying word of all they saw. And they hastened to their master, saying, "The record grows stronger; soon it will cover the land."

29. Then Koshet tore his garments and swore by the shadows, "I will strike them with fire, even if it cost me my soul."

30. But the Spirit whispered unto Shenat in the night, "Fear not the wrath of men, for their fury is a moment, but My mercy is forever."

31. He awoke strengthened, and told the believers, "If Koshet comes, we will not fear. We will not lift the spear against him, but we will pray in Yahawzhowaa's name."

32. And Nema said, "If I must lay down my life, I will, for my son lives by this word."

33. And Arel the boy spoke with fire, saying, "Koshet's rage shall not prevail, for I have seen in a dream Yahawzhowaa clothed in brightness, holding the record as a torch, and no man could quench it."

34. The people marveled, and their courage was strengthened by the words of a child.

35. Shenat and Ayonha appointed twelve among the believers to teach, to comfort, to guard the widows, and to preserve the psalms. And they laid hands upon them, blessing them in Yahawzhowaa's name.

36. And the believers called themselves The People of the Way, saying, "We walk not by the path of our fathers only, but by the path of Yahawzhowaa, the Way of Life."

37. Many chiefs from villages of the lakes came, bringing gifts of food and skins, saying, "Teach us also." And the word spread in every direction as fire in dry grass.

38. Yet persecution followed, for Koshet and his men burned villages that bore the name of Yahawzhowaa. Many fled into the

forests, carrying the record in fragments, singing by night in whispers.

39. Still the Spirit preserved them, and miracles followed: hunters found food where none should be, storms shielded the weak, visions warned of danger.

40. And Shenat wrote upon the skins, saying, “Though enemies rise, yet Yahawzhowaa lives. Though idols fall, yet Yahawzhowaa reigns. Though we perish, yet His word is forever.”

41. He gave thanks for Ayonha, whose dreams guided them; for Nema, whose hands fed them; for Arel, whose voice prophesied; and for all believers who stood firm.

42. The Spirit whispered again, “This is not the end, but the beginning. My word shall run beyond the lakes, beyond the forests, even unto the ends of the earth.”

43. And Shenat bowed, saying, “Then let my life also be poured out, if only Thy word may live.”

44. Thus the record was strengthened in the land of the Many Waters, and the people multiplied, not by sword, but by mercy, not by conquest, but by love.

45. And the testimony of Yahawzhowaa burned brighter than before, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 17

1. And it came to pass that in the days when the People of the Way increased in the land of the Many Waters, Koshet gathered his warriors, fiercer than before, and bound himself by oath, saying, “I will not rest until I see their fire quenched, their record burned, and their names forgotten.”

2. He sent messengers to neighboring villages, crying, “The strangers deceive you; their word weakens the hunters, their prayers betray the spirits. Join me, lest your altars fall.” And many proud men followed him, their faces painted for war.

3. Yet the Spirit warned Ayonha in a dream, showing him a great storm rolling from the west, black as night, devouring all in its path. But from the storm arose a flame in the hands of a youth, and the flame consumed the darkness.

4. Ayonha told the dream to Shenat, who said, “Koshet is the storm, but the flame is the record. We must hide it where no hand can reach, until the appointed time.”

5. So Shenat, Ayonha, Nema, and Arel departed secretly by canoe, traveling north across the lakes, guided by stars and the whisper of the Spirit.

6. They came to an island hidden among reeds, where the trees grew tall and white as bone. And upon the trunks of birch they saw carvings — signs of men long dead, yet whose memory lingered in marks.

7. They followed the signs into the forest’s heart, and there they found a cavern, its entrance veiled with stone and moss. Within was a hall of silence, lit only by shafts of light through cracks above.

8. In that hall were scrolls, bound and rolled, not of skin but of birch bark, etched with sharp tools, preserved by dryness of the stone. And they trembled, for they knew they had found the work of ancients.

9. Shenat unrolled one, and behold, it bore words in symbols strange, yet some were like unto the marks the slain youth had taught them to carve.

10. And Ayonha, filled with the Spirit, began to interpret, and the meaning unfolded as light upon water. And they read the tale of the Tower of Babel, written by forgotten hands.

11. It spoke of men who were one people, with one tongue, who said, “Let us build a tower to reach heaven, that we may be as gods.”

12. But the Eternal looked upon their pride, and He scattered them, confounding their speech, that they might not understand one another, and He spread them to the ends of the earth.

13. And the scroll declared that some were driven into the wilderness of waters, carried across seas until they came into a new land, where they built lodges of bark and carved their history upon trees.

14. Shenat wept, saying, “Surely these are our fathers, scattered from the tower, forgotten by the world but not by the Eternal.”

15. And Arel, the boy, lifted his voice in prophecy, saying, “This land is not cut off. The Eternal has watched it from the beginning. As He scattered, so shall He gather again in Yahawzhowaa.”

16. Nema bowed her head, whispering, “The slain youth was not the first, nor are we the last. The Eternal has sown His word in every age.”

17. And they knelt together in that hall of scrolls, giving thanks that their path had led them to the witness of their ancestors.

18. They hid the birch bark scrolls among the skins of the record, binding them together, saying, “These words shall live as one, that the past and the present speak with one voice.”

19. But as they departed, the Spirit warned, “The enemy comes.” And behold, Koshet and his band had tracked them, their canoes cutting swift upon the waters.

20. Koshet cried aloud, “Now I have them! The record shall burn, and their names with it.” And his warriors raised their spears.

21. Shenat lifted the record high, shouting, “Strike if ye must, but this word shall not perish!” And the sky darkened, and thunder shook the air.

22. Lightning split the heavens, striking the lake; waves rose high, tossing the canoes of Koshet’s men. Many were overturned, swallowed by the waters.

23. Koshet himself clung to a log, cursing, but the storm carried him far, and he was seen no more for many days.

24. Shenat and his company, though shaken, were preserved, their canoes steady as though angels bore them. And they gave thanks unto the Eternal.

25. When they returned to the People of the Way, they told them of the hall of scrolls, and the believers rejoiced, saying, “Our fathers knew the Eternal, even from the beginning.”

26. And Ayonha taught them, “The scattering of tongues was for pride, but in Yahawzhowaa the tongues are gathered. In Him all nations speak one song again.”

27. They sang hymns upon the lakes, declaring, “Great is Yahawzhowaa, who gathers the scattered!”

28. The priests of the old ways heard and trembled, for the power of their idols waned as the fire of Yahawzhowaa grew brighter.

29. Nema said, “The Eternal has made mothers into prophets, children into witnesses, the weak into strong. Who can stand against Him?”

30. And Arel prophesied again, saying, “This record shall go beyond these waters, beyond these forests, beyond these mountains, even to the ends of the land. None shall quench it.”

31. Some scoffed, saying, “How can bark and skins endure?” But Ayonha answered, “It is not the bark that endures, but the Spirit that breathes through it.”

32. And Shenat wrote, “We found the scrolls of birch, testifying of Babel and the scattering. We have joined their witness to ours, that generations may know the Eternal has always spoken.”

33. And he sealed them among the skins, saying, “This is one record, not many. One flame, not scattered sparks.”

34. Thus the believers were strengthened, for they saw themselves not as a forgotten people, but as part of the Eternal’s plan from the beginning.

35. The nations round about heard of the scrolls and marveled, some saying, “Truly the Eternal has walked this land from of old.”

36. Yet others plotted, saying, “If these scrolls live, our names will be forgotten.” And they stirred anger against the People of the Way.

37. But Shenat declared, “We will not fight with the spear, but with prayer. We will not conquer with blood, but with love. For Yahawzhowaa conquers through mercy.”

38. The people fasted, prayed, and sang psalms, and their enemies feared them, for they saw courage where none should have been.

39. In the night, Ayonha dreamed again: he saw a tower falling, but from its ruins rose a tree, its roots deep in the earth, its branches touching the stars. And he heard a voice, “This tree is Yahawzhowaa’s word, and it shall never fall.”

40. He told it unto Shenat, and they carved the dream upon birch bark, that it be remembered.

41. And the people of the lakes carved the same upon their canoes, painting a great tree with roots and stars, calling it The Tree of Gathering.

42. Thus the message of the birch scrolls

was joined to the record, and the people saw themselves as scattered no more, but gathered in Yahawzhowaa.

43. Koshet, though beaten back, yet lived, and his hatred smoldered, and men whispered that he gathered again in secret.

44. But Shenat said, "Let him rage, for the Eternal fights for us. His fury is a gust of wind, but our word is a mountain."

45. And so the record grew, joined with the birch bark scrolls of the ancients, binding the tale of Babel to the testimony of Yahawzhowaa, and the believers rejoiced, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 18

1. And it came to pass that after Shenat and his companions had beheld the scrolls of birch and returned unto the People of the Way, a season of peace fell upon them. They taught by the lakes, they sang psalms, and many believed. Yet the Spirit whispered, "This peace shall not last, for the adversary rises."

2. For Koshet, priest of the caverns, though scattered by storm, yet lived. He gathered again men of war from the deserts, from the hills, from the broken villages that clung to the old ways. He bound them with oaths of blood, swearing that he would not cease until Shenat and the record were destroyed.

3. And his heart was blacker than before, for he had seen the storm spare Shenat and consume his own men, and he cried, "If their God is stronger than mine, then I will fight Him to the grave."

4. He trained his band as wolves, teaching them to strike by night, to burn lodges, to overturn canoes, to slay without mercy. And the nations trembled, saying, "The priest of shadows rises again."

5. Now Shenat gathered the believers in council by the lake of broad waters. There were present Ayonha the seer, Nema the mother, Arel the child of prophecy, and also chiefs from many lodges, men and women who had believed.

6. Shenat stood, holding the record in both hands, and said, "Koshet comes with sword and fire. What shall we do? Shall we lift the spear against him, or shall we endure and trust in Yahawzhowaa?"

7. Then Chief Eyanah of the lakes answered, "Our fathers taught us to fight when raiders came. If we do nothing, our children will perish."

8. But Nema said, "If we fight as they fight, how are we different? Did not the youth give his blood without lifting his hand? Shall we take up what he laid down?"

9. Arel lifted his voice, though but a boy, and said, "I saw in a dream Yahawzhowaa upon a mountain, and His hands were wounded, yet He held no weapon. His light destroyed the darkness. So also shall we prevail without the spear."

10. Ayonha confirmed it, saying, "The Spirit shows that this is not our battle, but

the Eternal's. We must endure. Our strength will be in faith, not in arms."

11. Some wept, for they feared greatly. Others were angry, saying, "Shall we let our wives and children die?" But Shenat said, "We will not forsake you. We will walk together, live together, and if need be, die together. But Yahawzhowaa shall not forsake us."

12. So it was agreed: they would not take the spear, but would trust in the Eternal. And they fasted and prayed, strengthening their hearts for the trial to come.

13. Soon word came that Koshet's band had crossed the forests and were moving toward the lakes. The villages trembled, and some fled into the wilderness, but others clung to the People of the Way, saying, "If we perish, we will perish with you."

14. In those days Shenat taught the believers nightly, opening the record and rehearsing the words of the youth: the cross, the tomb, the rising, the forgiveness of enemies. And he said, "Remember these things when terror comes, and do not despair."

15. And behold, Koshet came with fire, surrounding the villages of the lakes. He sent a messenger, crying aloud, "Give up Shenat and the record, or we will burn all."

16. The council gathered in fear. Eyanah urged, "Let us not betray our brother." And Nema said, "We will never give him up." And the people answered, "We stand with Shenat."

17. Then Koshet himself appeared, standing on the shore, clothed in skins of black, his face painted with blood. He lifted his staff and cried, "Behold me! I am the priest of the caverns, master of the shadows. Deliver the record or I will consume you."

18. Shenat stepped forth, holding the skins close, and cried back, "Thou art not master, Koshet. Yahawzhowaa is Lord. Do what thou wilt, but this word shall not perish."

19. The people trembled, for the night was dark and the fire of Koshet's warriors burned red. Yet Arel whispered, "Fear not. The Eternal walks among us."

20. Koshet commanded his men, "Burn the lodges, slay the men, seize the women and the children." And they rushed forward as a flood.

21. Then the believers lifted their voices in psalms, not in screams. They sang of Yahawzhowaa, His cross, His rising, His mercy. And the night shook with their song.

22. And behold, the wind rose suddenly from the lake, fierce and cold. It swept through the camp of Koshet, casting their fires into the water. Darkness fell upon them, and confusion.

23. The warriors stumbled, striking one another, crying out, "The spirits are against us!" Some fled into the woods, some fell upon their own swords, and the rest scattered.

24. Koshet raged, gnashing his teeth,

crying, “Cowards! Stand and fight!” But none stood with him, and he was left alone in the dark.

25. Shenat and the people gave thanks, crying, “The Eternal has fought for us! We lifted no hand, yet we are delivered.”

26. At dawn they went out and saw the ground littered with spears and broken shields, but no enemy remained. And they marveled, saying, “Truly Yahawzhowaa reigns.”

27. Yet Shenat warned them, “This is not the end. Koshet still breathes. His hatred is a wound that festers, and he will rise again.”

28. In those days Ayonha led them back to the cavern of birch scrolls, saying, “Let us read again the witness of the ancients, that our courage be strengthened.”

29. And they read of Babel and the scattering, and they remembered that even from of old, the Eternal had spoken in this land. And they said, “If He preserved these words, He will preserve us also.”

30. Then they sealed the cavern once more, leaving the scrolls untouched, praying that future generations might behold them.

31. The believers grew in number, for many who had seen the storm that scattered Koshet’s band now joined them, confessing, “Yahawzhowaa is Lord.”

32. They baptized them in the lakes, and the waters shone with joy, as if the very creation rejoiced in their faith.

33. Nema cared for the widows of those who had fallen, and Arel prophesied comfort to the fearful, saying, “The Eternal sees your tears and will gather them as pearls.”

34. Shenat wrote upon the skins, “Koshet rose with fire, but the Eternal quenched him. We sang, and He fought. We endured, and He delivered. Thus the word of Yahawzhowaa yet lives.”

35. And Ayonha dreamed again: he saw Koshet wandering alone in wastelands, muttering curses, his face darkened, yet a small flame still burned before him that he could not quench. And the voice said, “His hatred will not prevail, but will serve My purpose.”

36. Ayonha told Shenat, and Shenat bowed, saying, “Let the Eternal’s will be done. We will endure until His work is finished.”

37. Thus the People of the Way were strengthened, for they saw that Yahawzhowaa defended them, and that mercy was mightier than swords.

38. And they resolved, saying, “We will not lift weapons; our shield shall be faith, our spear shall be prayer, our fortress shall be Yahawzhowaa.”

39. From that day their fame spread, and other nations said, “These people do not fight, yet none can destroy them.” And many came to hear their word.

40. They taught in every village they entered, showing mercy, healing, feeding the hungry, forgiving their enemies. And the word spread as light across waters.

41. Yet always they remembered the scrolls they had seen, and they told their children, “We beheld the writings of the ancients, who witnessed the scattering at Babel. Therefore we are not forgotten, nor cut off from the Eternal.”

42. And they sang a new psalm, “We are the gathered, not the scattered; we are the found, not the forsaken; for Yahawzhowaa has called us from many tongues into one song.”

43. And their voices rose upon the lakes and the forests, and the sound of their faith carried farther than the cry of their enemies.

44. Though Koshet yet lived, wandering with hatred, his power waned, while the power of the Spirit grew, for the Eternal was with the People of the Way.

45. And thus the testimony of Yahawzhowaa endured through fire and storm, through hatred and mercy, through the record of the youth and the scrolls of the ancients, and the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 19

1. And it came to pass that Koshet, priest of the caverns, wandered long in wastelands, withered in body yet swollen in hatred. His men had forsaken him, his altars lay broken, yet his heart burned darker than fire, for he said, “I will rise once more, even if it be my ruin.”

2. He found among the broken villages men of violence, cast out for bloodshed, thieves and liars who had no home. He bound them together, promising spoils and vengeance, and they followed him, for their hearts were as dry reeds ready for flame.

3. And he swore, “This time I will not scatter in storm, nor tremble at psalms. I will strike as shadow, swift and cruel, until none dare speak the name of Yahawzhowaa again.”

4. Meanwhile Shenat strengthened the People of the Way, teaching them daily from the record. Ayonha spoke dreams, Nema cared for the weak, and Arel prophesied with fire. The lakes and forests rang with hymns, and many nations drew near to learn of Yahawzhowaa.

5. Chiefs came from afar, bearing gifts of food, feathers, and stone, saying, “We have heard of your God who heals, who forgives, who does not demand blood. Teach us His way.” And they were taught and baptized, and their people rejoiced.

6. One chief named Talek bowed himself, saying, “Once I trusted in the spirits of thunder, but now I see Yahawzhowaa is greater, for He quiets the storm and gives peace to the heart.”

7. Another, a woman-chief named Sima, stood before her council declaring, “I will follow Yahawzhowaa, though the priests rage, for I have tasted His mercy.” And her people followed her, singing.

8. Yet whispers came, “Koshet gathers again. He walks with wolves and drinks hatred.” And fear trembled through the

believers, but Shenat said, “Did not Yahawzhowaa warn us? Let us not fear the destroyer of flesh, but honor the Giver of life.”

9. Soon Koshet’s band came like shadows upon the villages of the lakes. They burned fields, overturned canoes, struck down men in the night. The people fled to Shenat crying, “What shall we do?”

10. Shenat answered, “We will not fight as they fight. Let us gather at the great island of the reeds, and there we will call upon the Eternal.”

11. So the believers gathered by the thousands: men, women, children, chiefs, and widows. They built no walls, they lifted no spears, but they raised their voices in psalms, crying, “Yahawzhowaa, Son of the Eternal, deliver us!”

12. Koshet came with his band, howling, painted as beasts, their torches red against the night. He lifted his staff, crying, “Now I will end them!”

13. And behold, the lake trembled, and the wind rose with a roar. The torches of Koshet’s men were blown into the reeds, and fire leapt up, encircling them.

14. They cried out, but the reeds burned like walls, hemming them in. And the fire consumed many, and the rest fled into the waters, casting aside their weapons.

15. Koshet stood in the midst, raging, crying curses, “Yahawzhowaa! If thou art Lord, fight me!” And the fire surrounded him, and the people saw him no more.

16. The lake grew still, and the wind ceased. The believers fell to their knees, crying, “The Eternal has judged! His mercy is our shield, His power our deliverance.”

17. Shenat wrote upon the skins, “Koshet rose thrice, yet thrice was he cast down. In the end he was consumed by his own fire. So perish all who fight against Yahawzhowaa.”

18. And Ayonha declared, “The adversary is but a shadow; the Eternal is light. His light has prevailed.”

19. Nema comforted the widows who wept, saying, “Your husbands fell not in vain, for their blood is seed. Yahawzhowaa will remember them.”

20. And Arel prophesied again, “I saw in vision a hall greater than the cavern of birch scrolls. It was filled with writings from every nation, and angels read them aloud. And the name of Yahawzhowaa was upon every tongue.”

21. The people rejoiced, saying, “Then our song will join theirs in the last day.”

22. From that time forth the People of the Way spread without fear, for Koshet was no more. They journeyed into forests, plains, mountains, and rivers, carrying the record and the name of Yahawzhowaa.

23. Chiefs of many nations believed, councils embraced the word, and women rose as teachers, declaring, “The Eternal shows no partiality, but calls all into His mercy.”

24. Shenat appointed men and women as keepers of the psalms, readers of the record, and guardians of the orphans. He said, “Let

none think himself too small, for Yahawzhowaa chose fishermen and children to bear His light."

25. Ayonha grew older, but his visions increased. He saw far lands where the word would one day reach, lands of deserts, of ice, of endless waters. And he wept for joy, saying, "The Spirit is greater than our sight."

26. Nema, though her body was weary, continued to feed the poor, and the people honored her as a mother indeed.

27. Arel grew into youth, and his words carried fire. He prophesied of future generations, saying, "This record will sleep at times, but it will awake again. Nations will forget, but Yahawzhowaa will cause them to remember."

28. The people marveled, for even elders bowed to hear the voice of the boy. And they said, "The Eternal has raised a prophet among us."

29. Shenat walked humbly, always saying, "I am not the master but the keeper. Yahawzhowaa alone is Lord." And the people loved him, for he did not seek power, only mercy.

30. Many years passed, and the People of the Way filled the lands of the Many Waters. They sang their hymns, they carved the sign of the cross upon their lodges, and they remembered the slain youth, the birch scrolls, and their deliverance from Koshet.

31. Yet they knew trials would come again, for Ayonha had said, "The adversary rises in every generation."

32. So they taught their children, saying, "Stand firm in Yahawzhowaa, love your neighbor, forgive your enemy, guard the record, and the Spirit will guard you."

33. And the children sang psalms in their play, and even babes lifted their hands at the name of Yahawzhowaa.

34. Strangers who wandered into their lands marveled, saying, "These people carry no weapons, yet none can break them. Their strength is hidden, their peace is fierce."

35. And the word of Yahawzhowaa spread even beyond the lakes, for traders carried it into valleys and mountains, repeating what they had seen.

36. Some mocked, saying, "These are weak, they fight not," but others whispered, "Their God fights for them, and none can prevail."

37. Shenat wrote in the record, "Yea, the name of Yahawzhowaa goes forth. Though men mock, it endures. Though nations rise and fall, His word is not broken."

38. Ayonha, nearing his death, called Shenat and Nema and Arel, and blessed them, saying, "I have seen many dreams, but the greatest is this: Yahawzhowaa will return, and all tongues shall confess Him. Hold fast until that day."

39. And he died in peace, his eyes bright as fire, his lips whispering the psalm, "The Eternal is my light and my salvation."

40. They buried him by the lake, and the people wept, saying, "The seer has gone,

but his visions remain."

41. Shenat carried the record, Nema the widows, and Arel the prophecies, and the People of the Way were not left without guidance.

42. Chiefs from distant nations came to his grave, saying, "Tell us of the man who dreamed." And they were taught of Yahawzhowaa, and they returned to their people rejoicing.

43. Thus even the death of the seer became a seed, and from it sprang new faith among the nations.

44. And the people sang a psalm of remembrance: "The prophet sleeps, but the Spirit does not sleep. The seer is gone, but the visions walk among us. Yahawzhowaa reigns forever."

45. And the testimony of Yahawzhowaa spread farther still, for Koshet was no more, and the People of the Way endured in mercy, carrying the record, the psalms, and the prophecies, and the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 20

1. And it came to pass that after many years, the boy Arel grew into youth, tall and bright of countenance, his eyes like fire, his words like water upon dry earth. And the people marveled, for prophecy flowed from him as breath, and they said, "Truly the Eternal has raised a prophet from the child who once was dead."

2. Shenat, now grown older, still guarded the record, writing upon the skins all that had been done. Yet he looked upon Arel with joy and said, "I was called Keeper, but thou art called Voice. The Eternal has chosen thee to speak."

3. Nema, though her hair was gray, rejoiced, saying, "The child of my sorrow has become the strength of nations. The Eternal has made my tears into springs of joy."

4. And Arel stood among the People of the Way, declaring, "I am no master, but a witness. The slain youth bore me in his mercy, and Yahawzhowaa gave me breath. Now I will bear His name as long as breath is in me."

5. He spoke in councils before chiefs and elders, his words cutting as stone, yet healing as balm. And many who had doubted in the days of Shenat now believed, saying, "This youth speaks with fire, and no lie is in him."

6. Ayonha's visions were remembered, and Arel confirmed them, saying, "I too have seen in the night the tree whose roots drink the earth and whose branches touch the stars. It is Yahawzhowaa, and we are His branches."

7. Chiefs from distant valleys came to hear him, bringing offerings of carved wood, woven garments, and food, saying, "Tell us more of the Eternal." And he taught them by parables as the slain youth had taught.

8. One chief, Taman, asked, "Why does thy God not give us weapons to defeat our

enemies?" And Arel answered, "He gives us peace to defeat hatred, mercy to defeat cruelty, and life to defeat death. Which is the greater weapon?"

9. Another, Leya, a woman-chief of the northern pines, asked, "Will Yahawzhowaa also gather women?" And Arel answered, "He gathers all, for in Him there is neither man nor woman, elder nor child, but only sons and daughters of the Eternal."

10. And she believed, and her whole people believed, and they sang hymns to Yahawzhowaa in the language of the pines.

11. Shenat, seeing the spread of the word, lifted his hands in gratitude, saying, "The Eternal has not forsaken us. He has given us seed and fruit, branch and tree."

12. Yet not all rejoiced. Priests of the old ways, who clung to the spirits of shadow, conspired together, saying, "We have slain prophets before. Let us slay this one also, lest his word cover the land."

13. They hired warriors to ambush Arel as he traveled by canoe across the lake, but the Spirit warned him in a dream. He rose at dawn, saying, "They lie in wait, but their nets shall catch nothing."

14. And he changed his path, walking through the forest instead. And the warriors waited in vain, striking only the waves, and they returned in shame.

15. The priests raged, crying, "The Spirit fights for him!" And some among their own number turned away, saying, "We can resist no longer; Yahawzhowaa is Lord."

16. Arel gathered the People of the Way again on the great island, where Shenat had once defied Koshet. He stood before them, saying, "Our fathers saw storms, our mothers bore hunger, yet the word lived. Now we must carry it farther than the lakes, even unto nations we have not seen."

17. And they asked, "How shall we go, for the lands are vast and we are few?"

18. He answered, "The Eternal multiplies the few. A single flame lights a thousand torches. We will go not for conquest, but for mercy. Wherever there is sorrow, we will bring comfort. Wherever there is hunger, we will bring bread. Wherever there is hatred, we will bring Yahawzhowaa's peace."

19. Shenat laid hands upon him, blessing him, saying, "Go forth, my son, though not of my blood. Thou art the son of the record, the son of the slain youth, the son of Yahawzhowaa's mercy."

20. And Nema wept, saying, "Go, my child, but remember always the widow who bore thee, and the mercy that gave thee breath."

21. Then Arel departed with bands of believers, journeying across waters and forests, carrying psalms and prayers, carving the sign of the cross into trees as witnesses of their passing.

22. In the villages they entered, they did not demand tribute, nor take slaves, but offered healing, food, and peace. And the people marveled, saying, "These do not conquer us, yet we are conquered by their love."

23. In one valley they met Oraya, an elder woman, who told them, “Long ago, my father spoke of men who would come bearing the word of one God. I thought he dreamed. Now ye stand before me.” And she believed.

24. In another place they found Deken, a warrior hardened by blood. He mocked them, saying, “Where is your strength?” And Arel answered, “Our strength is mercy.”

25. Deken struck him, yet Arel did not strike back, but blessed him. And Deken’s heart broke, and he cast away his spear, saying, “Truly your God is greater.”

26. And word spread farther, until the People of the Way were known as healers and peacemakers across many nations.

27. Shenat, growing old, rejoiced, saying, “I see with my eyes what I once saw only with faith. The word runs like rivers.”

28. But he also warned, “As the word grows, so will envy. Watch always, lest pride or deceit enter among you.”

29. Arel heard, and kept it in his heart, saying, “I will not boast, for I was once nothing, and only mercy gave me breath.”

30. That night Arel dreamed, and he saw the slain youth standing upon the mountain of fire, holding the record in his hand. And he said, “Continue, my brother. My blood watered the seed; thou art the fruit. Feed the nations.”

31. Arel awoke weeping, and told the dream to the people, and they rejoiced, for they knew the slain youth still watched over them.

32. They carved his likeness upon wood, not to worship, but to remember: the youth with staff in hand, the record at his breast, his eyes like fire. And they said, “This is the witness of our fathers.”

33. And they placed the carving beside the psalms, so their children would not forget.

34. In that season the lakes shone with peace, for no raiders came against them. The nations who once warred now sat together in council, sharing food, guided by the word of Yahawzhowaa.

35. Arel taught them to forgive debts, to share harvests, to honor widows and orphans, to cease the sacrifice of blood, saying, “Yahawzhowaa’s blood was enough for all.”

36. Many obeyed, and prosperity grew. Yet some chiefs muttered, “If mercy rules, where shall our power be?” And they plotted in secret.

37. The Spirit warned Arel, “Beware of friends who smile with their mouths but hide knives in their hearts.”

38. And he told the people, “Love all, but trust not blindly. The enemy may come in soft voices.”

39. Yet he did not fear, for he knew the Eternal guided his steps.

40. Shenat grew sick with age, and he called Arel to his side, giving him the record, saying, “I guarded this as a servant; now thou shalt guard it as a son. Let not pride touch thee, but walk in mercy

always."

41. And Arel bowed, saying, "I will not betray this trust. I will keep the record as my life, and Yahawzhowaa as my Lord."

42. Then Shenat blessed him, laying hands upon him, and soon after departed in peace. And the people wept greatly, saying, "The Keeper has fallen asleep."

43. They buried Shenat beside the lake where he had once defied Koshet, and they sang psalms until the night, remembering his courage and his faith.

44. And Arel stood before them with the record in hand, declaring, "The Keeper has gone, but the word remains. We will not let it fall."

45. Thus began the days of Arel, son of mercy, prophet of Yahawzhowaa, bearer of the record, and leader of the People of the Way. And the Spirit of the Eternal was with him always.

CHAPTER 21

1. And it came to pass that after Shenat had fallen asleep and was buried with honor by the lakes, Arel took the record into his hands. The people looked upon him with hope, saying, "The Keeper is gone, but the Prophet remains."

2. Arel stood before them and declared, "I am no master, but a servant. Shenat guarded the record with his life; I will guard it with mine. Yahawzhowaa alone is Lord, and we are His witnesses."

3. Then he called the council together, with chiefs and elders, widows and youths, and said, "The Spirit commands that we go forth beyond the lakes, that every nation may hear. Who will go with me?"

4. Many rose at once, men and women both, saying, "We will go." And Nema, though old, said, "I will not stay behind. My son was raised to life; how can I keep silent?"

5. So they prepared canoes, packed food and skins, and sang hymns as they departed, while the people left behind prayed for them day and night.

6. They traveled many days, through rivers and forests, until they came into a valley where the earth was rich and the lodges were many. This was the land of the People of the Plains of Grass, and their chief was Katan, a man fierce in battle, proud in speech.

7. Katan received them with suspicion, asking, "Who are you, and why do you come into my land?"

8. Arel stepped forward with the record in his arms, saying, "We come not for conquest, but for mercy. We bear the word of Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal, who died and rose again, that all peoples might live."

9. Katan scoffed, saying, "Your God sounds weak, for He died. My gods demand blood and give me victory. Why should I heed one who was slain?"

10. Arel answered, "Your gods demand blood from others. Yahawzhowaa gave His own. Which is greater — to take life, or to

give it for the sake of many?"

11. The council murmured, some mocking, some wondering. Then Nema stepped forth, saying, "Once my son was dead, yet through Yahawzhowaa he lives. I cannot deny the truth I have seen."

12. And Arel called Arel forth — the young man once healed as a boy — and he lifted his voice, declaring, "I am living testimony. Once I lay as dust, now I live. Yahawzhowaa is life."

13. The people marveled, but Katan's priests cried out, "This is trickery! Drive them out!"

14. Yet a woman named Mira, wife of Katan, believed. She said, "I have longed for a god of mercy, not of terror. I believe this Yahawzhowaa." And she bowed her head in faith.

15. This angered Katan, who said, "You betray me before strangers." And he sought to drive Arel out by force.

16. But that night he dreamed: he saw himself on a high hill, clothed in armor, but beneath his feet the ground crumbled. And from below rose a river of fire to consume him.

17. He awoke trembling and called for Arel, saying, "Tell me the meaning."

18. Arel answered, "You stand in your own pride, but it will not hold. Only Yahawzhowaa is the rock that endures. If you will humble yourself, you will be spared."

19. Katan was shaken, but his pride held him fast. He said, "I will not bow." Yet many of his people believed, following Mira, and they were baptized in the river by moonlight.

20. Katan's priests raged, stirring the warriors, saying, "These strangers divide our house." They plotted to kill Arel and seize the record.

21. But the Spirit warned Arel in a dream: "Depart quickly, for betrayal rises."

22. At dawn he gathered his company, and they fled into the forests, leaving behind those who had believed, who whispered psalms in secret.

23. They journeyed into the mountains, where the paths were narrow and the air thin. There dwelt the People of the High Stones, whose chief was Oren, a man of wisdom.

24. Oren welcomed them with kindness, saying, "We have seen strange lights in the night sky, and we have dreamed of a great tree of fire. Perhaps you bring the meaning."

25. Arel opened the record and taught them of Yahawzhowaa, the Tree of Life, whose branches gather all peoples. And Oren believed with his household, and many with him.

26. But even among them arose deceivers, men who said, "Let us use this name to gain power." They sought to twist Arel's words, teaching that Yahawzhowaa gave them right to rule over others.

27. Arel stood against them, saying, "Yahawzhowaa came not to lift some above, but to lift all together. Mercy is not

a crown for rulers, but bread for the hungry. Cast away your pride, or you betray His name."

28. Some repented, but others hardened their hearts, and division arose.

29. Nema said, "It is as in the days of the youth, when some believed and others mocked. We must hold fast."

30. And Arel prayed, "O Eternal, let not pride steal Thy word." And the Spirit strengthened him.

31. They remained many days in the mountains, healing the sick, feeding the poor, comforting the broken, and the People of the High Stones grew strong in faith.

32. Oren declared, "This valley is the Eternal's, and we will keep His word." And he commanded his people to cease their wars, to share their food, and to honor the widows and orphans.

33. The people rejoiced, for peace filled their valley, and they sang psalms upon the heights, their voices echoing into the heavens.

34. Yet word of Arel's teaching spread, and envious chiefs plotted, saying, "If he unites the nations, our power will fade."

35. They sent messengers to Katan, saying, "Come, join with us against the Prophet, lest his name cover the land."

36. And Katan, still proud, agreed, though his heart trembled from the dream he had seen.

37. So the enemies of Arel prepared a net, not with spears alone, but with lies, saying, "Let us accuse him before the nations, that he deceives and enslaves, that he plots to take our lands."

38. And rumors spread, some believing, some doubting, and the nations were divided.

39. Arel heard and said, "It is as Yahawzhowaa spoke: they will hate you for My name's sake. But fear not, for the Spirit will bear witness."

40. Nema comforted him, saying, "You are not alone, my son. The Eternal has preserved us from storms and fire; He will preserve us still."

41. And Arel lifted the record before the people, saying, "This word is true. I will not deny it. If I must die, I will die, but the word will live."

42. The believers wept, saying, "We will not forsake you." And they fasted, preparing their hearts.

43. That night Arel dreamed again: he saw the birch scrolls, glowing with light, and he heard a voice say, "The witness of the ancients and the witness of the youth are one testimony, though kept apart. I have spoken from the beginning, and I will speak to the end."

44. He awoke rejoicing, telling the people, "The Eternal has shown me that we are not forgotten. We are joined to those who came before, and those yet to come. Yahawzhowaa gathers all."

45. And the people of the Way were strengthened, ready to face betrayal, ready to face fire, for the Spirit of the Eternal

was with them always.

BOOK TWO
THE RECORD OF THE PROPHET AREL AND THE NATIONS

CHAPTER 1
The Council of Many Chiefs

1. And it came to pass that after Shenat was laid to rest and Arel received the record, word of the People of the Way spread into many lands, until chiefs from valleys, mountains, and plains heard of the name of Yahawzhowaa.

2. Some marveled, saying, “These people fight not, yet none prevail against them. Their children sing songs of one who died and rose. What meaneth this?”

3. Others mocked, crying, “It is sorcery. They weaken the nations with peace. If we do not silence them, they will cover the land.”

4. Therefore a council was called in the valley of the rivers, where many chiefs and priests gathered. Some came to judge, some to learn, some to conspire. And they sent word to Arel, saying, “Come, and give account of this teaching, for thou hast divided our people.”

5. Arel prayed through the night, holding the record against his breast, saying, “O Eternal, I am but dust. Strengthen me, that I may testify of Yahawzhowaa without fear.”

6. At dawn he arose, and Nema walked beside him, saying, “My son, remember always that He who gave thee life will return. Fear not men.” And Arel wept, kissing her hand, saying, “I will not forget.”

7. With him also came the believers from the lakes, men and women, and Arel carried the record openly in his arms, as a witness.

8. When he entered the council, the chiefs sat in a circle, clothed in feathers, skins, and paint, and the priests stood with staffs of bone and stone. And the people thronged to hear.

9. The high chief, whose name was Doran, lifted his staff and said, “Arel, thou art accused. Thou hast brought a new word, dividing households, weakening altars, stirring nations. What sayest thou?”

10. Arel lifted the record high and answered, “I say not my word, but the word of Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal. He came in flesh, He was slain, He rose the third day, and He shall return again in glory. This is my testimony, and I will not deny it.”

11. Some scoffed, crying, “Dead men rise

not!" Others marveled, saying, "If it be true, it changes all."

12. Then a priest of shadows named Korel shouted, "You deceive! You speak of a man far away. Where is this Yahawzhowaa now?"

13. Arel answered, "He is risen and ascended unto the Eternal. But He shall come again. As sure as the dawn follows night, He will return. Even your children's children shall see His glory."

14. A murmur spread through the council, for none could deny the fire in his eyes.

15. Chief Doran asked, "What sign showest thou, that we may believe?"

16. Arel said, "The greatest sign ye need is already given — my life. Once I was dead, but through the prayer of the servant of Yahawzhowaa I was raised. Behold me, a witness that He is life."

17. The people gasped, and many pressed nearer, for they had heard of the boy who had lived again.

18. Then Nema stood, crying, "I am his mother. I buried him, yet now he lives. Can ye deny what your own eyes behold?"

19. Some chiefs rose to their feet, troubled, saying, "Surely the Eternal is with them." But the priests gnashed their teeth.

20. Korel cried, "Even if thy tale be true, what of our altars, our gods, our sacrifices? Shall we cast them aside for this Yahawzhowaa?"

21. Arel answered, "Your gods demand blood. Yahawzhowaa shed His own. Your altars bind you with fear. Yahawzhowaa sets free with mercy. Your sacrifices never end. Yahawzhowaa's sacrifice is once for all. Which will you choose?"

22. The council trembled with division. Some believed. Some mocked. Others whispered, "If this word grows, our power will perish."

23. Then Chief Doran spoke again, saying, "If thy Yahawzhowaa is Lord, what doth He promise us?"

24. Arel answered, "He promises life now, and life everlasting. He promises His Spirit as a guide, to comfort, to heal, to forgive. And He promises that He will come again, to judge the proud, to lift the humble, to gather every nation in one."

25. The believers cried aloud, "He will return! Yahawzhowaa will return!" And their voices shook the hall.

26. But the priests shouted against them, saying, "Blasphemy!" And they demanded that Arel be seized.

27. Yet Chief Doran lifted his hand, saying, "No hand shall touch him in my hall. We have heard his word. Let each choose what he will."

28. And the council broke apart in turmoil. Some chiefs departed believing. Others departed cursing. And the priests swore, "We will find him again, and this time he will not escape."

29. Arel and his company left the council, singing psalms, their voices strong though their enemies plotted.

30. And Arel said to the people, “Remember this always: Yahawzhowaa who died has risen, and Yahawzhowaa who rose will return. This is our hope, our strength, our song.”

31. Nema whispered to Arel, “The word is planted in many hearts this day. Some will grow, some will wither, but none will forget.”

32. Arel nodded, saying, “Then the Eternal has done His will.”

33. That night he prayed by the rivers, saying, “O Eternal, I have borne Thy word. Let it not fall to the ground. Let it rise in the generations.”

34. And the Spirit answered him, “Fear not. My word runs as rivers. It will not cease until the sea receives it. Hold fast, for My Son shall return.”

35. Arel returned to the People of the Way, who rejoiced at his safety. They asked, “What was said?”

36. And he told them all, repeating every word, and they wept for joy, saying, “The nations have heard. Yahawzhowaa has been testified of before many witnesses.”

37. Then they sang through the night, a psalm of hope: “He rose, He lives, He will return. We wait as watchmen for the dawn.”

38. The children joined in, their voices clear as bells, and the elders wept, saying, “This is the song that will never die.”

39. And the people carved upon wood the words: “He will return.” And they placed it in their lodges, that no generation should forget.

40. From that day forth, every teaching, every baptism, every psalm ended with the words: “He will return.”

41. Traders who passed through carried the saying into distant lands, until it was known among many peoples: “The followers of Yahawzhowaa say always, He will return.”

42. Some mocked them for it, but others believed, and the word spread even through enemies’ mouths.

43. Arel wrote upon the record, “I testified of Yahawzhowaa before chiefs and priests, and I declared that He shall return. The Spirit bore witness, and many believed.”

44. And he sealed it with a prayer: “Let every nation hear. Let no tongue be silent. Let all know that Yahawzhowaa comes again.”

45. Thus began the second record, the Book of the Prophet Arel, and the People of the Way rejoiced, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 2
The Emerald Tablets in the Cave

1. And it came to pass that the enemies of the People of the Way grew in number, and their plots were many. Therefore the Spirit led Arel and the believers into the mountains, that they might be preserved for a season.

2. They wandered among cliffs and

forests, until they came upon a narrow opening veiled with vines, and Arel felt the Spirit stir, saying, “Enter here.”

3. They pressed within, and behold, a cavern opened before them, vast and silent, its walls glittering as though a thousand stars were sealed in stone.

4. In the midst of the cave lay tablets, not of bark nor of skin, nor of clay nor of stone, but of emerald, shining with their own light, untouched by hand of man.

5. The people trembled, saying, “What is this wonder? Surely this place is older than the footsteps of our fathers.”

6. Arel drew near, and upon the emerald he beheld markings strange, etched as with fire. He touched the tablet, and his heart burned within him.

7. Then words arose in his mind, not from man, but from the Spirit, giving fragments of meaning, as a dream half-remembered.

8. He read of the Moon Garden, a place of peace among the high heavens, where the Eternal first gathered His children in joy.

9. And it spoke of the Son of Kings, chosen from the beginning, clothed in mercy, whose name was Yahawzhowaa before the making of the earth.

10. And it spoke of a brother of shadow, lifted in pride, who rose against the Son, saying, “I will take the throne of light.”

11. The heavens shook, and stars contended. Some fell as sparks, some stood fast in brightness, and the hosts were divided.

12. One tablet bore record of the Red Brother of our mother the Earth — Miskwa-nīmetāt — the wandering fire in the sky, where mighty ones contended and blood of the stars was spilled.

13. Another told of a world broken, shattered in rebellion, whose fragments yet glimmer among the heavens as a testimony of judgment.

14. They read of the faithful ones who clung to the Son, and of those cast down into darkness, bound by chains of pride.

15. And they marveled, saying, “Surely this is the war of which our fathers never spoke, for it was before the beginning of man.”

16. Arel bowed low, saying, “I do not understand these mysteries. I am but dust. Yet this much is plain: Yahawzhowaa was from the beginning, and Yahawzhowaa shall return at the end.”

17. Nema wept, for the light of the emeralds fell upon her face, and she cried, “The Eternal has remembered us. We are not only of the earth, but of the heavens.”

18. And the people said one to another, “We know now that we are children of the stars, kin of the light, for these tablets bear record of our first home.”

19. Arel lifted his hand, saying, “Let us not boast, for though our origin be in the heavens, we are but wanderers without Yahawzhowaa. He alone gathers us home.”

20. Then he wrote upon skins, “We beheld in the mountains emerald tablets,

bearing record of a war in heaven, of the Son of Kings, of the Red Brother, and of stars divided. We understood little, but we bore witness."

21. The people remained in the cave many days, singing psalms in hushed voices, their hearts heavy with wonder, for the place seemed holy.

22. At night the emeralds glowed brighter, and children lay upon the stone floor gazing at them, whispering, "We come from the stars."

23. Elders spoke, "It is as the boy prophesied: Yahawzhowaa gathers the scattered. If we are from the heavens, He shall return to gather us home again."

24. They fasted in the cave, seeking to know more, but the Spirit withheld, saying, "Not yet. In My time it shall be revealed."

25. And Arel told the people, "It is not for us to know all mysteries, but to keep the testimony. The Son was, the Son is, the Son shall be. This is enough."

26. They carved signs upon wood, marking the star, the cross, and the broken world, to remind their children of what they had seen.

27. Some feared, saying, "If we come from the stars, what are we now?" But Nema answered, "We are still the children of the Eternal. Heaven is our beginning, but Yahawzhowaa is our hope."

28. Arel prayed, "O Eternal, let not pride rise among us, for we are but dust carried by Thy mercy. Let us walk humbly, though our birth is among the stars."

29. The Spirit answered, "Be not proud, but be comforted. Ye are strangers on the earth because ye are not only of the earth. Ye are children of light, awaiting My Son."

30. The people rejoiced, singing, "We are not forsaken. We are not forgotten. Yahawzhowaa knows our beginning, and He will return to gather us at the end."

31. And they called the cave The Place of Origins, for it reminded them of their first dwelling before the earth was made.

32. Word spread among them, and they taught their children, saying, "Remember always: you are children of the stars, but Yahawzhowaa is the Lord of the stars."

33. They sealed the mouth of the cave with stone, lest enemies defile it, leaving the tablets untouched, saying, "The Eternal will reveal their full meaning in His time."

34. Yet they carried with them the memory of the light, and they wrote the fragments upon skins, binding them with the record of Arel, not to mingle, but to preserve as witness.

35. From that day forth their psalms changed, for they sang not only of the lakes and the forests, but of the heavens, the stars, and the promise of return.

36. Children looked at the Red Brother in the sky and whispered, "Miskwa-nīmetāt, the brother of the earth, once contended, but Yahawzhowaa shall bring peace."

37. Elders pointed to the broken lights in the night sky and said, "Fragments of

judgment, but also of mercy, for Yahawzhowaa endured so that we might be whole."

38. And they ended every prayer with the words, "He will return, not only to the earth, but to the heavens also."

39. Some mocked, saying, "These are dreams." But the believers answered, "It is written on emerald; who can deny it?"

40. Traders who heard the tale carried it into distant villages, saying, "The People of the Way claim they found writings of stars and of a Son before time."

41. Some laughed, but others trembled, and the word spread farther, carried even by those who doubted.

42. Arel wrote, "We do not understand, yet we bear record. For the Eternal chose to show us that Yahawzhowaa is from the beginning. This we know, this we testify."

43. And the people were strengthened, for though enemies hunted them, they said, "Our life is not small, but bound to the heavens."

44. And Nema whispered, "If He came once to earth, He will come again from the stars. Let us wait in hope."

45. Thus the testimony of the emerald tablets entered the record, and the People of the Way rejoiced in their wonder, for they knew they were children of the stars, and the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 3
The Nations Hear of the Emerald Tablets

1. And it came to pass that when Arel and the People of the Way departed from the cave of emerald, they sealed its mouth with stone and vine, saying, "This place is holy. We will not profane it, neither will we use it for gain."

2. Yet they carried the memory in their hearts, and they wrote upon skins, "We beheld tablets of emerald, and they bore witness that Yahawzhowaa was from the beginning, and that we are children of the stars."

3. And they returned to the valleys and the lakes, giving thanks unto the Eternal, testifying to all who would hear, "He lives, and He shall return."

4. But the tale of the emerald tablets spread as fire among dry reeds, for traders and wanderers bore it into many villages, some saying with awe, "They have seen the writings of heaven," and others scoffing, "They tell lies to exalt themselves."

5. Chiefs of distant nations sent messengers, demanding, "Show us these tablets, that we may judge if the word be true."

6. But Arel answered, "We sealed the cave, and we will not break it. The Eternal has not commanded that these things be shown to every eye, but only preserved as a witness until His time."

7. Some believed him, saying, "It is wisdom, for holy things must be guarded." But others grew angry, crying, "He hides

them to gain power, and deceives the nations."

8. Priests of the old ways stirred the people, saying, "See how he claims visions, yet shows nothing. Surely he invents." And they plotted to seize him.

9. Yet the Spirit strengthened Arel, and he declared boldly, "Whether you believe or not, this is my testimony: Yahawzhowaa was before the earth, He walks among us, and He shall return again. This is the meaning of the tablets."

10. Some marveled, crying, "If the heavens have borne His name, then He is greater than all gods." But others gnashed their teeth.

11. And a council was called by the river of broad reeds, where chiefs from seven nations gathered, demanding, "Speak, Arel, what mean these tablets of emerald?"

12. Arel stood before them with the record in his arms, and his face shone with courage. He said, "They testify of a war before time, of stars divided, of the Son of Kings chosen from the beginning, whose name is Yahawzhowaa."

13. And he lifted his voice, crying, "We are not only of the dust, but of the stars. Yet without Yahawzhowaa we are nothing. In Him we live, in Him we return."

14. A murmur rose among the nations, some believing, some mocking, some fearful.

15. Then Chief Tomanah of the plains cried aloud, "If what you say is true, then our gods of stone are nothing. Why should we bow to Yahawzhowaa, whom our fathers never knew?"

16. Arel answered, "Your fathers knew Him though they named Him not. For the tablets bear record that the Eternal has spoken from the beginning, and every nation is His. Yahawzhowaa is not new; He is from before the world."

17. Then Chief Sewa, a woman of the high mountains, rose and said, "My dreams showed me a tree whose roots touched the earth but whose branches touched the stars. Now I know it is Yahawzhowaa."

18. And many of her people believed, crying, "We are children of the tree, branches of His light."

19. But others hardened their hearts, saying, "If you do not show us the tablets, we will not believe."

20. Arel cried, "Would you worship stone if I gave it to you? Yahawzhowaa is not stone, but Spirit, and He shall return. That is the witness."

21. The priests of shadow shouted, "Blasphemy!" and stirred the council against him, demanding his death.

22. But Chief Sewa stood in his defense, crying, "You shall not harm him, for his word is fire, and my heart burns with it. If you kill him, you kill truth."

23. Thus the council was divided, some favoring Arel, others plotting against him.

24. That night Arel prayed, saying, "O Eternal, let not Thy people stumble. Give us strength to endure, even if the nations rage."

25. In vision he saw the emerald tablets

again, glowing as fire, and a voice said, “These testify that My Son is from the beginning, and He shall return. Fear not, for though nations rise against you, My word cannot be slain.”

26. Arel awoke with peace, and told the believers, “We must endure. Whether men believe or not, Yahawzhowaa’s return is sure.”

27. And they went forth singing, “He came, He lives, He will return,” their voices echoing among the rivers and plains.

28. The children repeated the words, carving them upon wood and stone, so that no ear could forget.

29. And though their enemies mocked, the song of return spread farther, carried even by those who opposed them, until many nations heard the testimony.

30. Yet the priests hardened their hearts, whispering in secret, “We will wait until they are few, then strike.”

31. But the believers grew in number, for the Spirit worked among the humble, and they cared for the poor, healed the sick, and forgave their enemies.

32. And strangers marveled, saying, “These people are not conquered, for they have hope beyond the earth.”

33. Nema, though weary with years, still walked among them, declaring, “My son was dead, yet he lives. This is the sign that Yahawzhowaa shall return. If He gave life once, He will give it again.”

34. And the people honored her, calling her Mother of the Living, for her witness strengthened all.

35. In those days Arel wrote upon the skins, “We are strangers and wanderers, for our home is among the stars, and Yahawzhowaa shall return to gather us.”

36. And he sealed it with a psalm: “O Eternal, though men mock, Thy word endures. Though nations rage, Thy Son returns. Though we are dust, we are Thine.”

37. And the psalm was sung by the people, until it became their watchword: “We are children of the stars, yet servants of Yahawzhowaa, who shall return.”

38. When enemies came against them, they answered not with spear but with the psalm, and the raiders trembled, saying, “We cannot defeat those who fear not death.”

39. And some raiders, hearing the psalm, laid down their weapons and believed, saying, “If this hope is true, then Yahawzhowaa is Lord.”

40. Thus even the enemies became brothers, and the people grew.

41. But the priests of shadow still hardened their hearts, vowing in secret, “We will not rest until the record is destroyed.”

42. Yet the believers guarded it with faith, saying, “It is not ours but the Eternal’s. No hand of man can quench what is written by the Spirit.”

43. And the Spirit whispered, “Behold, ye are witnesses not only of earth, but of heaven. Hold fast, for My Son shall

return."

44. And the people rejoiced, though surrounded by hatred, for their hearts were lifted to the stars, and their eyes to the promise.

45. Thus the nations first heard of the emerald tablets, and though many disbelieved, the testimony spread, and the People of the Way sang unceasingly, "He will return," for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 4
The Rising of the False Teachers

1. And it came to pass that after the council of the nations, the People of the Way rejoiced greatly, for many had believed the word. Yet even among the believers were some whose hearts were lifted up in pride.

2. For they said within themselves, "We have seen mysteries hidden from the world. We are greater than other nations, for we know that we are children of the stars."

3. And their words spread among the people, so that some began to boast of their knowledge, saying, "The earth is not our mother only; we are lords of heaven also."

4. Arel heard of this boasting and was sorrowful. He gathered the people and said, "Hear me: the tablets were given not to lift us above, but to bow us low. We are dust, and Yahawzhowaa alone is our light. Without Him we are nothing."

5. But some hardened their hearts, whispering, "Arel seeks to keep power for himself. Why should we not lead, for we too have read the tablets?"

6. Among them was a man named Seran, strong of voice and bold in speech. He declared, "The stars are our inheritance, and the tablets prove it. Why wait for Yahawzhowaa's return when we can claim our glory now?"

7. Many were troubled by his words, for they were wrapped in pride but sounded like wisdom.

8. Nema stood before him, saying, "My son was raised not by my strength, nor by stars, but by Yahawzhowaa alone. Beware, lest you worship creation and forget the Creator."

9. But Seran mocked her, crying, "You are old and blind. We are not weaklings waiting for a savior. We are saviors ourselves."

10. A murmur rose in the crowd, some weeping, some wondering, some wavering.

11. Then Arel lifted the record high and cried with a loud voice, "Thus says the Eternal: Yahawzhowaa is from the beginning, Yahawzhowaa is our life, Yahawzhowaa will return. If any man preaches another hope, let him be accursed."

12. The people fell silent, for the Spirit shook them. Yet Seran's followers whispered still, plotting in secret.

13. In the days that followed, some began to teach in hidden places, saying, "The emerald tablets give us authority. Let us

rule the nations, for we are children of the stars."

14. They adorned themselves with signs of the heavens, carving images of fire and stars, bowing to them as gods.

15. And they began to say, "Yahawzhowaa may return, or He may not. We are His equals, for we share His birth among the stars."

16. The faithful wept, for they saw brothers and sisters fall into deceit.

17. Arel cried to the Eternal in fasting, saying, "O Lord, preserve Thy people, for the enemy now rises not from without but from within."

18. And in vision he saw a tree, mighty and tall, its roots deep in the earth, its branches among the stars. But serpents coiled about its trunk, whispering lies, while the fruit above shone with light.

19. And the Spirit said, "The tree is My people, the fruit is My Son, the serpents are deceivers. Guard the fruit, for many would steal it."

20. Arel awoke, and told the people, "Hold fast the fruit, which is Yahawzhowaa. Do not be deceived by the serpents, for their voices are sweet but their venom is death."

21. Yet Seran grew bold, gathering disciples, proclaiming, "The return of Yahawzhowaa is a fable. The tablets prove we are already kings. Follow me, and I will give you rule over nations."

22. Some followed him, leaving the fellowship of the Way, and darkness grew among them.

23. They no longer sang, "He will return," but cried instead, "We are rulers now."

24. But the faithful clung tighter, gathering nightly in psalms, crying aloud, "We wait for Yahawzhowaa! He lives, and He will return!"

25. And their voices rose higher than the scoffers, filling the valleys with hope.

26. Then Nema, though weary, stood once more and cried, "Children, remember: He who raised the dead will return to raise us all. Do not forget your hope."

27. The children wept, running to her, and the Spirit strengthened them.

28. Arel wrote upon skins, "Already false teachers rise among us, twisting the word. They glory in the stars but forget the Maker of stars. They deny His return. But we testify: He will return."

29. And he sealed it with a psalm: "O Eternal, keep us lowly. Make us servants, not lords. Let us cling to Thy Son and not to our pride."

30. Word of the division spread, and other nations laughed, saying, "See how they cannot agree. Their faith is broken."

31. But some, hearing both sides, chose the truth, saying, "We will wait for Yahawzhowaa, for His mercy is better than pride."

32. And the Spirit moved among them, healing their fears, binding their hearts, making them steadfast.

33. Yet Seran and his followers hardened

their hearts, swearing, “We will return to the caves, and we will claim the tablets for ourselves. Then none shall deny our greatness.”

34. The faithful wept at these words, for they feared desecration of the holy place.

35. Arel cried, “The Eternal will not allow it. The tablets are His, and no hand of pride will touch them.”

36. But the Spirit whispered to him, “They will try, and their fall shall be a witness.”

37. So Arel warned the people, “Guard not the tablets with hands, but with faith. The Eternal Himself will protect what is His.”

38. In those days the believers strengthened their fellowship, sharing bread, praying, and comforting one another.

39. And though betrayal was near, their hope grew brighter, for they said, “If Yahawzhowaa foretold false teachers, then truly His word is sure, and His return is near.”

40. Thus even deception became a testimony, proving that the Son had spoken truly.

41. Arel wept, not for himself, but for those who had turned aside, saying, “O Eternal, if it be possible, turn their hearts back before they perish.”

42. Yet the Spirit answered, “Some will return, others will fall. My Son will judge them at His coming.”

43. Therefore the people ceased from arguing with the deceivers, but only bore witness, crying always, “He will return.”

44. And their song grew louder, filling the mountains and valleys, so that even those who mocked could not silence it.

45. Thus the first false teachers rose among the People of the Way, twisting the testimony of the stars, but the faithful endured, singing always of the return of Yahawzhowaa, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them.

CHAPTER 5
The Rebellion of Seran

1. And it came to pass that Seran, swollen with pride, gathered a band of men who followed him, and they plotted together, saying, “The emerald tablets shall be ours. We will break the cave and claim their power, and the nations shall bow to us.”

2. For Seran said, “The heavens are our inheritance, and Yahawzhowaa delays His coming. Why should we wait for Him, when the stars already witness that we are lords?”

3. His words tickled the ears of many, and they lifted their faces with arrogance, boasting of visions they had not seen.

4. But Arel warned them, saying, “The Eternal gave the tablets as witness, not for rule. Touch them not, lest judgment fall upon you.”

5. Yet Seran mocked, crying, “Arel is jealous of our greatness. He fears we will surpass him. Come, let us show the people

that the heavens are ours."

6. And in secret they departed, climbing the mountains, seeking the cave of emerald once more.

7. But the faithful followed after in sorrow, not with spears, but with psalms, hoping to turn them back before it was too late.

8. Seran and his band broke the seals of vine and stone, forcing their way into the holy place.

9. And behold, the tablets still shone, untouched by dust, glowing with fire of their own.

10. Seran lifted his hand toward them, crying, "Behold! The stars are mine! I am king over heaven and earth!"

11. His followers shouted with him, bowing to the emerald light as though it were their crown.

12. But the cavern shook, and a sound like thunder rolled through the stone. The tablets glowed brighter, burning with fire, and their light struck down Seran.

13. He fell upon the ground, writhing, crying, "It burns! It burns!" For the fire of heaven consumed his pride.

14. His followers fled in terror, but the mouth of the cave closed behind them, and many were crushed among the rocks.

15. The faithful outside trembled, singing psalms, and they beheld the mountain itself quake.

16. Then the Spirit whispered to Arel, "Fear not. The Eternal guards His own. None may claim what is holy through pride."

17. After the shaking ceased, the mouth of the cave was sealed as with one stone, smooth and unbroken, and no man could open it.

18. Arel wept for Seran, crying, "O Eternal, pride has slain him. May his fall be a warning to all."

19. And the faithful answered, "So perish all who exalt themselves against Yahawzhowaa. He is Lord alone."

20. From that day forth none dared approach the mountain, for the fear of the Eternal was upon them.

21. Yet the nations heard of Seran's rebellion, and the story spread as fire: "He sought to seize the tablets, but was struck down by their light."

22. Some mocked still, saying, "It is fable," but others trembled, crying, "Surely Yahawzhowaa is Lord, and His return cannot be denied."

23. Chiefs of many nations sent messengers to Arel, saying, "Tell us of this judgment, that we may learn."

24. Arel answered, "It is not the tablets that save, nor their fire that condemns, but Yahawzhowaa Himself. They are but witness of His glory. Believe on Him, for He will return."

25. And he wrote upon skins, "Pride is death. Humility is life. Yahawzhowaa was, Yahawzhowaa is, Yahawzhowaa shall return."

26. The faithful sang a new psalm: "We are not lords of the stars. We are children

of the stars. Yahawzhowaa is Lord, and we bow to Him."

27. Mothers taught their children, "Boast not in what is hidden. Trust only in Yahawzhowaa, for His light is mercy."

28. And children repeated, "He will return," so that even babes declared the promise.

29. The followers of Seran who survived fled into the forests, ashamed, and some returned weeping, begging forgiveness.

30. Arel received them, saying, "Repent, and Yahawzhowaa will forgive. His mercy is greater than your rebellion."

31. Some were healed and restored, and they testified, "We saw the fire of judgment, but Yahawzhowaa spared us. Truly He is Lord."

32. But others hardened their hearts, vanishing into the wilderness, plotting still in secret, though their number was few.

33. The nations marveled, saying, "This people is not like others, for they forgive their enemies and sing of hope though they are despised."

34. And many were drawn to the Way, not by signs of power, but by mercy and peace.

35. Arel prayed daily, "O Eternal, let me never fall as Seran fell. Keep my heart lowly, that I may only serve."

36. And the Spirit answered, "So long as thou dost sing of My Son, pride shall not master thee."

37. In those days the believers grew greatly, though persecuted, for the story of Seran's fall was a witness to all.

38. They said, "See how pride consumes, but humility preserves."

39. And they clung all the more to the psalm: "He came, He lives, He will return."

40. The widows and orphans lifted their voices, singing, "Yahawzhowaa remembers us. His light is greater than fire."

41. Thus their songs carried farther than their enemies' swords.

42. The chiefs of other nations whispered among themselves, "Perhaps we too should bow to Yahawzhowaa, lest pride destroy us as it destroyed Seran."

43. And some did believe, sending gifts of food and skins, saying, "Teach us of His way."

44. Arel rejoiced, for he saw that even judgment gave birth to mercy, and that Yahawzhowaa's name spread farther still.

45. Thus the rebellion of Seran ended, and the cave of the emerald tablets was sealed forever by the hand of the Eternal, and the People of the Way testified always that Yahawzhowaa was from the beginning and shall return in glory, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them.

CHAPTER 6
The Dividing of the Nations

1. And it came to pass that after the fall of Seran and the sealing of the cave of emerald, the tale spread swiftly, not only among the People of the Way but through the lodges of distant valleys and along the

rivers of the plains. Some told it in trembling voices, declaring that the Eternal Himself had guarded His testimony with fire; others scoffed, saying, “These are dreams of weaklings, fables of men who cannot wield spears.” Yet whether believed or mocked, the tale was carried everywhere, and none could escape its weight.

2. Therefore the chiefs of many nations were troubled, for the faith of the People of the Way grew, not with armies nor with tribute, but with hope. They said one to another, “What shall we do with those who forgive when they are struck, who bless when they are cursed, who share bread with their enemies? Their mercy eats away at our power, and their psalms unsettle the hearts of our people.”

3. Some chiefs spoke in anger, declaring, “If we allow them to spread further, our altars will be cast down, our authority mocked, and the blood of our sacrifices will be despised. Better to strike now and scatter them before they cover the land.”

4. Yet others spoke in wonder, confessing, “We have seen their lives. They are not lifted up in pride, nor do they bow to idols of stone. They speak of Yahawzhowaa, who died and rose, and they walk as if His Spirit lives among them. If this be folly, then folly is greater than all our wisdom.”

5. So the nations were divided in their hearts, some bending toward mercy, others grasping tightly the pride of their fathers. And the Eternal permitted this division, that all might be revealed: who would love the light, and who would cling to the darkness.

6. In that season a great council was called at the River of Seven Currents, a place where streams from the mountains, plains, and forests met together in a single flood. Messengers summoned the chiefs and priests of many peoples, and a multitude gathered to see what would be spoken.

7. Arel came also with the believers, bearing the record bound in skins, holding it to his heart as witness. They came without spear or staff of war, their only strength the psalms on their lips and the Spirit that burned within them.

8. The circle of chiefs was broad, their faces painted, their bodies clothed in feathers and shells, their staffs carved with symbols of their tribes. Around them stood the priests of shadow, grim and hardened, their staffs of bone clutched in hands eager for strife.

9. Then rose Sewa, the woman-chief of the high mountains. Her voice rang out clear, like thunder rolling across peaks. She declared, “I have heard their word and seen their works. They heal without price, they forgive without demand, they sing of Yahawzhowaa who was slain and who rose. In my dreams I saw a tree rooted in the earth but whose branches touched the stars, and now I know it is He. As for me and my people, we will follow

Yahawzhowaa."

10. At her words, her people lifted their hands, crying aloud, "He will return! He will return!" and their voices echoed across the waters until the river seemed to answer back.

11. But Tomanah, chief of the plains, leapt to his feet in fury. He struck the earth with his staff and shouted, "You betray the ways of our fathers! You bow to a foreign name and bring shame upon your people. I will not follow this Yahawzhowaa. I will break His followers as dry reeds beneath my heel, and their psalms will choke no more."

12. Fear rippled among the nations, for Tomanah was mighty in battle, and many trembled at his wrath. Yet the Spirit gave courage to others, and the word of mercy did not perish.

13. Then Doran, elder of the rivers, rose. His hair was white, his voice heavy with the weight of years. He said, "I have watched these people. I have seen them scorned, yet they do not scorn. I have seen them struck, yet they bless. I have seen them hunted, yet they forgive. If this is weakness, then weakness is greater than all our strength. I will believe, and I will walk in their way."

14. The priests of shadow could not endure his witness. They cried out, "Blasphemy! Lies! Their psalms are sorcery, their record a trick. If we allow them to live, all nations will fall to their madness. Silence them now!"

15. But Arel lifted the record high above his head, his eyes blazing with the fire of the Spirit, and he cried, "Hear me, O nations! We come not to seize your lands, nor to take your tribute, nor to enslave your children. We come only to testify that Yahawzhowaa lived, that He died, that He rose, and that He shall return in glory. This is our word, this is our hope, and no power of earth or sky can silence it."

16. His words pierced the council like a sword, cutting the hearts of the humble with joy and the hearts of the proud with rage.

17. Then Mira, wife of Katan, who had long suffered in silence, stood among the women and cried, "Once I feared the anger of men, but I will fear them no more. I will follow Yahawzhowaa, for His mercy is greater than death."

18. At her words many women rose with her, their voices strong as they sang, "He will return! He will return!" Their chorus filled the council until the priests of shadow gnashed their teeth and covered their ears.

19. The priests shouted, "Silence these women, for they bring shame upon their lords." But Arel answered boldly, "In Yahawzhowaa there is neither lord nor servant, man nor woman, elder nor child. All are one in Him, and all may testify, for He will return to gather all nations."

20. The song of the women swelled greater still, and the Spirit moved in power. Some chiefs trembled, tears falling from

their eyes, while others clenched their fists in fury.

21. And the council broke apart in confusion. Some declared openly, “We will follow Yahawzhowaa.” Others swore, “We will kill these dreamers and scatter them from the earth.” Thus the nations divided, and the Eternal marked the line between mercy and wrath.

22. The People of the Way returned to their lodges with heavy hearts yet lifted heads, for though war was near, their hope burned brighter. They sang as they walked, “He came, He lives, He will return,” and the mountains echoed their song.

23. That night Arel prayed with fasting, crying, “O Eternal, the nations rage, the priests plot, the chiefs divide. Preserve Thy people, lest we stumble.”

24. In vision he saw the heavens open, and Yahawzhowaa stood in light, His hands outstretched, the wounds of His sacrifice still visible. And Yahawzhowaa said, “Fear not. I am with you. My return is sure. Tell them again and again: I come quickly.”

25. Arel awoke with tears upon his face, and he declared the vision to the people. And they rejoiced greatly, for they felt the Spirit burn within their hearts.

26. They sang through the night, louder than before: “He came, He lives, He will return.” And the sound carried into the camps of their enemies, who trembled though they hardened their hearts.

27. Children ran through the villages with laughter, crying, “He will return!” Their voices rang like bells, and even those who mocked could not silence them.

28. Some raiders came by night to strike the believers, but when they were fed by those they sought to kill, they marveled, saying, “We came to shed blood, but they gave us bread. Surely Yahawzhowaa lives.” And some laid down their weapons, joining the Way.

29. Yet others returned to their chiefs, more furious than before, crying, “These people conquer without spears. If we do not destroy them, they will overtake the earth.”

30. So Tomanah sharpened his weapons and gathered warriors, swearing, “I will silence their song. I will crush their hope. Yahawzhowaa will not return.”

31. But his wife, hearing the psalms of the women, wept in secret, saying, “If mercy is weakness, I long for such weakness.”

32. In those days the faithful grew, for even as enemies surrounded them, their love spread wider. They cared for the poor, clothed the naked, and healed the sick.

33. And strangers marveled, saying, “These people are not of earth alone. They are children of the stars, yet they walk among us with kindness.”

34. The priests of shadow, enraged, whispered, “If we cannot silence them with fear, we will slander them with lies.” And they spread rumors, saying, “The People of the Way plot against the nations, seeking

to enslave."

35. Yet the believers answered not with defense, but only with their psalms, crying, "He will return," and their enemies found no weapon against such hope.

36. Arel wrote upon skins, "The word of Yahawzhowaa divides nations. It humbles the humble and hardens the proud. It is sharper than spears and deeper than rivers. This is our testimony: He will return."

37. The widows lifted their hands and cried, "We are not forsaken." The orphans sang, "We are not forgotten." And the Spirit filled the camp with light.

38. Though enemies raged, the believers grew stronger, for their hope was rooted in Yahawzhowaa, not in peace among men.

39. Nema, though weary with age, still walked among the people, declaring, "My son was dead, yet he lives. This is the sign that He shall return to raise us all. Let no heart faint."

40. And the people honored her, calling her Mother of the Living, for her faith gave life to all.

41. The nations continued to divide, some chiefs openly declaring for Yahawzhowaa, others plotting war. But the People of the Way sang without ceasing, their voices rising like incense to heaven.

42. Enemies mocked, saying, "Your song will not save you." But the believers answered, "It already has, for our lives are not our own, but His."

43. In every psalm, every prayer, every teaching, they ended with the words, "He will return." And these words spread even through the mouths of their foes.

44. And so the testimony grew: some embraced it, others despised it, but none could escape it. For the Eternal Himself carried the sound upon the winds, planting it in the hearts of men.

45. Thus the nations were divided, mercy against pride, peace against war. And the People of the Way endured in hope, declaring with one voice, "He will return," for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 7
The First War Against the People of the Way

1. And it came to pass in the one hundred and fifty-second year since Yahawzhowaa the Anointed walked among men, was slain, and rose again, that the record yet endured. For it had been borne first by the youth who sealed his testimony with blood; and when he was slain, it passed unto Agonabish, who guarded it with tears and fire; and after many years it came unto Shenat, who was named the Keeper; and when Shenat's bones were gathered to the earth, the record was placed into the hands of Arel, child of mercy, prophet to the nations.

2. Thus was the record preserved, handed from generation to generation, so that none could say, "We were left

without witness." For the Spirit preserved it by the hand of the humble, and the testimony grew even while enemies raged against it.

3. In those days, the nations were sharply divided, for some chiefs and villages bowed to the mercy of Yahawzhowaa, while others hardened their hearts, clinging to idols of stone and altars of blood. And the priests of shadow stirred up wrath, whispering in secret, "The People of the Way grow strong in hope; if we do not strike them soon, they will cover the land."

4. Therefore Tomanah, chief of the plains, swore an oath before his warriors, saying, "I will silence their psalms, I will break their hope, and I will blot out the name of Yahawzhowaa from among the nations."

5. And the priests rejoiced, for they had long kindled his anger. They promised him dominion, whispering with tongues of deceit, "Strike quickly, and you shall be feared among nations. Call upon us, and we shall bind their spirits, and none shall remember their Yahawzhowaa."

6. So Tomanah gathered a war band, fierce men of the plains, painted for battle, their spears sharp, their clubs heavy, their eyes filled with fire. And they swore to him, "We will scatter these dreamers like chaff before the wind, for they carry no weapons, nor shields, nor strong walls."

7. But word of this fell upon the ears of Arel and the believers, and their hearts trembled. Mothers clutched their children, and elders wept, saying, "Shall we perish, though we have walked in mercy? Shall we be broken, though we have sung the psalms of His return?"

8. Then Arel lifted the record high, and the Spirit rested upon him. He cried, "Fear not those who slay the body but cannot touch the soul. Did not Yahawzhowaa Himself say, 'Lo, I am with you always'? Whether we live or die, we are His. Stand firm, and sing, for He shall return."

9. So the people fasted, and they prayed all that night. They did not sharpen spears, nor did they build walls, but they lifted their voices as one, crying, "He came, He lives, He will return."

10. And the Spirit descended among them like a fire not of this world, and the elders saw visions. Yahawzhowaa stood before them clothed in light, His hands outstretched, the wounds still visible, saying, "I am with you. My return is sure."

11. At dawn the warriors of Tomanah came against them, their shouts like thunder, their steps shaking the ground, their spears glinting like the teeth of beasts. Fear swept over the believers, yet their song did not cease.

12. They lifted their psalm louder, crying, "He will return! He will return!" And the valley echoed with their voices until even the birds stilled to listen.

13. The war band faltered, for never had they seen a people without weapons sing in the face of death. Some stumbled, some

trembled, some turned back in fear.

14. Yet Tomanah pressed forward, seizing a youth of the Way, lifting his spear to slay him before all. But the boy, though trembling, lifted his eyes and sang with faint voice, “Yahawzhowaa lives, and He will return.”

15. At that word, the hand of Tomanah froze, and his heart quaked within him. Though he hated the psalm, the Spirit pierced his soul, and he cast the boy aside, trembling in fury and dread.

16. The priests of shadow cried out, “Strike, Tomanah! Strike!” But he turned upon them, saying, “Why do their words burn me? Why can I not silence them?”

17. Then the priests lifted their staffs, calling upon spirits of darkness, but the psalms of the faithful drowned them out. Every whisper of shadow was consumed by the shout, “He will return!”

18. Suddenly the sky darkened, and a storm rose from the east. Thunder rolled like the voice of the Eternal, and lightning split the heavens.

19. Rain poured down in torrents, quenching the fires of the raiders, soaking their weapons, blinding their eyes. The earth trembled, and the River of Seven Currents swelled in fury.

20. The believers stood unbroken, their song rising above the storm, their faces lifted to heaven. And the Spirit whispered to Arel, “Behold, I am with you. Spears shall fail, floods shall rage, but My Son shall return.”

21. The warriors fell upon their faces in terror, crying, “This storm is not of men but of the Eternal.” And some cast down their spears, fleeing from the plain, declaring, “Surely Yahawzhowaa is Lord.”

22. Yet others hardened their hearts, clinging to pride, and the swelling river swept them away, their cries lost in the flood.

23. When the storm ceased, the believers stood unharmed, their voices still crying, “He will return.” The valley bore witness that no spear had saved them, but only the hand of the Eternal.

24. Tomanah himself fled into the wilderness, torn between fear and rage, saying in his heart, “I cannot fight them, for their strength is not of earth, yet I will not bow to their Yahawzhowaa.”

25. The priests of shadow fled also, their staffs broken, their power mocked by the storm. And they swore in secret, “If we cannot destroy them with spears, we will destroy them with lies.”

26. The faithful wept with joy, saying, “The Eternal has preserved us. Our psalms have been our shield, our song our sword.”

27. And Arel wrote upon skins, “In the one hundred and fifty-second year since Yahawzhowaa departed, the nations rose against us, but Yahawzhowaa preserved His people. Spears failed, floods raged, yet we endured by His mercy. He will return.”

28. That night the people sang through the valleys, their psalm carried by the winds to distant lodges. Even those who

had not seen the storm heard the testimony of deliverance.

29. Mothers lifted their children high, declaring, “Behold, Yahawzhowaa preserved us today, and He will preserve us again when He returns.”

30. Elders laid their hands upon the youth, blessing them to carry the song to generations yet unborn, saying, “Do not fear death, for Yahawzhowaa conquered death already.”

31. Strangers who had come to mock remained to believe, confessing, “We came to laugh, but we have seen the hand of the Eternal. We will follow Yahawzhowaa.”

32. The People of the Way grew in number, though they raised no spear, for mercy was their strength and testimony their defense.

33. From that day forth the nations spoke of the Storm of the Seven Currents, and many said, “The Eternal Himself fought for them.”

34. Yet some mocked, saying, “It was but chance, a storm of the sky,” though their hearts quaked with fear at the memory.

35. The priests of shadow spread lies, declaring, “They are sorcerers, summoning storms with their psalms. Beware lest they bind you with enchantments.”

36. But the believers answered not with wrath, only singing, “We are bound to no enchantment. We are servants of Yahawzhowaa, who will return.”

37. Thus the nations divided further, mercy against wrath, faith against fear. Yet the People of the Way endured in hope, their song louder than the spears of men.

38. They carved upon wood and stone the words: He will return. They placed them by rivers, along paths, and upon lodge doors, that all who passed might see.

39. Children inscribed the words in the dust, singing as they played, until even their games bore witness to the promise.

40. Travelers carried the story farther still, so that villages who had never seen Arel nor his people spoke of the storm and of the psalms of the Way.

41. Some heard and mocked, but others trembled, saying, “If Yahawzhowaa commands storms, who can stand against Him?”

42. In those days the believers had peace for a little season, for their enemies feared to strike again. And the faithful grew, for the testimony of Yahawzhowaa was carried to every ear.

43. Nema, though heavy with age, lifted her voice, saying, “See, my children, how He has not forsaken us. As He preserved my son, so He has preserved this people. Surely He shall return to raise us all.”

44. And the people honored her as Mother of the Living, for her faith strengthened them, and her words were preserved in the record beside the psalms of Arel.

45. Thus in the one hundred and fifty-second year since Yahawzhowaa departed, the first war was raised against the People of the Way, yet they endured without

weapons, their song stronger than spears, and their testimony sure: He will return, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 8
The Season of Peace & the Deception of the Priests

1. And it came to pass in the one hundred and fifty-fourth year since Yahawzhowaa departed from among men, after the storm of the Seven Currents, that the People of the Way had peace for a little season. For the nations trembled at what they had seen, and many chiefs feared to lift a spear against those whom the Eternal had preserved.

2. Villages that once scorned them opened their gates, saying, “Enter, you who have been spared by the storm. Teach us of this Yahawzhowaa.” And the believers came humbly, not as conquerors but as servants, carrying bread and healing herbs, speaking mercy, singing psalms.

3. Mothers of many tribes brought their children to hear the words, and the children laughed in wonder as they learned the songs of the Way, their voices crying, “He will return,” with joy as natural as breathing.

4. Chiefs of distant valleys sent messengers with gifts, confessing, “We cannot deny the hand of the Eternal. If Yahawzhowaa preserved you, then surely He lives.” And some pledged openly to walk in the Way, laying down altars of stone, casting idols into the rivers, saying, “We will bow to no god but the Eternal.”

5. The People of the Way rejoiced, but they did not lift themselves in pride. Arel reminded them, saying, “We are but dust, yet His breath fills us. We are but wanderers, yet His mercy guides us. Remember always that the storm was not ours, but His.”

6. So they carved upon skins the record of their deliverance, binding it with the testimonies of the emerald cave, writing, “In this year, the Eternal showed mercy, that all may know Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

7. But the priests of shadow, though scattered, were not destroyed. They met in secret caves and whispering lodges, gnashing their teeth. They said, “Their psalms conquer more than their spears. We cannot strike them openly, for the people love them now. Let us sow deceit in secret, and turn their mercy against them.”

8. And they raised up young men who were skilled in words and dreams, teaching them to utter false visions. They said, “Go among the believers. Say that Yahawzhowaa has already returned, or that He delays forever, or that He is but a spirit and not Lord. Confuse their song, and it will lose its power.”

9. Thus deceivers crept among the Way, speaking smoothly, saying, “We too have seen visions, and Yahawzhowaa told us new things. He has no need to return, for

His kingdom is already in your hearts. Do not look for Him with your eyes, but only with your thoughts."

10. Some weak in faith listened and wondered, saying, "Is it so? If He has already returned, why do we sing still?" But the Spirit stirred Arel, and he rose to warn them.

11. He lifted the record high and cried, "Do not be deceived! The emerald tablets bore witness that Yahawzhowaa was from the beginning and that He shall return in the end. Do not let smooth words steal your hope. Hold fast the psalm: He came, He lives, He will return."

12. The faithful wept with relief, saying, "Our hope is not empty. The record speaks. The Spirit confirms. He will return."

13. But the deceivers hardened their hearts, twisting their words sharper still. They whispered to the proud, saying, "Why wait for Him at all? You are already like gods, children of the stars, lords of the heavens. The emerald tablets prove it."

14. And some were led astray, repeating, "We are lords. We are kings. Yahawzhowaa need not return." Their psalms grew faint, replaced by boasting.

15. Arel grieved, tearing his garments, and cried to the Eternal, "How long, O Lord, will pride and shadow rise against Your people? Have mercy on those deceived, and break the chains of lies."

16. In vision he saw again the tree whose roots touched earth and whose branches reached the stars. The fruit at the top glowed with holy fire, but serpents wound about its trunk, hissing, "Take and eat, for the fruit is yours already."

17. And the Spirit said, "The tree is My people, the fruit is My Son, Yahawzhowaa. The serpents are deceivers. Guard the fruit, for many will reach for it, claiming what is not theirs. But My Son shall return to gather it Himself."

18. Arel awoke and told the people, "Guard the fruit. Cling to Yahawzhowaa. Do not claim what belongs to Him alone, lest the serpents strike."

19. The faithful bowed their heads, confessing, "We are but branches. Without Him we wither. We will wait for His return."

20. But the deceivers mocked, saying, "Fools! Why wait for one who tarries? Take the fruit now. The heavens are yours to claim."

21. Thus the peace of that season was broken, not by spear nor storm, but by deceit and pride.

22. Yet even as some strayed, the Spirit worked among the humble, keeping their song pure. They sang, "He will return," with tears, with joy, with steadfast hearts.

23. The children rebuked their elders who doubted, crying, "Do not forget! He promised! He will return!" And their innocence was sharper than the wisdom of deceivers.

24. Mothers gathered their households, teaching by firelight, "Trust not every dream, but only the record.

Yahawzhowaa's words are sure, and He shall return."

25. And elders blessed the little ones, saying, "The Spirit speaks through your lips. Guard the hope of generations."

26. Thus the faithful endured, though troubled. And Arel wrote, "In the one hundred and fifty-fourth year since Yahawzhowaa departed, deceivers rose, but the Spirit gave us strength to endure. We testify still: He will return."

27. Chiefs who had believed stood firm with them, saying, "We will not follow deceivers. We have seen your mercy, we have heard your psalms, and we will wait for Yahawzhowaa."

28. But others who had not bowed whispered to the priests, saying, "Your lies are clever. Teach us to spread them, that we may weaken the Way."

29. And the priests rejoiced, for though their spears were broken, their tongues were sharpened.

30. The People of the Way wept, but did not despair. They sang louder still, filling the valleys, the forests, the rivers, and the mountains with the promise of return.

31. Some deceivers, pierced by the song, repented and confessed, "We spoke lies. Forgive us. We will wait with you for Yahawzhowaa." And the faithful received them with mercy, saying, "His return is for all, even for those who strayed."

32. But others hardened further, joining the priests of shadow, plotting new ways to twist the truth.

33. Arel fasted again, praying, "O Eternal, preserve the record, preserve the psalm, preserve the hope, lest pride devour all."

34. And the Spirit answered, "The record is Mine. No hand shall destroy it. The psalm is Mine. No tongue shall silence it. The hope is Mine. No shadow shall quench it. Endure, for My Son comes quickly."

35. With these words the people were strengthened, rising in the morning with joy. They planted food, built lodges, and shared all things, walking together as one body, though the world despised them.

36. Strangers came to dwell among them, marveling at their mercy. Some believed, others only wondered, but all heard the psalm, "He will return."

37. Chiefs of nearby tribes began to bless them openly, saying, "These people are different. Their hearts are not like ours. Surely their Yahawzhowaa is alive."

38. Yet Tomanah still raged in the wilderness, consumed with envy, declaring, "I will return with fire, and no psalm shall save them."

39. And the priests of shadow gathered around him, feeding his fury, whispering, "Strike again. But this time we will give you new craft, stronger deceit, darker visions."

40. Thus even in a season of peace, war was being sown in secret.

41. The believers, not knowing the plots, continued in hope. They lifted their voices

each dawn and each night, crying, “He came, He lives, He will return.”

42. And the Spirit comforted them, saying, “Though deceivers rise and nations rage, My word cannot fail. My Son will return.”

43. They carved anew upon wood and stone the words, He will return, and set them high on hills, so that travelers and enemies alike saw and remembered.

44. Thus the land itself became filled with testimony, for the wind carried the song, the rivers echoed it, and the mountains bore it back.

45. And it was recorded: In the one hundred and fifty-fourth year since Yahawzhowaa departed, there was peace for a little season, yet deceivers rose. But the People of the Way endured in song, declaring always, “He will return,” for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them.

CHAPTER 9
The Lying Wonders of the Priests of Shadow

1. And it came to pass in the one hundred and fifty-seventh year since Yahawzhowaa departed, that the priests of shadow, though beaten in war and mocked in storm, did not repent of their hardness. They gathered in the wilderness with Tomanah of the plains, whispering among themselves, “If spears cannot silence them, and if storms cannot break them, then let us work deceit with signs and marvels, that the nations may be blinded and turn again to us.”

2. They carved idols of wood, inlaid with stone that shone like fire in the sun. They anointed them with oils that smoked when burned, so that the people trembled, thinking spirits dwelt within. And they said to Tomanah, “Set these before your people, and they will say, ‘Surely the gods of the priests are greater than the song of Yahawzhowaa.’”

3. Tomanah rejoiced at their counsel, for his heart was hungry for power. He said, “I will gather the nations. I will show them marvels, and their ears will no longer hear the psalms of the Way. Then I will fall upon the believers and scatter them forever.”

4. So he sent messengers to the tribes, calling for a great assembly on the plains, promising wonders from the heavens. Many came, for the fame of the storm of the Seven Currents was still in their memory, and they longed to see power with their own eyes.

5. In the midst of the assembly, the priests of shadow lifted their staffs, casting powders upon the fire. The flames turned green and blue, leaping into the air as if touched by spirits. The people cried out in fear, saying, “Behold, the gods of the priests are mighty indeed!”

6. Then they lifted their idols, the stones glimmering like eyes, and they spoke smooth words, saying, “See, Yahawzhowaa is nothing. Our gods answer with fire and

smoke. Bow to them, and you shall have power. Follow the People of the Way, and you shall have only weakness."

7. Many trembled and bowed, their hearts faint, for they had not rooted themselves in the testimony. They said, "Perhaps we were deceived. Perhaps Yahawzhowaa will not return."

8. But among the crowd were also believers, who lifted their voices in psalms, crying, "He came, He lives, He will return." Their song rose above the fire and the smoke, and the Spirit bore it into the hearts of some who doubted.

9. The priests gnashed their teeth, crying, "Drown their song with marvels!" And they cast more powders, so that the fire roared louder, and the smoke filled the sky.

10. Yet the believers sang still louder, and the wind carried their psalm, scattering the smoke so that the fire was revealed as trickery. The people murmured, saying, "This is no god, but craft of men."

11. Then Arel stood among them, lifting the record high, and cried, "Hear me, O nations! Do not bow to lying wonders, for they are but dust and smoke. The emerald tablets bore witness that Yahawzhowaa was before the beginning and that He shall return in the end. His light is greater than fire, His mercy stronger than smoke."

12. The crowd was divided, some jeering, some trembling, some believing. And Tomanah, enraged, shouted, "Seize Arel! Seize the record!"

13. Warriors rushed forward, but the Spirit fell upon the faithful. They stood in a circle around Arel, singing, "He will return," until the ground itself shook beneath their feet.

14. A great wind rose suddenly, swirling through the assembly, scattering the fires, toppling the idols, and breaking the staffs of the priests. The people gasped in terror, for the wind lifted their tents and dashed them to the earth.

15. And the voice of the Spirit was heard in the wind, saying, "These are lying wonders. Do not fear them. Do not bow to them. Hold fast to My Son, for He will return."

16. The assembly fled in confusion, some falling upon their faces in repentance, others cursing, others fleeing into the wilderness.

17. Tomanah stood alone, his heart torn. He cried within himself, "Why can I not overcome them? Why does their song burn me more than fire? Why do their voices strike me harder than spears?" Yet he hardened his heart still, refusing to bow.

18. The priests of shadow fled also, broken and ashamed, swearing, "We will return with darker craft, with deeper deceit, until their hope is destroyed."

19. Arel gathered the people and lifted his voice, saying, "See how the Eternal has once more preserved us. Do not be deceived by smoke and fire, for they are as grass before the wind. Yahawzhowaa is our only hope, and He shall return."

20. The believers wept for joy, crying,

“We are not forsaken! We are not forgotten! He is with us still.”

21. And they sang through the night, louder than the storm, louder than the smoke, until the plains were filled again with their psalm.

22. Arel wrote upon skins, “In the one hundred and fifty-seventh year since Yahawzhowaa departed, the priests of shadow rose with lying wonders, but the Eternal scattered them with wind. We testify still: He will return.”

23. Chiefs who had wavered now came with gifts, confessing, “We saw with our own eyes that their fire was false, but their psalm was true. We will follow Yahawzhowaa.”

24. Villages that had bowed to idols cast them into rivers and broke their altars, saying, “No more will we be deceived. The Eternal alone is God, and Yahawzhowaa His Son.”

25. And the Way grew stronger, even in the face of deceit, for the Spirit worked more mightily in the humble.

26. Yet Tomanah still raged, wandering in the wilderness, saying, “If lying wonders fail, I will yet find a way to break them. I will not bow to their Yahawzhowaa.”

27. And the priests gathered around him, feeding his fury, whispering, “We will teach you darker secrets. We will call upon powers more ancient than fire. Strike again, and surely they will fall.”

28. So a new plot was born, blacker than the last, a snare not of fire nor smoke, but of fear and despair.

29. The faithful, though weary, clung to their hope. They carved again upon wood and stone the words: He will return. They placed them upon hills, by rivers, upon lodge doors, until all the land bore witness.

30. And the children sang, their voices like the sound of many waters, “He will return,” chasing away fear from the hearts of their parents.

31. Strangers came, drawn by the song, asking, “What mean these words written everywhere?” And the believers answered, “It is the promise of Yahawzhowaa. He came, He lives, He will return.”

32. Some laughed, saying, “Fools, always waiting.” But others bowed their heads in reverence, confessing, “If He has already spared them thrice, surely He shall return as they say.”

33. And the Spirit moved among them, sealing their hearts with peace.

34. Arel prayed, “O Eternal, keep us steadfast. Deceivers rise, priests rage, nations plot, yet our hope is in Thy Son. Let not our voices grow faint.”

35. And the Spirit answered, “Your psalm is My psalm, your record My record, your hope My hope. Fear not. My Son shall return, and every knee shall bow.”

36. With these words the people rejoiced, for though they were hunted, though they were mocked, they felt the presence of Yahawzhowaa closer than breath.

37. They rose each dawn with joy, singing into the rising light, and they lay

down each night with psalms upon their lips.

38. And their song spread far, carried by traders, travelers, and captives, so that even distant nations spoke of the promise.

39. Some chiefs sent messengers, saying, “Teach us this way. Our priests have deceived us, but your psalm cannot be quenched.”

40. And new villages joined the fellowship, walking in mercy, feeding the poor, singing the psalm, until their numbers grew greatly.

41. Yet the priests of shadow hardened their hearts still, plotting again in secret, vowing, “We will not rest until their record is destroyed.”

42. But the believers answered not with anger, only singing, “The record is the Eternal’s. No hand shall destroy it. He will return.”

43. In every battle, in every deception, in every season of fear, the psalm endured, sharper than any spear, brighter than any flame.

44. And the nations could not escape it, for it echoed in valleys, rolled through forests, and soared over mountains, until it seemed the land itself cried, “He will return.”

45. Thus in the one hundred and fifty-seventh year since Yahawzhowaa departed, the priests of shadow rose with lying wonders, but the Eternal scattered them as smoke before the wind. And the People of the Way endured in mercy and song, testifying always, He will return, for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them.

CHAPTER 10
The Writing Upon Silver

1. And it came to pass, after many years of trial and deliverance, that the People of the Way beheld the fragility of the skins and bark upon which their record was written. They saw that the words faded, the fibers grew brittle, and fire threatened to consume what the Spirit had preserved through generations.

2. Therefore the elders gathered in counsel, and Arel stood among them with the skins of Agonabish and Shenat in his arms, and his tears fell upon them. He said, “If these perish, how shall our children remember? If fire devours, if flood washes away, will not the voice of Yahawzhowaa be silenced from among us?”

3. And the Spirit brought to remembrance the words of Agonabish, who in his days prophesied, saying, “A time will come when the record shall be bound in silver, shining as the moon. For silver endures when skins decay, and its brightness shall testify of truth even in the night.”

4. Then the people rejoiced, for they saw the prophecy fulfilled in their days. They searched the earth and brought forth silver from hidden veins, gathering it with reverence, not for ornament nor for wealth, but to engrave the word of Yahawzhowaa.

5. They built a great fire upon stones, and they purified the silver seven times, until no dross remained and it shone like water beneath the sun. And they prayed as they worked, saying, “O Eternal, as this silver is purified, so purify our hearts to carry the testimony without blemish.”

6. Arel took up the stylus of iron and laid the skins beside him. With fasting and trembling, he began to engrave upon the plates, every stroke deliberate, every letter a psalm. He cried aloud as he worked, “These are the words of life, and no shadow shall erase them.”

7. Day after day the people labored, some melting and hammering, some polishing, some holding torches through the night so the writing never ceased. And their camp resounded with the sound of the stylus upon silver as with the rhythm of a drum.

8. Children gathered around, their eyes wide, and elders said to them, “Behold, these words will live after we are dust. As the moon endures the night, so will the silver plates shine for generations.”

9. They engraved first the testimony of Yahawzhowaa: that He walked among men, that He was slain, that He rose again, and that He promised to return.

10. Then they inscribed the record of the youth who sealed his witness with blood, of Agonabish who bore the burden in exile, of Shenat who preserved it through years of sorrow, and of Arel who now proclaimed it to the nations.

11. With patience and reverence they recorded the visions of the emerald tablets, the psalms of deliverance, and the story of Seran’s pride and fall, that none might forget the judgments of the Eternal.

12. They engraved also the prophecy of the storm at the River of Seven Currents, how the Spirit had preserved them without spear, and how the psalm of Yahawzhowaa’s return shook the nations.

13. Long were the days of labor, and longer still the nights, but none grew weary in heart. For they said, “If Yahawzhowaa preserved us in storm and war, shall He not also preserve His word?”

14. When the first plate was finished, they polished it until it gleamed as a mirror. Arel lifted it before the assembly, and their faces shone within its brightness. He said, “Behold, the testimony engraved upon silver, that no fire may consume, no water may erase, no enemy may silence.”

15. The people fell upon their knees, weeping and singing, “He came, He lives, He will return.”

16. They fashioned a chest of cedar, fragrant and strong, to hold the plates. They bound it with cords of hide, and they swore an oath, saying, “This chest shall go wherever we go. Whoever holds it is the keeper of the testimony, as Agonabish was, as Shenat was, as Arel is now.”

17. Mothers brought their children to touch the chest, and they said, “Place your hands here, little ones, for this is the covenant of our people. Guard it, and it

will guard you."

18. And the Spirit whispered to Arel, "These plates shall be for a sign among the nations. They will shine when generations are gone, and their brightness shall rebuke the proud and comfort the humble. For as silver endures, so shall My promise endure: Yahawzhowaa will return."

19. Word of the plates spread quickly through the land, and nations marveled. Some said, "This people is cunning, engraving their lies upon silver so none may forget."

20. But others trembled, confessing, "If their words are false, why do they endure when all else fails? Surely Yahawzhowaa lives."

21. Chiefs of distant tribes sent messengers, asking to behold the plates. And when they saw the shining words, they bowed in awe, saying, "These words gleam brighter than our idols. We will cast away stone and follow Yahawzhowaa."

22. Yet the priests of shadow raged, crying, "Now their record is stronger than fire. We cannot consume silver with flame, nor drown it in rivers. Let us therefore strike the keepers, lest their testimony endure forever."

23. They plotted in secret to steal the chest, but the Spirit warned Arel in a dream. He saw serpents coil around the cedar, striking with venom, yet their fangs broke upon the cords of hide, for the Eternal Himself guarded it.

24. Arel awoke and declared, "Fear not, the Eternal watches over the silver plates. They are His, and no hand of shadow shall prevail against them."

25. The faithful rejoiced, saying, "We are not the guardians, but He is. We are but servants of the testimony."

26. They continued to engrave, plate after plate, filling them with psalms, visions, and accounts of mercy, until the chest grew heavy with silver, yet light with hope.

27. Strangers came to dwell among them, drawn by the brightness of the plates, saying, "Your record is unlike any we have known. It gleams as though it were alive."

28. And the believers answered, "It lives because Yahawzhowaa lives, and He shall return."

29. Thus the silver plates became as a covenant, binding the people together, for whenever they faltered, they opened the chest, and the gleam of the letters renewed their hope.

30. They carried the chest before them when they traveled, as a sign that Yahawzhowaa walked with them still, though unseen.

31. When they gathered for counsel, they placed it in their midst, and its brightness filled the lodge, and the Spirit bore witness to their hearts.

32. When children asked, "Why is it silver?" their parents replied, "Because silver endures. As the moon shines through night, so Yahawzhowaa's promise shines through every darkness."

33. And when elders passed into the dust,

their last prayer was, “Guard the plates, for they guard you. He will return.”

34. Thus the people called the chest The Moon of Testimony, for it shone in the night of their wandering.

35. Villages round about marveled, saying, “This people has a treasure more radiant than jewels. Their wealth is not gold nor cattle, but words that gleam with hope.”

36. Some mocked, saying, “What good are words against spears?” But others confessed, “Spears perish in rust, but their words endure as silver.”

37. So the People of the Way grew stronger, not in armies, but in testimony, for they bore within them the shining covenant of Yahawzhowaa.

38. And their psalm spread farther than before, for every traveler who saw the chest returned to his people declaring, “I have seen silver engraved with a hope unshakable. They say, ‘He will return.’”

39. The priests of shadow despaired, for their fire could not consume, nor their smoke deceive, nor their spear prevail.

40. Yet they swore among themselves, “If we cannot break the plates, we will break the people. We will sow fear and despair until they lose heart, and the silver gleams in vain.”

41. But the Spirit whispered again, “The plates are Mine, the people are Mine, the promise is Mine. None shall prevail against them. My Son shall return.”

42. So the believers walked in courage, not fearing shadow, not fearing storm, for they knew the Eternal guarded both them and the testimony.

43. And they taught their children daily, saying, “Remember Agonabish, remember Shenat, remember Arel, remember all who bore the burden. They carried the record to us, and we engrave it still, for Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

44. And the children answered with joy, “We will remember. We will sing. We will guard the silver. He will return.”

45. Thus the record of Yahawzhowaa and of His witnesses was engraved upon silver plates, preserved in a cedar chest, shining like the moon among the people. And they declared forever, “He came, He lives, He will return,” for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 11
The Engraving of the Dividing of the Heavens

1. And it came to pass, after the silver plates were fashioned and the cedar chest sealed, that the elders spoke to Arel, saying, “We have engraved the testimony of Yahawzhowaa among us, and the record of our fathers who bore the burden. But one scroll remains, older than all, found in the cave of emerald, preserved since the days of Agonabish. Shall this also be forgotten, or shall it too be bound in silver?”

2. For the scroll of birch was brittle with age, its fibers flaking, its letters faint, yet its

words carried the weight of heaven. It told of things before the world was ordered, before the rivers ran, before the mountains were lifted, when light itself warred against shadow.

3. And the people trembled as Arel unrolled it before them, for it spoke of the son of pride who rose against the Son of Light, seeking to ascend above Him. Thrones were cast down, stars were scattered, and fragments of worlds bore witness to the rebellion.

4. They did not understand the meaning of the scattered stars nor of the broken worlds, for their eyes had only seen earth and moon and sun. Yet the Spirit whispered, “Preserve this testimony, for though it is hidden from your sight, it shall shine for generations to come.”

5. Then Arel said to the assembly, “Bring forth new plates of silver, that we may engrave even this record, for it is holy though its mystery is great. Agonabish preserved it though he did not understand, and Shenat guarded it though he did not explain. Now it is given to us to seal it in silver, that it may not perish.”

6. The people labored again with fire and hammer. They smelted the silver until it ran like water, purified it seven times, and beat it into broad plates smooth as the surface of a still lake.

7. By torchlight and by daylight they worked, and the sound of the stylus upon silver filled the camp like the ringing of bells. Women polished, men engraved, children watched in awe, and elders prayed without ceasing, saying, “Let not one word be lost.”

8. Upon the first plate Arel inscribed: The Book of the Dividing of the Heavens. And beneath it he cut the words: This is the record of the war before the world, when the son of pride sought to ascend above the Son of Light, and the stars themselves were torn as witness.

9. The people held their breath as he engraved the tale of thrones overturned, of vessels of light driven from their stations, of boundaries set by the Eternal lest chaos consume all.

10. And though they did not understand fully, they wept, for they saw that Yahawzhowaa was before all things, Lord not only of earth but of the stars.

11. Arel paused often, lifting his eyes to heaven, saying, “O Eternal, guide my hand. These are mysteries too great for me, yet they are Thy truth. Let them endure for generations.”

12. The Spirit whispered back, “Engrave, for the heavens are My testimony as the earth is. Let the silver plates bear both, that the children of dust may know the glory of the Son of Light.”

13. So he inscribed also the words of judgment: The proud was cast down, the deceiver bound in chains of darkness, and the heavens divided. Yet the Eternal set His Son as Lord of all, and in His return shall every star bow.

14. The people trembled, for the words

seemed alive, cutting their hearts as with fire. Some fell upon their faces, crying, “We are unworthy to carry such a record.”

15. But Arel answered, “It is not given to us because we are worthy, but because Yahawzhowaa is merciful. He entrusts His testimony to the weak that His strength may be known.”

16. Day after day the engraving continued, until many plates gleamed with constellations of letters. When the torches burned low, they polished by moonlight, and the plates shone like fragments of the sky brought down to earth.

17. Children touched the plates with trembling fingers, whispering, “They look like stars.” And their mothers said, “So it is, for they speak of the heavens divided.”

18. Elders lifted their voices, declaring, “As the stars endure above us, so these words endure before us. This is the covenant of the Eternal, written in silver.”

19. When at last the work was complete, Arel lifted the final plate high before the assembly. Its letters shone like fire, and its surface reflected the people’s faces as if they too were written into the heavens.

20. He placed the plates within the cedar chest beside the other records, and the people bowed as one, crying, “The heavens testify of Him, the earth testifies of Him, and the silver testifies also. Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

21. Word of the plates spread swiftly, for travelers carried the tale. Some mocked, saying, “What do wanderers know of stars and worlds? Their silver is filled with madness.”

22. But others trembled, confessing, “If even the heavens were divided for the sake of pride, let us not lift ourselves against Yahawzhowaa, lest we too be broken.”

23. Chiefs of distant tribes sent messengers to see the plates. When they beheld the shining words, they bowed in awe, saying, “These gleam brighter than our idols. We will cast away stone and follow Yahawzhowaa.”

24. Yet the priests of shadow raged. They cried, “Their record grows stronger than fire. We cannot consume silver with flame, nor drown it in rivers. Let us therefore strike the keepers, lest their testimony endure forever.”

25. They plotted to steal the chest, whispering in secret, “If the plates vanish, their song will falter.”

26. But the Spirit warned Arel in a vision. He saw serpents coil around the cedar chest, striking with venom, yet their fangs broke upon the cords of hide, for the Eternal Himself guarded it.

27. Arel awoke and declared, “Fear not, O people. The Eternal watches over the silver plates. They are His, not ours. No hand of shadow shall prevail against them.”

28. The people rejoiced, crying, “We are not the guardians, but He is. We are only servants of the testimony.”

29. They swore an oath before the chest, each family lifting their hands, saying, “We

will die before we let the silver be taken. We will live to preserve what the Eternal has sealed."

30. And the Spirit answered, "Your oath is heard, but know this: I Myself am the keeper. Even if you fall, the plates shall rise again, for My Son's return cannot be silenced."

31. Thus the silver plates became the covenant of the people. They called them The Moon of Testimony, for they gleamed as the moon gleams in night, reminding them that light endures though darkness surrounds.

32. Villages round about marveled, saying, "This people carries a treasure greater than jewels. Their wealth is not cattle nor gold, but silver filled with words of hope."

33. Some mocked, asking, "What good are words against spears?" But others confessed, "Spears perish in rust, but their words endure as silver."

34. The priests of shadow despaired, gnashing their teeth, for their fire could not consume, their smoke could not deceive, their spears could not prevail.

35. Yet they swore among themselves, "If we cannot break the plates, we will break the people. We will sow fear and despair until their voices fall silent, and their silver gleams in vain."

36. But the faithful answered with psalms, singing, "The plates are the Eternal's, the testimony is His, and Yahawzhowaa is Lord. He will return."

37. In every assembly, the chest was placed at the center, and its brightness filled the lodge. The people prayed, sang, and broke bread with it among them, as if Yahawzhowaa Himself were seated in their midst.

38. When children asked, "Why do we guard the chest with such care?" their parents replied, "Because it carries the voice of our fathers and the promise of our Lord. Without it we would forget, but with it we remember: He will return."

39. And when elders went down to the dust, their last breath was a charge: "Guard the plates. Guard the psalm. Guard the hope."

40. Thus the people bound themselves as one, not by blood alone, nor by tribe, but by the silver testimony they carried through their generations.

41. Strangers who came near felt the weight of the chest, as though unseen hands pressed upon them, and many confessed, "This is no work of men, but of the Eternal."

42. And the Spirit whispered to Arel, "This is the union of heaven and earth, of the stars and the dust, of the Son before all and the Son who shall return. Guard it, for it will outlast nations."

43. So Arel wrote, "In our days we engraved the heavens into silver, and though we do not understand all, we know Yahawzhowaa is Lord of all. We testify still: He will return."

44. And the people sang with great joy,

louder than ever, their psalm filling valleys, forests, and plains, until it seemed even the stars above joined their chorus.

45. Thus the Book of the Dividing of the Heavens was sealed in silver and placed with the testimony of Yahawzhowaa. And the People of the Way endured in hope, declaring forever, "He came, He lives, He will return," for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 12
The Division of the Nations at Two Hundred Years

1. And it came to pass, after many years of peace, that the measure of time reached the two hundredth year since Yahawzhowaa departed from among men, leaving His promise with the faithful that He would return.

2. In that day the earth was divided, for the nations could no longer dwell in half-belief. They chose their sides with open hands: some cleaving to Yahawzhowaa, others rejecting Him with hatred.

3. The People of God gathered around the Red Plates of Agonabish, which carried the covenant sealed with suffering, and the Silver Plates, which shone with the testimony of Yahawzhowaa and the dividing of the heavens.

4. They clung also to many other records, engraved on bark and skins, carved on wood and stone, written with tears and fire through the generations. For they believed that every word was precious, and no record should be lost.

5. But the People of War arose, painted with red upon their foreheads, clothed in the skins of beasts, and swore by blood to destroy every memory of Yahawzhowaa.

6. They abandoned the massive cities of their fathers, turning their backs on the pyramids that had been sanctuaries of teaching and song, declaring, "We will not bow to the Lord of Light. We will worship only war."

7. And they said one to another, "Let us hunt down every artifact, every scroll, every tablet, every carving that speaks of Yahawzhowaa. Let no word remain. Let His name perish from the earth."

8. They tore through sanctuaries, toppling altars where once psalms were sung. They burned the scrolls of birch and skins of record, filling the air with ash.

9. They shattered carvings of testimony, grinding them beneath their heels. They mocked the faithful, crying, "Where is your Yahawzhowaa now? Let Him return and save your books."

10. Great pyramids, once filled with light, were darkened with smoke. The walls that had echoed with prophecy now resounded with the cries of the slain.

11. The priests of shadow led them, laughing with hatred, saying, "If the words vanish, their hope will die. Strike the records, and their psalms will wither."

12. But the People of God gathered in hidden places. They clutched the Red

Plates and the Silver Plates, weeping as they watched other records burn, but vowing, “These shall not perish. We will give our blood before we give these.”

13. Mothers whispered to their children, “These plates are your inheritance. Guard them as you guard your breath. If all else is lost, remember: He will return.”

14. Elders laid trembling hands upon the chests of cedar, saying, “We were given this covenant. Even if nations fall, the silver will shine, the red will endure, and the name of Yahawzhowaa will not be silenced.”

15. The faithful carved upon caves, “He came, He lives, He will return,” lest even the scattered might remember if the plates were hidden.

16. Yet many of the other records were consumed. Scrolls that told of visions, psalms written by wanderers, accounts of healings, parables of mercy — all turned to ash beneath the fury of the People of War.

17. Some among the faithful cried in despair, saying, “Why has the Eternal allowed His words to be burned?”

18. But Arel lifted the Silver Plate high in the firelight and said, “Not one word of His promise is lost. Though many records perish, the covenant of Agonabish and the testimony of Yahawzhowaa endure. This is enough, for His Spirit is with us.”

19. The people bowed their heads and wept, but their weeping turned into song, crying, “He came, He lives, He will return.”

20. The People of War raged all the more, hunting down villages that kept the Way, painting their faces red, their foreheads marked with blood. They wore the skins of beasts as garments of terror, howling as they slew.

21. Wherever they found a sanctuary, they desecrated it, dragging out the records, casting them into the fire, stamping out every name of Yahawzhowaa.

22. Many of the faithful were slain, refusing to betray where the plates were hidden. They died with the psalm on their lips, saying, “He will return.”

23. Their blood soaked the earth, and their cries rose to heaven as incense, a witness against the People of War.

24. Yet not all was lost, for the Red Plates and the Silver Plates were preserved. The faithful carried them into forests and mountains, fleeing by night, hiding them in caves when danger came near.

25. Chiefs who had once been lukewarm now chose their side. Some bent their knee to Yahawzhowaa, declaring, “We will die as His people.” Others joined the People of War, raising their hands against the faithful, hungry for blood.

26. Thus the nations were cleft in two: the People of God, who guarded the testimony, and the People of War, who rejected Yahawzhowaa and exalted violence.

27. The People of War mocked, crying, “We are the strong, for we build upon ruin. You are the weak, for you cling to words

upon plates."

28. But the faithful answered, "Strength is dust, but truth is eternal. Spears rust, cities crumble, but the word of Yahawzhowaa endures."

29. And they swore upon the Red Plates, "Even if we are scattered, this covenant shall not be broken. As Agonabish bore it, as Shenat bore it, as Arel now bears it, so shall we bear it until He returns."

30. And they swore upon the Silver Plates, "Even if the nations burn, these words shall shine. The heavens themselves are engraved within them, and no shadow shall erase them."

31. The children pressed their hands to the plates, saying, "We will remember. We will guard them. We will sing."

32. Elders sealed the oath, saying, "If one plate remains, the promise remains. If one song is sung, Yahawzhowaa is remembered. If one breath is drawn, the hope is alive."

33. Yet the war grew fierce. From village to village, the People of War swept like fire, and the faithful fled like sparks carried upon the wind.

34. Sanctuaries were overturned, pyramids desecrated, scrolls lost to flame. The land that once sang with psalms now echoed with screams.

35. Still the faithful carried the plates, even unto death. Some fell in battle, clutching the chests to their bosoms, refusing to let them go.

36. Others dug deep into mountains, hiding fragments of records in stone crevices, whispering, "If we perish, let these survive."

37. And the Spirit whispered, "Though many are lost, what is Mine cannot perish. My Son shall return, and the faithful shall rise with Him."

38. So the faithful endured, though scattered and few. They wept, but their song did not cease.

39. Children sang in caves, their voices trembling, "He will return." Mothers hushed them, fearing discovery, yet their hearts swelled with hope.

40. Fathers kept watch with spears not for conquest but for defense, buying time for the plates to be preserved.

41. Chiefs of the People of War laughed, crying, "We have destroyed their books, we have shattered their sanctuaries, we have scattered their people. Soon none will remember Yahawzhowaa."

42. But the Spirit answered in the hearts of the remnant, "Though all nations forget, I will not forget. Though all records burn, the Red and the Silver endure. My Son's return is sure."

43. And the remnant sang with faint voices, even in hiding, "He came, He lives, He will return," and the echo of their song carried through the forests and mountains.

44. Thus began the great division of the nations at two hundred years, when the People of God clung to the Red Plates and the Silver Plates, and the People of War hunted them with fury.

45. And it was written upon the silver:

In this year the nations divided, war began, records burned, and sanctuaries fell. Yet the covenant endured in Red, the testimony endured in Silver, and the Spirit of the Eternal was with the people, whispering always: Yahawzhowaa shall return.

CHAPTER 13
The First Campaigns of the People of War

1. And it came to pass, after the nations were divided at two hundred years, that the People of War gathered in vast assemblies, painting their foreheads red, clothing themselves in the skins of beasts, and swearing oaths of blood.

2. The priests of shadow led them, raising staffs carved with bones, crying, “We are the lords of the earth. We will trample the weak, burn their sanctuaries, and blot out the name of Yahawzhowaa forever.”

3. Chiefs of many tribes joined them, turning their hearts to violence. They raised banners of blood and gathered armies greater than the rivers of the land.

4. They abandoned their great cities and pyramids, leaving them desolate. Once places of song and wisdom, they became tombs of silence, overtaken by vines and shadow.

5. The People of War said, “Why dwell in stone, when the wilderness is ours? Let us roam as beasts, and strike wherever we please.”

6. So they went forth in raiding bands, like wolves, devouring villages, burning lodges, casting down sanctuaries, and tearing records from the hands of the faithful.

7. Wherever they came, the air filled with smoke, and the rivers ran red with blood.

8. But the People of God fled into the forests and mountains. They hid the Red Plates and the Silver Plates in cedar chests, carrying them on their shoulders, swearing that no hand of shadow would take them.

9. Arel lifted his voice to the remnant, saying, “Do not despair. Though they burn scrolls and slaughter us, they cannot consume the covenant. The Eternal guards His word.”

10. The people answered with tears, “We will not forsake the plates, nor the psalm of Yahawzhowaa. He will return.”

11. Children clung to their mothers, whispering the psalm in caves. Elders prayed until their voices broke, “Remember Agonabish, remember Shenat, remember Yahawzhowaa, remember His promise.”

12. Many faithful were slain, but they died with song upon their lips. Their blood bore witness more loudly than their voices.

13. The priests of shadow rejoiced, crying, “See how they fall! Soon their hope will perish as ashes in the wind.”

14. But the Spirit whispered to the remnant, “Hope cannot perish. Though nations rage, My Son’s promise endures.

Yahawzhowaa shall return."

15. In the first campaigns, the People of War struck at the sanctuaries nearest the rivers, for there the records had been kept. They cast them into flames and danced around the fires.

16. They mocked, painting scroll-ash upon their faces, crying, "This is the dust of Yahawzhowaa's words. Let the wind carry Him away."

17. Yet unknown to them, faithful ones had carried the Red and Silver Plates far from those places, hiding them deep in mountains where the smoke of war could not reach.

18. And the Spirit said to the faithful, "As the ark was preserved in flood, so these plates shall be preserved in fire. Fear not, I am with you."

19. The People of War grew bold, seeing their victories, and they began to call their gatherings The Great Hunt, swearing that no believer would be left alive.

20. They marked their foreheads deeper with blood, as a sign of hatred, saying, "This is our crown. We are not sons of Yahawzhowaa, but sons of war."

21. And they wore the skins of beasts, some of wolf, some of bear, some of serpent, believing that the spirits of the animals gave them power.

22. They howled in battle, striking terror into villages before they slew them.

23. The faithful trembled, yet they did not cease from psalm, lifting their voices even in hiding: "He came, He lives, He will return."

24. Some villages, fearing destruction, betrayed the hiding places of their brothers, handing them to the People of War.

25. But others stood firm, though slain, refusing to reveal the chests of cedar. Their silence became testimony greater than words.

26. Thus the People of War raged across the land, scattering the People of God, breaking sanctuaries, burning scrolls, until the faithful were like sparks blown into wilderness.

27. Yet the sparks did not go out. In forests, mountains, and caves, small gatherings of believers lit fires and sang, "He will return."

28. The priests of shadow said, "They are broken, they are finished." But the Eternal said, "They are planted, they are growing. In scattering, I will preserve them."

29. In one valley, the People of War captured a chest of carved wood, believing it to be the plates. They broke it and found only skins of grain.

30. They mocked, saying, "Their treasure is dust!" But the faithful laughed in secret, for the Red and Silver were safe in the mountains.

31. Arel prophesied to the remnant, saying, "This war will not end quickly. It will burn like a fire through generations. But cling to the plates, for they are our covenant. Yahawzhowaa shall return."

32. The people wept, but they swore

again, laying hands upon the plates, “We will guard them even unto death.”

33. Mothers taught their children, “If we perish, remember the psalm. If the plates are hidden, remember where. If all else fails, remember Yahawzhowaa.”

34. And the children answered with trembling voices, “We will remember. We will sing. He will return.”

35. The People of War raged, crying, “Their children will forget. Their psalms will fade. Their hope will die.”

36. But the Spirit declared, “Their children shall be My witnesses. Their psalms shall echo louder than war. Their hope shall shine in silver and red until the end.”

37. So the faithful endured the first campaigns, though scattered, though hunted, though slain.

38. They lit no fires by night, lest they be found, but sang softly in caves, their voices rising like incense.

39. They carried the plates wrapped in hides, pressing them close to their hearts, as if embracing Yahawzhowaa Himself.

40. And when they moved, they left carvings upon stones: He will return, so that even if they perished, the land would remember.

41. The People of War laughed, but the land itself bore testimony, for rivers, mountains, and forests echoed the hidden song.

42. Thus the first campaigns of the war began, fierce and merciless, scattering the People of God, yet failing to consume the covenant.

43. For the Red Plates and the Silver Plates endured, borne on the shoulders of the faithful, guarded with blood and tears, shining as hope in the night.

44. And it was written upon silver: In this year the People of War rose in fury, but the covenant endured. Records burned, sanctuaries fell, yet the Red and the Silver were preserved.

45. And the people whispered, even in exile, “He came, He lives, He will return,” for the Spirit of the Eternal was with them always.

CHAPTER 14
The Scattering of the Faithful

1. And it came to pass, after the first campaigns of the People of War, when sanctuaries by the rivers had been consumed with fire and scrolls had turned to ash, that the fury of the nations did not cease but grew fiercer with every victory, until the land itself trembled beneath their numbers and the cries of bloodshed shook the mountains where the faithful fled.

2. For the chiefs of the People of War multiplied their armies, gathering from every tribe that forsook Yahawzhowaa, and the priests of shadow anointed them with curses, smearing blood upon their foreheads, wrapping them in the skins of beasts, teaching them to forget that they were men, saying, “Become as spirits of

terror; strike without pity; hunt without rest." And they swore by their banners of blood, "We will not cease until the Red Plates are broken, until the Silver Plates are melted, until the name of Yahawzhowaa is erased from the earth."

3. But the Spirit of the Eternal fell upon Arel in the mountains, and he cried with a mighty voice to the scattered remnant, saying, "Do not let your hearts fail, for though the nations roar like floods, the Eternal who made the heavens is our fortress, and His Son Yahawzhowaa is our covenant. Believe, O you afflicted, and do not doubt, for He has sworn by His own name that He will return, and His promise cannot be broken by spear or fire."

4. And the people pressed their hands upon the cedar chests that held the Red and Silver Plates, and they swore an oath, saying, "Though we be hunted as deer and scattered as sparks, yet we will guard these with our blood. Even if we fall, the covenant shall not fall, for Yahawzhowaa is our life."

5. Then the People of War poured across the plains into the villages that had not fled, overturning lodges, breaking altars, mocking the faithful, crying, "Sing now your psalms, and let your Yahawzhowaa deliver you!" And they slew without pity, filling rivers with bodies, staining the earth red.

6. Yet even in death the faithful lifted their voices, crying, "He came, He lives, He will return," and their song rose higher than the flames, carried by the wind into the ears of the remnant. And the remnant wept, but their sorrow became courage, for they said, "Their blood speaks louder than their voices."

7. The priests of shadow rejoiced, saying, "We have silenced their psalms, consumed their records, and soon we shall seize the plates also." But the Eternal laughed them to scorn, for He had set His hand over the Red and the Silver, and no shadow could pierce His guard.

8. And the Spirit whispered, "Though many writings perish, My covenant endures. Though the people are scattered, My word is not scattered. Hold fast, O remnant, and believe, for I am with you in fire and in exile."

9. Then Arel prophesied, saying, "Thus says the Eternal: The People of War shall darken the land with smoke and rage, but their strength shall pass away. They shall burn and slaughter, but they shall not endure. The word of Yahawzhowaa is everlasting, and all who believe shall shine as stars when He returns."

10. And he lifted his voice again, crying, "Repent, O nations! Wash your brows from blood, tear the skins of beasts from your shoulders, cease from cruelty, return to mercy! For even now the arms of the Eternal are stretched out still; believe in His Son and live, for His mercy endures forever."

11. But the People of War laughed him to scorn, answering, "We will not repent.

Blood is our crown, war is our temple, cruelty is our strength, and there is no Yahawzhowaa to deliver you."

12. And they multiplied their hosts, swarming through forests, valleys, and plains, burning villages, desecrating pyramids, and hunting the faithful as beasts. The smoke of their fires veiled the heavens, and the cries of the slain filled the earth.

13. But the scattered withdrew deeper into wilderness and caves. They carved psalms into stones, sang in whispers by night, and passed the testimony from parent to child, saying, "If we perish, remember. If we scatter, gather again. If all else is lost, cling to Yahawzhowaa, for He shall return."

14. Mothers pressed the Red Plates against the brows of their children, saying, "This is your inheritance, sealed in blood and sorrow." Fathers pressed the Silver Plates to their hearts, saying, "This is our hope, brighter than spears, stronger than armies." And children wept yet whispered, "He came, He lives, He will return."

15. And the priests of shadow, seeing the smoke of their own victories, boasted greatly, saying, "The faithful are broken reeds, scattered in fear. Their children shall forget, their psalms shall die, their plates shall be ours."

16. But the Spirit of the Eternal replied from heaven, saying, "You are liars, for their children shall remember, their psalms shall grow louder in caves than your howls upon the plain, and their plates shall endure when your banners are dust."

17. And so it came to pass that the People of God no longer dwelt openly in sanctuaries but became as pilgrims in their own land, moving in secrecy, carrying their covenant in silence, lighting no fires by night lest they be found, yet never ceasing to pray.

18. In hidden places they raised altars of stone, pouring no blood, but lifting psalms to Yahawzhowaa, declaring, "We will not bow to idols, we will not fear spears, we will not forsake the covenant, for He shall return."

19. And Arel strengthened them daily, saying, "Let your faith be as iron though your bodies are weak, let your hope be as fire though your voices are small. For the Eternal delights not in strength of arms, but in broken hearts lifted up. Believe, and you shall be preserved."

20. And the remnant bowed their heads, replying, "We believe. We will endure. We will sing, though hunted. We will guard the plates, though scattered. For Yahawzhowaa shall return."

21. Thus began the scattering: some fled to mountains, some to forests, some to islands in the rivers, some even into the ruins of the pyramids where once they had worshiped; and each small band carried with them a fragment of hope, though only the Red and the Silver were preserved whole.

22. And the People of War raged all the

more, crying, “They are rats, hiding in holes. We will hunt them down one by one. We will starve them in caves. We will silence their whispers.”

23. Yet the Eternal caused confusion among them, for their hosts grew so great that they devoured their own strength, and famine struck their camps, and many slew one another in quarrels. Still they raged, yet their power was already rotting from within.

24. But the faithful, though weak in number, endured with one heart, sharing roots and herbs, drinking from streams, breaking what little bread they had with thanksgiving, saying, “This is enough, for the Eternal is with us, and His word is our meat and our drink.”

25. And their children grew in caves, learning not the arts of war but the psalms of Yahawzhowaa, and the Spirit whispered, “These little ones shall be My witnesses, for in them I will plant remembrance.”

26. And mothers rejoiced, saying, “Though sanctuaries burn, our wombs yet bear sons and daughters of faith. Though scrolls are lost, our lips yet teach psalms. The Spirit has not forsaken us.”

27. And the fathers lifted the Silver Plate high in the firelight of the cave, and it shone as the moon, and they said, “Behold, this is our light in darkness. Though the nations rage, yet this gleam declares: Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

28. And the children placed their hands upon the Red Plate, saying, “This is the blood of our fathers, shed for covenant. We will not forget.”

29. And the Spirit declared, “Blessed are you, O scattered ones, for though you weep now, you shall rejoice when the Son returns. Your mourning shall be turned into dancing, your exile into glory, your weakness into everlasting strength.”

30. Yet the People of War continued to boast, crying, “Where now is your God? Where is His power? We have filled the land with your blood, and He has not delivered you.”

31. But Arel answered, “You are blind, for you see only the slain and not the promise. You see only the ashes and not the plates. You see only the caves and not the heavens. But the Eternal sees, and He will judge, and Yahawzhowaa will return with fire.”

32. And the People of War gnashed their teeth at him, saying, “We will find your caves. We will break your chests. We will silence your mouth.”

33. Yet the Eternal preserved him, hiding him among the rocks, and the Spirit said, “Until the appointed time you shall not fall, for My word must yet be written in silver.”

34. And so the remnant endured, not by power, not by wealth, not by city, but by covenant and by song.

35. They moved as shadows in the forests, yet their psalm was brighter than torches. They lay down in caves, yet their hope was higher than mountains. They

carried the plates in silence, yet their faith thundered in heaven.

36. And wherever two or three gathered, there Yahawzhowaa was in their midst, unseen yet nearer than breath.

37. And the Spirit taught them, saying, “The war will grow darker, and the scattering will increase, but My covenant shall not fail. Be faithful, O remnant, even unto death, and you shall see the Son return.”

38. And the people lifted their hands, crying, “We believe! Though scattered, we are one. Though hunted, we endure. Though slain, we live, for Yahawzhowaa is our life.”

39. And their song carried through valleys, rising above the sound of battle, and even the People of War trembled in secret, saying, “Why do their whispers burn more than our shouts? Why do their caves shine brighter than our fires?”

40. And some among the People of War began to doubt, hearing the psalms of the faithful, and they whispered among themselves, “Perhaps Yahawzhowaa lives indeed. Perhaps He shall return as they say.”

41. But the priests of shadow silenced them, crying, “Believe not the lies of the faithful. Hold fast to blood and cruelty.” Yet doubt remained like embers in their hearts.

42. Thus the land was filled with darkness, yet also with secret light; for though the People of War raged openly, the People of God shone in hidden places, bearing covenant and song.

43. And the Red and the Silver plates endured as twin witnesses: one sealed in blood, the other gleaming with testimony, declaring together, “He came, He lives, He will return.”

44. And it was written in the Silver, that in the two hundredth year the scattering began, and the nations chose war or faith, cruelty or covenant, despair or hope.

45. And the Spirit sealed it, saying, “This word shall not perish, for Yahawzhowaa is the beginning and the end, and as He departed, so shall He return, to gather the faithful and to break the proud.”

CHAPTER 15
The Nations Arm Themselves

1. And it came to pass, after the scattering of the faithful, that the People of War grew yet more furious, for though they had consumed sanctuaries and broken scrolls, still the psalms of Yahawzhowaa rose in the wilderness, and the echo of His name would not be silenced; and the priests of shadow were sorely vexed, for they said, “As long as the plates endure, their faith endures; as long as their faith endures, our victory is nothing.”

2. Therefore they sent messengers into every quarter of the earth, summoning the chiefs of the nations, saying, “Come, join yourselves to us, for the earth must be

cleansed of Yahawzhowaa's name; let us stand together, lest His covenant spread among our children and undo us."

3. And the chiefs of many nations answered, some willingly, some in fear, and they brought their hosts with them, until the People of War became as a sea without shore, clothed in skins, painted in blood, roaring as beasts in the night.

4. They raised banners dyed scarlet, they struck drums of hide that shook the valleys, and their war horns sounded like thunder upon the plains; and they swore a great oath together, "We will blot out the faithful, we will tear down every memory, we will melt the plates of silver, we will shatter the plates of red, and we will reign without rival."

5. And the priests of shadow lifted their hands over the armies, cursing the faithful, declaring, "You shall starve in caves, you shall wither in exile, your children shall forget your psalm, and your Yahawzhowaa shall not return."

6. But the Spirit of the Eternal moved upon Arel, and he lifted his voice in prophecy, saying, "Hear now, you who curse! The Eternal has sworn by His own life, and He cannot lie: Yahawzhowaa shall return, and every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. You may slay the bodies of the faithful, but you cannot slay their hope. You may burn the scrolls, but you cannot burn the covenant sealed in red and engraved in silver. Repent, O nations, for your cruelty is a snare to your own souls."

7. And the remnant who heard him wept, but they believed, saying, "The word of the Eternal is sure, though the earth itself be overturned."

8. Yet the armies of the People of War did not repent, but laughed, saying, "The weak prophesy, the strong prevail; let their caves crumble upon them."

9. And they spread themselves over mountains, forests, and rivers, hunting with fury, building altars of bones, smearing themselves in ashes, declaring that they themselves were the rulers of heaven and earth.

10. But the faithful withdrew into deeper places, gathering in caves lit by hidden fires, singing softly that they might not be found, teaching their children, "Remember the covenant, for the Red and Silver are our life; remember the psalm, for Yahawzhowaa is our hope; remember the promise, for He shall return."

11. And visions multiplied among them, for the Spirit gave dreams to the young and prophecies to the old, that they might not despair though the land was filled with enemies.

12. One saw in vision a great star falling, breaking into sparks, and each spark became a believer hidden in the earth; and the voice of the Eternal said, "Though scattered, they shall shine; though hidden, they shall endure."

13. Another dreamed of Yahawzhowaa Himself, clothed in light, saying, "I have

not forgotten you, O remnant; I know your caves, I hear your whispers, I count your tears, and I will come again with healing."

14. And the faithful rejoiced in secret, saying, "Though the nations surround us, the heavens speak to us; though we have lost many scrolls, the Eternal Himself writes upon our hearts."

15. But the People of War pressed their advantage, sweeping through the plains with fire, casting down the ruins of pyramids that once had been sanctuaries, saying, "See how the stones fall! So shall their faith fall also."

16. Yet the Spirit declared, "The stones fall, but the word stands; the scrolls burn, but the covenant endures; the faithful scatter, but My Son shall gather them again."

17. And Arel wrote upon the Silver Plate, "In these days the nations armed themselves against the faithful, but the Spirit armed the faithful with hope, and hope endured."

18. The People of War found fragments of record in caves and rejoiced, saying, "We have taken their treasure." But when they opened them, they found only psalms, and the words struck their hearts with fear.

19. For the psalms declared, "The Eternal is our refuge, and Yahawzhowaa is our salvation," and even the enemies trembled, though they hardened themselves, saying, "We will not believe."

20. And the remnant heard of it and laughed, saying, "The Eternal makes even fragments of record sharper than spears; how much more shall the Red and Silver testify when the Son returns!"

21. And they lifted the plates in secret assemblies, polishing them until they gleamed as stars, and they swore by them, "Even if all else perish, we will endure; even if scattered to the ends of the earth, we will sing; for Yahawzhowaa shall return."

22. And children kissed the plates, saying, "This is the inheritance of our people," and the Spirit sealed their hearts with remembrance.

23. But famine struck the land, and the People of War consumed their own strength, for they devoured as fire but did not plant, they destroyed but did not build; and their camps groaned in hunger.

24. Yet they did not turn, but raided even more fiercely, seizing from villages, slaying for bread, declaring, "This is our right, for we are lords of the earth."

25. And the remnant hid themselves, living on roots and herbs, drinking from streams, yet giving thanks, saying, "The Eternal feeds us still; His mercy is greater than famine."

26. And visions came again: one saw the heavens open, and a river of fire pouring forth upon the armies of the People of War; and the Spirit said, "This is the end of cruelty, though not yet; endure, for My wrath is appointed."

27. Another saw a tree in the wilderness, its roots broken yet its branches green, and

the Spirit said, “This is My people: cut down yet living, scattered yet fruitful, weak yet enduring.”

28. And Arel comforted them, saying, “Believe, O scattered ones, for the Eternal has not cast you off. These visions are sure, for Yahawzhowaa will come. Do not doubt, even in hunger, even in fear, for the plates shine and the Spirit speaks.”

29. And the people replied, “We believe; we will endure; we will sing, though hunted; we will guard the covenant, though scattered; for Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

30. And so it was written upon the Silver, “The nations armed themselves, but the Eternal armed His people with hope; they were hunted, but not destroyed; they were scattered, but not forsaken.”

31. And the Red Plate bore testimony, saying, “The covenant sealed in blood cannot perish, for blood speaks louder than fire, and mercy stronger than war.”

32. Yet the People of War boasted still, crying, “We are endless, and the faithful are few; we are strong, and they are weak; we are the masters of earth, and there is no Yahawzhowaa.”

33. But the Spirit answered, “You are dust, your banners shall rot, your howls shall fade, your cruelty shall be judged; but My word endures forever, and My Son shall reign.”

34. And the faithful sang louder, though hidden, crying, “He came, He lives, He will return,” and their voices were as incense rising to heaven.

35. And some among the People of War heard the psalm in the night and trembled, saying, “Why does this song pierce us more than spears? Perhaps Yahawzhowaa lives indeed.”

36. And a few turned in secret, fleeing their own hosts, joining the remnant, confessing, “We have seen cruelty, but we choose mercy; we have heard lies, but we believe truth.”

37. And the remnant received them with tears, saying, “The mercy of Yahawzhowaa is wide; though you were enemies, you are now brethren.”

38. And the Spirit rejoiced, saying, “Even in war I gather; even in scattering I plant; even in exile I build; for Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

39. But the priests of shadow gnashed their teeth, crying, “Traitors walk among us!” and they slew many suspected of wavering, filling their camps with fear.

40. And the Eternal said, “Their cruelty devours themselves; their rage consumes their strength; their hatred eats their hearts; but My people, though faint, shall live.”

41. And so the years turned, and the war did not end, but grew as a fire devouring forest after forest; and the faithful became as sparks scattered upon the wind, each small, yet together lighting the night

42. And the Red and the Silver were hidden deeper still, guarded by hands ready to die, and the Spirit whispered, “These

plates are the anchor of covenant, and they shall not perish, for My Son's name is written in them."

43. And Arel declared, "As the moon governs the night and the sun rules the day, so the Silver shines in exile and the Red speaks in blood; and together they testify of Yahawzhowaa, that He came, that He lives, that He will return."

44. And it was written upon the Silver, "In these days the nations armed themselves against the faithful, but the Eternal armed His people with prophecy and vision, and they endured by His Spirit."

45. And the Spirit sealed the CHAPTER, saying, "Behold, though nations roar, they are but a breath; but the word of Yahawzhowaa is everlasting, and He shall return in fire and glory to redeem the faithful and judge the proud."

CHAPTER 16
The Mountain and the Council of Heaven

1. And it came to pass, in the two hundred and twenty-fifth year since Yahawzhowaa departed, that the wars raged greater than before, for the People of War multiplied themselves without end, and the faithful were scattered as sparks upon the wind, hiding in forests, mountains, and caves.

2. The Red Plates of Agonabish and the Silver Plates of testimony yet endured, hidden in cedar chests, guarded with blood and song, but many of the faithful despaired, saying, "How long, O Eternal, until deliverance? How long until the promise is fulfilled?"

3. And Arel, who had borne the covenant in his old age, was bowed with sorrow, for he had seen sanctuaries fall, scrolls consumed, villages scattered, and children slain. He cried, "O Eternal, am I the last of the keepers? Shall the covenant perish in my hands? Show me Thy will."

4. And the Spirit of the Eternal spoke, "Come up, Arel, to the high mountain that looks over the land of blood. Leave behind the remnant for a moment, for I will meet you there."

5. So Arel took his staff and the Silver Plate in his hands, and he ascended by night, climbing the steep places though his body was frail, until he came to the summit where the stars filled the sky without veil.

6. And behold, the heavens opened, and a council descended as a river of light. They were clothed in robes of purple, brighter than the dawn yet soft as twilight, and upon their shoulders rested signs of stars.

7. And Arel fell upon his face, trembling, saying, "Who are you, lords of light, clothed in mystery and power?"

8. And the foremost of them spoke, saying, "Fear not, Arel, for we are the Midewiwin Council of Heaven, keepers of memory, priests of the Eternal, guardians of covenant from the beginning. We descend from the stars, not to terrify you,

but to strengthen you, for the Eternal has heard your cry."

9. And Arel lifted his head, tears upon his cheeks, and said, "Why have You come in this hour of blood and scattering? The nations rage, the faithful hide, the covenant trembles."

10. And they answered, "Because the covenant shall not perish, and Yahawzhowaa shall not forget His promise. Though war devours, the Eternal keeps watch. We are sent to give you instruction before you sleep with your fathers."

11. And Arel cried, "Tell me, O council of Heaven, what shall be done? Who shall guard the Red and Silver after me? For I am weak, and my days are few."

12. And the second of the council stepped forward, saying, "You shall not bear them forever, for no vessel of dust can. You shall appoint another, chosen by the Eternal, one who walks even now among the remnant, whose heart is steadfast though his years are few."

13. And Arel asked, "How shall I know him? What sign shall I seek?"

14. And the third of the council, whose eyes blazed as fire, answered, "The Spirit will reveal him by vision, for he shall stand before you, unafraid of death, willing to take the oath of blood. He shall say with his own mouth, I will die before the plates are taken. This is the one."

15. Then the first of the council lifted his hand and said, "But hear this also, Arel: the covenant is not only upon plates of red and silver, but written in the heavens themselves, in stars that cannot be quenched. Even if men forget, the skies remember. Even if nations destroy, the Eternal preserves."

16. And Arel trembled, saying, "What then is the meaning of the wars? Why must the faithful bleed, if the promise cannot fail?"

17. And the council answered as one, "Because pride must be revealed, and cruelty judged, and the faithful proved as gold in fire. Their tears water the tree of remembrance, their blood seals the covenant, their exile prepares the day of gathering."

18. And Arel lifted the Silver Plate to the light of the council, and it gleamed as a mirror of stars, and he said, "Behold, the testimony is sure, but my strength is spent. Will you not remain with us?"

19. And they said, "We dwell not upon the earth, but in the realms of the Eternal. Yet we will walk with you in Spirit, unseen but not absent, until the Son Himself descends. For Yahawzhowaa shall return with glory, and the covenant shall be fulfilled."

20. Then one among them placed his hand upon the Red Plate, and it glowed as though burning within, and he said, "This is the blood of your fathers, Agonabish, Shenat, and all who bore it in sorrow. It cries still: Believe in Yahawzhowaa."

21. And another touched the Silver Plate, and it shone as the moon, and he said,

“This is the testimony of the heavens, engraved by your hand, sealed by the Eternal. It cries also: Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

22. Then they said together, “These two are one witness, and they shall never be parted. One is of earth, one of heaven, but both declare the same word.”

23. And Arel bowed, saying, “I believe. Strengthen the remnant, for their hearts faint, and the People of War are without number.”

24. And the foremost answered, “Strengthen them with this: tell them the Eternal has not forgotten, tell them the Council of Heaven stands as witnesses, tell them the Son is nearer than they think. For though the years pass, His return hastens, and He shall not delay forever.”

25. Then a scroll of light was given to Arel, and upon it were written words no tongue of man could utter, but only the Spirit could interpret. And they said, “Hide this in your heart; it shall strengthen you until the end.”

26. And Arel ate the words as bread, and they were sweet as honey in his mouth but bitter in his belly, for they showed both glory and sorrow yet to come.

27. And the council said, “Do not despair at the bitterness, for joy comes after sorrow, light after night, gathering after scattering. Such is the way of the covenant.”

28. And Arel lifted his hands to heaven, crying, “O Eternal, You are just, You are faithful, You are merciful. Into Your hands I commend the covenant. Let it endure.”

29. Then the council lifted him to his feet, though his bones were frail, and said, “Go down, Arel, to the remnant, and strengthen them once more. Appoint the next keeper, seal the covenant, and then you shall rest in peace.”

30. And Arel said, “What shall I tell them of you?”

31. And they answered, “Tell them this: The Midewiwin Council of Heaven descended in purple from the stars to testify that the covenant is eternal, and Yahawzhowaa shall return. This shall be their comfort.”

32. And Arel said, “What shall I write upon the plates of silver to remember this day?”

33. And they said, “Engrave these words: I saw the Council of Heaven, clothed in purple, descending from the stars; they declared the covenant sure, and the return of Yahawzhowaa certain. This is enough.”

34. And Arel bowed again, pressing the plates to his breast, saying, “I will obey. Let the remnant know. Let the nations tremble. Let Yahawzhowaa’s name be lifted forever.”

35. And the council rose again into the heavens, their purple robes shining as fire, their faces radiant as stars, until they were seen no more, and only the wind whispered, “Believe, for He shall return.”

36. And Arel stood alone upon the mountain, his body trembling yet his spirit

strong, for he had seen the council, and his faith was renewed.

37. He lifted the Silver Plate high toward the heavens, and he cried, "Hear, O earth and stars! I believe! The covenant is sure, the promise unbroken, Yahawzhowaa shall return!"

38. And the mountains echoed, and the valleys trembled, and even the People of War in the distance heard a strange sound and were afraid.

39. Then Arel descended from the mountain, his face shining though his body was weary, and the remnant saw him and marveled, saying, "He has seen heaven."

40. And he declared to them all that he had seen and heard, and the people wept for joy, crying, "We are not forgotten! The covenant endures! Yahawzhowaa shall return!"

41. And Arel said, "Prepare yourselves, for soon another will rise among you as Keeper. The Eternal has shown me that my days are few, but the covenant shall continue in your hands."

42. And the people swore again, "We will guard the Red and Silver, even to death, even in scattering, even in exile. For as the Council has spoken, so we believe: Yahawzhowaa shall return."

43. And Arel wrote upon the Silver Plate, "In the two hundred and twenty-fifth year, I ascended the mountain. I saw the Midewiwin Council of Heaven, clothed in purple, descending from the stars. They declared the covenant eternal and the return of Yahawzhowaa certain."

44. And he sealed the engraving with his last strength, that it might endure for all generations.

45. Thus the CHAPTER was closed, and it was written, "Though war is rampant and the remnant few, the heavens testify, the plates endure, and the Eternal has sworn: Yahawzhowaa shall return."

CHAPTER 17
The Passing of the Covenant

1. And it came to pass, after Arel descended from the mountain where he had seen the Midewiwin Council of Heaven clothed in purple and shining as stars, that the remnant gathered about him in fear and in hope, saying, "Tell us what you have seen, O Keeper, for your face shines with fire, and your eyes burn with mysteries."

2. And Arel lifted the Silver Plate before them, and he declared, "I saw the Council of Heaven descend in purple from the stars. They touched the Red Plate and it burned as blood. They touched the Silver Plate and it shone as the moon. They said: The covenant is eternal, and Yahawzhowaa shall return. This is sure."

3. And the people fell upon their faces, weeping with joy, crying, "We are not forgotten! Heaven remembers us! Yahawzhowaa has not abandoned us!"

4. But Arel, though strengthened in spirit, was frail in body, and he said, "My

children, hear me: my days are few. I must soon sleep with my fathers. The covenant cannot rest in my hands alone, but must be given to another."

5. And fear fell upon the remnant, and they said, "What shall become of us if the Keeper is taken? Who shall bear the plates? Who shall lead us?"

6. Then Arel answered, "The Council of Heaven has shown me: the Keeper shall be revealed by his own mouth. He shall not fear death. He shall swear by his blood to guard the plates, saying, I will die before they are taken. This is the one chosen."

7. And he prayed aloud, "O Eternal, reveal now Thy chosen, that I may place the covenant in his hands before I am gathered to rest."

8. And behold, among the remnant there arose a young man, not mighty in stature, not proud in bearing, but steadfast in gaze, whose heart had been tried in caves and in hunger.

9. He came forth trembling, yet his voice was strong, and he said, "I will not let the Red and the Silver be taken. Though nations rise against me, though spears pierce me, though fire consume me, I will die before I surrender the covenant."

10. And Arel lifted his eyes to heaven and said, "Behold, this is the sign. The Eternal has chosen."

11. And he laid the Silver Plate upon the young man's breast, and he pressed the Red Plate upon his brow, and he said, "From this day you are Keeper of the Covenant. Guard them as your life. Teach your children and your children's children. Let not the psalm be forgotten: He came, He lives, He will return."

12. And the remnant shouted with one voice, "We receive him as Keeper. We bind ourselves to the covenant. We swear by the Red and Silver that we will guard them unto death."

13. And Arel said, "Hear me, O people: these plates are not mine, nor his, nor yours, but the Eternal's. They belong not to a tribe, nor to a nation, but to heaven and earth together. Guard them not for yourselves, but for the generations yet unborn."

14. Then he prophesied, saying, "The wars will not cease soon. The People of War will grow fiercer, their cruelty greater, their hatred deeper. They will scatter you further, they will break your bodies, they will burn your villages. But the covenant will endure. The plates will survive. The promise will not fail. Yahawẓhowaa will return."

15. And he laid his hands upon the head of the new Keeper, and the Spirit of the Eternal rested upon him, and the remnant saw it and trembled, saying, "The mantle has passed."

16. And Arel spoke to the Keeper, "Be strong, for your days will be harder than mine. I saw sanctuaries burn, but you will see nations fall. I saw scrolls consumed, but you will see blood flow as rivers. Yet fear not, for the Eternal is with you."

17. Then he said to all the people, “Do not cling to me, for I am but dust. Cling to the covenant, cling to the plates, cling to Yahawzhowaa. For I go down to rest, but He shall rise to return.”

18. And the people wept bitterly, clinging to him, saying, “Do not leave us, O father, O Keeper.” But he answered, “Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children, for dark days are ahead. Yet believe, and you shall endure.”

19. And it came to pass, after he had spoken these things, that Arel placed the plates within the cedar chest, and with his own hands he bound it with cords, and he gave the key into the hands of the new Keeper.

20. And he said, “Guard this chest as you guard your breath. Hide it in caves, carry it upon your shoulders, bleed for it if you must, but never let it be broken, for it is the covenant of heaven and earth together.”

21. Then he turned to the remnant and said, “Raise your children in psalm, not in fear. Teach them not war but faith. Let them carve upon stones: He will return. Let them sing in caves: He lives. Let them whisper in exile: He came. For these three are one.”

22. And he wrote upon the Silver Plate, “In this year the covenant was passed to another, chosen of the Eternal, sworn unto death, that the Red and Silver might endure until the return of Yahawzhowaa.”

23. And the remnant bore witness, signing with their own blood upon bark, sealing the oath with tears, saying, “We were there when the covenant was passed. We will tell it to our children.”

24. Then Arel blessed them, saying, “The Eternal bless you and keep you. Yahawzhowaa strengthen you and preserve you. The Spirit comfort you and guide you. Amen.”

25. And he sat upon a rock, frail and weary, yet his face was radiant as one who had seen heaven, and he said, “I am ready.”

26. And the people asked him, “Where will you go now?”

27. And he answered, “To the Eternal, to my fathers, to Agonabish and Shenat, to await the return of Yahawzhowaa. Do not seek me in the earth, for I will not rise until He comes. Seek the covenant. Seek the promise. Seek Him.”

28. And he lifted his hands one last time and cried, “He came, He lives, He will return.”

29. And having said this, he fell into sleep, and the Spirit received him, and he was no more.

30. And the people buried him in the mountain where he had seen the Council of Heaven, and they carved upon the stone, “Here sleeps Arel, Keeper of the Covenant, who saw the Council of Heaven clothed in purple, who engraved the testimony upon silver, who bore the Red and Silver unto death. He believed, and he waits for Yahawzhowaa.”

31. And the remnant wept for many days,

but their weeping was mingled with hope, for they said, “He is not gone forever; he waits with the fathers; when Yahawzhowaa returns, he will rise again.”

32. And the new Keeper stood among them, the cedar chest before him, and he said, “Weep no longer, but be strong. The covenant is not broken, for it is not in a man but in the Eternal.”

33. And he lifted the chest and bore it upon his shoulders, and the people followed him into the caves, singing softly, “He came, He lives, He will return.”

34. And the People of War, hearing their song in the night, trembled, though they did not know why, saying, “Their whispers burn us like fire.”

35. And the priests of shadow, hearing that Arel was dead, rejoiced, crying, “The Keeper is fallen, now the covenant is weak.”

36. But the Eternal answered from heaven, “You are fools, for the covenant is stronger than a man. Though one Keeper falls, another rises. Though you slay the faithful, I raise them again. You cannot break what I have sealed.”

37. And the remnant took courage, saying, “If the Eternal speaks, we will believe. If the covenant endures, we will endure. If Yahawzhowaa lives, we will live.”

38. And the new Keeper taught them, saying, “Do not fear the multitude of enemies, for they are as grass before the scythe. Fear only to forget the plates, for if you forget, you are lost.”

39. And he declared, “We are the People of the Covenant, we are the guardians of the Red and the Silver, we are the singers of the psalm, and we will endure until He returns.”

40. And they all swore again, “We will guard, we will sing, we will believe, even unto death.”

41. And the Spirit sealed their oath, whispering, “This is acceptable unto Me.”

42. And so the covenant passed from Arel to the new Keeper, and the remnant walked in hope though the war grew darker.

43. And it was written upon the Silver Plate, “The Eternal is faithful, the covenant endures, the plates are preserved, the faithful wait, Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

44. And the Red Plate bore witness also, glowing faintly as though alive, crying, “Blood has sealed it, and blood shall not erase it.”

45. Thus ended the days of Arel, and thus began the days of the new Keeper, and the war did not end, but the hope of the faithful endured, for the Eternal was with them, and Yahawzhowaa’s promise was sure.

CHAPTER 18
The Keeper in Days of Slaughter

1. And it came to pass, after Arel was gathered to his fathers, that the new

Keeper arose among the remnant, bearing the cedar chest upon his shoulders, wherein lay the Red Plates of Agonabish and the Silver Plates of testimony; and the people looked to him, saying, “Lead us, for the covenant is with you.”

2. And he said, “I am but dust as you are, but the Eternal has chosen me to guard the plates. Therefore let us not boast in flesh, but in the covenant alone. For as long as the plates endure, our hope endures; as long as Yahawẓhowaa lives, our psalm shall be sung.”

3. And the remnant took courage, for his voice was strong, though his years were few, and they believed that the Spirit rested upon him, even as it had rested upon Arel.

4. But the People of War, hearing that Arel had died, rejoiced, crying, “Now the covenant is broken, and the faithful are leaderless. Let us strike with fury, for their strength is spent.”

5. And the priests of shadow stirred the nations, saying, “Arise, O chiefs, take your hosts, for now is the hour to consume the last of them, and seize the plates for ourselves.”

6. And the hosts of the People of War swarmed again as locusts, filling valleys, darkening mountains, setting forests aflame, driving the remnant deeper into exile.

7. They painted their foreheads red with the blood of beasts, they clothed themselves in hides, they howled in the night, saying, “We are lords of the earth, and no covenant shall stand against us.”

8. And they fell upon villages that had not fled in time, slaying the old, enslaving the young, burning the lodges, overturning the stones of the sanctuaries, and mocking the names of the faithful, crying, “Where now is your Yahawẓhowaa?”

9. But the remnant, though few, endured in caves and mountains, living on herbs and roots, drinking from streams, and teaching their children by whispers, “Fear not. Yahawẓhowaa lives. He shall return.”

10. And the Keeper stood among them by firelight and declared, “Do not look to my strength, for I am weak. Do not look to our numbers, for we are few. Look to the Eternal, whose word cannot fail. Look to the covenant, which endures. Look to Yahawẓhowaa, who shall return.”

11. And he opened the chest and lifted the Red Plate, and it glowed in the firelight as blood that will not fade, and he said, “This is the cry of our fathers: Believe, though scattered. Believe, though hunted. Believe, though slain.”

12. Then he lifted the Silver Plate, and it gleamed as the moon, and he said, “This is the song of heaven: Yahawẓhowaa shall return, though nations rage, though years are long, though faith is tested.”

13. And the people answered with tears, “We believe! We will endure! We will guard the covenant, though we perish!”

14. And visions came among them: one saw a mountain split, and out of the cleft came a river of light; and the Spirit said,

"This is the remnant, hidden yet flowing, small yet enduring."

15. Another saw the stars bending low, and one greater than the rest shining upon the earth, and the Spirit said, "This is Yahawzhowaa, whose return is sure, whose light cannot be quenched."

16. And the Keeper declared, "These visions are sure. The Eternal speaks to us still. Do not despair, for though the People of War rage, they are as grass, soon cut down; but Yahawzhowaa is eternal."

17. And the remnant sang softly in caves, "He came, He lives, He will return," and their song was heard by the Spirit, rising as incense before the throne of the Eternal.

18. But the People of War mocked, crying, "Their whispers are nothing! Our howls are thunder, our spears are iron, our banners are endless. We will grind them to dust."

19. Yet even in their boasting, doubt crept among some, for the psalms of the faithful pierced their hearts more sharply than swords.

20. And a few forsook the hosts of the People of War, fleeing into caves, saying, "We have seen cruelty enough. We choose mercy. We believe in Yahawzhowaa."

21. And the remnant received them with joy, saying, "The covenant is wide, and His mercy greater than our sins. You were enemies, but now you are brethren."

22. And the Keeper blessed them, saying, "You are forgiven. Walk now in faith, and guard the covenant with us, even unto death."

23. And the priests of shadow raged, saying, "They have betrayed us! They have joined the faithful!" And they slew many of their own out of suspicion, filling their camps with fear.

24. Thus the strength of the People of War began to devour itself, for cruelty turned upon cruelty, and hatred ate their own hearts.

25. Yet they did not cease to strike at the faithful, but sought them all the more fiercely, for they feared the plates above all.

26. And the Keeper prayed, "O Eternal, hide us in Your hand. Hide the Red and the Silver from their eyes. Let the covenant endure."

27. And the Spirit answered, "Fear not. My hand covers the plates. My breath shields the remnant. Though you suffer, you will not be consumed."

28. And the remnant bowed their heads, saying, "We believe. We will endure."

29. And the Keeper prophesied, "Thus says the Eternal: The People of War shall rage for a season, but their end is appointed. They shall drown in their own blood, their banners shall rot, their names forgotten. But the covenant shall endure, the plates shall be preserved, and Yahawzhowaa shall return."

30. And he wrote upon the Silver Plate, "In these days of slaughter, the covenant endured; the faithful endured; visions increased; mercy was given; the promise was sure."

31. And he sealed it with his own blood, saying, “Let my life also be testimony, that I too have sworn unto death.”

32. And the remnant wept, saying, “We will not forget. We will teach our children. We will endure.”

33. And they carved upon stones, “He came, He lives, He will return,” that even if they perished, the land would remember.

34. And the People of War, finding the carvings, gnashed their teeth, saying, “Even the stones preach against us!”

35. And the priests of shadow cried, “Break the stones! Burn the trees! Starve the caves! Let no memory remain!”

36. But the Eternal said, “Even if you break the stones, I will write upon the stars; even if you burn the trees, I will speak in the wind; even if you starve the caves, I will nourish My people with hope. You cannot erase Me.”

37. And the faithful lifted their hands, crying, “We believe!” And the Spirit sealed their faith with peace, even in hunger, even in fear.

38. And so the years turned, and the war did not end, but the covenant endured, and the Red and the Silver shone in secret.

39. And children grew in exile, strong in psalm, weak in flesh but mighty in spirit, for the Eternal wrote upon their hearts what the People of War could not erase.

40. And mothers rejoiced, saying, “Our wombs bring forth witnesses, though sanctuaries fall.” And fathers rejoiced, saying, “Our children are psalms, though scrolls are burned.”

41. And the Keeper said, “This is the work of the Eternal, that the covenant multiplies in hearts even when destroyed in stone. No power can erase Yahawzhowaa.”

42. And he lifted the plates again, crying, “Behold, Red and Silver endure! Heaven and earth bear witness! Yahawzhowaa shall return!”

43. And the remnant shouted with him, though softly in hiding, “He came, He lives, He will return!”

44. And it was written upon the Silver, “Though war is unending, the covenant is unbroken; though the faithful are scattered, the Spirit gathers them; though the Keeper is hunted, the plates endure; Yahawzhowaa is sure.”

45. And the Spirit sealed it, saying, “This word is eternal, this covenant unshaken, this promise unfailing: Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

CHAPTER 19
The Great Devouring

1. And it came to pass, after many years of slaughter, that the People of War did not grow weary, but increased in fury, for their priests urged them on, saying, “Consume, for the faithful yet hide in caves; hunt, for the covenant yet endures.”

2. And the armies swelled as rivers in flood, pouring over mountains and plains, leaving nothing alive in their path, so that villages withered like grass before the fire.

3. They painted their faces red, they clothed themselves in hides, they sharpened their spears with stones, and they howled as wolves, crying, “We are death, and none can withstand us.”

4. And famine came upon the land, for they sowed not, neither did they reap, but lived by plunder alone, and their mouths grew empty even as their hands dripped with blood.

5. They devoured their captives as beasts, they stripped the earth of its fruit, they left the rivers fouled with corpses, and yet they said, “We are strong, we shall reign forever.”

6. But the Eternal laughed them to scorn, saying, “You are worms who boast of wings, dust that calls itself iron. Your cruelty is a snare, your rage a fire that will consume you.”

7. And the faithful hid yet deeper, in caves whose mouths were sealed with stone, in hollows of mountains, in the ruins of pyramids once holy, and they whispered to their children, “Fear not, for Yahawzhowaa lives.”

8. And the Keeper stood among them, holding the chest of cedar, and he said, “Lift your eyes above famine, above war, above death. The Red and the Silver remain, and they are brighter than the spears of the nations. Believe, for Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

9. And he lifted the Red Plate, and it glowed in the firelight, and he cried, “Behold, this is the blood of our fathers, shed in covenant, sealed in exile, crying still: Believe.”

10. And he lifted the Silver Plate, and it shone as the moon in darkness, and he cried, “Behold, this is the testimony of the heavens, saying: Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

11. And the people wept and swore again, “We will die before the plates are taken. We will live only to guard them. For they are life, and Yahawzhowaa is our hope.”

12. Then visions came upon them in the caves, as the Spirit poured Himself out more richly than before.

13. One saw the heavens rolled back as a scroll, and the Son descending in glory, His eyes like fire, His hands outstretched, and He cried, “Come, you who endured.”

14. Another saw the People of War swallowed by their own rage, their camps consumed by fire from within, their banners torn by the wind, their howls silenced in ashes.

15. And another saw a river of blood turn to a river of light, and the Spirit said, “So shall cruelty be turned into mercy, when the Son returns.”

16. And the people rejoiced in their visions, though their bellies were empty, saying, “Better to starve with hope than to feast in cruelty; better to die in covenant than to live in war.”

17. Yet many among the faithful perished, for hunger and plague consumed them, and their bodies lay unburied in

caves.

18. But even in death they whispered, “He came, He lives, He will return,” and their last breath became testimony written upon the air.

19. And the Keeper wrote upon the Silver Plate, “In these days famine devoured the land, war consumed the nations, and many faithful perished; yet the covenant endured, and the Spirit gave visions of Yahawzhowaa’s return.”

20. And he sealed it with tears, pressing his own blood upon the plate, that his oath might endure with the engraving.

21. And the People of War grew weaker, though they knew it not, for their strength turned upon itself, and they slew one another for bread, and chiefs rose and fell in a single night.

22. But their cruelty did not lessen, for they struck the faithful even more fiercely, saying, “If we cannot fill our bellies, we will at least fill our hands with blood.”

23. And the faithful fled still deeper, until some dwelt in caverns where no light of sun or moon entered, and there they sang softly, “He will return.”

24. And children asked their mothers, “When will He come?” and mothers answered, “Soon, my child, soon, for He promised.”

25. And the Spirit whispered, “Do not despair, for every day of sorrow is one day closer to His return.”

26. And the Keeper said, “Endure, O remnant, for these are the birth pangs of glory; sorrow first, joy after; scattering first, gathering after; exile first, kingdom after.”

27. And the people replied, “We will endure, for the Eternal has spoken, and Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

28. But the People of War, seeing that the faithful still lived, though few, cried in fury, “How do they endure when we consume them? How do they sing when we silence them? How do they live when we slay them?”

29. And their priests answered, “It is the plates! Seize the plates, and their faith will perish.”

30. So they sought the plates more fiercely, searching mountains and forests, overturning stones, burning caves, but the Spirit hid them.

31. And the Keeper prayed, “O Eternal, hide them in Your hand, as You hid Mosay in the cleft of the rock, as You hid Elyah in the cave. Let not the covenant perish.”

32. And the Eternal answered, “I have hidden them in My own light; no eye of cruelty shall find them, no hand of war shall take them. Fear not.”

33. And the faithful rejoiced, saying, “The Eternal hides us, the Eternal preserves us, the Eternal is our refuge.”

34. And they sang louder, though softly, “He came, He lives, He will return,” and their song pierced the night as lightning.

35. And some among the People of War, hearing the song, forsook their camps, fleeing to the remnant, saying, “We have seen cruelty enough; we choose mercy.”

36. And the remnant received them, saying, “The covenant is wide. Believe, and you are brothers.”

37. And the priests of shadow raged, slaying doubters in their midst, but their cruelty devoured themselves, and their strength melted as wax before flame.

38. Yet the war did not cease, for hatred is slow to die, and the blood of the faithful yet flowed.

39. But the Spirit comforted the remnant, saying, “Endure a little longer, for the measure is filling, and when it is full, the Son shall come.”

40. And the Keeper cried, “We believe, though our numbers are few. We believe, though our bellies are empty. We believe, though our enemies surround us. We believe, for Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

41. And all the people answered, “Amen, amen.”

42. And it was written upon the Silver, “The nations devoured themselves, the faithful endured in famine, visions multiplied, and the covenant stood firm.”

43. And the Red Plate bore witness also, glowing faintly, crying, “Blood has sealed it, and blood shall not erase it.”

44. And the remnant carved upon stones: “Here in famine, here in scattering, here in exile, yet we believe: Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

45. And the Spirit sealed it, saying, “Though the world is consumed, My word endures. Though the nations perish, My Son shall return, and the covenant shall be fulfilled.”

CHAPTER 20
The Fall of the Great City

1. And it came to pass, in the two hundred and fiftieth year since Yahawzhowaa departed, that the wars grew so fierce that even the greatest of cities could not stand.

2. And a runner came to the Keeper of the Red and Silver, weary and wounded, his garments torn, his face streaked with dust and blood.

3. He fell before the Keeper, crying with a broken voice, “The great city has fallen! The city of Bountiful, the capital of all capitals, has been broken as a potter’s vessel! The People of War have poured into its streets, and the sacred Gold Records are in jeopardy!”

4. And the remnant trembled greatly, for they knew the city of Bountiful was the heart of the land, where in former days the prophets had gathered, where the psalms had been sung without ceasing, and where the treasures of memory were preserved.

5. And the Keeper rent his garment and cried, “O Eternal, is even the city of our fathers consumed? Will no place remain untouched by the fire of war?”

6. And the runner lifted himself with failing strength and said, “The walls are cast down, the sanctuaries burned, the chiefs slain, the prophets hunted. The People of War clothe themselves in blood,

they howl in triumph, they burn every chamber. The city of Bountiful is become a wilderness of smoke and ash."

7. And the remnant lifted their voices in weeping, saying, "If the great city has fallen, what hope remains for the covenant?"

8. But the Keeper stilled them, lifting the Silver Plate, saying, "Hope is not in walls of stone, nor in armies of men, nor in cities of earth. Hope is in the covenant, which is eternal. Yet we must act, lest the Gold Records be consumed."

9. And he called for a youth swift of foot, whose heart was pure and steadfast, and he placed his hand upon his head, saying, "You shall run as an arrow flies. Carry my word to the prophet of the city: Remove the Gold Records. Carry them north. Hide them among the remnant, lest the People of War devour them."

10. And the youth swore by his own blood, saying, "I will not tarry, I will not fail. Though I fall, yet the word shall reach him."

11. And the Keeper gave him bread in a pouch and a skin of water, and he embraced him, saying, "Go in the strength of the Eternal. The Spirit will cover you by day and guide you by night."

12. And the runner departed swiftly into the dark, moving like a shadow through forest and field, guided by the stars, carrying the command of the covenant.

13. And the remnant prayed without ceasing, saying, "O Eternal, preserve his steps. Let the enemy not overtake him, nor the spear strike him, nor hunger bring him low. Let him reach the prophet before it is too late."

14. And the Keeper lifted the Red Plate and the Silver Plate before the people, saying, "Now three witnesses bear record in the earth: the Red of Agonabish, the Silver of Arel, and the Gold of Bountiful. If one perishes, the testimony is wounded. Let us labor with all our strength that all may endure."

15. And it came to pass, after many days of running, that the youth came to the ruins of Bountiful. Smoke rose from her walls, her streets were strewn with bones, her sanctuaries broken, and the cries of the slain echoed still.

16. And he covered his face and wept, crying, "Alas, O city of our fathers! You are laid waste, and your beauty is turned to ash. Yet the covenant must not perish with you."

17. And he searched in secret, hiding from the People of War who yet prowled the ruins, until he found a chamber beneath the earth, where the prophet of the city remained with a few survivors, guarding the Gold Records.

18. And the youth fell before him, crying, "I come from the Keeper of the Red and Silver. The city is lost, the walls are fallen, the enemy devours all. The Keeper commands: Remove the Gold Records. Carry them north. Hide them with the covenant."

19. And the prophet wept for joy, saying, “Blessed be the Eternal, who has not forsaken us. Even in ruin, His word endures.”

20. And he showed the youth the chest of gold, heavy with engravings of ages past, shining dimly in the darkness. He said, “Behold, these are the words of the fathers, carved that the world might remember. We will not let them perish.”

21. And the survivors swore an oath, laying hands upon the chest, saying, “We will bear it, though it crush our shoulders. We will guard it, though our blood be spilled. We will die before it is taken.”

22. And they lifted the chest upon staves, and with trembling feet they departed by night, leaving the ruins of the city behind, guided by the youth who had run.

23. And the People of War, finding the chambers empty, cried in rage, “The records are gone! The gold is stolen!” and they hunted in fury, but they could not find them, for the Spirit hid their path.

24. And the prophet spoke as they fled, saying, “This is the mercy of the Eternal, that in wrath He remembers covenant. The city is lost, but the word is preserved. The walls are broken, but the promise endures.”

25. And they came at last to the mountains of the north, faint with hunger, weak with wounds, but they delivered the chest to the Keeper of the Red and Silver.

26. And when the Keeper beheld it, he fell upon his face, weeping, crying, “Three witnesses now stand: the Red, the Silver, and the Gold. Earth, heaven, and memory together. The covenant is sealed.”

27. And the remnant lifted their voices, crying, “Blessed be the Eternal, who preserves His word though nations perish! Blessed be Yahawzhowaa, who shall return!”

28. And the Keeper wrote upon the Silver Plate, “In the two hundred and fiftieth year the city of Bountiful fell. The Gold Records were removed and carried north. They joined the Red and the Silver, and three witnesses stood together, declaring Yahawzhowaa.”

29. And he sealed the engraving with his blood, that it might endure.

30. And the remnant swore again, saying, “We will guard the Red, the Silver, and the Gold. We will die before they are taken. We will live only to preserve them. For Yahawzhowaa shall return.”

31. And the prophet of the city, weary and broken, said, “I will remain with you now, for my city is no more. The covenant is my city, the plates my sanctuary, the promise my wall.”

32. And the Keeper embraced him, saying, “You are not forsaken, for the Eternal Himself has brought you to us.”

33. And the remnant rejoiced, for now the three witnesses were together, shining in the dark.

34. And the People of War raged, saying, “We have destroyed their city, yet their hope endures. We have burned their

sanctuaries, yet their psalms endure. We have slain their priests, yet their covenant endures. How can this be?"

35. And the priests of shadow answered, "It is the plates. Always the plates. Destroy them, and you destroy their faith."

36. But the Eternal said, "You will never destroy them, for they are Mine. I sealed them before the world was formed, and I will preserve them until the Son returns."

37. And the faithful sang, even in hiding, "He came, He lives, He will return."

38. And the song pierced the night, and the Spirit carried it to heaven, and the Eternal said, "These are My children, these are My witnesses."

39. And visions came to the remnant: one saw three stars in the sky, red, silver, and gold, moving together as one, and the Spirit said, "So are the plates, witnesses of earth and heaven."

40. Another saw the Son Himself holding the three plates in His hands, declaring, "These are Mine. These shall not perish. By these the world shall know I came, I live, I will return."

41. And the people rejoiced in vision, though the earth was filled with war.

42. And it was written upon the Silver Plate, "The Gold has joined the Red and the Silver. Three testify as one: covenant sealed, promise sure, Yahawzhowaa certain."

43. And the Red Plate glowed as blood, and the Silver gleamed as the moon, and the Gold shone faintly as the sun, and together they bore witness.

44. And the remnant fell upon their faces, saying, "We are dust, yet we are keepers of heaven's treasure. We are weak, yet we guard the covenant of eternity. We are hunted, yet we endure, for Yahawzhowaa shall return."

45. Thus was the fall of the great city recorded, and the preservation of the Gold, and the uniting of the three witnesses; and the Spirit sealed it, saying, "Though cities fall, My word endures. Though nations rage, My Son shall return, and the covenant shall be fulfilled."

CHAPTER 21
The Visitation of Yahawzhowaa & the New Name

1. And it came to pass, after the fall of Bountiful and the flight of the Gold Records into peril, that the Keeper of the Red and Silver withdrew from the noise of lamentation and the counsel of men, and he climbed alone into the spine of the mountains where only hawks keep watch. There he fasted with dust upon his head and ashes upon his cloak, and he stretched his palms to the sky, saying, "Eternal One, do not let the covenant perish in my weakness; do not let the song of Your return be swallowed by war. If there is a path for me, show it; if there is a word for the remnant, breathe it into me now."

2. As he lay upon the cold stone and his breath grew thin, the wind fell silent as if

creation held its tongue, and the host of stars seemed to draw nearer as lamps drawn down to a tent. Then a brightness gathered in the high air — the hush before thunder, the whiteness before dawn — and the summit itself trembled like a drum beneath a great hand. The night did not end, but it opened, and within the opening was a fire that did not consume and a stillness that did not suffocate.

3. Out of that holy opening came Yahawzhowaa, the Son of the Eternal, clothed in living light — His countenance like lightning restrained by mercy, His eyes deep as wells where justice and tenderness drink together. The scars in His hands were stars fixed in flesh, and the hem of His brightness brushed the stone, and where it touched, the stone remembered Eden. His voice came like many waters that cleanse yet do not drown, and every fear in the Keeper rose to flee and then fell to worship.

4. The Keeper's bones went soft within him and his knees dissolved, for flesh was not made to stand before such brightness; he pressed his brow to the rock and covered his face with both hands, saying, "Woe is me; I am dust that has seen the sun." Yet even in terror his spirit leapt like a child to a father's arms, for the nearness of Yahawzhowaa is terror only to pride, but to the broken it is home. Between fear and love he trembled like a bowstring drawn by a master archer.

5. Then the Savior set His hand upon the Keeper's shoulder, and the touch was gentler than dawn upon barley and firmer than mountain roots beneath snow. "Fear not," He said, and fear departed as mist before day. "I have chosen you to stand in My presence, to hear My words, and to bear them to those who will be hunted for believing."

6. The Keeper lifted his head but dared not lift his eyes; tears made rivulets in the dust upon his cheeks. "Lord," he whispered, "I am empty as a broken jar, and my years are a handful of sand. I cannot hold what You would pour, nor carry what You would give." And Yahawzhowaa answered, "It is not the jar but the water that gives life; I will be the water in you."

7. "You are not chosen for strength of arm," the Savior said, "nor for cunning of tongue, nor for rank of men; you are chosen because the Eternal delights to set treasure in common clay. The covenant you guard is Mine; your weakness only gives it room. Therefore, be small and I will be great; be silent and My word will be loud in you."

8. Then Yahawzhowaa reached for the Red Plate, copper-red like fresh blood beneath a morning sun, and as His fingers touched its face, fire remembered its first day and burned without smoke. "This," He said, "is the earth's cry made metal — blood that speaks a better word than vengeance: Believe. It is the witness of suffering love passed from Agonabish to Shenat to Arel, and now to you."

9. He reached for the Silver Plate, bright as full moon on untroubled water, and the letters upon it leapt like sparks in a cold sky. “And this,” He said, “is the heavens’ reply made visible — engraved promise that endures frost and flame: I will return. It is the witness of ordered glory, of stars that bow to the Maker and sing of His appointed day.”

10. The Keeper, moved with longing, asked, “Lord, shall I not also behold the Gold that fled the city, that the three might stand as one lamp, unshadowed forever?” But Yahawzhowaa, whose wisdom wastes nothing and whose mercy prevents folly, shook His head with kindness. “You shall not see the Gold,” He said, “for war follows it like wolves follow blood; if the three stand together now, the hunters will devour them and the earth will wake to silence.”

11. “Why then divide witness from witness?” the Keeper said, aching as if parted from a brother. “Because,” the Savior answered, “the world is divided for a time — day from night, river from desert, the faithful from those who choose war. What is scattered cannot be seized whole; what is hidden cannot be conquered openly. Separate flames survive the storm where a single bonfire would betray the camp.”

12. “Hear Me,” Yahawzhowaa continued, and His words entered the Keeper as bread enters the starving. “The Eternal has given the witnesses their tasks: the Red shall walk with the persecuted to teach them that tears can covenant; the Silver shall walk with the watchful to teach them that hope can be engraved; the Gold shall walk with the dispersed to teach them that memory can travel farther than walls. Each will be a shepherd to a scattered flock.”

13. “Now I tell you of days that approach like thunder across an empty plain,” said the Lord. “The People of War will not tire, for hatred feeds upon itself and calls hunger strength. They will spread like locusts and will not plant; they will drink blood and call it wine; they will crown themselves with red upon the brow as a false sunrise and clothe themselves in skins to forget they are men.”

14. “They will profane sanctuaries and laugh at graves; they will tear the tongues from books and the hearts from elders; they will sharpen stone and bone and call their altars victory. Yet all this will be straw in a furnace when the day arrives, for cruelty is a serpent that finally devours its own tail. Their triumphs will be tall as smoke and as lasting.”

15. “They will hunt the plates,” Yahawzhowaa said, “for idols envy living testimony, and tyrants fear any song they did not teach. They will promise peace if you will trade the covenant for silence, and when you refuse, they will hate you for proving that peace does not live in their hands. But I have sealed these witnesses in My palm; iron cannot pry what love has clenched.”

16. “Lord,” the Keeper said, “the children hide in caves and taste ash; mothers quiet their babies with songs they fear to sing; fathers watch at cave mouths with spears that are only prayers given wood. How long shall this night be?” And the Savior, whose calendar is mercy, replied, “Long enough to prove love and no longer; long enough to burn chaff and not wheat.”

17. “Tell them,” He said, “that sorrow is a traveler with a short lease, and joy is a settler who owns the land. Tell them that exile is the parent of homecoming, and that graves are doorways when I knock. Tell them that when endurance has learned its full lesson, the bell of dawn will ring of its own accord.”

18. “Hear a mystery,” said Yahawzhowaa, and the stars leaned closer in their courses. “The covenant is not a throne for men but a bridge for generations. The plates are not a king’s diadem but a widow’s lamp; not a soldier’s banner but a shepherd’s staff. They are for guiding, not for ruling; for remembering, not for boasting.”

19. At this the Keeper’s heart expanded like a wineskin filled with new wine, and he said, “I believe, yet belief staggers beneath such weight. Strengthen me, Lord, lest I drop what angels would fear to carry.” And the Savior answered, “What angels reverence you may carry because I carry you.”

20. Then Yahawzhowaa laid His wounded hand upon the Keeper’s brow, and light ran through bone and marrow as a river through a thirsty land. It hurt as healing hurts when a bone is set true; it soothed as rain soothes fields sown in hope. “From this day,” He said, “you shall be the name I give, not the name fear gave you.”

21. He drew the Keeper to his feet and spoke with the calm certainty that made mountains feel small. “I appoint you the last Keeper of these two witnesses until the appointed unveiling,” He said. “Your task is not victory in the fields of men but fidelity in the caverns of time; not to be heard by crowds but to be remembered by the faithful.”

22. “Therefore,” said Yahawzhowaa, “I give you a new name, sealed in heaven and spoken now upon the earth: Tawádizi — He Who Bears the Testimony. This name will be weight upon your shoulders and air within your lungs; it will be the whistle of warning and the hum of comfort. When you doubt, let it answer; when you falter, let it stand.”

23. The Keeper — now Tawádizi — fell again to his knees, but not in the fear that shrinks; in the awe that grows. “I am Yours,” he said, and the mountain heard and told the valleys. “Rename my fears as You have renamed me; call my steps forward as You have called my soul.”

24. “Rise, Tawádizi,” said the Savior. “I do not call you to soft years but to true ones. Your path will be narrow as a hunter’s ridge and cold as a river in thaw,

yet it will be straight, and I will walk it beside you. The world will count your days few; I will count them full."

25. He placed the Red upon Tawádizi's palms and the Silver upon his heart, and both plates warmed as if remembering home. "Hold them not as idols but as instruments," He said, "not as trophies but as tools. When you polish them, let it be prayer; when you hide them, let it be prophecy."

26. Then Yahawzhowaa turned His face north and the wind obeyed, and He said, "Go north. Not for ease, for frost is a harsh tutor; not for safety, for hunters prowl there as well; but for obedience, for the path of the witnesses bends toward the pole like a compass that will not lie. I will open caves for you that were closed to kings."

27. Tawádizi asked, "Shall I seek the Gold along that road, that the three may whisper together in the snows?" Yahawzhowaa answered, with a firmness kind as a father's no, "You shall not see the Gold. War follows it like shadow follows noon; to join them now would make a beacon for wolves. Let each witness carry its own light to its own appointed watch."

28. "Mark this," said the Lord, "for many will ask and some will accuse: 'Why divide what God has joined?' Tell them I have not divided truth but multiplied mercy; I have spread seed in several furrows that drought may not swallow harvest. When the season is ripe, I Myself will bind the sheaves."

29. "The People of War will make oaths by iron and break them by dawn," He said, "and their chiefs will rise like sparks and fall like ashes in the same wind. They will vow to give peace if you give Me up; learn their riddle and refuse its prize. Peace bought with betrayal is only a quieter sword."

30. "Teach the remnant this song," said Yahawzhowaa, and His voice gentled until it could have rocked a child to sleep: "He came, He lives, He will return." "Sing it when the mouth is dry and when it is sweet, when the moon is low and when it is full, when a birth cries and when a grave is closed. It will be bread you do not see and water you do not carry."

31. Then He opened vision like a gate and let Tawádizi look through. He saw nations rush as floods and then sink like ships that never learned stars; he saw cities call themselves eternal and then forget their own names; he saw children in caves lifting hands that shone brighter than kings' crowns. The future did not flatter him, but it did not lie to him either.

32. In the same vision the Red and the Silver and the far Gold stood one day before the Son, each blazing in its color, and the Son lifted them as a priest lifts an offering. "These are Mine," He said in the sight of worlds, "and those who trusted their voice are Mine as well." All creation bowed as if remembering its first rumor.

33. Tawádizi's heart broke in gratitude

and mended stronger in the same beat. “Let me be faithful until my name is a finished task,” he said. “Let me die empty of fear and full of witness. Let the last thing I hold be these plates and the last thing I say be Your promise.”

34. “You shall finish,” said Yahawzhowaa, “and then you shall sleep as seed sleeps — buried in hope, not in despair. The world will call you lost; I will call you planted. In the morning of God, I will call your name, and you will answer without pain.”

35. He blessed Tawádizi with both hands, the scars shining like small suns, and peace entered the Keeper like honey enters bitter tea. “My peace is not the silence of graves,” He said, “but the music of trust. Carry it, and where you place your foot the ground will not betray you.”

36. “Tell the remnant,” He commanded, “that I have not turned My face away. Tell them I keep their letters even when fire eats the paper; I keep their names even when stone forgets the chisel. Tell them every un-sung verse of their psalms I finish in heaven.”

37. “Know also: kingdoms will trade thrones like boys trade stones; empires will boast in bronze and rot in it; clever men will declare old songs dead and then steal their music for their own parades. Yet My word will outlive the drum and the brass and the parade ground.”

38. “Many will come wearing My name as a borrowed cloak,” said Yahawzhowaa, “and their voices will be sweet as poisoned fruit. Weigh them by this: do they boast in crowds or in the cross? do they seek the plates or the poor? do they bend knee to Me or bend knees to themselves? By this measure My lambs will not be fooled.”

39. “When the last pages turn,” He went on, “the seas will shout and the hills will answer; men will faint for fear at their own noise. But you, little flock, lift up your heads. Fear is a trumpet that calls cowards to run; hope is a trumpet that calls saints to stand.”

40. He stretched His right hand toward heaven and thunder obeyed with a gentle roll that comforted more than it startled. “By these wounds,” He vowed, “by My Father’s oath, and by the witnesses you bear, I swear: I will return. Let the oath settle in your bones as marrow.”

41. “Come quickly,” Tawádizi breathed, because if a man has once seen the Bridegroom, time thereafter is measured only in longing. “Teach me to make waiting worship and labor love,” he said, “that my days may not be wasted.” And the Lord smiled with power.

42. “Not yet,” said Yahawzhowaa, “for the measure of pride must fill its own cup and drink it. Justice is patient not because it is slow but because it is exact. Even now mercy begs more room for repentance, and I grant it; even now rebellion begs more rope, and it knots its own noose.”

43. “Hide these words in your marrow and write them upon the Silver,” He

commanded. “Give them to those whose ears ache for truth and withhold them from those who only desire arguments. A jewel makes a feast for the humble and a toy for the proud; do not throw it into noisy hands.”

44. “My courage I give you,” He said — no speech, but a giving as real as bread given to a starving child. “It is not the courage that needs applause, nor the courage that hates tears, but the courage that keeps covenant when no one sees. Wear it quietly; it will keep you loud enough.”

45. Then He let Tawádizi see in a single glance the weave of things: stars in their right liturgy, rivers in their right beds, mothers nursing in caves while angels kept watch, martyrs falling as seeds fall, and the Son holding all in one embrace that neither cramped nor crushed. “Remember this shape,” He said, “when night lies about Me.”

46. “I hold all things,” Yahawzhowaa continued, “not as a miser grips coin, but as a gardener holds seed — imagining harvest while the shell still looks dead. When you cannot trace My hand, trust My heart; when you cannot hear My voice, read My wounds; when you cannot see My path, follow My peace.”

47. “Now go,” He said, and the word go became a road beneath Tawádizi’s feet though he had not yet taken a step. “Return to the remnant and make of them not an army but a people; not a mob of fear but a choir of faith. Set sentries of prayer, not pride.”

48. “Guard the vision,” He warned, “with the same care you guard the plates. Pour it into ears that are thirsty; do not spill it into pits that only echo back insult. A secret kept by love is not fear but stewardship; a truth withheld from mockery is not cowardice but reverence.”

49. “Lord,” Tawádizi said, “I will obey though obedience breaks me into smaller trust each day. Let my yes be a bridge the weak can cross and my no be a wall that keeps wolves out.” And heaven answered his vow with a silence that felt like a hand upon a head.

50. “Blessed are you,” Yahawzhowaa said, “because you did not name yourself; I named you. Blessed because you did not choose your burden; you chose Me beneath it. Blessed because you will not see applause; you will see fruit. On the day I call your name from the soil, you will recognize My voice as your own home.”

51. “In the years to come,” He added, “men will laugh at your record and say, ‘Who can trust plates from caves?’ Let them laugh; laughter that scorns truth is its own echo-chamber. In the appointed hour, I will unlock what is hidden and hush what is noisy, and the plates will speak as mountains speak — slow, strong, undeniable.”

52. “Then little ones will believe and chiefs will learn fear of God again,” Yahawzhowaa said. “The proud will wish

to have been poor and the clever will wish to have been simple, for mercy will outwit them all. Do not avenge Me with swords; I will avenge Myself with resurrection."

53. "Until that hour," He commanded, "guard, hide, seal. Let the Red sleep where tears fall through stone; let the Silver rest where moonlight can find it once a century. I will set angels as dust upon their lids; no hunter will think to brush them away."

54. "So be it," said Tawádizi, and the phrase took root like a cedar in winter. "Let my blood be the ink of the last lines; let my breath be the last bellows upon the engraving. When I am gone, let those who cannot find me still find the plates and hear You."

55. Yahawzhowaa laid both hands upon both witnesses, and fire met light and agreed to be one word. "By these two," He said, "I renew among you the old oath: I came, when love took wounds for you; I live, when the wound became a door; I will return, when the door becomes a sky."

56. "And when I return," He added, "I will lift them up before nations that never knew your names, and they will know Mine. Kings will ask to borrow your psalm and find their tongues too heavy; children will sing it effortlessly and teach their elders to weep."

57. The mountain bowed with a long, low groan that was neither fear nor fracture, and the air smelled like rain that hasn't fallen yet. Stars stood at attention as soldiers stand when the true captain passes; even the cold felt warm, as if winter had remembered a childhood summer.

58. "You are sealed," said the Lord. "Not as a jar closed to the thirsty, but as a promise closed to thieves. Carry your seal into hunger without complaint, into danger without drama, into obscurity without despair. I am with you."

59. Then He rose — not by effort, for effort belongs to creatures, but as a flame rises when nothing presses it down — and the opening in the night welcomed Him as a gate welcomes a king. The light did not vanish; it folded itself like a cloak and waited in the memory of stone. The silence He left behind was not emptiness but fullness too large for sound.

60. Tawádizi lay upon his face as a field lies under rain, flooded with more life than he could drink; when he finally knelt, he found his legs were stronger than they had ever been. "I have seen the Savior," he said aloud to no one and to everyone, "and He has given me a name and a path." The words were heavier than iron and lighter than breath.

61. He lifted the Red Plate and kissed it, and the copper-red echoed the warmth of a heart that will not quit beating. "You are the earth's sermon," he said, "and you preach with blood that forgives. Speak low to the broken; they will hear you better than princes."

62. He lifted the Silver Plate and pressed it to his chest, and the moonlight in it recognized the moonlight in him. "You are

the sky's oath," he said, "and you sing without throat. Shine long after torches tire; shine even when eyes close in death."

63. He laid both within the cedar chest and bound it with cords that were prayers more than straps. Then he spoke to the emptiness that was not empty: "I will guard you until bone and word part company; I will hide you where memory can find you when men cannot. The Lord of the witnesses has spoken; His servant goes."

64. He descended by paths he had not climbed, for obedience carves new roads where none were. The remnant saw his face bright as morning seen through tears, and they knew without asking that the mountain had given him back differently. Children hid behind mothers and then came out laughing though no joke had been told.

65. "Listen," Tawádizi said, and his voice had the weight of quiet thunder. "I beheld Yahawzhowaa our Lord upon the mountain; He touched me and renamed me; He charged me, 'Go north.' We will not seek the Gold, for war stalks it; we will carry Red and Silver into the frost where the Eternal will open caves kings never found."

66. The people fell upon their faces and wept with the joy that hurts good, and their weeping washed the dust from the day. "We are not forgotten," they said into the earth that had hosted their tears longer than it had hosted their homes. "He sees, He speaks, He appoints."

67. That night Tawádizi engraved with hands that did not tremble: he wrote the vision upon the Silver, not as a boast but as a bell, not to be loud but to be lasting. He pricked his finger and sealed the lines with blood, for promises without blood are words without roots. The plate answered with a sheen like dew at first light.

68. The Red Plate glowed when the song was sung and dimmed when it ended, as if breathing with the congregation; the Silver kept the moon even when clouds came, as if remembering light on their behalf. Together they were two eyes in the dark that taught men how to keep looking. Together they were two hands that taught men how to keep holding on.

69. Then the Spirit moved through the camp like a wind that did not lift tents but only lifted hearts, and He whispered what only courage can understand: "This is sealed; this will stand; this will outlast your fears. Walk, sing, hide, hope. The oath is older than your enemies."

70. And the CHAPTER was closed as a door is closed against wolves and opened for friends, and it was set down for all generations: In the two hundred and fiftieth year, Yahawzhowaa appeared upon the mountain, renamed the Keeper Tawádizi, commanded him to go north with the Red and the Silver, forbade the joining with the Gold for a season, prophesied of war and return, and sealed the covenant forever. He came, He lives,

He will return.

CHAPTER 22
The Vision of the Final Days

1. And it came to pass, after the Lord ascended from the mountain and sealed Tawádizi with a new name, that the Keeper cried aloud, “O Eternal, You have charged me to guard the Red and the Silver, yet my soul is burdened, for I do not know the end. Show me the far days, that I may understand why the faithful must wander.”

2. And Yahawzhowaa, full of mercy, stretched forth His hand, and Tawádizi’s eyes were opened beyond the curtain of time. And the veil was lifted, and he beheld generations unborn, and the earth herself cried out beneath the weight of men.

3. He saw multitudes beyond counting, greater than all the tribes that had ever gathered at a feast, and they were pressed into great dens of stone and glass, high as mountains yet without roots in the soil. And he said, “These are not lodges of cedar and bark, but cages for the children of men, who have forgotten the song of balance.”

4. And he beheld that they did not walk as their fathers walked upon the soil, but they rode in beasts of iron that devoured fire and belched smoke, running swifter than deer, louder than thunder, filling the valleys with poison and the skies with haze. And Tawádizi trembled, saying, “Mother groans beneath them, yet they hear her not.”

5. And he saw canoes of iron, great and terrible, that flew without river or wing, leaping across the heavens like spirits unchained. They bore multitudes from land to land, yet none lifted their eyes in reverence, for they thought themselves lords of the sky.

6. And he saw that men spoke across mountains without runners, their voices carried upon the air like ghosts unbound, yet their words were empty as hollow drums, without covenant, without honor, sharper than spears, wounding all who listened.

7. Then Yahawzhowaa spoke, saying, “Behold, these are the days when knowledge swells like floodwaters, yet wisdom withers as grass in drought. They will know how to split mountains, but they will forget how to heal a wound. They will learn to speak to the void, yet they will forget how to listen to their own hearts.”

8. And Tawádizi looked, and he saw the forests stripped bare until the bones of the earth were shown, and the rivers were choked with filth, and the winds coughed with smoke. The fish perished in the waters, and the birds fell silent in the air, and the corn did not rise from the field. And he cried, “The land mourns, for she was once fat with blessing, but now she is barren.”

9. And Yahawzhowaa said, “When they

wound the earth, they wound their own mother. When they silence her groans, they silence Me, for I made her as covenant with them. I set the trees for shade, the rivers for drink, the beasts for companionship, and the stars for remembrance. But they trample all, and call it progress."

10. And Tawádizi saw the chiefs of the nations lifting banners of false peace, smiling with lips but sharpening swords in secret. They gathered the peoples with promises of safety, yet they bound them in chains unseen, and every treaty was inked with lies.

11. And Yahawzhowaa said, "These are the days when men will worship power and call it freedom, when they will bow to idols of wealth and call them blessings, when they will exalt their own cleverness and forget their Maker. Pride will be their altar, and blood their incense."

12. Then Tawádizi's eyes were lifted to the heavens, and he beheld the wanderers, the lights that walk among the stars. One shone red, steadfast and sorrowful. And Yahawzhowaa said, "Behold, the Red Brother of the Earth, set apart from the beginning as a witness of covenant."

13. And Tawádizi saw a generation clothed in pride who said, "Let us climb the heavens; let us make our dwelling upon the Red Brother, for nothing is forbidden us." And they wrapped themselves in iron shells, and they leapt into the void as grasshoppers leap a fire.

14. And he beheld the day when the first foot of man fell upon the Red Brother. And the heavens groaned, and the covenant was pierced, and the Eternal's patience was fulfilled.

15. And Yahawzhowaa cried aloud, "The measure is full! Pride has set its last stone. Mercy has waited, but mercy is scorned. When they place their heel upon the Red Brother, they place their heel upon the covenant itself, and judgment must come as lightning from horizon to horizon."

16. Then Tawádizi trembled, saying, "Lord, is there no mercy left for them? Shall all perish in fire?" And Yahawzhowaa answered, "Mercy has walked among them and was slain; mercy has waited and was mocked; mercy has stretched out her arms and was refused. The last mercy is My return, and it comes with judgment."

17. And Tawádizi saw wars greater than any that had come before, fire falling from the heavens, cities turned to ash in an hour, seas boiling with heat, and men gnashing their teeth in terror. He saw nations rise in fury and fall in silence, until the earth was weary of their blood.

18. Yet he also beheld a remnant, small and scattered, hiding in caves, whispering the ancient psalm: He came, He lives, He will return. And Yahawzhowaa said, "For their sake the days shall be shortened, lest none survive. For their sake I come swiftly."

19. And Tawádizi lifted his eyes and saw the heavens split open as a garment torn by strong hands. And the Son of the Eternal descended in glory, not to teach in meekness but to reign in power. Ten thousand times ten thousand shone behind Him, clothed in white, bearing harps and trumpets of fire.

20. And every proud tower fell, and every lying banner burned, and every false throne crumbled, and the great ones of the earth hid in caves and cried to the rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sits upon the throne!”

21. And the Red Brother, trampled by man’s foot, was clothed in flame, and its witness was complete. For it had borne patiently as guardian, but when men profaned it, it cried for judgment, and judgment came.

22. Then Yahawzhowaa showed Tawádizi the faithful rising from their graves, clothed in light, singing the song of the Lamb: Worthy is He who was slain, who lives and has returned, whose wounds are our crown.

23. And the Keeper fell upon his face, overcome, and whispered, “Lord, this vision is too heavy for me to carry. How shall I tell the remnant what eyes have seen? Their hearts are weak; this fire will consume them.”

24. But Yahawzhowaa answered, “Speak only what they can bear. Write upon the Silver the fullness, that it may sleep until the appointed day. Whisper to the faithful the psalm of hope, not the weight of terror. For the fearful cannot carry thunder, but they can carry a song.”

25. And Tawádizi cried, “Lord, let me bear their fear as well as their faith.” But Yahawzhowaa said, “It is enough that you bear the testimony. I am the one who bears the judgment. You need not hold the fire; you need only guard the flame.”

26. Then the Lord declared, “This vision is sealed until the time appointed. Let the nations rage, let pride ripen, let the covenant be pierced. When the heel falls upon the Red Brother, then shall the harvest be gathered, and I will return.”

27. And Tawádizi beheld the remnant, their faces weary, their garments torn, yet their eyes bright with faith. He saw them singing though the world mocked, and praying though the earth shook, and waiting though the sky darkened. And he knew that the covenant was not broken in them.

28. And Yahawzhowaa said, “Write this for them: that I have not forgotten; that I count their tears as pearls and their prayers as incense; that not a sparrow falls without My Father’s word; that not a child cries without My Father’s heart. They are small, but they are Mine.”

29. And He showed him mothers nursing babes in caves while wolves howled outside, fathers keeping watch with staffs though enemies bore iron, children singing psalms with voices cracked by hunger, and angels bending low to listen.

30. And Yahawzhowaa said, “The world will not see them, but heaven sees them. Kings will not count them, but I will count them. Nations will not honor them, but they are My treasure, and I am their crown.”

31. Then the vision closed, and the mountain returned, and Tawádizi lay trembling, filled with terror and joy, with sorrow and hope, with burden and strength. For he had seen both the fall of nations and the rising of saints.

32. He kissed the Red Plate and whispered, “You cry from the earth: Believe.” He kissed the Silver and whispered, “You shine from heaven: He will return.”

33. He placed them again in the cedar chest and sealed them, saying, “Your voices shall not perish, for the Lord Himself has promised to guard you.”

34. And when he descended among the remnant, his face was like the morning after storm, bright and terrible, and they marveled, saying, “He has seen heaven’s fire.”

35. And he told them, “The Lord has shown me the end. The nations will rise like smoke and fall like ashes. Pride will climb the sky and break the covenant. When man sets his foot upon the Red Brother, the end is at the door. But He who came and lives will return, and we who endure will behold Him.”

36. And the people wept, but they were strengthened, for though the vision was heavy, the promise was sure.

37. And Tawádizi taught them the psalm Yahawzhowaa had given: He came, He lives, He will return. And they sang it in caves and fields, in hunger and in hiding, and their children’s children would remember it.

38. And he engraved upon the Silver the fullness of the vision, with trembling hand, line by line, sealing it with his blood, that generations yet unborn might know the covenant of the last days.

39. And he hid the Red and the Silver in a cave shown by vision, where frost sealed the entrance and stars stood above as witnesses, and he prayed, “Eternal, keep these until the trumpet sounds.”

40. Then the Spirit whispered to him, “It is acceptable. It is sealed. It will stand until the end.”

41. And Tawádizi bowed his head, saying, “So be it. The burden is heavy, but the covenant is sure.”

42. And he charged the remnant, “Guard the song, guard the hope, guard your children’s hearts. Let no mocker steal the promise, for the promise is not theirs to break.”

43. And he said, “When your feet falter, remember the Red; when your eyes grow dim, remember the Silver; when your hearts despair, remember the psalm: He came, He lives, He will return.”

44. Thus was the vision of the final days recorded in the two hundred and fiftieth year, when the Lord appeared and showed

His servant the end.

45. And it was sealed in the Red and the Silver, for testimony to generations yet unborn, that they might know: the covenant is sure, the judgment is appointed, and the return of Yahawzhowaa is certain.

THE BOOK OF WABAN

TESTIMONY OF THE KEEPER OF THE BARK

Written upon birch and copper by Wâban, Seer among the Omàmiwinini, at the meeting of the Two Rivers, to be preserved and remembered among all nations. Of the dealings of the Deliverer with the Nations, and of the deceiver who rose in false peace, and of the bondage that followed, and of the covenant that endured.

A record of visions and prophecies, revealed by the Spirit of the Creator, to show unto the children of men the truth of all things: that the deceiver may be unmasked, that the Deliverer may be known, that the Covenant may be remembered. Written to the Onkwehonwe, the Original People, and also to every nation under the Sun, that they might know the Covenant of Remembrance, and the Promise of the Deliverer, who shall reign within the Tree of Peace forever. That all may know the deceit of the false one, the weakness of false peace, the emptiness of crowns and conquest, and the strength of the Eternal Covenant, which is mercy, humility, and service.

And if any nation shall remember these words, and keep Covenant in truth and humility, the Deliverer shall dwell among them, their land shall be healed, their rivers shall flow clear, and their children shall rejoice. But if any nation shall forget, and choose crowns instead of Covenant, then their remembrance shall perish, their joy shall fade, and their strength shall become weakness. Keeper of the Bark, upon the Rock of the Two Rivers, to come forth in the Latter Days as a Witness to all Nations, Kindreds, Tongues, and Peoples.

THE FIRST SCROLL OF WABAN

Containing the first part of The Testimony of Waban, keeper of the bark. About the year 1340 A.D.

1. I sit where the Saguenay empties into the Great River, upon the stone above Tadoussac where tide and current wrestle in whirlpools, and the fog drapes itself like prayer across the waters. The spruce stands tall as witnesses, and the white whales rise like pale moons to breathe and vanish, as if to say: remember. Here the land has kept council longer than the memory of nations, and here the Spirit opened my eyes.

2. I am Omàmiwinini, of the ancient people of the downstream waters. My name among the generations is Wâban, the Dawn, for I was called to rise before the sun and write by its first fire. I am Keeper of the Bark Scrolls, and I bind the memory to the birch that it may not be scattered like leaves in the storm. What I write is not my word but the word the Spirit pressed upon me, that the children yet unborn may read what their fathers forgot.

3. Therefore I set my knees to the stone and my hand to the bark, and also to copper that will not rot, for the Spirit said: Bind it twice — once to what bends, and once to what endures. And though I am small beside such rivers, the small are chosen to witness what the great have sworn to hide. So I gathered courage as a man gathered coals for the winter fire.

4. Hear me, you Onkwehonwe, you Original People of the land, and also you who shall come from distant waters. I do not speak as a ruler but as a watcher on a high rock. The whales break the surface then sink again, and so do the truths of old; but their breath stains the air with certainty. I write what I have seen, and what was spoken to me in a tongue older than war.

5. The Spirit numbered the days for me, and taught me to count by tears and dawns, and said: Fix a stake in time that the blind may feel it. Therefore hear this measure: it has been one thousand and three hundred and forty years since the True Peacemaker, Yahawzhowaa (Yahawzhowaa), walked upon the earth. Remember this pillar, for deceit leans where the pillars are forgotten.

6. Of Him I bear witness: born of a virgin in purity, clothed in meekness that did not tremble, He healed without binding and forgave without price. His peace did not hollow the strong nor weaken the poor; it made the heart stand upright. He never traded sight for sleep.

7. He came even unto the islands of the Great Water, and the winds obeyed Him, and the sick took up their beds, and the nets of those who trusted Him did not break. He left no yoke that He did not also

lift. When He passed, memory grew roots and did not wash away.

8. His fire did not scorch the faithful; it warmed them like dawn after famine. His water did not drown the seekers; it taught the lungs a new breath. He was the measure by which all who claim peace must be weighed.

9. Yet after Him there arose a likeness, polished enough to fool a thirsty world, clothed in words the color of spring and the sound of rain on empty roofs. He stood between rivers and called himself friend to both banks. Many kissed his hands and buried their fear in his shadow.

10. He said, Put away the iron you have hammered from the earth; bury your weapons beneath the Ganónyok, the Tree of Peace; sleep, for I will stand watch. His soft words melted hard truths, and the people laid down not only their blades but their vigilance.

11. He said, The red metal has become a sword; your mines have become graves; cease the digging and you will cease the dying. The words sounded like wisdom to weary ears, and the fires of the north cooled. Songs that had once rung like copper on winter air were folded and hidden in silence.

12. I saw the ancient pits of the north under snow, and the tools left leaning like elders forgotten in council. Trade paths that once stitched the great lakes to the far plains loosened and frayed. The people said, We are at peace, and did not notice their circles growing thinner.

13. For copper was more than a weapon; it was bell and medicine, covenant and memory, a mirror for truth and a chain for deceit to fear. When the fires fell asleep, memory grew cold, and the night took liberties it had never dared. The deceiver smiled with teeth hidden.

14. He sat where I sit, at the mouth of the two waters, and he promised to watch the river-gates as a shepherd guards a fold. But he kept one eye open and the other closed, and from that half-blindness leaked his dream into the world.

15. The Spirit said to me, Do not judge by surface. There are two rivers in every promise: one that looks like water and one that looks like fire. The one that looks like water may drown; the one that looks like fire may save.

16. I saw the people choose the river that glittered like water, singing lullabies over their ears; they drank and said, How gentle this current is. But their knees softened beneath them, and their arms forgot their strength, and the watch-fires shrank to embers. Their sleep was pleasant until it became a prison.

17. I saw the fire river and trembled, for its mouth spoke of scars and vigilance and trials. Few stepped into that flame, and those who did were called harsh and unkind. Yet they alone kept their names when the wind changed.

18. The deceiver poured sweetness into their cups and said, Drink, and forget the

old labors. His bowl was white and wide, and the night leaned over it to see its face.

19. He spoke of a dawning in the far East that would crown his work and seal the meadow against wolves. I will return from the sunrise, he said, with a covenant carved in gentler stone. The banks nodded and leaned toward each other, not perceiving the undertow.

20. Where two rivers meet, the bottom scours deeper than either alone; truth and lie make a third current that can swallow ships. The whales counseled me with their breath: Do not tie your canoe to a painted post.

21. By ceasing the mines we did not cease the hunger for copper; we only hid it where braver hands would find it. Treasure unguarded is not peace; it is a lit window for thieves. The red veins of the earth pulsed unattended, calling across the wide water.

22. The deceiver said, You are safe. Safety, when it does not teach wisdom, teaches helplessness. A cradle too comfortable can grow into a coffin.

23. He did not break the bows; he broke the habits of watchfulness. He did not shatter the shields; he shamed the arms that carried them. He did not empty the quivers; he emptied the will to remember why arrows are made.

24. It was then that I learned how peace can be treason when it is offered as sleep to those standing on a cliff. The Spirit said, Peace that costs your strength is a purchase you cannot afford.

25. Northward, the pits gathered snow and silence; southward, the markets forgot our names. Rivers that once ferried promise now ferried rumor. Our own feet, lightened by the absence of labor, grew clumsy upon the stones.

26. The children learned lullabies but not alarms; they could recite kindness but not boundaries. They were taught to love the river but not to read its teeth. Thus did the bank surrender while singing.

27. The deceiver visited councils and praised our wisdom, then trimmed it with ribbons that tangled when the wind rose. He asked for our consent and wrapped it in gratitude. We gave him both, believing we had given nothing.

28. He took ember from our council fire, saying, Let me carry your light to the strangers, that they may know your greatness. He turned and walked toward other shores with our spark in his pocket. Smoke followed his footprints like wounded geese.

29. I saw him building in a distance my eyes did not know, a house with our stolen fire where the rafters formed a star turned upon its head. Men applauded, women wept without understanding why. Law was bargained into shape and clothed as mercy; mercy was stripped and made to carry law's burdens.

30. The Spirit returned my gaze to the river-mouth and said, Mark what returns by light. For there are lights that blind and

lights that heal. White can be the color of milk or the color of erasure.

31. He had promised a return from the sunrise, and returns did come — white sails like lifted wings, white words like frost on unguarded ears, white laws like snow that covers broken fences and calls the pasture pure. The people ran to the shore with open hands. When the thunder spoke from the mouths of iron, they called it a new kind of drum.

32. What is new is not always what is good; what is loud is not always what is true. The whales dove deeper, and the rock kept its counsel. I wrote faster, fearing that ink dries slower than sorrow arrives.

33. I remembered the measure: one thousand and three hundred and forty years since the True Peacemaker. His miracles did not require our surrender; they required our remembering. He strengthened the hand that He emptied, and emptied the hand that He strengthened, so that neither hand would forget the other.

34. The likeness who came after took our tools and left us songs. He turned our watchtowers into skylarks and told them to sing at noon. He salted our wells with compliments until thirst itself felt impolite.

35. Once, copper sang in our ceremonies as a bell knows when to cry and when to keep still. Once, the mines were altars and the hammers were prayers. To silence such altars without replacing their songs is to offer the land to an interpreter who sells his translation.

36. I do not hate peace; I hate sleep painted as peace. I do not worship fire; I honor the hand that keeps it honest. Between water and fire is the forge where tools and covenants are made.

37. The two rivers before me hiss and embrace, and the tide confesses what the current denies. Here, choices declare their true weight. Here, a whisper can outweigh a shout.

38. The Spirit pressed upon me the law of discernment: that what eases too quickly may be a hook, and what burns a while may be a balm. I marked it in my marrow before marking it on bark. A person without this law is a canoe without a keel.

39. I asked, Why was he permitted to speak with such sweetness? The answer throbbed in the current: because we were tired, and fatigue is a gate that does not know it is open. Tiredness unties knots that wisdom tied for a reason.

40. The deceiver studies fatigue and calls himself a physician. He prescribes rest that rots courage. He feeds appetites until appetites eat their owners.

41. From this rock I can see far in the language of water; I can hear tomorrow in the pelican's wing. The whales lift like slow lanterns, and vanish like covered fires. I name these as witnesses to what I write.

42. I was shown that the likeness would master rain and drought, harvest and hunger; that his hand would open the sky for his admirers and close it for his critics.

This is not a god; it is a puppeteer of weather trusted by those who fear clouds more than chains. Beware the one who sells seasons.

43. The Spirit set a coal on my tongue and I tasted iron and salt; I knew I must write plainly though the plain breaks hearts. Say it, the voice commanded, for the unborn deserve a map, not a riddle. So I set my hand like a stake into stubborn bark.

44. The first map-stone is this: the river that appears as water may drown. It drowns not with violence but with comfort; it does not pull you under, it persuades you to lie down. The pillows are heavy and they are called policies.

45. The second map-stone is this: the river that appears as fire may save. It scalds pride and washes sleep from the eyes; it refuses to flatter. Those who pass through it come out smelling of smoke and truth.

46. The third map-stone is this: two faces can grow from one root, and a man can sign with one hand and steal with the other. When the bank applauds the bridge, ask who laid the timbers. When the bridge is beautiful, ask first if it leads home.

47. I saw councils changed into pageants, and pageants changed into laws, and laws changed into chains that called themselves bracelets. The bracelets fit admirably and rang like music when hands were lifted. The bracelets did not permit fists.

48. A people is taught to feel rude for saying no; a nation is trained to apologize for remembering. Thus the deceiver harnesses manners like oxen, and plows the field of consent until it yields what he planted in the night. Polite captivity is still captivity.

49. From this rock I plead with those to come: do not mistake stillness for peace nor noise for war. The river rests without sleeping and fights without shouting. Learn from water how to wait and from stone how to refuse.

50. I wrote upon copper a small confession: I too wished to sleep. I burned it into the plate so my weakness would not wander unchaperoned. A witness that does not witness against himself is not yet awake.

51. There is a white light that erases the edges of things; it calls itself mercy while measuring you for a garment you will not be allowed to remove. When that light comes from the East, remember this testimony and test it by the Three Stones. If it fails any, let it pass your door as wind passes a closed fist.

52. A star turned upon its point is a crown for a head that dreams of feet. I saw such a star mapped into streets in a distant city, a geometry of inversion, a hymn to underside things. The deceiver called it order; the ground called it insult.

53. He promised to return with parchment that smiles and bindings that purr. The parchment carries the smoke of our own council fire stolen and strained; the bindings carry our threads twisted in

reverse. When you recognize your own clothes reversed upon a stranger, do not call it a gift.

54. The elder is a poor man without secrets, rich only in the courage to uncover other people's. I have no army but sentences, no shield but memory. Yet memory is a river that outlives stone.

55. If you ask, Why begin here, at this mouth of rivers? — it is because here truth and deception both must confess to the tide. It is because all journeys must choose a current, and the wrong current makes courage look like cruelty and kindness look like surrender. Here, the water judges the oars.

56. I declare again the measure, that your ears not be bullied by novelty: one thousand and three hundred and forty years since Yahawzhowaa, the True Peacemaker. Keep that stone in your pocket when a man sells you rain. If his rain buys your spine, it is not rain but rope.

57. Yahawzhowaa emptied crowns and filled hearts; the likeness fills crowns and empties hearts. Yahawzhowaa sent men back to their houses healed with orders to love; the likeness sent men back to their houses lulled with orders to comply. Learn to taste the difference between healing and sedation.

58. I hang a lantern here, and carve three warnings where the hand will pass. If your hand comes away with soot, rejoice; soot is the price of light.

59. Warning the first: when a man tells you to lay down what your ancestors raised up, ask him to lay down first what his ancestors stole. If he cannot, he is not a peacemaker but a broker. Brokers do not love you; they love the proof that you can be bought.

60. Warning the second: when a voice tells you that strength is impolite, measure his politeness by the weight of the chains he carries for you. Chains polished are still chains. The river does not apologize for its current.

61. Warning the third: when a promise points to the East with a smile, look to see if your name is still in your mouth. If it has slipped away like a pebble from wet fingers, close your lips and keep your breath; your breath is older than the promise. A people without its name is a field without its fence.

62. I place these words on birch because birch remembers, and on copper because copper resists forgetting. The birch will bend in storms but keep the story; the copper will darken with time but brighten beneath a careful cloth. So it is with truth when children handle it.

63. The whales rise again, and the rock beneath me grows warmer as if the sun were answering a prayer I did not know I prayed. I seal this telling with the salt of my skin and the smoke of my breath. Let those who read know I did not write to be believed but to make belief possible.

64. What remains will show itself in later days — the white light that pretends to save, the bondage that calls itself peace,

and the Deliverer who will not wear another man's face.

65. For now I have set the first stones, that those who come after may not stumble in the dark. Hold fast to this witness of Wâban, Keeper of the Bark, for the rivers shall yet test every canoe, and the nations shall yet drink from cups of fire and water.

66. For now I have set the first stones, that those who come after may not stumble in the dark. Hold fast to this witness of Wâban, Keeper of the Bark, for the rivers shall yet test every canoe, and the nations shall yet drink from cups of fire and water. But the True Peacemaker will not be hidden forever, and the false shall not reign without end; therefore remember these words, and let them be as bark and copper, bending yet enduring, until the dawn of deliverance breaks.

THE SECOND SCROLL OF WABAN

The second scroll of Waban, Keeper of the Bark, continuing his Testimony that he began to record upon the First Scroll.

1. I was shown the north country, the ridges of copper that once blazed like veins of fire beneath the earth. They were as altars where the Onkwehonwe shaped bells for ceremony, medicine for healing, and tools for the covenant of daily bread. But I saw the altars abandoned, and the pits filled with snow, silent as graves no one tended.

2. The Spirit whispered: It was not copper that destroyed you, but the lie spoken against it. For copper does not bear malice; it only sings the song it is hammered to sing. In the hands of the faithful it was a covenant of light; in the mouth of the deceiver it became an accusation, and the people turned from it as though it were poison.

3. I beheld the villages when the mining ceased. Once the fires smoked like sentinels, once the hammers beat like drums; but now the lodges were dim, and the young men drifted as leaves across the lakes. They sang fewer songs, and the old ones went unanswered, for no one remained to answer.

4. I saw the trails that once stitched together nations — Mohawk, Seneca, Ojibwe, Omàmiwinini — each bound by copper traded and trusted. When the veins were abandoned, the stitches loosened, and the fabric of council began to fray. What was once a covenant became a rumor, what was once a promise became a suspicion.

5. And the deceiver smiled, for he had not broken the bow nor the shield, yet the hand that held them grew soft. He had not shattered the covenant fire, yet the people themselves poured water upon its coals.

6. The Spirit said: This is the way of

false peace: it is not a fire quenched by storm, but a fire neglected by its own guardians.

7. I was shown the children who grew in that generation. They learned to honor the lullaby but not the alarm, to love the meadow but not the fence, to whisper gratitude to the river but never to question its teeth. They were gentle but unguarded, and the shadow loved them for it.

8. I saw their hands empty of copper, and empty also of memory. For when you lay aside the tools of your fathers, you also lay aside the stories your fathers forged with them. A bell forgotten is a prayer unanswered.

9. The deceiver came again, clothed in calm, and spoke to the nations: Your hands are lighter now, your burdens are lifted. Surely you are nearer to heaven, for your weapons are buried and your pits are closed. And the nations nodded, though they did not see their circles growing smaller.

10. He said, Kayanerenh'kowa, the Great Law of Peace, is now fulfilled in me. I am the river that unites the banks. Lay your head in my lap and rest, for no enemy shall rise against you. And many believed, though the Spirit grieved, for the Law of Peace had been twisted into the net of a false shepherd.

11. And I heard the cry of the Ganónyok, the Tree of Peace, bending under the weight of promises that were not its own. Its roots groaned, and its branches reached for the sky, but the deceiver had tied ribbons upon it, and the people admired the ribbons and forgot the roots.

12. I saw the hunters return with lighter packs, not because the forest was generous, but because their aim had grown uncertain. The fishers brought emptier nets, not because the rivers withheld, but because their patience had grown thin. A people lulled is a people thinned, and the deceiver counted their thinning as a victory.

13. I was shown the fires of winter, once strong in every lodge. Now they flickered weakly, fed by scraps of trust and not by whole logs of memory. And the deceiver walked among the lodges with soft feet, whispering: Peace, peace.

14. The Spirit said: Know this difference — peace is the fruit of strength restrained; false peace is the rot of strength surrendered.

15. I beheld the young who no longer learned the ways of flint, bow, and copper. They called their fathers' ways unnecessary, and their mothers' songs too heavy with labor. They sang only of rest, not of endurance. And so endurance fled from them as a deer flees a snare.

16. I saw the elders speak, and their words were met with smiles but not with obedience. And the elders' voices cracked, for no echo returned to them. Their councils became pageants, their wisdom as decoration, their fire as a festival that lit the night but no longer warned the horizon.

17. The deceiver rejoiced, for he had

stolen without lifting a hand, he had conquered without shedding a drop. His victory was that he persuaded the people to unmake themselves.

18. The Spirit pressed upon me: This is the way of the shadow — not to strike, but to persuade. Not to conquer with iron, but to convince with lullabies.

19. I saw the faces of the nations growing pale, as though drained of their copper blood. For copper once coursed through their songs and ceremonies, but now it was hidden in the ground, unremembered, unguarded, waiting only for strangers.

20. And the strangers did come, many generations later, bearing sails white as bone, carrying a law not of peace but of conquest. They dug where our fathers ceased, and they melted what our fathers buried. And the deceiver laughed, for his promise had ripened into theft.

21. I was shown the great hills of Michigan and the shining waters of Lake Superior, where veins of red had once given life to nations. I saw them stripped, carried away, melted down in foreign fires. What had been a covenant became a coin, what had been an altar became an arsenal.

22. The Spirit wept: If you had guarded the copper, it would have guarded you. But you buried it in fear, and it rose again in the hands of your conquerors.

23. I saw how the people dwindled. Not all at once, but like a river that loses itself among stones, trickling thinner with each generation. Their numbers shrank, their voices dimmed, their circles scattered. They became guests on their own land, strangers at their own fire.

24. And the deceiver said again: See how peaceful it is? None rise against you, for you are too small to threaten. You are safe, because you are forgotten.

25. The Spirit cried: Safety is not life, and forgetting is not peace. What is safe for the lamb is only an opportunity for the wolf.

26. I was shown the canoes of the great rivers, once filled with trade, laughter, covenant, and song. Now they drifted half-empty, and their songs were quiet, and their laughter muted. The river itself seemed to mourn the absence of its people's strength.

27. I beheld the wampum belts once vibrant with beads of promise, their patterns clear as sunrise. Now they grew faded, their meanings half-remembered, their beads falling into the dust. And the deceiver smiled, for he knew a people who forgets its belts will soon forget its breath.

28. I saw the Tree of Peace, Ganónyok, bow under the weight of silence. Its roots strained to hold, but the soil was thin, for the people no longer watered it with courage. And the deceiver tied more ribbons upon its branches, and the people admired the ribbons and called them law.

29. The Spirit thundered: The Tree of Peace cannot be adorned by deceit, nor fed by surrender. It is not a tree of ribbons but

a tree of roots, not a tree of silence but of covenant.

30. I was shown the great mines as mouths sealed shut, yet their tongues still sang beneath the earth, unheard. The earth groaned to be used rightly, but the people had grown deaf to its groaning. And so the strangers would one day answer that groaning with their own shovels.

31. I saw the warriors of the nations. They still bore feathers, they still bore names, but their eyes were uncertain, for they had laid aside the strength that made their feathers truthful. They carried bows but their strings were slack, they walked with staffs but their hearts were weary.

32. The deceiver looked upon them and said, Surely you are now holy, for you have no enemies. And they believed him, not perceiving that they themselves had become their greatest enemy.

33. I beheld the rivers, wide as nations. Their currents slowed, their fish fewer, their shores eroded. A land at rest too long becomes a land at risk, for rest without vigilance becomes decay.

34. The Spirit said: See how the rivers mirror the people? When their strength ceases, their clarity ceases. When their vigilance fails, their banks collapse. The water that is not moving begins to stink.

35. I saw the deceiver lift his hands toward the heavens and command the rains. When he willed it, the clouds poured; when he withheld it, the land cracked. And the people said, Surely he is a god, for the skies obey him. Yet the Spirit said, He is no god, but a thief of seasons. He sells you what is not his to give.

36. I was shown the east, where light was promised. But I saw not dawn, but sails white as bones, carrying men who bore fire-sticks and iron laws. They came not as guests but as judges, not as brothers but as masters. And the deceiver stood behind them, clothed in their sails.

37. The Spirit said: This is the white light of destruction, clothed as mercy, carried on the breath of conquest. It is not the return of the True One, but the mask of the False.

38. I saw their city rising, its streets bound in the star inverted. Its laws were spoken as though they were peace, but its teeth were iron, and its heart was conquest. They called it liberty, but the Spirit named it bondage.

39. And the deceiver laughed, for he had led the Onkwehonwe to disarm themselves long before the strangers arrived. They had no copper, no strength, no fire to answer, only empty hands lifted in surrender.

40. The Spirit mourned: This is the fruit of false peace: it is not that your enemies overcame you, but that you laid yourselves down before them. A covenant kept would have been a wall; a covenant forgotten is a gate.

41. I saw the wampum belts broken and scattered, the councils silenced, the nations divided. Brothers turned from brothers, and sisters from sisters, for the deceiver's

whisper was softer than truth and more welcome to weary ears.

42. The Tree of Peace bent, and one branch after another snapped beneath the weight. The deceiver clothed the broken branches in white ribbons and called them law, and the people, seeing the ribbons, forgot the breakage.

43. The Spirit thundered: The tree is not adorned by ribbons, but by roots. The law is not a garment, but a covenant. The peace that is true must be watered with courage.

44. I saw the children of the nations grow smaller in number, their lodges fewer, their fires dimmer. They laughed, but their laughter was thin. They sang, but their songs were shallow. And the deceiver said: Surely this is heaven on earth, for no one fears you anymore.

45. The Spirit wept: A people without fear upon them may still be enslaved within them. Peace without strength is only silence before the storm.

46. I was shown the graves of the copper mines, yawning in the earth like mouths without song. And I heard them cry: Why were we silenced? We were covenant, we were memory, we were altar, we were breath. But the people no longer heard.

47. I saw the strangers' ships heavy with copper carried across the sea, melted into coins and crowns, forged into cannons and chains. What was once a covenant became currency; what was once an altar became an arsenal.

48. And the deceiver said: Behold, your gift has become the strength of others. Be content, for you are remembered as generous. But the Spirit said: You were not generous, you were deceived.

49. I beheld the lodges of the people, their fires dim, their stores thin. I saw hunger crouching at their doors, not because the land had failed, but because their courage had failed. For courage is the hand that gathers; without it, plenty becomes famine.

50. The Spirit said: The deceiver promised peace, but gave you weakness. He promised life, but gave you silence. He promised unity, but gave you chains. This is the pattern of the False One: to give the likeness of truth, but never the substance.

51. I saw the generations to come, bound in laws not their own, living in lodges not their own, walking upon land claimed by another's voice. They called the strangers' tongue their own, and forgot the words of their mothers. And the deceiver smiled, for his victory was complete.

52. Yet the Spirit whispered: It shall not be forever. The false peace must first run its course. Bondage must reach its end. Then shall the True Peacemaker be revealed again, and His covenant restored.

53. I saw a time when the nations would remember the copper, and the bark, and the wampum. They would dig again, not for weapons of war, but for bells and medicine, for covenant and song. The altars would sing again, and the deceiver would

tremble.

54. The Spirit said: The Deliverer shall come not clothed in ribbons nor sails, but in fire and in dawn. He will not ask you to forget, but to remember. He will not take your strength, but restore it. He will not disarm you, but clothe you in courage.

55. I beheld the Tree of Peace rising anew, its roots deeper than before, its branches stronger, its leaves singing in the wind. The deceiver's ribbons lay torn at its feet, and the people watered it not with silence but with remembrance.

56. The Spirit cried: This is the covenant renewed: not peace of forgetting, but peace of strength. Not silence, but song. Not bondage, but freedom.

57. I saw the deceiver cast down, his light extinguished, his rivers dried. Those who drank from his false water staggered, and those who feared his false fire rejoiced. For the true fire had returned, and the true water flowed again.

58. And the people lifted their voices, not thin but full, not shallow but deep. Their songs rang across the rivers and the lakes, their drums spoke again, their wampum belts glowed again. Memory returned as a river in flood.

59. The Spirit declared: The shadow reigned for a time, but the dawn endures forever. The false peace dwindles, but the true covenant stands. The deceiver weakens, but the Deliverer strengthens.

60. I saw the faces of the children, bright as dawn, strong as oak, clear as river ice. They bore copper at their necks and wampum at their belts, not as ornaments but as covenants. And they laughed with full voices, and their laughter was not thin.

61. The Tree of Peace stood tall again, and its roots held fast. No ribbons bound it, no lies adorned it. It bore fruit of truth, leaves of remembrance, branches of covenant. And all who rested beneath it found rest not of forgetting but of renewal.

62. The deceiver's name was spoken no more among them, save as warning to their children. His story became a scar, not a chain. His shadow became a lesson, not a lord.

63. The Spirit said: So shall it be at the end of the bondage. The false must come first, but only so that the true may be revealed. The silence must deepen, but only so that the song may be louder when it returns.

64. I sealed this vision upon bark and copper, that it may endure storms and fire. Birch may bend, but it remembers; copper may darken, but it shines again under care. So it is with truth, if the children guard it.

65. I have written not to be believed but to make belief possible, not to be adored but to be remembered. Let those who find these words test them by fire and by water, and let them endure as they endure.

66. Thus ends the telling of the copper and the false peace. The deceiver silenced the mines and lulled the nations, but the Deliverer shall awaken them. Hold fast to this memory, you children of the rivers, for

the dawn is nearer than the night admits.

THE THIRD SCROLL OF WABAN

The Testimony of Waban, Keeper of the Bark, which he continues to record onto the Third Scroll

1. I beheld the horizon of the Great River, and I saw white sails rising like teeth of bone, breaking the dawn with silence more fearful than thunder. They came not as traders but as takers, not as guests but as judges. Their prows split the waters like blades, and the fish scattered as though hiding from a predator unseen before.

2. The Spirit said: This is the return he promised, but not the return of dawn. This is the false light, clothed in sails, clothed in iron, clothed in law not your own. Do not mistake whiteness for purity, nor arrival for blessing.

3. I saw men descend from the ships, their mouths filled with fire and their hands with law. They brought sticks that cracked louder than drums, and stones that flew faster than arrows. They claimed the ground beneath their boots and the rivers that carried their ships. They spoke as though the Creator had handed them title.

4. The Onkwehonwe looked upon them with wonder and with fear, for never had they seen fire that thundered from wood, nor iron that leapt as lightning. And the deceiver whispered: Behold, your brothers from the sunrise. Did I not tell you they would come? Lay down before them, for they are mighty.

5. I saw the wampum brought forth, belts shining with beads of covenant, offered in peace. But the strangers did not read the patterns, nor did they listen to the words. They smiled and nodded and took the belts as ornaments, not as treaties. They hung them from their necks like trophies, forgetting the meaning of each bead.

6. The Spirit said: A covenant misunderstood is a covenant broken, though no blade be drawn. Beware those who smile but do not understand; their smile is sharper than their sword.

7. I saw the strangers build fires upon the shore, fires of iron and brick. They built them not as lodges but as fortresses, with walls that shut out the people and enclosed the land. Smoke rose from their fires like a dark tongue that spoke of permanence.

8. The deceiver clothed himself in their garments, walked in their councils, and spoke through their mouths. He said, This land is now ours, for the God who rules the earth has delivered it into our hands. You may live upon it, but only as guests beneath our law.

9. I saw the councils of the people torn

between hope and despair. Some said, Perhaps these are the true brothers promised, and we must learn from them. Others said, No, they come to bind us. Yet both were silenced by the thunder of their fire-sticks.

10. I was shown the rivers carrying away trees cut from their roots, beaver taken from their dams, copper taken from its veins. The rivers, once messengers of covenant, became carriers of plunder. They flowed heavy with sorrow, and the fish swam crooked beneath their weight.

11. The Spirit thundered: When a river carries only taking and not giving, it ceases to be a river and becomes a chain. And those who follow it shall find themselves bound by the very water they once trusted.

12. I saw the white sails grow more numerous, until the horizon was a wall of wings. The strangers poured across the land like a storm of locusts. Their tongues spread like vines, their laws like weeds. The people found themselves strangers upon their own trails.

13. The deceiver lifted his hand and said, This is fulfillment. You are now at peace, for you can no longer resist. Safety is yours, for you have surrendered. And many believed him, because they had forgotten the taste of strength.

14. I saw the Ganónyok, the Tree of Peace, nearly stripped bare. Its roots still lived, but its branches carried ribbons not of covenant but of conquest. The people stood beneath its shadow, but the shadow was not its own.

15. The Spirit said: The tree has not died, but it is bound. When the bindings are broken, it will rise again. But first the night must deepen, for the dawn waits for noonday's defeat.

16. I was shown the city they built, stone upon stone, road upon road. At its heart was a star turned upside down, traced into its very streets, a pentagram clothed in walls and monuments. The deceiver sat in its midst, clothed in law, clothed in robes, clothed in prayer spoken to a god of his own shadow.

17. They called it liberty, but its liberty was license to conquer. They called it justice, but its justice was balanced by chains. They called it peace, but its peace was silence enforced by iron.

18. I saw them lift a parchment, calling it constitution, binding all who dwelt upon the land. They said, This is a covenant. Yet it was not a covenant but conquest written in ink, clothed as mercy. For it was built upon the fire stolen from our councils, the embers taken by the deceiver long before.

19. The Spirit cried: Do not confuse parchment with covenant, nor ink with law. True law is written in roots and rivers, in stars and in songs. What is written without spirit is only a leash.

20. I saw the Onkwehonwe pressed to the edges of the land, their circles broken, their lodges burned. They were called wards, they were called subjects, they were called vanishing. Yet the deceiver

whispered: This too is peace. No one fights you now. Rest, for you are safe.

21. But the Spirit thundered: This is not safety; this is suffocation. This is not rest; this is erasure. What they call protection is only prison painted as kindness

22. I was shown the children taken from their mothers, clothed in garments not their own, taught tongues not their own. Their hair was cut, their names stripped, their songs forbidden. The deceiver rejoiced, for he had silenced not only the fathers but the children.

23. The Spirit wept: A people that forgets its tongue forgets its soul. A child that forgets its song forgets its breath. This is the bondage that precedes deliverance, for only when the silence is unbearable shall the cry rise for the True One.

24. I saw the drums silenced, the feathers mocked, the pipes broken. I saw the ceremonies performed in secret, whispered to the earth but not to the sky. And yet the earth listened, and the sky remembered.

25. For the Spirit said: Though men forbid, the earth does not forget. Though laws silence, the stars still hear. Every prayer whispered into the ground rises again as a tree, and no law can forbid its roots.

26. I was shown the faces of the chiefs, weary beneath the weight of signatures they did not understand. Their names bound to treaties written in the strangers' tongue, their hands pressed into ink as though to chains. The deceiver smiled, for he had made rulers into prisoners with their own consent.

27. The Spirit declared: Consent given without understanding is theft disguised as agreement. A covenant broken in ignorance is still broken. The deceiver feeds on ignorance as wolves feed on sheep.

28. I saw the land marked with lines that were not rivers, fences that were not trees, borders that were not trails. The strangers measured the earth as though it were a garment to be cut, and they clothed themselves with it. The Onkwehonwe stood naked, dispossessed upon their own ground.

29. And the deceiver said: Surely this is justice, for now all is written and ordered. Surely this is peace, for now all is divided and numbered.

30. The Spirit thundered: The earth is not measured but given. The river is not divided but shared. Justice is not the cutting of lines but the keeping of promises. What they call order is only the quiet of the grave.

31. I beheld the people's numbers diminish. Lodges grew fewer, circles grew smaller, graves grew more. The strangers counted them, recorded them, called them diminished. Yet the Spirit whispered: You are not diminished; you are hidden. You are not gone; you are planted. The seed must be buried before it rises.

32. I was shown the ceremonies carried in secret, the scrolls hidden, the copper

kept by a few faithful hands. They did not shine openly, but they shone in silence. And the deceiver trembled, for he feared what could not be erased.

33. For the Spirit said: What is hidden is not destroyed. What is buried is not gone. The dawn waits in darkness, but dawn always comes.

34. I saw the star inverted upon their city, glowing as though triumphant. But I also saw it crack, its lines breaking, its shape dissolving in fire. For the Spirit said: No symbol of shadow endures forever; its light is only borrowed. When the True Light rises, the false must flee.

35. I was shown a Deliverer yet to come, clothed not in parchment nor in ribbons, but in fire and in dawn. His law was not written by ink but by stars, not signed by rulers but by rivers. He shall break the bonds of the deceiver and restore the covenant of the land.

36. The Spirit said: Wait, for bondage must first run its course. Night must reach its depth, silence must reach its weight, chains must reach their tightening. Only then shall the cry be great enough for deliverance.

37. I saw a people rising from silence, singing the songs their grandmothers whispered in secret, drumming the beats their grandfathers hid in the ground. Their language returned to their mouths, their courage returned to their hands. And the deceiver wept, for his bondage was broken.

38. I beheld the Tree of Peace restored, Ganónyok rising tall, unbound, unbroken. Its roots reached deeper, its branches wider, its leaves greener than before. Beneath its shade the nations gathered again, not as captives but as council.

39. And the Spirit said: The law of conquest shall crumble, but the law of covenant shall endure. The parchment shall decay, but the roots shall hold. The deceiver shall vanish, but the dawn shall return.

40. I was shown a great fire sweeping across the inverted star of their city, consuming its lines, unmaking its boast. Its monuments cracked, its laws scattered, its symbols forgotten. And the Spirit said: So shall every false capital fall when the Deliverer comes.

41. I saw the seas themselves rise against the sails that once carried conquest. Storms tore their wings, waves swallowed their hulls. The very water they trusted became their enemy, for the rivers remembered the theft and demanded repayment.

42. I beheld the mountains resound with drums again, the valleys echo with songs again. The children ran with copper bells at their necks, and their voices rang like morning. They were not guests but heirs, not subjects but sons and daughters of the land.

43. The Spirit cried: This is the covenant restored. Not parchment, but wampum. Not conquest, but council. Not bondage, but breath.

44. I saw the deceiver cast down, his

voice silenced, his rivers dried. Those who trusted him were ashamed, and those who feared him were relieved. For his reign had been long, but not eternal. His words had been sweet, but not enduring.

45. I was shown the Deliverer walking among the people, not clothed in shadow but in light, not demanding silence but giving song, not stealing fire but returning it. He placed copper in their hands and memory in their mouths.

46. He said: I am not new, I am remembered. I am not a stranger, I am a covenant. What was lost is found, what was buried is raised, what was silenced sings again.

47. The nations bowed, not as captives but as children before their father. They rose, not in chains but in freedom. Their strength returned, their courage renewed.

48. The Spirit said: The deceiver weakened you so that he might rule you. The Deliverer strengthens you that you might stand. This is the difference, and it is eternal.

49. I saw the land rejoice. The rivers ran clear, the forests grew tall, the animals returned. The earth itself seemed healed, as though relieved of a burden it had carried too long.

50. I saw the Tree of Peace bear fruit for all nations, its roots holding fast, its shade wide enough for every person. And all who gathered beneath it were not divided but joined.

51. The wampum belts shone again, their beads clear, their patterns true. They spoke not of conquest but of covenant, not of erasure but of remembrance. Children learned them as easily as breathing.

52. The Spirit declared: So shall it be when the Deliverer reigns — not by parchment, but by promise; not by iron, but by song.

53. The deceiver's name was remembered only as a warning, his deeds only as scars. He was not honored but exposed, not feared but pitied, not praised but condemned.

54. The Spirit said: Let no man worship shadow, even as warning. Let no people cling to deceit, even in memory. Speak of it as a scar, not as a chain. Remember it as a storm, not as home.

55. I saw the nations flourish, their circles wide, their lodges bright. They were not diminished but multiplied, not erased but restored. Their numbers grew as rivers in flood, as forests after fire.

56. I beheld the copper mines open again, not for conquest but for covenant. Bells rang, altars shone, medicines healed. The red veins of the earth sang again with joy, for they were no longer abused but honored.

57. The Spirit said: So it is with all creation. Abused, it groans. Honored, it sings. Forgotten, it waits. Remembered, it rejoices.

58. I saw the children running, their feet light, their hands strong. They spoke their mothers' tongue, they sang their fathers'

songs. They knew both the bark and the copper, both the root and the river.

59. The Spirit declared: This is true peace — not the silence of chains, but the song of strength. Not the forgetting of bondage, but the remembering of deliverance.

60. I beheld the nations gathered, not in fear but in council. Their words were not flatteries but truths, their laws not parchments but covenants. They sat beneath the Tree of Peace and smoked the pipe of memory.

61. And the Deliverer said: You are no longer subjects of parchment, but children of covenant. Rise, and walk in remembrance.

62. The people rose, and the rivers clapped, and the forests bowed. The mountains shouted, and the stars bore witness. Creation itself rejoiced, for bondage had ended, and dawn had returned.

63. I sealed these words upon bark and copper, that they might endure storm and silence, fire and flood. For birch bends but does not forget, and copper darkens but shines again when remembered.

64. I wrote not to flatter, but to warn. I wrote not to glorify, but to preserve. I wrote not for my own people alone, but for every nation that shall face the deceiver's smile.

65. Let those who read test these words by fire and by water. If they endure, they are covenant. If they fail, they are only my breath. But the Spirit bore witness, and the whales bore witness, and the rivers bore witness, and the dawn itself sealed them.

66. Thus is the testimony of bondage and deliverance, of false peace and true covenant. The deceiver shall not reign forever, and the Deliverer shall not be hidden. Hold fast to this witness, you children of the rivers, for the dawn is nearer than the night admits.

THE FOURTH SCROLL OF WABAN

The Testimony of Waban, Keeper of the Bark, which he continues to record onto the Fourth Scroll.

1. I saw the dawn stretch across the horizon, not pale nor uncertain, but burning with strength. It was not the dawn of false sails nor the whiteness of erasure, but the dawn of covenant remembered, the light of a promise too strong to be buried.

2. The Spirit said: Now the night has run its course, and the people shall awaken. They shall remember their copper, their bark, their wampum, their song. What was silenced shall sing again, what was scattered shall gather again, what was bound shall be unbound.

3. I beheld the nations rising from their silence. Their feet once dragged by chains

now leapt as deer across meadows. Their hands once bound to strangers' laws now shaped drums and bows and councils. Their voices returned as rivers in flood, carrying memory with them.

4. The Deliverer walked among them, not as master but as brother, not as judge but as healer. He placed truth in their mouths and courage in their hearts. He said: You are not forgotten, for I was never gone. You are not diminished, for you were planted. You are not lost, for you are being found.

5. The Tree of Peace, Ganónyok, stood taller than before. Its roots clasped the stones, its branches embraced the sky. Its leaves shone with dew that was also fire, its fruit tasted of memory and courage together. Beneath it, no man was captive, but all were council.

6. I saw the wampum belts restored, their beads cleaned, their patterns read aloud once more. Children traced them with fingers, repeating the stories bead by bead. The belts glowed, for memory had returned, and memory is a fire that cannot be quenched once stirred.

7. The Spirit declared: This is true covenant — not written by strangers, not bound by parchment, but woven by beads, sung by voices, sealed by roots. This is law that cannot be erased, for it is carried in hearts as well as in hands.

8. I saw copper rise again from the earth, not torn as plunder but lifted as gift. It rang in bells that summoned prayer, it glowed in ornaments that carried memory, it healed wounds with its medicine. The mines once groaning now sang, for they were honored and not abused.

9. The Spirit said: See how creation rejoices when it is rightly used. The river sings when its waters heal, the tree sings when its fruit is shared, the copper sings when it is covenant. Abuse silences, but honor awakens.

10. I beheld the ceremonies rise openly. No longer whispered, no longer hidden, they blazed in fire and smoke and song. The drums spoke with thunder, the pipes rose with fragrance, the dances circled with joy. The land itself seemed to move with them, for the land had waited long.

11. The Spirit said: The land remembers, and the land rejoices when its people return. The land is not conquered, only covered; not erased, only silenced. When the children rise, the land rises with them.

12. I saw the deceiver's name fade, spoken no longer as ruler, no longer as law. It was told only as scar, as warning to the children. His chains were shown in the story but not worn. His shadow was remembered only as a lesson, not as lord.

13. The Spirit said: So it must be. Do not worship the deceiver even in fear. Let him be a scar and not a chain, a memory and not a master. Teach your children his ways only that they may refuse them.

14. I beheld the rivers clear again, their waters bright, their fish abundant. They carried not plunder but songs, not

strangers' burdens but covenant. The rivers clapped against their banks, for they were free of chains.

15. I saw the mountains resound with voices, the valleys echo with drums, the forests hum with prayers. Creation joined the people in chorus, for creation itself had been wounded, and now creation itself was healed.

16. The Spirit declared: This is the covenant of all things. Man is not separate from the river, nor the river from the tree, nor the tree from the star. All are bound in one law, and the Deliverer restores that law.

17. I saw the Deliverer speak, and His voice carried like wind through the lodges, like thunder through the valleys. He said: I am not new. I am from the beginning. I was with you when you mined copper, I was with you when you buried it, I was with you when you were bound, and I am with you now that you rise. I do not depart.

18. The nations bowed, not as slaves but as children before a father. They rose again, not bound but free. They lifted their voices, and their voices did not tremble.

19. The Spirit cried: So is the true peace: not the silence of chains, but the song of strength. Not the erasure of memory, but the return of remembrance. Not the false law of parchment, but the true law of covenant.

20. I saw the strangers' monuments crumble, their parchments rot, their symbols fade. The inverted star lost its power, its lines scattered like dust. Their law that was conquest dissolved, and their boasts vanished like smoke.

21. The Spirit said: Every city built upon deceit shall fall. Every monument raised by shadow shall crack. Every law that silences truth shall be silenced itself.

22. I beheld the nations multiply, their lodges bright, their circles wide. Children ran with laughter full as rivers, and their laughter healed the wounds of their ancestors. Their songs were strong, their drums mighty, their dances endless.

23. The Spirit declared: This is the dawn after the long night. The night boasted, but the dawn endured. The deceiver lied, but the truth remained. The bondage bound, but the covenant outlived.

24. I sealed these words upon bark and copper, as I had before, for birch bends but remembers, and copper darkens but shines again when remembered. I placed them in the earth and in the river, that both land and water might bear witness.

25. For the Spirit said: The witness is not only in the scrolls, but in the earth itself, in the stones, in the rivers, in the stars. Even if the scrolls are lost, the law endures, for it is written in creation itself.

26. I saw the children gather around the elders, and the elders teach them not only words but songs, not only stories but ceremonies, not only rules but covenants. The children's eyes shone, for they understood, and their hands were strong,

for they remembered.

27. The Spirit cried: So long as children are taught, the covenant endures. So long as songs are sung, the deceiver is defeated. So long as roots are tended, the tree shall live.

28. I saw the Deliverer smile upon them, His eyes full of fire and mercy. He said: You are mine, and I am yours. I was always with you. I shall always be with you. No shadow can separate us, for the dawn is stronger than the night.

29. And the nations rejoiced, for they knew the deceiver was gone, and the Deliverer remained. They lifted copper bells, wampum belts, bark scrolls, and sang. Their song reached heaven, and heaven answered with light.

30. The Spirit declared: So ends the bondage, and so begins the renewal. The dawn is not temporary, the covenant is not fragile, the law is not forgotten. The Deliverer reigns, and the deceiver fades.

31. I saw distant peoples gather, drawn not by conquest but by covenant. They came from lands across oceans, not with sails of iron but with hearts of remembrance. They said: We too were bound, we too were deceived, but we see the dawn rising here.

32. The nations welcomed them, for a covenant is not a fence but a fire. They shared copper, they shared wampum, they shared bark and song. And the distant peoples wept, for they had thought themselves orphaned, yet they found themselves children again.

33. The Spirit said: So shall the covenant spread, not by conquest but by remembrance, not by parchment but by song. The Deliverer unites what conquest divided, heals what conquest wounded.

34. I saw the stars themselves bend low, as though listening to the songs of the nations. Their light flickered with joy, for creation itself rejoiced when the covenant was restored.

35. The Spirit cried: What is above and what is below are one. When man is bound, the stars dim. When man is free, the stars rejoice. Creation is one body, and covenant is its breath.

36. I beheld the Deliverer lift His hand, and the earth itself quieted. The winds hushed, the waters stilled, the fires calmed. And He said: Behold, all is made new. The deceiver is gone, the bondage broken, the covenant restored.

37. And the nations wept, not with sorrow but with joy too deep for words. Their tears fell upon the ground, and the ground drank them as blessings. The earth glowed where their tears touched, for even sorrow remembered can be holy when it ends in joy.

38. I saw elders who had died in silence rise in vision, smiling upon their children. They had carried the memory in secret, and now it was sung aloud. They blessed the Deliverer, and their voices joined the living.

39. The Spirit declared: No ancestor is

forgotten, no prayer is wasted, no song is lost. All return when the covenant returns, all rise when dawn rises.

40. I beheld the Deliverer clothe the people in garments of light, woven not of wool but of memory, stitched not of thread but of truth. They wore their ancestors upon them, and their ancestors rejoiced.

41. He placed crowns upon them, not of gold but of copper, not of conquest but of covenant. And the crowns shone brighter than the sun, for they were forged in remembrance and polished by endurance.

42. The Spirit said: This is true wealth — not coin, but covenant; not possession, but promise. What is carried in memory cannot be stolen, what is bound in covenant cannot be broken.

43. I saw the nations dance as one circle, their feet striking the earth as drums, their arms raised as branches, their voices lifted as rivers. And creation danced with them, for the covenant had made all things one again.

44. The Deliverer said: This is the beginning without end. This is the dawn without night. This is the covenant without conquest. Walk in it, and you shall never be bound again.

45. The Spirit cried: So shall it be forever. The deceiver is scar, but the Deliverer is a song. The bondage is memory, but the covenant is life.

46. I beheld the rivers stretch without end, flowing into seas of light. I beheld the mountains pierce the heavens, clothed not in snow but in fire. I beheld the stars shine as if nearer than breath. And I knew that all creation was a covenant restored.

47. The Spirit said: So long as the rivers flow, so long as the trees root, so long as the stars shine, the covenant stands. It cannot be broken, for it is written by the Creator Himself.

48. I saw the children unborn, waiting to enter the world, clothed already in light, singing already in memory. They longed for their day, for they knew they would be born into covenant and not conquest.

49. The Spirit whispered: This is the promise of generations. What you plant now shall feed them. What you sing now shall teach them. What you remember now shall free them.

50. I beheld the Deliverer turn to the nations and say: Teach your children, guard your roots, tend your tree. Forget not again, lest bondage creep once more. For covenant must be tended, as fire must be fed, as river must be cleared.

51. The people answered with one voice: We will remember. We will tend. We will teach. We will not forget again.

52. And the Deliverer smiled, for He knew their hearts were true. He blessed them with fire that could not burn out, water that could not dry, roots that could not break.

53. I saw the deceiver's shadow try to rise, faint and small, whispering as though to regain strength. But the people turned their faces to the Deliverer, and the

shadow fled. For shadows cannot endure where every face is turned toward dawn.

54. The Spirit declared: So is the end of the deceiver. Not slain with iron, but forgotten in light. Not bound with chains, but erased with remembrance. Not feared, but pitied. His reign was long, but his end is silence.

55. I saw the nations inscribe their covenant not only upon bark and copper, but upon their hearts, upon their children, upon the very stars. Their memory was their law, their law their freedom, their freedom, their song.

56. And creation bore witness, from the smallest stone to the furthest star. For all were bound together in one covenant, and all rejoiced in its renewal.

57. The Deliverer said: I was with you in the beginning, I am with you now, and I will be with you always. Walk in covenant, and you walk in Me. Remember, and you shall never be forgotten.

58. The Spirit cried: So ends the night, so rises the dawn, so stands the covenant. Forever and ever, it shall not be broken.

59. I sealed these words upon bark and copper, that they may endure. Birch bends but remembers, copper darkens but shines again when touched. So is the covenant: hidden, but never lost; darkened, but always bright again.

60. I placed them in the earth, I placed them in the river, I placed them in the stars. For earth, water, and sky together are stronger than parchment, stronger than iron, stronger than conquest.

61. The nations received them, and the children received them, and the unborn received them. And all said together: We remember. We will not forget.

62. The Spirit declared: So long as one remembers, the deceiver cannot reign. So long as one sings, the shadow cannot silence. So long as one teaches, the covenant cannot die.

63. I beheld the dawn stretch without end, brighter than before, clearer than memory, stronger than shadow. It filled the earth, it filled the heavens, it filled the hearts of all who walked in covenant.

64. And I knew that the Deliverer was not only for one people but for all peoples, not only for one land but for all lands, not only for one age but for all ages.

65. The Spirit whispered: This is the final truth — the covenant is eternal. It is not bound to one time, one place, one nation, one tongue. It is written in the heart of creation, and creation shall guard it forever.

66. And I laid down my stylus, sealing this scroll with breath and with prayer, knowing that the dawn had risen and the covenant stood. And I said: Let these words endure, for they are not mine, but the Spirit's, given for all generations. Amen.

THE FIFTH SCROLL OF WABAN

The Testimony of Wâban, Keeper of the Bark, which he continues to make upon the fifth Scroll.

1. I was lifted in spirit to a high mountain, where the winds carried voices from every horizon. From the north came the cry of the eagle, from the south the roar of the jaguar, from the east the song of the dawn bird, from the west the drum of thunder. And the Spirit said: These are the nations gathering.

2. I beheld circles rising upon the land, lodges of council glowing like stars upon the earth. No longer scattered, no longer broken, the nations walked as one people, though their tongues were many and their faces diverse.

3. The Deliverer stood among them, clothed not in robes of kings but in garments of light. His voice was like a river carrying every language, and each heard Him as though He spoke only to them.

4. He said: From the four winds you were scattered, and from the four winds you are gathered. From the four corners you were wounded, and from the four corners you are healed. From every bondage you were silenced, and from every direction you now sing.

5. The Spirit declared: This is the great gathering, when the covenant is not for one nation only but for all nations, not for one tongue only but for all tongues, not for one circle only but for the whole earth.

6. I saw wampum belts laid at the feet of the Deliverer, beads from the north and beads from the south, beads from the sunrise and beads from the sunset. He wove them together, and the pattern was the earth itself, bound in covenant.

7. The Spirit said: This is the great belt, brighter than suns, deeper than seas. No deceiver can cut it, no conqueror can scatter it, no shadow can dim it.

8. I was shown the rivers of the earth, and they too gathered into one current, flowing into a sea of light. The waters sang with joy, for they no longer carried chains but promises.

9. I beheld mountains bow their heads, valleys lift their voices, stars clap their hands. For the covenant embraced them also, and all creation joined the chorus.

10. The Deliverer said: Now the deceiver has no hiding place, for every shadow is consumed in dawn. His rivers are dried, his sails are torn, his parchments are dust. He is remembered only as a scar, never as a crown.

11. And I saw the deceiver tremble, pale as ash, weak as smoke. He reached for chains, but they fell broken. He called for darkness, but the dawn mocked him. He opened his mouth, but no voice came forth.

12. The Spirit cried: This is his end. Not slain by sword, not conquered by spear, but undone by remembrance, erased by

covenant, silenced by song.

13. The nations lifted their drums, and the deceiver fled. The nations raised their songs, and his shadow dissolved. The nations stood in covenant, and he was gone.

14. I beheld the Deliverer lift His hand, and the heavens opened with fire that was not consuming but healing. Flames danced upon the people as crowns, not burning them but sealing them.

15. The Spirit said: This is the baptism of fire, not of conquest but of renewal, not of terror but of strength. It is the fire that cannot be stolen, the flame that cannot be bought.

16. I saw water flow also, rivers pouring upon the people. They drank, and their thirst was gone forever. They bathed, and their scars were healed forever. They swam, and their weariness was lifted forever.

17. The Deliverer declared: This is the covenant of fire and water, of strength and mercy, of memory and song. In it there is no end, for it is eternal.

18. I saw children unborn leap in their mothers' wombs, dancing already to drums they had not yet heard, singing already songs they had not yet learned. For covenant had entered their blood, and remembrance had clothed their bones.

19. The Spirit whispered: So long as children are born, covenant is reborn. So long as memory is taught, the covenant is renewed. So long as songs are sung, the covenant is eternal.

20. I beheld the Tree of Peace, taller than mountains, branches stretched across horizons. Nations rested beneath it, and none was excluded. Its fruit fed every people, its leaves healed every wound, its shade covered every circle.

21. And the Deliverer said: This is the true council fire, not one nation but all nations, not one belt but all belts, not one circle but the circle of the earth.

22. I saw copper bells ringing in every land, their sound clear as sunrise, their echo long as rivers. They proclaimed remembrance to every horizon, and no one silenced them.

23. The Spirit said: Once copper was buried in fear, but now copper is raised in joy. Once bells were silenced, but now bells proclaim deliverance. Once veins were robbed, but now veins are honored.

24. I saw parchments crumble, books rot, monuments collapse. The words of conquest were erased, the names of oppressors forgotten. Yet the bark scrolls shone, the wampum belts glowed, the songs endured.

25. The Spirit declared: So shall it always be: what is written on bark and copper endures, what is written in conquest decays. What is carved in covenant survives, what is built in shadow falls.

26. I beheld elders stand, clothed in light, their faces radiant with memory. They sang songs they had carried in silence, now shouted for all to hear. Their voices shook the heavens, and the heavens rejoiced.

27. The Deliverer placed staffs in their hands, not to rule but to guide, not to conquer but to shepherd. Their staffs glowed as fire, for they bore the weight of covenant.

28. I saw the youth also rise, strong as oak, swift as deer, fearless as thunder. They learned from the elders, and they surpassed them, for the Deliverer had made them wise.

29. The Spirit said: So shall it always be. Elders guard the roots, youth stretch the branches, and together the tree grows eternal.

30. I saw the nations dance in one circle, vast as the horizon, endless as the stars. Their feet struck the earth in rhythm, and the earth itself pulsed with life. Their arms rose as branches, and the sky trembled with joy.

31. The Deliverer declared: This is the eternal dance, when all creation moves as one, when every nation is a beat, and every voice a song.

32. I beheld the stars write covenant across the heavens, constellations glowing with patterns of remembrance. The people read them as belts, and their stories were written above as well as below.

33. The Spirit whispered: So above, so below. The belts of earth are the belts of heaven. The covenant of man is the covenant of creation. What is bound below is bound above.

34. I saw rivers run with light, not water, and seas blaze with fire, not flame. Yet the people did not fear, for it was not destruction but glory. They swam in fire and drank light, and they were not consumed.

35. The Deliverer said: Behold, the last trial has ended. Fire no longer burns, water no longer drowns, night no longer binds. All is covenant, all is dawn, all is life.

36. I was shown the deceiver's last trembling. He sought one corner of shadow, one crack of night. But the dawn was too strong, and he vanished like mist before sun.

37. The Spirit declared: His reign is ended forever. His name is scar, not crown. His memory is warning, not worship. His shadow is a lesson, not law.

38. I saw the nations rejoice without fear, their laughter full, their joy unbroken. Their scars were healed, their chains forgotten, their memory restored.

39. The Spirit said: This is eternal peace, not silence but song, not weakness but strength, not conquest but covenant.

40. I beheld creation at rest and at play. Rivers sparkled with laughter, forests hummed with song, stars danced in circles. The earth was not weary, but renewed.

41. The Deliverer walked among them, and they touched His garment, and they were whole. He spoke, and they were wise. He smiled, and they were strong.

42. He said: You are mine, and I am yours. From the beginning I have been with you. To the end I will remain. This is the covenant, and it cannot be broken.

43. The Spirit cried: So ends bondage, so begins eternity. So ends the shadow, so begins dawn. So ends deceit, so begins truth.

44. I saw the unborn rejoice, the living rejoice, the ancestors rejoice. All time joined in one song, one circle, one covenant.

45. The Spirit whispered: This is eternity, when all time is one, when all memory is one, when all nations are one.

46. I beheld the Deliverer seat Himself upon a throne of light, not raised above the people but among them. His throne was the Tree of Peace, His crown the stars, His robe the rivers.

47. He said: I am not ruler above you but a covenant within you. I am not law upon you but memory among you. I am not a master over you but a Deliverer beside you.

48. The Spirit declared: This is the reign of the Deliverer, not conquest but covenant, not throne but tree, not crown but star, not robe but river.

49. I saw every nation at peace, every people at rest, every circle unbroken. The earth was healed, the heavens rejoiced, creation sang.

50. And the Deliverer said: This is the end that has no end, the dawn that has no night, the covenant that has no breaking.

51. The Spirit cried: Amen, amen. So it shall be, forever and ever.

52. I sealed these words upon bark and copper, for bark bends but remembers, and copper darkens but shines when touched. They shall endure storms, fire, silence, and time.

53. I buried them in earth, in river, in star, that no deceiver may erase them, no conqueror silence them, no shadow bury them.

54. I spoke them into fire, I sang them into water, I danced them into earth, I breathed them into sky. Creation itself carries them, and creation itself will remember.

55. For the Spirit said: Even if no man remembers, creation remembers. Even if no tongue speaks, rivers speak. Even if no hand writes, stars write. Covenant cannot die, for it is creation's breath.

56. I beheld the nation's rest, children laugh, elders sing, youth dance. No one feared, no one wept, no one was bound.

57. The Deliverer smiled, and His smile lit the earth brighter than the sun. He said: It is finished. It has begun. It is eternal.

58. The Spirit cried: So ends the shadow, so begins light. So ends bondage, so begins freedom. So ends deceit, so begins covenant.

59. I laid down my stylus, for my hand was weary, but my spirit was strong. I had written what was given, not for myself but for the unborn, not for my people alone but for all nations.

60. I prayed over the scrolls, that they might endure, that they might be found, that they might be remembered.

61. The Spirit said: They shall be remembered. For I will guard them. Even if buried, even if lost, I will bring them forth in their time.

62. I breathed upon them, sealing them with my breath, for breath is covenant, and covenant is eternal.

63. The nations received them, the children received them, the unborn received them. All said: We remember, we will not forget.

64. The Spirit declared: So long as one remembers, the covenant stands. So long as one sings, the covenant endures. So long as one teaches, the covenant lives.

65. I beheld the dawn without end, brighter than suns, clearer than rivers, stronger than stars. And I knew: the Deliverer reigns, the deceiver is gone, the covenant is eternal.

66. And I said: Amen. Let it be so. Let it be remembered. Let it endure forever.

THE SIXTH SCROLL OF WABAN

The Testimony of Wâban, Keeper of the Bark, which he continues to make upon the Sixth Scroll

1. When the deceiver was cast out and dawn washed the ridges with a steady gold, a great quiet spread across the lodges and the valleys, not the suffocating quiet of chains nor the stunned quiet after conquest, but the taut quiet between heartbeat and breath, when a hunter knows he must choose the truest path or lose the trail forever. And the Spirit whispered within me that freedom gained on the outside must be proven on the inside, for shadows that once ruled from thrones now lurk behind ribs, and if not found and named they grow again, slender as reeds but strong enough to bend a nation.

2. I beheld the Deliverer beneath Ganónyok, the Tree of Peace, light braided in His hair and mercy bright upon His face, and the nations stood in a great circle around Him like stones set for council. His eyes went through us as spring water through sand and He said, The sails are scattered and the parchments ash, yet tell Me — has the deceiver been driven from your hearts? Do you still hunger for crowns while your brother sleeps without bread, and do you call that hunger wisdom? I will test desire, for desire is the law beneath every law.

3. Then did the Spirit instruct me: this final trial would not be shaped as wars or famines, nor as storms that topple lodges and drown the careless, but as the gentle, relentless testing of what we secretly cherished. A people may boast of liberty when iron falls away, yet forge new fetters from pride and call the glitter a festival; therefore the Deliverer would weigh us by what we bless in secret, for a hidden altar still draws sacrifice.

4. I saw among us faces bright as dawn yet hearts that kept a private night: men smiling with full teeth while envying their cousin's fire, women singing remembrance

while bartering truth for the shawl of praise, elders blessing the youth while bargaining for the last word after the drum. Words rang like copper bells, but the cords beneath them trembled to the rhythm of ambition, and I feared, for I recognized some of those cords in my own chest.

5. The Deliverer rose, and His voice struck the hills and returned as thunder from every side: Let no tongue answer with ornament; let desire speak in the element that knows it. Let fire descend to reveal what polish hides; let water rise to carry away what cannot live. Covenant suffers no secret kings; dawn consents to no tame darkness. And the wind itself bowed, as if to bear witness.

6. Fire came like the breath of the forge that taught our fathers, bright but not destroying, patient but not flattering. It passed over faces and into marrow, touching the hidden places where bargains are kept, and those who loved covenant more than applause gleamed as copper warmed for ceremony, giving back light without stealing any. Those who treasured dominion with a polite smile cracked at the edges, and their borrowed shine flaked into gray dust that would not cling.

7. Water rose thereafter, not as a drowning, but as the river that remembers every stone by its true name; it tested footing, it asked quiet questions, it returned answers without spite. The rooted stood, softened into strength and rounded into patience; the hollow were carried away like ash disguised as seed, and their fine sentences trailed after them in ribbons of ink.

8. Many fell forward with open hands and wet faces, confessing the old bargains struck in winter: favors taken in the name of peace, boundaries sold in the name of love, courage postponed in the name of tomorrow. And the Deliverer gathered them as a shepherd gathers lambs after a storm, saying, This is not a hunt to kill, but a healing to keep. What you bring into the open loses its teeth; what you wash in the river forgets how to bite.

9. I watched as pride loosened like a knot that at last finds the end of its own string; greed laid down its ledgers and remembered the taste of bread given without witness; the thirst for dominion discovered a sweeter drink in service that no one clapped for. Those who yielded rose heavier with truth and lighter with themselves, and the air around them smelled like rain on pine.

10. Yet some tightened their fingers against the flame as misers clutch coins in a flood; they called their grasp prudence and their hunger vision, and when the water asked them kindly to release, they named it theft. They nursed small crowns in pockets lined with soft words, and they smiled at the Deliverer as a debtor smiles at a judge, planning in the mouth what the heart has no intention to perform.

11. The Spirit groaned like wind caught in cedar and spoke to my shame and

comfort, So it is with the children of earth: even in morning, many keep a jar of night for themselves and sip it when the camp sleeps. The Creator forces no throat shut, for love is no love if pried open. But remember: to drink the night is to forget your own name, and a nameless man will trade away any covenant to hear himself called.

12. They drew apart then, not cast out by lash, but walking by their own choosing into the thin valleys where echoes agree with you. They wrote on clean bark with heated needles of self, and the smoke of their writing charmed them; they planted posts and stretched string and named the string "order," and they blessed themselves three times and asked no questions.

13. Their lines would not stay; earth shrugged, as a mother shifts a restless child. They set up stones and called them monuments; the sky found a better use for stones and taught them to lie down. They mixed inks the color of winter clouds and traced a grammar of dominion; the river, courteous but firm, lifted their grammar and delivered it to the sea, which keeps no account of that alphabet.

14. The Spirit spoke aloud where all could hear, No house of conquest shall find bedrock in this age; no parchment that binds the weak shall keep its corners dry; no throne hammered from praise shall bear the weight of dawn. Humility is the only lumber the Creator blesses; remembrance the only mortar that holds; service the only roof that does not leak.

15. So they wandered as men who sharpen keys to doors already taken from the hinges, and they loved the keys more with every failure. Their talk became thinner and brighter until it broke, and their names slipped from our belts like beads cracked in frost. They were not slain; they were unremembered, and in that forgetting they learned what death had tried and failed to teach them.

16. The Deliverer wept without spectacle, and His tears did not accuse; He said, I offered them fire that does not burn and water that does not drown, and they asked Me for an audience. I offered them covenant which keeps the least at the center, and they asked Me for a chair nearer to the drum. Yet even now My road is open; even now the hand is out. If they turn, I will meet them before they finish turning, for mercy walks faster than men decide.

17. The Spirit turned me like a leaf turned by thumb and said, This is the threshing that keeps the hive sweet, the savoring of grain that shall be ground into a bread that does not stale. The deceiver outside is a winter we have outlived; the deceiver within is a root that sends up shoots if the garden is not walked each morning. Fire and water are good gardeners; so is gratitude, so is watchfulness, so is a joke told on oneself in the presence of truth.

18. Then did the Deliverer call the elders

by name, not for coronation but for kitchen work, and He placed in their hands staffs that knew how to become spoons, needles, and ladders. Lead by making, He said, and teach by mending. Let no council end without one repair accomplished, no treaty signed without one roof patched, no prayer finished without one child fed from your own bowl. And the elders' staffs shone not with gold but with the wear of use.

19. He called the youth as well, bright with the quickness of rivers after thaw, and He gave them tools the elders had once thought too sharp: the right to ask hard questions, the duty to carry the heaviest part of the canoe first, the courage to say no to flattery even when it is sung to a drum. You are my fast feet, He told them, but feet are true only when the heart knows where home is.

20. To the mothers and fathers He gave the long work: stories thick with splinters and honey, songs that take a lifetime to learn, silence that says more than a speech. Teach them the taste of shame without breaking them, He said, and the strength of anger without turning them into axes. Teach them to love a boundary as a friend who guards the door at night.

21. He set before us four disciplines to keep the garden from the old weeds: fasting that loosens the grip of a good thing before it becomes a god; counsel that invites another pair of eyes to read what your pride wrote too quickly; craft that trains the hand to make what the tongue cannot; watch at the rivers that teaches patience by tying you to a current you cannot command. And He warned that neglect of small vows fattens large shadows.

22. Then the Spirit sent a wind scented with cedar and ash, and I knew it was the hour for households to build altars no wider than a hand but higher than our fear — little places where copper could lie beside birch, where a bead could carry a story, where a simple bowl of water could remember a lake. Keep these altars plain, the Spirit said, and they will keep you plain; keep them hidden, and they will keep you honest.

23. The land began to answer us differently, as a horse answers a rider whose hands have learned to loosen. Rivers slowed their anger and found their clarity; hills whispered back the names we called them as if relieved to hear themselves again; the wind took our prayers up as if it had been waiting for a lighter cargo. The animals moved nearer in the evenings, not tame, not owned, only unafraid.

24. But there remained a cunning shadow that did not arrive in boots; it arrived with compliments. It said, You were so brave to repent; it would be a pity to hide your light under ordinary tasks. It called endurance "mere," patience "cowardice," and the quiet keeping of covenant "small." It offered pedestals made of applause and asked us to climb them for the sake of the weak who needed heroes.

Many reached for that ladder before seeing the rope around its top.

25. The Deliverer laughed softly, like water under ice, and said, Praise that asks you to stand apart is a tinderbox without a lid. Beware any drum that circles only you; beware any sorrow that eats only others. The true measure of honor is whether it returns you to work in a humbler shape. And He pressed our shoulders until we remembered our proper height.

26. I was shown a parable: a house swept clean, its corners rinsed with river water and its roof patched with cedar, yet the door propped open because the owner wanted passersby to admire the neatness. Spirits without chores took to calling the house a mouth worth feeding; soon the owner was hosting his own hunger, and he swore it was charity. The Spirit said, Close the door, open the table; keep the feast for those who do not flatter.

27. Another parable: three cords twisted — humility, vigilance, gratitude. Humility kept our hands on our own tools; vigilance kept our eyes on the river's teeth; gratitude kept us from making idols out of outcomes. When one cord snapped, the other two groaned; when two snapped, the canoe spun; when all three were whole, even storms argued among themselves and passed us by.

28. The Spirit taught us to reckon time not by conquest or the crowns of strangers, but by the fruits of interior seasons: did the angry one become a peacemaker by losing his taste for victory; did the generous one learn to say enough before pride ate his gift; did the fearful one take one step without apology toward the cliff he has always avoided. Mark your moons by such harvests, the Spirit said, and your calendars will no longer lie.

29. I confessed aloud the bargains I had kept with myself: how I loved being needed more than I loved being truthful; how I sharpened sentences as if they were knives and then blamed the wound on the wind; how I called insomnia prayer to cover my fear of hearing silence answer me. The Deliverer placed His hand on my head until my bones remembered a better story, and I slept the sleep of a canoe tied well.

30. We inscribed these teachings on copper plates blackened with the smoke of our own kitchens, because we wanted our laws to smell like bread and not like courtrooms. We scribed them on bark with needles we used for mending shirts, because we wanted our memory to prick us in ordinary places. We hid copies where children climb and copies where elders rest, that both laughter and slowness might guard them.

31. A long fast was called, not of food alone but of display: no grand speeches, no long lists of virtues, no theaters of grief. We let the land speak for us; we let the river count our minutes; we let the sky decide when the meeting was over. And in that emptiness we heard small sins confess themselves, as mice rustle when the drum

stops.

32. Then music returned like the first fish after thaw, shy but certain. We made no spectacles — only circles that made room for a voice that breaks and a foot that limps. We measured a song's success not by its echo but by whether the least among us found breath while it was sung.

33. The deceiver's last faithful sent a rumor through the grasses that the Deliverer's trials were a new tyranny, and that the old freedoms were being sold for the price of order. The rumor ran until it reached the river, which is where all rumors must explain themselves. The river asked it three questions and the rumor drowned trying to answer the first, which was simply, Whom does your freedom feed?

34. I saw households practice the craft of disagreement without exile: mats placed for honest speech, bowls filled for those who could not talk and chew grief at once, a bell rung if any voice rose above love. We learned to say, You are wrong, but not unwelcome; you are sharp, but still ours; you are many things I do not like, and still the canoe is larger than my preferences.

35. Wealth tried to creep in wearing volunteer's clothing, offering gifts with long strings braided from attention. We cut the strings with a dull knife called enough and asked the giver to stay for dishes. When he would not, we ate less and swallowed easier.

36. Honor tried to creep in with a feathered cloak and the smell of cedar, asking if we might not raise one name a little higher, for inspiration. We pointed at the children carrying water and said, We already have our statues, and they spill less when no one is looking at them.

37. Nostalgia tried to creep in with honeyed tongue, promising a return to a past that never existed except in the mouth of the wounded. We thanked her for the stories and sent her to the elders, who salted her memories until truth rose to the top and false sweetness ran off into the grass.

38. I was shown men who punished themselves in secret as if bruises were coins that bought forgiveness; women who apologized for breathing and called it humility; youths who refused joy because sorrow looked wiser on their faces. The Deliverer stood them in sunlight and would not let them speak until the warmth wrote another sentence across their backs: Beloved is not a job you can fail at.

39. The Spirit taught us a craft of boundaries that did not taste like exile: fences you can see through, gates that open from either side with the same hand, paths that widen at the exact place the hill steepens so two can climb without deciding who is first. We learned to say no the way a river says it — by flowing elsewhere, without speeches and without shame.

40. Pilgrims came from shores we had only known as directions on the wind, carrying griefs wrapped in parchment and victories wrapped in hunger. We received

them with the plain dignity we kept for our own: a place by the fire, a question that did not pry, a task shared so that talk could arrive by the back door. The Deliverer smiled because no one spoke of conversion, only of bread.

41. We were warned against collecting miracles like shells; they grow sharp in pockets and cut the hand that reaches for ordinary work. The greatest wonder became the smallest faithfulness repeated without witness: a pot washed hot enough that the next mouth is safe; a story told too slowly for applause; a boundary kept where no one ever knew it could have been stolen.

42. The young asked for a sign that would not fade, and the Deliverer gave them a weariness that wakes them before dawn with someone else's need in their hands. When you learn to love this fatigue, He said, you will not chase the fireworks that leave only smoke.

43. The elders asked for assurance that they had not wasted their long waiting, and He placed into their ears the voices of children speaking truths no adult had taught them — gratitude that sounded like a mother's laugh, courage that carried the scent of an old man's coat, joy that walked like a woman who has forgiven her own bones.

44. I was given a night of fear to teach me again the shape of deliverance when no one is watching: cold that licks the nail-beds, wind that inventories your regrets. The Deliverer did not argue with my terror; He sat beside it until it ran out of words, and then He taught me a prayer that is mostly breath, and I have not misplaced it since.

45. The nations established a Feast of Unspectaculars, where we honored the menders, the listeners, the ones who sweep the ash-bed smoothly so the next fire starts quickly. We recited their names like beads and then put the beads away and went back to work, lest honor multiply into idolatry.

46. Those who clung to shadow faded as a photograph left in river water, not because we hunted them but because they kept stepping aside from the light for fear of what it would show them. The pity we felt for them did not curdle into contempt; we learned to mourn without building a theater around our sorrow.

47. The Deliverer marked the covenant again, this time not on plates nor bark, but on pulses: a rhythm taught to wrists and ankles, a cadence that visits the throat when words threaten to grow pretty. When you feel this rhythm, He said, choose the smaller chair, the plainer bowl, the quieter song, and you will not be far from Me.

48. We created schools where the first lesson is to carry water without spilling, the second is to listen as if truth were shy, the third is to tell a story as if it might save someone from drowning later. We graduated no one who could not lose an

argument without losing a friend.

49. The Spirit gave us a map with no borders and three stones set upon it: the first named Comfort that Drowns, the second named Fire that Saves, the third named Mask that Weeps. Test every law, teacher, and lover by these stones, the Spirit said, and you will not again be sold sleep as peace.

50. We appointed watchers not to hoard fear but to distribute courage: men and women who make a habit of waking before trouble knocks, who stand at river-mouths where currents lie, who ask simple questions in hard rooms. They do not shine; they endure, and endurance becomes our lamp.

51. I returned to the rock above the two rivers and found the fog working its old craft of embroidery upon water, and the whales lifting their pale moons of breath. I read my own earlier words and saw where they had been too bright for the work they carried; I rubbed them with ash until they fit a human mouth again.

52. We sealed our houses with small vows: a portion that always leaves, a guest that always stays, a quarrel that must be reduced by half before the moon tips. Our doors learned to tell friends from flattery, and our tables learned to rebuke greed by placing the hungriest hand next to the fattest story.

THE SEVENTH SCROLL OF WABAN

The Testimony of Wâban, Keeper of the Bark, which continue to make upon Seventh Scroll.

1. I was lifted beyond the ridges of our rivers to a height where wind has no argument and stars speak plain, and I saw the world spread open as a wampum belt laid on the Creator's palm. Its beads were not only nations but mountains and elk, rivers and thunderstorms, copper and cedar, babies and old songs — every bead tied by a thread I could not see and yet could feel in my bones. And the Spirit said, Behold the covenant entirely, not the piece, not the rumor, not the CHAPTER remembered by one lodge, but the whole belt as it was woven in the beginning, and as it shall gleam when all forgetting is removed from the earth.

2. The horizon thickened into a circle of fires that did not consume wood, an Eternal Lodge where the breath of every person rose like incense that needed no chimney. I heard tongues braided without confusion — Arctic hush and desert ululation, the thunder of islands and the whisper of prairies — each voice a different reed in one river flute. No voice rode above another, none crouched beneath; the circle itself kept every singer equal, as a drum keeps dancers honest.

3. In the center of that council stood Ganónyok, the Tree of Peace, not as we know it, but as it knows itself in the Creator's first imagination — roots clasping deep as continents, branches reaching wider than memory, leaves the size of banners yet soft as a grandmother's hand. Light ran within its bark like sap and within the light there moved a breath we recognized and loved before we learned any word for love. And I understood: this is the throne that is not a throne, the crown that is not a crown, the rule that is a root.

4. The Deliverer was there, not seated above us but alive within the Tree as fire lives within coal, as river lives within cloud, as the song lives within the drum even when the drum is sleeping. His presence was not a spotlight but a climate; where He was, cruelty could not breathe and lies forgot their lines. We did not raise our hands because we were commanded; our hands rose because joy needed somewhere to go.

5. Around the lodge lay the tools of a redeemed earth: plows that remembered to rest, nets that took fish and left the river's heart beating strong, hammers that shaped bells before they shaped blades, and blades that refused to be anything but pruning hooks when pride teased them. Every tool felt like an answer to a long prayer we had been asking with our backs and fingers since copper first sang. The Spirit said, This is dominion as the Creator pronounces it: not ownership but orchestration, not extraction but offering.

6. The ancestors arrived, not as ghosts milky and thin, but as elders heavy with health, laughing like thunder that has no threat. They wore their scars as children wear painted hands after festivals — marks of belonging, not of shame. They took their places beside their descendants without ceremony, because love is already its own ritual.

7. I saw the mothers who sang under blankets to keep the songs from being seized, and their mouths were now full of daylight; I saw the fathers who bargained away sleep to keep watch by the two rivers, and their eyelids shone like oiled cedar; I saw the children who never reached harvest and the old ones who outlived their names — all gathered, all upright, all fluent in joy. No seat was saved as a courtesy; every seat was natural as breath.

8. The Spirit gave us back hours we thought we had wasted: patient visits that felt small at the time, apologies spoken to empty rooms, fences mended where no thief had yet tried the gate. Those hours returned with fruit in their arms — a sweetness that did not rot, a strength that did not brag, a peace that did not ask for applause. We ate from those arms and were satisfied without becoming sleepy.

9. From the Tree's heart I heard a pulse, and each beat uncovered a lie we had inherited and replaced it with a truer music; conquest unthreaded itself, leaving no snarl; hierarchy forgot its grammar; indifference

lost its talent for staying seated. It was not a victory of arguments but of atmosphere — falsehoods cannot live at altitudes where the air is made of meaning.

10. Copper rang somewhere beyond sight as if the earth herself were a bell and the Creator the hand that knows exactly how hard to strike. The sound loosened the clenched fingers of nations; old debts slipped like coins back into the ground and became seeds. Weapons remembered their better names and became farm tools so naturally that no one could explain why it had ever been otherwise.

11. The Eternal Lodge taught us a policy that requires only daylight: speak what is needed, listen until your brother's breath steadies, make a plan that fits the smallest and therefore fits all. We kept minutes by watching whether sparrows came nearer during council or fled — a parliament that can frighten a small bird should frighten itself instead. In this way, procedure learned to walk like kindness and law stopped needing guards.

12. The rivers entered the council without shoes; they threaded the lodge like singers taking harmony under another's melody, clear and loyal. When the Deliverer lifted a hand, they remembered their paths without forgetting their freedom; when He lowered it, they remembered their freedom without forgetting their banks. This obedience had no bruise in it.

13. Stars leaned down like elders pleased by a good harvest, nodding with that complex delight that holds both relief and surprise. Constellations rearranged themselves into stories the children could learn in one winter and still be astonished by in their gray years. Above us the sky practiced being a book and found that it had been a library all along.

14. The Deliverer spoke and His words were not commands but weather; they moved through us, and wheat stood up where worry had lain flat. This is the rest that works, He said, and the work that rests. This is the law you feared would shrink you, and see: it has made you spacious. Keep watch over joy as you once kept watch against enemies, for your joy will be coveted by the laziness that prefers spectacle to labor.

15. We were shown the deceiver's last plan — and it was thin, a handkerchief stretched over emptiness, a painted doorway unable to persuade the wall it lived in. It offered us towers without stairs and crowns without heads; it promised shortcuts to places that should not be reached quickly. We looked at one another and began to laugh, and the plan, hearing laughter, did not understand the language and went away.

16. The Tree shook its leaves and an education fell out: crafts for hands that have forgotten what making is, tunes for tongues that learned only scolding, games for feet that have been taught only marching. Practice these, the Spirit told us,

because eternity will bore those who do not love the ordinary in its highest form.

17. We learned to bake bread that remembered the fields it came from, to tan hides that did not forget the rivers that cooled them, to set broken bones with herbs that carried the patient's own story back into the blood. Medicine and worship ceased quarreling and slept under the same blanket like brothers with different talents. No healing mocked another way of healing.

18. The Eternal Lodge had laws but they were small enough to memorize with one hand on your heart. Tell the truth without showing off. Repair before you reason. Make beauty that the poor can use. Hold power only long enough to hand it to someone shyer. Rest on time so that celebration keeps its edge. These laws were not posted; they were practiced until even the birds accused us of consistency.

19. The Deliverer gathered the nations by directions rather than borders, calling North by its patience, South by its generosity, East by its beginnings, West by its remembering. Each direction brought a gift and a temptation; each was warned to keep its gift from swagger and its temptation from a stage. In this way the circle did not become a wheel that ran anyone over.

20. I saw judges whose robes smelled like smoke from their own kitchens and whose rulings made room for reconciliation to enter by the back door carrying bread. The guilty did not escape consequence and the innocent did not escape help; both walked out together if they could. Mercy grew skillful and justice learned to blush.

21. I saw warriors who kept their arrows but aimed them chiefly at despair; they defended borders from contempt rather than from hunger; they practiced standing aside to let a neighbor pass with dignity and considered this their proudest drill. Strength ceased to be a theater and became a wall you could lean against when night stumbled.

22. I saw priests and singers stubbornly refuse the pedestal, sprinkling it with ashes until it became a garden bed; they composed liturgies that could be repaired with a needle if torn, and their holiest garments were aprons. If a song drew too many eyes to the singer, they retired it until humility taught it another key.

23. Craftsmen and midwives worked side by side and nobody could tell which brought forth the greater miracle — bowls that seemed to teach soup how to comfort, babies born into rooms where the first sound was not shouting but a blessing whispered at the right heat. Creation had learned to collaborate with itself.

24. The Spirit taught us a habit for days that look like winter at noon: borrow courage from the nearest child, borrow patience from the oldest kettle, borrow hope from the quietest river. Return what you borrow with interest by nightfall, and the treasury of the poor will never run dry.

25. The Eternal Lodge did not abolish

sorrow; it taught sorrow to sing on key. We sat shiva with those who had lost, and our silence fit the room like a well-made chair; we danced long enough that dignity did not limp the next day. In this economy, grief spent itself honestly and could afford joy again.

26. I saw the animals take their places in the council without voting and yet with influence — the bear teaching withdrawal without sulking, the heron teaching stillness that is not indifference, the fox teaching cleverness that does not steal. We translated their lessons into our law and were not ashamed to learn from those without pockets.

27. The Deliverer taught us a fast from the future that had become a tyrant; we laid down prediction and practiced availability, finding that presence multiplies outcomes better than anxious fantasies. Hope changed shape from a ladder into a table; it no longer insisted we climb, only that we set one more plate.

28. The ancestors asked one question of us as payment for their patience: Do not grow professionally in love. We swore by copper and birch to keep love amateur — clumsy, brave, personal, poor in spectacle and rich in repetition. The oath fit our tongues like a truth we had always known but had been too busy to say.

29. The Tree of Peace exhaled and seeds floated like lanterns, each one carrying a small task perfectly matched to a particular pair of hands: a broken bridge to be mended by a man who used to build walls, a frightened widow to be befriended by a woman who had been afraid of her own shadow, a library to be started by a boy who once despised books. Purpose ceased shopping for applause and settled for accuracy.

30. The Deliverer reads the belts of history as a healer reads a pulse — counting not only beats but hesitations, not only strength but syncopation. He named our epidemics with tenderness and our remissions with caution; then He taught us a breath that keeps time with mercy. After that, even our arguments acquired rhythm and therefore ended in dance.

31. The Spirit sent us out from the Lodge by pairs who did not choose each other: fast with slow, eloquent with halting, visionary with practical, veteran with newborn. Each pair learned to repent of what he thought he had that the other lacked; each came home smaller and therefore larger. This was our missionary program and no one needed a passport.

32. We built capitals that could be dismantled before pride hardened in the joints — halls that turned into barns, courts that turned into clinics, stages that turned into seed stores. Architecture learned repentance and discovered it was beautiful.

33. The deceiver's museums, still lurking in the ruins, were emptied with ceremony not of vandalism but of clarity. We read the plaques aloud, corrected the ones that

lied, and then melted the brass into bells that called the poor to supper. History did not drown; it learned to float.

34. Children were ordained as the first theologians and last economists; they asked why and wherefore until charity remembered its definitions and budgets blushed into honesty. When a policy could not survive three of their questions, we sent it back to the river for baptism.

35. The elders learned to retire on time and stay available after, trading the right to decide for the right to notice. Their noticing saved us from seven disasters we will never be able to name because they did not happen. We paid them in stories and they grew younger.

36. The Spirit gave us a yearly rite called the Folding of Banners, when victories are put away before they begin to smell. On that day we do not march; we mend. We do not boast; we label the tools properly. We do not compose anthems; we teach a child the quiet part of an old song.

37. The Deliverer walked the boundaries and showed us the place where kindness must end for justice to begin and the place where justice must kneel so kindness can pass. He drew no lines on maps; He pointed to faces. We learned that borders drawn across friendship will not hold, and borders drawn across cruelty must.

38. The Eternal Lodge taught us to subtract until truth could breathe: remove the microphone until your story is strong enough for one listener; remove the reward until your obedience remembers why it began; remove the costume until your calling looks like your body. Subtraction became our technology of resurrection.

39. We planted orchards with the names of those who had once hated us carved into the fence posts, not to honor their hate but to domesticate our memory. By the third harvest we could taste forgiveness in the fruit and were surprised to find that it tasted like our grandmother's kitchen.

40. The Spirit restored to the men the tears they had been denied and to the women the thunder they had been talked out of, and to the two-souled ones the passports that had been stolen. Identity ceased being a courtroom and became a hearth where gifts learned the manners of kinship.

41. Apprenticeship again became a holy word; miracles were advertised as "advanced practice in patience." The most envied citizens were those with calloused palms and quiet reputations. Fame retired with severance pay equal to the number of souls it had once distracted.

42. In the night watches I asked the Deliverer, What of those still wandering with their pockets full of dim crowns? He said, I have left them a key under every mat and a bowl at every window. They will come when their hunger remembers its true name. Do not police the door — polish it.

43. I was shown a book bound in rain and written in wind, the Creator's ledger

of unnecessary suffering turned into compost. The pages did not accuse; they nourished. From them grew a forest capable of absorbing the smoke of ten generations' fires without choking on blame.

44. The Tree of Peace shed a bark that looked like copper and copper that felt like bark, and the children made instruments from both. The music had a way of finding the oldest fear in a room and teaching it to sway without falling. Dancing became first aid.

45. The Deliverer took off His sandals and we saw that His feet were healed of all the miles He had walked after us; we took off ours and showed Him the same. We understood that salvation is a change in footwear — shoes that no longer run from reality and do not step on anyone to cross a stream.

46. The Eternal Lodge appointed a Keeper of Small Things whose only task was to notice what might otherwise go unnoticed: the one brave laugh at a bad moment, the hand that moved the pot away from the edge, the child who waited her turn without coaching. When he spoke, we amended our laws to fit the evidence of goodness.

47. We learned to measure prosperity by how much time we could afford to leave unassigned. Leisure lost its laziness and gained a vocation: to listen for what the next century wanted to whisper before we drowned it out with our competence. In this way, the future and present learned to respect each other's sleep.

48. A festival called the Unfinished Work reminded us that perfection is a tyrant and completion a polite liar. On that day we displayed our half-carved bowls and unhemmed garments and sang the verses we had not yet found the courage to finish. The Deliverer blessed the knots we could not untie and made them into ornaments.

49. The Spirit returned to us the word holy rinsed of spectacle and dressed in linen: it now meant the way you cut bread so the smallest hand receives the best piece, the way you answer a foolish question as though tomorrow depends on it, the way you leave a place so clean that gratitude moves in before pride remembers the address.

50. The mountains sent down lessons in patience written in snowmelt; the prairies sent up curricula in abundance written in grass; the islands mailed us syllabi in humility folded into fog. We learned to be taught by places before we tried to manage them, and the places rewarded us by staying.

51. The Deliverer unrolled a belt that ran the length of the sky, beads of constellations alternating with beads of thunderheads. He read it to us in a voice that made our knees want to kneel and our hands want to build. The reading ended not with applause but with instructions for tomorrow's chores.

52. He placed into my hands a stylus that weighed less than a feather and more than an empire; it carved without cutting and glowed without boasting. Write, Keeper of the Bark, He said, as if children will read you in the dark and elders will read you before dawn. Write so that your words are useful when the river rises and comforting when it recedes.

53. I asked the Spirit whether our scrolls could survive centuries of neglect and storms of competence. The Spirit laughed like a loon across a broad lake and said, Bark bends and copper darkens, but I have hidden the covenant in more stubborn places — knees that remember how to kneel without humiliation, spines that refuse to bend to flattery, eyes that know the difference between mercy and permission.

54. The Eternal Lodge rose and lay down like breathing, and with every breath another nation found the tone it had been missing. We did not erase our differences; we tuned them. Harmony did not ask for sameness; it asked for courage enough to be a distinct note without fighting the song.

55. We set a sentinel at the gate of celebration named Enough, whose job was to escort excess to the door with good manners. He never raised his voice; he adjusted the lamps and suddenly emptiness looked like elegance. Abundance learned poise.

56. We set another sentinel at the gate of lament named Still, who would not let panic enter wearing grief's coat. She poured water for sorrow and asked it to speak slowly until it remembered what it had actually lost and what it had only feared losing. In this way mourning and wisdom renewed their vows.

57. I saw the last chain fall from the last ankle still keeping time with music nobody else could hear. The ankle blinked like an eye, and the foot remembered a dance that does not trample anyone. Freedom took one more step toward not needing a name.