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## The Tripartite Tributaries of Ush

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The Tripartite Tributaries of Ush

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
English  
British Literature after 1660

by

Alicia Cognevich

B.A. University of New Orleans, 2009  
M.A. University of New Orleans, 2011

December, 2011

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## Abstract

Inspired by Vladimir Nabokov's metafiction novel *Pale Fire* and with Joseph Campbell's research in comparative mythology and religion in mind, I explore the act of mythmaking and the composition of metafictional text in this work of fiction. The myth aspect combines elements of Classical, biblical, medieval, Romantic, and original materials to form a product that should strike readers as both familiar and alien, demonstrating Campbell's notion of the monomyth as well as the ongoing tradition of mythmaking that continues to captivate both readers and writers. The metafictional portion of the text emphasizes a reader's relationship to a work of fiction, a scholar's relationship to his or her scholarly work, and a subtext's relationship to its primary text. Combining the texts encourages the reader to read critically and reevaluate his or her conceptions of genre in order to piece together the greater story of tyranny and rebellion.

Literary fiction; metafiction; narrative voice; genre conventions; myth; comparative mythology

Dear Joséphine,

As I read your *Ush* translation, I shall footnote as I see fit. Based on the incomplete mess of research and incomprehensible notes in the margins you dumped off on me, I can promise you'll need to come behind me to clean up what I misread or just plain get wrong. I hope whatever business took you away so suddenly is resolved happily and you return with renewed vigor to complete this questionable project. I'm just kidding. I'm sure it's fine. The administrators are in an uproar though. You could have at least left *me* a note saying where you went. Anyway, I'm sure you'll be in exhausted and moody when you get back, so I left a surprise for you in the fridge. I hope your sweet tooth is feeling frisky. And if the rest of you is feeling likewise, I'll be about. ;-)

Love,

John

The  
**Tripartite Tributaries of Ush**

New verse translation by

**Joséphine du Lys**

Text edited by Jonathon Summers

## Part 1<sup>1</sup>

### The poet invokes the Muses.

Of the generations of worlds and mankinds have I<sup>2</sup> challenged myself to tell. Smooth the

---

<sup>1</sup> Many of the personified figures, locations, and even the structure of the myth follows a three-part pattern. The value placed on the human mind and nature is illustrated in the use of river imagery even in the title, evoking thoughts of Shelley's *Mont Blanc*, of which Joséphine was a huge fan. "Ush" refers to a fictional river Joséphine concocted during her residence at UFR in order to sidestep a massive continuity error in "Moments of Being in French Revolutionaries," her first scholarly publication. A more fitting title is jotted in her notes: "Don't Eat from the Orgasm Tree." Clearly the lack of professionalism on the part of the good professor demonstrates the lackadaisical approach she took in the translation of the Ush myth. Perhaps when she comes back to clean up my notes, she will rethink her approach to her work in the future. The validity of this alternate title ought to be further explored. The concept of Original Sin is tied to sexual transgression in some Christian philosophy, which seems to support the notion of God's statement that eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil will result in Adam dying meaning "die" in a sexual rather than literal sense. This also solves the problem of whether or not God told a lie. What Joséphine failed to take into consideration is that the French *le petite morte* did not come into being until centuries after the composition of the Bible, negating this as a valid theory. Like so many biblical scholars, Joséphine did not consider that Original Sin might refer only to mankind's breaking of God's only prohibition. To attempt to rationalize and find reason in matters of love and trust is one of the many follies of mankind.

<sup>2</sup> There appears to be a single author for the segments of the myth translated. Rarely does he interrupt the narrative, though not serving much purpose when he does.



impediments of my rough nature and slow tongue, O ladies of the mountain<sup>3</sup>, so that I may impart upon my fellow man the truths that have been revealed to me by those powers<sup>4</sup> of whom I am not worthy to speak. Smile upon my mission and think me not brazen, for I am not descended from those impetuous men<sup>5</sup> but rather the softer clay of golem-makers<sup>6</sup>. I, of those who mold figures in the shape of our liking as the gods before us shaped humanity in the many forms of their liking, don the mantle of the poet to present the first verses set into mass and motion to the last strands of rhyme that will conclude the epic of the journey of our lives<sup>7</sup>.

### **The Ancients are born.**

Before the world was, before the spirits<sup>8</sup> thought to create mirrors of their likeness, before time and necessity birthed the realm of divine forms<sup>9</sup>, there was vast and eternal vacuum. To say 'there was' is to misspeak, for there was, in truth, nothing, but there are no words in this tongue or

---

<sup>3</sup> An invocation of the Muses, who live on Mount Parnassus in the Classical tradition, though rather less eloquently done than Homer, Ovid, and even the small nod by John Milton. This is the first place where it seems Joséphine may have concocted filler where she was missing pieces of the original myth.

<sup>4</sup> The author claims to transcribe the message of his gods.

<sup>5</sup> The Cthonians.

<sup>6</sup> The Men of the West who deny the gods and invent golems.

<sup>7</sup> This is a nod to the first canto of Dante's *Inferno*, a text that should be grossly outdated by the myth. Perhaps Dante took his lines from *Tributaries*.

<sup>8</sup> The name ascribed to the deities under the Old Ones.

<sup>9</sup> The Ancients and the Old Ones.

another to emphasize the lack in being of the first state of this world that was not<sup>10</sup>. In the darkness and void, there came a fleeting notion, as notions are fleeting in nature. 'There was,' was the thought in its entirety<sup>11</sup>.

---

<sup>10</sup> How many negatives can someone pack into one sentence with without losing coherence? The seemingly infinite layers of void depicted in this portion of the myth mirrors the nothingness being conveyed. "Before the beginning, there was nothing." An apt summary handwritten in the margin of Joséphine's translation. The use of the words "vacuum" and later "space-time" bring in a scientific level of understanding anachronistic to the supposed time of *Tributaries'* composition. Whatever Joséphine hoped to achieve by introducing this sort of language is unknown, as it does little more than baffle the reader. Please, alter your language.

<sup>11</sup> From nothingness comes thought, which creates concepts, which then creates gods to create the world. The composer of this myth certainly was not shy about asserting his opinion of which came first: the universe or God. The answer is "neither." If the first entity of all was thought, there is clearly great value placed on man's mental faculties within this culture. No wonder Joséphine chose the translation of this myth as her great work; she has an eidetic memory. Her mind is like a steel cage with a single exception. Speaking of which, I decided to drop in on her just in case she was hiding out at home. I figured not because her car was gone. But the odd thing was when I looked in the window. Her door handles were replaced with Victorian replicas. There were weird lamps, porcelain figurines, and creepy old dolls. Things that have *never* been in her house before. And it looked like someone had stamped *fleurs-de-lis* all over her walls. Maybe they were painted. But there were everywhere. Either Joséphine went France-crazy or she took on a tenant...? Why wouldn't she just tell me that? I'm going eat that chocolate éclair I've been saving.

From those two words was birthed the necessity of place and time. Thus were the first three pre-generative powers<sup>12</sup>: Necessity, given the kindler name of Lady Faireyes in the ages of man, the All-Father, Time<sup>13</sup>, who counted and marked the passing of moments, and Chaos, whose form contained the first swirling elements and thoughts in a constant state of disorder. Always at odds were the orderly All-Father and Chaos, whose differences were never to be reconciled, as Lady Faireyes saw generative power in their opposition<sup>14</sup>.

All immortals were created. The only exceptions are these greatest, eldest three, and there is question still that one brought the others into being. Every other entity in existence has a creator in one sense or another. Many believe themselves to have sprung out of nothingness, and think themselves superior in some ways to others. Few still cling loyally to he who shaped them. These all-important creators are celebrated, denied, cursed, and forgotten<sup>15</sup>. Where does it state

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<sup>12</sup> The name ascribed to the Ancients, Old Ones, spirits, and any other nonhuman sentient being.

<sup>13</sup> Ananke and Ouranos were the two first protogenoi within Chaos, according to Hesiod's *Theogony*.

<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note the conflict between male and gender-neutral divine powers rather than male and female. The female figure acts with the well-intentioned agenda of creating a universe. Was this perhaps an early form of feminist subversion within an ancient religion, or is this the fiction of a well-known scholar of profeminism? Generative opposition: Joséphine believed that confrontation created solutions to problems rather than exacerbate them. Somehow, she was not universally hated at UFR.

<sup>15</sup> Free will gives humanity the choice to acknowledge or deny the existence of a higher power.

in the laws of man that we are to possess flawless memories<sup>16</sup>? We forget, the world changes, and sometimes, when the vice grips us, sometimes we lie<sup>17</sup>. But my words are breathed into me by forces greater than any mortal man. Let he who has never uttered a falsehood be the first to burn my written word<sup>18</sup>.

From Necessity, Time, and Place came the existence of the first being in the yet unformed universe: the Ancient<sup>19</sup> known by many names but beloved by our people as the Lord Ush.

When the Lord looked upon the Lady Faireyes, he glimpsed all the feats he would

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<sup>16</sup> This rather long digression appears to be an attempt on the part of the poet to assert his innocence in some unspoken matter of heresy. From earlier passages, one can already come the conclusion that the culture the poet is a part of values memory, undermining this defense. Joséphine no doubt had a smile on her smug face as she translated this passage. She did not get as far as she did in her field from having fresh, new ideas but rather remembering ALL of the old ones.

<sup>17</sup> The question one is led to at this point concerns the reliability of the poet. If he admits to lying “when the vice grips” him, how is the reader to perceive the rest of the myth? Furthermore, could this be a message embedded by Joséphine to admit her fabrication of certain passages? With the exception of this paragraph, the narrative is fluid. The insertion of this litany of excuses for failing to “remember” the truth so close to the beginning of an alleged religious text is a recipe for disaster, one that apparently took place, given that this is the only known copy of the *Tributaries* myth in existence.

<sup>18</sup> *John* 8:7.

<sup>19</sup> The oldest race of the powers.

perform, all he would not, and all the doubts of 'would' and 'would not' that would reshape his plan. These he saw and shuddered. Beneath his molding hands<sup>20</sup>, Lady Faireyes took on a new shape that was more pleasing to the Lord. Her face became three<sup>21</sup>, each containing in its eyes the feats in her knowledge, and each hiding its eyes from the Lord. Thus was Ush pleased with her shape, and he banished the vision he beheld from his mind<sup>22</sup>.

### **Ush creates the Old Ones.**

Ush saw fit that he not exist within the bounds of the All-Father and Chaos, but rather outside of them<sup>23</sup> so that he could order the swirling elements in his own time. Chaos was displeased at this division and balancing of its contents, as was the All-Father angered at Ush's rejection of his presence<sup>24</sup>. Only Lady Faireyes withheld her objection to the Lord's choice of his dominion, for she understood the necessity for a separate place for divinities as she understood

---

<sup>20</sup> Ush is a craftsman god. He diverges from the smithing god because he works figuratively with clay rather than metals. The Shadows have that covered.

<sup>21</sup> Trinities are not separate beings but depicted as one. Who could be interpreted as an equivalent of the Fates or the archetype of the divine Seer are also the force of necessity, indicating a requirement for all that takes place. The earlier claim of free will is undercut by this.

<sup>22</sup> Ush rejects omniscience. Apparently, the truth hurts too much for an overlord.

<sup>23</sup> Ush moves into hyperspace, the void outside of space-time, where he can manipulate space-time without being influenced by it. Will he grow old and die in time?

<sup>24</sup> Ush rejects Time's gift of his presence – his present – not his past. Is that too far of a stretch? I'm way past the point of realizing this myth is fakefakeFAKE. It's a fake. But why did she write it? Is she trying to convey some secret? Maybe where she went and why? Or who's in her house?

the danger<sup>25</sup> of Ush living upon the world he was soon to create.

As the Lord prepared a spring in the universe before him, the divine plane shifted into winter<sup>26</sup>, for life emerges from death. Unseen beings<sup>27</sup> outside the sight of Lord Ush fell dormant as the flower hides in the stem and the beast slumbers in the forest. Between the gulfs of the All-Father and Chaos<sup>28</sup>, the world prepared to be born.

From the elements plucked from Chaos, fire, air, water, and earth<sup>29</sup> found favor in the Lord's eyes. The first creation was of lyrics, for Lord Ush sang the world into being<sup>30</sup>. Each word commanded an element, and it existed as living poetry. 'Let Terra<sup>31</sup> go here, for she will bear the burden and fruit of my ministrations. There Sky<sup>32</sup>, and there Hydros<sup>33</sup>.' Together he molded them

---

<sup>25</sup> Why would Ush living inside of his created world be dangerous? Maybe if he always lived in his world, he would leave well enough alone.

<sup>26</sup> Cosmic seasons cause cosmic beings to hibernate.

<sup>27</sup> These unseen creatures that exist but are not created by any of the Ancients are never elaborated upon. Giant space bears hibernate. Got it.

<sup>28</sup> In addition to seasons, the cosmos has a geography with time and space on either side of the void Ush populates.

<sup>29</sup> The Classical elements.

<sup>30</sup> One of the primary creation myth archetypes is creation via spoken word.

<sup>31</sup> Earth.

<sup>32</sup> Air.

<sup>33</sup> Water.

to form a sphere<sup>34</sup> of land surrounded by water and covered with air. And the Lord saw that it was good<sup>35</sup>. He crowned his second creation<sup>36</sup> with fire, the greatest of the primordial substances.

The three Old Ones of the world clung together, bound by mutual love and age. Outside of their realm, just as Ush was outside of the Ancients' domain, Fire danced and tumbled and snarled.

### **Ush creates Adalhei of the Shadows.**

Though Ush was pleased by the sphere he had created, he considered what could be done to make it more pleasing<sup>37</sup> to him. He wished to populate his world with beings of various sizes and textures and movements. With no one to speak to, for he did not see the other Ancients as more personable than a man sees the mountain, nor did he condescend to address the Old Ones, quite young at this time, the Lord sought to form a helper<sup>38</sup> for himself. As he did not wish this companion to be a lesser entity as the Old Ones, he rent a portion of himself free<sup>39</sup>. Thus was

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<sup>34</sup> In this ancient cosmos, the world is a sphere, not a disk. The author was clearly a forward-thinking man to make such an assertion.

<sup>35</sup> *Genesis* 1:4. For a myth that is supposed to predate so many other religions, *Tributaries* certainly steps on the toes of a number of established texts.

<sup>36</sup> The planet, or “world.”

<sup>37</sup> Personal pleasure is the primary motivating force for Ush.

<sup>38</sup> While Ush means to create a being inferior—regardless of his claim otherwise—to him, he uses his own body to form the being. This creates a problem of hierarchy. Ush indicates later that substance determines hierarchy, while he implies here that age makes him superior to Adalhei.

<sup>39</sup> Ush and Adalhei follow the tradition of the fractured figure, as seen in Samael and Lilith, Osiris and Horus, and Adam and Eve. This is also similar to Blake's Urizen, who was rent from

Adalhei created.

'Speak to me, Adalhei, noble being of the immortal world,' said the Lord Ush.

The words of Ush stirred Adalhei to life, as they ordered the elements, for the words of the Ancients create living poetry as no other. Adalhei beheld herself, her Lord, and his world within space-time and found all wanting<sup>40</sup>. 'Why, O Lord,' said she, 'do you and I bear the same countenance and sexless form<sup>41</sup> though we are not the same? Why do you deny me a face and body of my own?'

Ush ached at Adalhei's words, for he had created her to be his companion and admirer, not his accuser. 'Where were you when I collected the elements from swirling Chaos<sup>42</sup>? What word did you sing during the birth of Terra? No smile have you for my fire or my love. Nay, do

---

Los, both of whom are trapped within a now finite world which was once infinite before the division of the immortal self.

<sup>40</sup> The world is without a population at this point, rendering it "wanting." The issue of Ush's lack may be related to his physical deterioration in order to create his partner. He would be literally incomplete. Alternately, Adalhei could represent the alternative to Lady Faireyes as the primordial scold.

<sup>41</sup> These twin hermaphroditic immortals recall Jewish apocryphal legend of Samael and Lilith, who were demonic/angelic twins who opposed Adam and Eve.

<sup>42</sup> Reminiscent of *Job*. Being unable to question a superior for any reason can create feelings of helplessness. Joséphine talks about her uncle's unwavering rules as inspiration for her own harsh attitudes about certain things like questioning. If I ever ask her for proof or reasons for the claims she makes, she gets really angry because she "knows zeengs" that I apparently "cahnt comprehend, Jean, ahnd don't desserf to know."



not answer now. I rent you from my side, but you rent you from my heart.'

Gathering all the strings of his heart save one, the Lord wove a mighty thread for Adalhei. 'For the pain you have caused me,' he cried, 'you must sew a shadow with this string upon everything in creation that exists from now until I consume the world with fire<sup>43</sup>. You will weave and command the web of the world, but never shall you speak again to me<sup>44</sup>.'

Thus was Adalhei banished weeping from Ush's court to spend eternity, unseen and unloved, affixing her web of shadow to all that exists in creation.

### **The Lady of Ash and Darkness obtains weapons.**

From this terrible event came another being, quite by accident, formed in a crystallized tear from Ush's divine eye that fell into the fire over his world. The Lord's tear, infused with snarling fire, burned through Sky and Terra and Hydros to a black hollow<sup>45</sup> beneath them all. There, born of divine anguish and primordial passion, emerged the Lady of Ash and Darkness.

As the world above was developed by Ush, so, too, was Erebus, the shadow beneath Terra by Adalhai. The Lady of Ash and Darkness witnessed the forging of the first weapons by the Shadows<sup>46</sup>: one created Ignorance, first mistaken to be a virtue<sup>47</sup> by mortal and immortal

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<sup>43</sup> Ush plans to destroy a world he has hardly created. Why?

<sup>44</sup> Ush stops Adalhei's ability to speak to or against him.

<sup>45</sup> Erebus.

<sup>46</sup> Servants of Adalhei.

<sup>47</sup> It is appropriate that no being knows what ignorance is, giving way to the flawed notion that "ignorance" is synonymous with "innocence." I went to break into Joséphine's house earlier tonight. Just takes a credit card and a bit of finesse. Before I even got up on the house, some old man with an accent got up in my face. He asked if I knew the "pretty lady" that lived there, if

alike; another created Fear, and the universe itself shuddered when it was revealed; a third created Hate, which ignited the first Celestial War<sup>48</sup>.

Fascinated by these weapons, the Lady of Ash and Darkness adorned herself with their symbol, an indestructible metal called adamant<sup>49</sup>. From Adalhai, she begged a means to reproduce the strife she suffered in Ush's world. Rather than gifting the Lady of Ash and Darkness with a child, Adalhai gave her a seed strung with the unseen heartstring of the Lord and sent her out of Erebus.

On Terra, the Lady of Ash and Darkness planted the seed in an open field and surrounded

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she's coming back soon, because he wanted to talk to her. When I told him she was my fiancé, he started acting twitchy like he was going to come out of his skin. Asked if she kept any of her things at my house. That was enough creepifying old man for me. As I turned to go, he grabbed me. Gave me a "warning" that sounded more like a threat: "Be careful, young man, lest the shadows not thrown by lesser men fall upon you." He made me think of Roland for some reason. Just... creepy and confusing.

<sup>48</sup> The war between one third of the gods and those loyal to Ush. The myth's narrative overlaps here, alluding to events that have not yet been described, as many timelines progress simultaneously from this point on. Joséphine drew up charts of these timelines, mapping each god's progression from its birth to its death or the end of the myth, which have been lost, and I am not allowed in her office while she is away for some reason. Wouldn't it make sense to give your RA a key to your office so when this sort of thing happens, he isn't stuck with your incomplete research?

<sup>49</sup> The hardest metal in the universe.

the land with an adamant wall<sup>50</sup> to keep whatever grew<sup>51</sup> hidden away from mortals. Her legacy secured, the Lady of Ash and Darkness retreated to Erebus.

### **Ush populates Terra.**

Determined to not make the same mistake twice, the Lord Ush molded his next creations from a more modest substance than himself. From the bodies of the Old Ones, he brought into being mountains, clouds, seas, trees, grasses, animals, and finally humans. Sexless and identical, the humans were made in the Lord's shape, like the questioning Adalhei, but Ush bound their minds to tiresome tongues and hands that were slow to strengthen and quick to dissipate<sup>52</sup>.

The Lord Ush sent two lions through Terra, two eagles through Sky<sup>53</sup>, and two great sea turtles through Hydros to measure the world. At the center of creation, the six kingly beasts met and called to the Lord. Their song reached from Terra into heavenly Sky, forming the mountain

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<sup>50</sup> Her walled garden was named "Paradise," which is "a walled garden."

<sup>51</sup> The Hidden Tree, which has properties of the Tree of Knowledge in *Genesis*.

<sup>52</sup> Ush cripples his first human creations in a verbal and literary sense, rendering them unable to speak against him as Adalhei did. Punishing many for the "crime" of an individual is a poor leadership move. Those are just happening left and right around here. No one tells me a thing, and then the police come around asking questions and mixing up my notes. If she hadn't made me promise never to talk to or about Roland, I'd throw him under the bus so fast. He must have called her to France. He's done it before. I wonder who called the cops though. This might be bigger than I thought.

<sup>53</sup> Zeus sent two eagles to circle the world and meet in the middle, where the omphalos stone under Delphi was placed.

called Lykos<sup>54</sup>, where the Lord built his palace, for this was the center of the world. In his palace of clouds and stars and adamant protrusions, Lord Ush recorded the findings of his creatures and placed stones on a great map to divide territories<sup>55</sup>.

To rule over the territories he created on Terra, Lord Ush forged titanic beings of fire and air that twisted like serpents<sup>56</sup>. Many of these spirits, finding beauty in the shape of the Lord's human creations, took the forms of great men. There was then formed the final spirit, born of the love the spirits, humans, and Lord Ush held for one another. His name was Prometheus<sup>57</sup>, and he blessed the bond between the Powers and mortals.

### **Ush dreams.**

Seeing all was well in the world of Chaos and the All-Father, the Lord removed himself from that place<sup>58</sup> to rest. There, he dreamed of a shape, one that both centered on and

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<sup>54</sup> Wolf. This follows a missing portion of the myth that might have explained the significance of the wolf in this culture. I bet Dr. du Lys has something on this in her office or her study at home that could help me...

<sup>55</sup> By making maps, Ush locks the world in a concrete, finite form. He further detracts from his world by dividing ownership of the land.

<sup>56</sup> In Jewish apocrypha, the seraphim appear as six-winged serpents made of flame.

<sup>57</sup> In no way does this name fit in this myth. He is not a god of "forethought," nor does he have anything to do with the meaning of his name in *Tributaries*. He is a Prometheus archetype, no doubt, but it seems the "myth's" author forgot to take out a placeholder.

<sup>58</sup> When Ush leaves space-time, he appears to have no awareness of the goings-on within space-time, except for all the times the happy voices of the humans rouse him from his hyperspace sleep. When she was translating this part, Joséphine told me her uncle was the same way.

encompassed him. In that position, the Lord would be both closest and farthest from every being in the world<sup>59</sup>. These thoughts were given shape as the Lord Ush dreamed on and sealed in place with Adalhei's shadows.

### **Prometheus creates clay men.**

Prometheus, the last spirit the Lord made, had so much affection for the humans that he offered to teach them to create tiny figures from clay and water<sup>60</sup>, for the gift Prometheus had that other spirits did not was the knowledge and ability to create in the same way as the Lord. Upon Terra, Prometheus sat with the humans and taught them to carve faces and mold fingers and hold the tiny figures upright with sticks and hatching. When the little men were to the humans' liking, Prometheus breathed into their<sup>61</sup> throats that they, too, might sing the words of creation. Clay turned to flesh, twigs to bones, and the tiny men came to life.

Seeing the humans pleased with their clay men brought Prometheus much joy, and he blessed them. Much rejoicing of the spirits followed Prometheus's gift to the humans, and they blessed them as well.

### **The first Celestial War is waged.**

The joyous cries of his people woke Lord Ush from his reverie. Seeing that the favor of

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<sup>59</sup> Dante's conception of God places him at the center of the universe as well as at the farthest reaches of it, as depicted in the concentric circles within *Paradiso*.

<sup>60</sup> Satan does this for the humans in "The Mysterious Stranger" by Mark Twain. Things do not end well.

<sup>61</sup> The humans.

his fickle<sup>62</sup> creations had shifted so easily toward another, the Lord forbade Prometheus to teach the humans any more lessons of the Powers. Further, the Lord forbade Prometheus to create temporal versions of the weapons, tools, and devices of the Powers<sup>63</sup>.

No being in or outside the world had received a commandment before this moment<sup>64</sup>. Born of a mutual bond, Prometheus had no concept of conditions applied to love, and so he believed the Lord's love for him had died. Affection turned to revulsion, and the hateful Prometheus led a rebellion against the Lord Ush.

Prometheus created devices far superior to those the celestial host already had, and armed a third of them<sup>65</sup> with these apparatuses. Thus, the first Celestial War was begun.

Three spirits under the Lord's command called each other 'Brother,' and vowed to reign victorious that they might share territories<sup>66</sup> won from the other spirits. Together they traveled beneath Terra to Erebus, where they begged weapons of the Shadows.

Adalhei bestowed upon these spirits names, the first names not gifted by the Lord Ush, for his poetry was that which named and animated all in the universe he created within the

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<sup>62</sup> According to whom? Which god(s) dictated this myth to the poet? Given how *Tributaries* ends, it is unlikely the god is Ush.

<sup>63</sup> In Jewish apocrypha the lessons (such as literacy, meteorology, and weaponry) of the fallen angels, who created the nephilim by marrying human women, angered God. This contributed to His decision to send Noah's Flood. In Greek myth Prometheus angered Zeus by bringing fire stolen from heaven to humanity. It seems these head gods do not want humanity to be educated.

<sup>64</sup> Except Adalhei, who is forbidden to speak to Ush.

<sup>65</sup> Those who supported Prometheus.

<sup>66</sup> The territories Ush gives to the spirits become objects of greed.

bounds of Chaos and the All-Father.

The first was given the title of Lord Thunderer<sup>67</sup>, and the Shadows removed stone and form from their forge, leaving behind the terrible white light<sup>68</sup> that would soon pierce the Sky. The Lord Thunderer took up his weapon, and waited.

The second was called Atlanta<sup>69</sup>, he of hoofstock<sup>70</sup> and sea foam. The Shadows breathed and baited and roared as beasts, circling the second spirit, until he learned the litany of curses<sup>71</sup> they offered. Atlanta took up his weapon, and waited.

The third was granted a name of fear, which was his first weapon, for no mortal would dare to utter it while he lived. My people called him the Kind One<sup>72</sup> as a sign of fear and respect. The Shadows smelted lime and iron and blinding light and cast a helm of mutable form

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<sup>67</sup> A parallel to Thor or Zeus.

<sup>68</sup> The lightning bolt. The first brother is given the gift of raw violent power. The similarities to other myths are really piling up. I know Campbell's theory of the monomyth, but this is ridiculous. I wonder how much a professor gets paid for uncovering "new" religious texts.

<sup>69</sup> Owner of Atlantis, the place the Atlantic Ocean will soon occupy.

<sup>70</sup> Any animal with hooves.

<sup>71</sup> The second brother is given the ability to tap into an aspect of Lady Faireyes (aka the Fates), which allows him to know and use as a weapon everything involving the existence of a foe.

<sup>72</sup> The Kind Ones is a name often ascribed to the Fates, though euphemistic names are not uncommon to death gods, and this spirit receives the Helm of Invisibility, one of the items ascribed to Hades in Greek myth. The third brother seems to get the best weapons of the three brothers, as is common in folklore. It is also obvious that he will rule over the Underworld eventually.

that shared its properties with the wearer. The Spirit of the Helm took up his weapon.

The three brothers returned to Terra on the first night of the battle. As the Powers all slept, the Kind One donned his helm and became unseen to the incorporeal and terrestrial eye. He stole into Prometheus's camp and smashed the rebels' arsenal<sup>73</sup>. By dawn, the revolting Host was without arms, and the Kind One stood ready on the battlefield.

Adalhei took her Shadows to Terra to witness the first Celestial War, for nothing so terrible had ever taken place in the young universe. While the Shadows danced between night and day, Adalhei took the form of the divine chimera<sup>74</sup>, with the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the face of a tyrant's daughter<sup>75</sup>. Together these dark figures shuddered and watched the bloody battle that ranged all over creation.

Sky opened up and wept over Terra, who shook with rage and grief, to wash away the blood that fell upon her. Weapons clashed, apparatuses exploded, and vehicles of war splintered one another. Worst of all, spirits slew spirits, decimating much of the Celestial Host. Though they ran and hid, humans and animals of Terra were all but wiped out by the spirits' carnage.

The Lord Ush did nothing. He waited for the battle to end.

The Lord Thunderer and Atlanta found Prometheus in the midst of the battle. Before

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<sup>73</sup> See above.

<sup>74</sup> The Sphinx.

<sup>75</sup> Appropriate, given the fact that her creator is Ush, the tyrant of tyrants. I know Roland doesn't like noise in his house, but turning off her cell phone for this long is just ridiculous. How is she supposed to function without contact with the outside world? She does have a job, a fiancé, and deadline. These things need to be attended to. Tenure doesn't give her free leave to piss off for three weeks without notice. A phone call. How difficult is that?



Prometheus could strike either spirit down, Atlanta issued his litany of curses, invoking the first face of Lady Faireyes, who sees all crimes one has and will commit in his life. Faced with the toll his war took on Terra and the beloved humans, Prometheus was undone<sup>76</sup>.

As Prometheus wept over the bodies of Ush's humans, the Lord Thunderer took up his bolt of lightning and rent his body. The blood, liver, and member that once made Prometheus whole fell into Hydros's oceans<sup>77</sup>. Wounded thus, Prometheus was powerless to defend himself when the Lord Ush arrived to end the battle.

### **Prometheus is punished.**<sup>78</sup>

Just as Prometheus's body was rent, so too was his soul. He who was once love and the teacher of humanity morphed into a new form under the Lord Ush's molding hands<sup>79</sup>.

Three faces for three bodies replaced the titanic heavenly being. The first was the most

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<sup>76</sup> Now that the mental destruction Lady Faireyes's power can cause is known, it becomes clearer why Ush removes the vision he receives from his mind.

<sup>77</sup> This is reminiscent of Ouranos being castrated by his son Cronus in the *Titanomachy*.

Aphrodite springs to life from the sea foam where Ouranos's member falls. Given that Love is identified as a fallen star which comes from the ocean, this is likely a related myth.

<sup>78</sup> I guess running away to uncle is one way to rid yourself of responsibilities. Quit your job. Ruin your relationship. Let all your bills lapse. Throw it all away. You're so smart. You'll find a new job easy. Fuck everything, right? Don't worry. I'll be the bigger person and finish this even if *you* don't give a shit about it.

<sup>79</sup> This is the second trinity from one being Ush imposes on another Power, though these three do not seem to be aware of each other. Like a professor and her RA.

bold, beautiful warrior of the Celestial Host, who the Lord cast down with his army to Erebus<sup>80</sup> deep below Terra, where Shadows roil and rave. The second was nailed hand and foot, ever-bleeding, to the face Mount Lykos that reached into Heaven. He was called ha-satan<sup>81</sup> and enslaved to the will of the Celestial Court, which used him as a sign of mortality and as an accuser. The last was but a minim<sup>82</sup> beside the others. It appeared as a tiny speck of light in the eastern Sky as night fell and dawn broke then fell from its place in the universe when the Lord Thunderer attacked Prometheus. The Morning Star, that was the spirit's love, was lost in the blood and foam that fell into Hydros.

Thus fallen, bound, and lost, Prometheus was no more, and the first Celestial War came to a close<sup>83</sup>.

### **Ush abandons the destroyed world.**

The Lord Ush descended upon the destruction that was Terra's surface. 'My children,' cried Terra, but Ush said nothing<sup>84</sup>. Trees were splintered and burned. Beasts licked their wounds

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<sup>80</sup> It should be noted here that this spirit does not actually land. That is a long way to fall.

<sup>81</sup> The Accuser, an angel in God's court, in the Torah. He doubles here as the crucified and tormented Prometheus figure.

<sup>82</sup> The smallest animal in the world.

<sup>83</sup> The enemy of the celestial court has to be defeated in battle, robbed of his identity, eternally tortured, and physically dismembered in order to end the war. Ush's wrath is almost unparalleled. Dr. du Lys had similar inclinations against her critics.

<sup>84</sup> "Fickle" the humans are called. How quickly Ush decides the dead humans and spirits he "loves" so much are not worth lamenting! I guess when you are so great, there is no one to hold you accountable for your crimes.

and consumed the dying. Spirits mended one another's wounds with fire. There was nothing left of humans save their corpses, over which their tiny clay men wept. The Lord Ush cared nothing for the tiny clay figures Prometheus had helped the humans to bring to life. Without warmth or food, they perished as well.

Grief-stricken<sup>85</sup>, Ush returned to his realm outside of the world, not to return for a time. The Powers watched him leave<sup>86</sup> and pondered who would lead and love them in his absence.

### **The Sphinx roams.**

After the Lord Ush no longer moved within the world, a creature that had remained hidden in the shadows of Mount Lykos<sup>87</sup> stirred. Just as the inhabitants of Terra were decimated by the first Celestial War, so too were some of the Powers. No longer able to exist in all places as the Lord, Adalhei of the Shadows became trapped in her terrestrial body. With Lord Ush unable to cripple or silence her, the Sphinx opened her eyes and roamed Terra, mending shadows, questioning<sup>88</sup> those that crossed her path, and striking down those whose minds were incapable of seeking truth.

The spirits saw the Sphinx move and did nothing, for they feared the Ancient who was

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<sup>85</sup> I think a delusional author intruded here. There is no evidence of Ush's heartbreak or regret over anything so far, and I don't foresee that changing.

<sup>86</sup> Ush's abortive enterprise.

<sup>87</sup> The companion god, the god of the shadows, is found in the shadow of the overlord's palace. Appropriate.

<sup>88</sup> With challenges and riddles. Adalhei takes revenge on Ush's people for the god's slight.

the same as the Lord<sup>89</sup> and who was outside of his sight.

**Zagreus is born with new men. Celebrate bodily existence.**

The spirits remaining after the first Celestial War nourished what was left on Terra. They sowed crops and bred animals until the land was lush once more. Where Terra's rich soil had been scorched, the spirits planted the grapevine and olive tree<sup>90</sup>.

It was there in the first olive grove that two spirits heard the cries of Prometheus<sup>91</sup> and remembered the love that was shared before the war. The Lord Thunderer, who dwelled in the Lord's<sup>92</sup> Sky palace, and the Iron Queen<sup>93</sup>, whose domain had flourished from recent bloodshed, found comfort in one another's fiery arms.

'Nay, we will anger the Lord Ush if we love in his world,' the Iron Queen said.

'You misinterpret the will of the Lord,' the Thunderer told her. 'Do not impose false words on Lord Ush. We are different than Prometheus was. We do not build apparatuses or make clay men against the will of the Great One. The Lord remembers and blesses unions of love. Have no fear.'

The Lord Thunderer took the Iron Queen under his mantle, and they twisted and writhed

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<sup>89</sup> This is the first time Adalhei's power level is stated. For one who "is the same" as Ush, she does not take much of an active role in the universe for a long time.

<sup>90</sup> Symbols of Bacchus or other hedonistic, earthy god. This sort of god speaks to my soul, through port mostly. There is no sorrow wine can't wash away.

<sup>91</sup> His voice carries at the most optimum of times.

<sup>92</sup> Ush.

<sup>93</sup> The Iron Queen is an ancient deity of the dead, later of the Classical Underworld.

as fiery serpents<sup>94</sup>. They begat Zagreus, a spirit of the Powers born upon Terra.

Seeing the newly created infant Zagreus, many spirits trembled with fear and anger. No Power had loved with such intensity since before the Celestial War. No Power had dared create a new being since before the Celestial War. No Power had come together with another Power in the name of love or otherwise.

The spirits, frightened of this new spirit-child, took possession<sup>95</sup> of golden peacocks and tore Zagreus to pieces. When the Lord Thunderer heard his child's cries, he smote the boy's attackers but too late, for the young Zagreus was already slain. From the smoking ruins of the fell spirits and the divine flesh of the child came humanity<sup>96</sup>.

In her despair, the Iron Queen cast away her crown and adorned herself with lotuses and nightshade<sup>97</sup>. Calling herself simply Cora<sup>98</sup>, she wandered Terra, spurning potential lovers and spreading the symbols of her grief: flowers.

In the shadow of an olive tree, a farmer found Zagreus's still-being heart. Taking the small item for a peacock's egg, the farmer took it home and nursed it until from its smoldering

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<sup>94</sup> Apparently, spirits do not procreate in the same way mortals do, so we, the mortal readers, are not privy to this act.

<sup>95</sup> As demons possess mortals.

<sup>96</sup> This story echoes one of the death-rebirth cycles of Dionysus, which ends in the creation of man complete with original sin because of the titans' wickedness and the god's divinity.

<sup>97</sup> Symbols of death and rebirth. I hope that rebirth follows the death quickly. I'm down one RA position. It turns out the police having a warrant to search one's office doesn't bode well at UFR. But no officers have come to see *me*. Are the cops messing with me? Why?

<sup>98</sup> Another name for the Iron Queen, also known as Persephone, the maiden of spring.

core<sup>99</sup> emerged a new infant Zagreus<sup>100</sup>. He who birthed men was also born from men, and so when the boy grew to be a man, he walked alongside his children rather than ruling over them. Together, they drank wine and rejoiced in life<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> Artistic renderings of the mythical phoenix often take the shape of a flaming peacock. Once the phoenix lives out its life, it dies. The bird is then reborn, emerging from its ashes.

<sup>100</sup> Zagerus follows the dying god archetype. He is a benefactor of man and a catalyst in seasonal change; his death caused the Iron Queen to spread flowers all over the world, just as spring follows winter.

<sup>101</sup> Terrestrial life. I don't see what's so great about it.

## Part 2

### The world progresses.<sup>102</sup>

At this time in the world, Terra was an entity fully whole<sup>103</sup>. As she and her brothers Sky and Hydros moved in their enduring embrace, the world they formed together took a round shape, a shape that was echoed by the Lord Ush in his grand design for the world beyond Terra. The Old Ones were fastened to one another just as the universe was fastened to Ush, by the thread of shadows woven by Adalhei, the Lord Ush's created equal whose questioning misstep caused her to be cast aside. The second to displease the Lord Ush was Prometheus, who loved the Lord's humans too well, and who knew the absence of love to be only hate. His split spirit ha-satan was bound to Mount Lykos in Heaven, where the Lord Thunderer sought his advice and

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<sup>102</sup> Losing my job wasn't enough. No... Joséphine's house was burned down over the weekend.

Her things that I don't keep in my car are gone. No electronics were left on; it was definitely arson. Police report says the fire started under the deck out back, and none of the doors were forced. They've been indirectly harassing me so much that I'm surprised they didn't come to question me as a suspect. Joséphine's been gone for two months. Where *is* she? Why would someone torch the place and not rob it? It was such a nice house. They managed to save Bosco. He was OK, just a little singed. He's staying with me now. Sounds like a little pig when he sleeps. I'm not sure what breed he is, but he's a pretty dog. I'm glad of the company. For lack of anything better to do with my time, I'm finishing this stupid project.

<sup>103</sup> Called Pangaea. *Tributaries* accounts for the creation of some actual geographical landmarks.

Though the creations are supernatural in nature, the fact that an ancient culture was aware of them all is impressive. A little too impressive. Joséphine traveled all over the world to gain the knowledge she had. I wonder what airline the *Tributaries* poet used. I bet money it was Delta.

ensured he could never escape the torment of his never-mending wounds. His beauty and defiance were thrown down toward Erebus with his rebels. His final seed remained hidden from the world for a long time.

Over time, Terra regained the ease of fertility it had when Lord Ush first created it. Trees were bountiful, and the beasts of the field were tame. Upon the earth also dwelled mankind, a race of single-sexed men after the image of Zagreus who was slain as a spirit and reborn as a man. Without pangs of hunger or ravages of old age, mankind lived well on Terra.

### **Zagreus declares a holiday.**

In celebration of the life he and his people lived on Terra, Zagreus declared a holiday<sup>104</sup> that lasted from the eve of the New Year to the second change in the sun's journey across the Sky. Zagreus crushed the first grapes of the new harvest underfoot, mixed myrrh and spices, and served heady wine<sup>105</sup> to his people. The men drank and sang and chased deer in the forests. When night fell, they danced in frenzy around fires, shouting the glories of the terrestrial life into the dream-summoning darkness.

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<sup>104</sup> Reminiscent of Bacchanalia.

<sup>105</sup> In ancient times, straight wine could cause insanity and suicide. What a relief they fixed that in modern times. Something I've been wondering: who'd been feeding Bosco while Joséphine was away? They didn't find any bodies in the house. Who was in her house and why was he there? Did he—she was gorgeous, it had to be a *he*—torch the place to hide something? The affair maybe?



Shadows shuddered and danced with the men, for none feared the unseen in the night in this early age of men. Protected by ignorance, mankind befriended the Shadows, who told them stories of deep forges and dangerous things<sup>106</sup>.

The men were titillated by the stories of dark ideas and fears almost as much as those Zagreus told of exciting escapades and pleasure. They began to tell stories of their own. Zagreus laughed and applauded his people's talents. He brought a golden lyre down from Mount Lykos to aid in their compositions. 'A golden age<sup>107</sup>,' the men called this time.

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<sup>106</sup> Composing lyrics, an act of creation when used by Ush, becomes a bonding point. Joséphine has always had music to fill the air. Erik Satie's *Vexations* and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* were her favorites. I think that noise is god-awful, but it makes sense that she would play something that drowned out all other sounds. She told me that she made friends with the shadows in her room when she was a little girl. She'd see all sorts of animals and shapes in the plays of shadow on moonlight or nightlight. Said the *shadows* were afraid of the dark. They made the house creak when they shuddered, and they sounded like a crying woman when they were very frightened. She used to think the shadows were really making these noises because she could tell they kept her aunt up all night too. It should be noted that Joséphine's aunt died of unknown causes when Joséphine was very young. To "comfort the shadows," Joséphine told them stories all night. That was how she stopped being afraid of the dark. Now, if no one is talking, she has to play music or the shadows will "get upset," I guess.

<sup>107</sup> Given the description of the land and living conditions, this appears to be an apt name, Classically speaking.

## **Cthon becomes a god.**

Atlanta of the hoofstock and sea foam discovered a passage beneath Terra's surface that connected to Hydros where the sweet water met but did not mingle with the brackish. There, Atlanta confessed his affection for the two Old Ones. Their love begat the new Power called Cthon.

To protect Cthon from others who would harm him as they harmed Zagreus, Atlanta hid Cthon away between the sweet and brackish water<sup>108</sup> until he was full grown. Halos of water and foam clung to his divine brow when he emerged from Hydros to walk upon Terra for the first time.

While Zagreus slept<sup>109</sup>, Cthon spoke to mankind.

'Who are you who wears halos, O spirit?' the men asked.

'I am Cthon, lord of the world under the Sky,' said he. 'I am god of all things in the field and the sea<sup>110</sup> except for you. Who is your god? Who is your creator?'

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<sup>108</sup> Which creates beautiful haloclines. I saw a news article about them, using the *Karan* as source material, then I read about "5 Gaping Plot Holes Directors Knew You Would Miss." Stirring.

<sup>109</sup> Either this is a really long nap, or Zagreus is affected by cosmic seasons described in Part 1.

<sup>110</sup> Cthon is the first being to call himself a god. This is the first of a long line of unsubstantiated claims he makes. Apparently, the cops were snooping around UFR because her uncle *isn't* in France. He's been in town for years, covering up drug smuggling because—guess what—turns out he's a retired cop. The D'arcs have been in the game for three generations. Roland's got all the connections in the force they need. A family business, you know? No, I didn't know, but thanks. That must be why the cops have been messing with me. Or why they've stayed out of my

The men were frightened because they did not possess a god, nor did they understand what gods were. Sprung forth and not created, mankind had no creator.

‘Beings with no anchor in Heaven, the realm of the gods, are doomed<sup>111</sup>,’ Cthon said. ‘I will save you from this doom. Speak Cthon as your god, and I will be your anchor in Heaven.’

The men were terrified to learn of their doom. They swore allegiance to Cthon, their benefactor in Heaven, their savior from doom. They recorded his words with acid in a book of metal pages<sup>112</sup> to forever preserve the origins of the Cthonians. Cthon then demanded tribute from mankind in return for his kindness to them. None could deny his gift, and so they searched for payment to offer their god.

### **Other spirits speak to Cthon.**

The other spirits gathered on Mount Lykos and summoned Cthon before a council. There, he was accused of planning to overthrow the three brother spirits who ruled the universe in the Lord Ush’s absence. The Lord Thunderer, Atlanta, and the Kind One cautioned Cthon against rebelling as Prometheus did.

A Power born of Terra, Hydros, and Atlanta<sup>113</sup>, Cthon possessed traces of all the Old Ones in his being. This made him unlike any other Power in the universe. Outside, he was an echo of Chaos, who swirled angrily in its gulf when it viewed the universe. Full of energy absent

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face. What’s he looking for? Or is he trying to ruin my life? Joséphine said he’s never approved of us. My blood isn’t blue enough. I can’t see Joséphine being mixed up in something like that. Then again, I couldn’t see her running away from her life. But she did.

<sup>111</sup> To what is never stated.

<sup>112</sup> Urizen’s brass book comes to mind, from Blake.

<sup>113</sup> Who is made of fire and air.

from his fellow spirits, earth and water, Cthon thought himself superior, thought himself deserving of worship and tribute. He was wily, though, and did not seek to battle the other spirits.

‘My rule is over mankind alone, who call themselves Cthonians<sup>114</sup>,’ said Cthon. ‘Those who give themselves any other name will be outside my domain.’

The council acquitted Cthon and he was released. Zagreus had awoken for the council and followed Cthon down Mount Lykos.

‘Cousin<sup>115</sup>,’ said Zagreus. ‘Why have you turned my people against me? They use words they never knew before<sup>116</sup> to rebuke me.’

Cthon shook as his mother Terra, calling the Cthonians to his side. ‘Back, Shadow-walker, Demon<sup>117</sup>-strider,’ they rebuked Zagreus. The Cthonians who once walked and danced

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<sup>114</sup> All of mankind calls themselves “Cthonians” at this point, so that makes Cthon lord over all humanity.

<sup>115</sup> Zagreus was son to the Lord Thunderer, brother of Atlanta, who fathered Cthon.

<sup>116</sup> In this instance, education proves to be a curse for humans and their well-intentioned “creator.” Joséphine told me about her one memory lapse. It happened after she returned from her time in the service. She was like Wonder Woman. She went to school all over the world, got PhDs in theology and archaeology, mastered four dead languages—one of which I’ve never even heard of—joined the Coast Guard for kicks, and was beautiful to boot. How does someone like that disappear? She wasn’t shy about what she knew either. She had this elitist attitude toward everything. She was French. Her family had a coat of arms; here’s the ring to prove it. You’d think she dined on tiramisu fried in gold and caviar plated in diamonds her whole life.

by Zagreus's side no longer knew he from whom they had sprung. The laws within their book of metal pages, scribed in acid writing, named Zagreus a hedonist, a sinner, a lover of wicked ways<sup>118</sup>.

The Cthonians poured wine upon Terra in tribute to Cthon for saving them from sin and doom. The holiday that once brought joy and pleasure to mankind because the season that heralded a time of purgation and repentance and denial of pleasures<sup>119</sup>. Solemn praise did the Cthonians utter to their god, for they were proud of their newfound reason and morals.

### **The Cthonians cross the Shadows.**

Inspired to emulate their beloved god, the Cthonians scribed new laws into their book of acid script and metal pages. Maps of Terra were drawn and divided into territories<sup>120</sup>. Kings of

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<sup>117</sup> “Demon” has a negative connotation, but what a demon is exactly is not clarified very well. A demon is anything unloved by Cthon, it seems.

<sup>118</sup> Religion and laws turn humanity from what is good to tyranny. Joséphine didn't believe in God. She believed in the Earth. Roland was highly religious, she said. And a tyrant. Coincidence? I think not.

<sup>119</sup> Carnival precedes Lent, and both of these have ancient roots. I don't remember what they are. Some shit about going into the woods and doing everybody you want and eating up all the meat and luxury foods before a fast. I thought she was having an affair at first, but if Roland is here and harassing me, where is she? Did he do something to her? Is he trying to keep me away from her?

<sup>120</sup> Because no knowledge is being passed from one generation to the next, the Cthonians do not realize they are committing the same blunders as their gods. That was something she used to talk about being the worst thing a parent can do to their kid. Hiding family history—maybe like drug

men were named and given rule over land and mankind alike. Laws were written to control and restrain every man on Terra.

Once all the Cthonians were addressed in the book of metal pages, other beings were then addressed. Creatures with teeth and claws stronger than the Cthonians were called monsters and hunted. Other beasts were enslaved to the will of their human masters, plowing their fields and carrying their loads. The Shadows were renamed Demons, for they were unloved by Cthon. These Demons were forced into Erebus and only allowed to walk on Terra in the dark of night.

The Demons remembered the friendship they once had with mankind. They snarled and roiled like flames at this treachery. Rather than be confined to their first home, the angry Demons possessed men's bodies to walk upon Terra in the light of day.

The numbers of the Shadows far outmatch the number of mankind, and so the Cthonians formed a covenant with the Demons. The Demons each agreed to give up their possessions in return for the heart of a tyrant. In honor of this covenant, tyrants were eradicated for a time, and the Demons left the Cthonians in peace.

The attack of the Shadows did not deter the Cthonians from writing more laws. Soon every action and thought, too, was addressed and named a virtue, and so was praised, or a sin, and so was punished. The virtuous were admired by their fellow men but given no reward. The sinful were hunted as monsters. Sin and tyranny ran thin, but the Cthonians found no satisfaction in the world.

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smuggling—even sex talks. Nobody talks anymore. We just depend on the internet and schools to teach our kids what we should be teaching them. Maybe that's why she ran away. She couldn't cope in the real world because her parent figure never taught her how.

### **The Lady of Ash and Darkness gives Cthonians new bodies.**

The strife of the Shadows and Cthonians drew the eye of the Lady of Ash and Darkness<sup>121</sup>. The tiny men looked so pitiful and miserable in their existence that she, born of the Powers' grief, was moved to offer her aid. Down flew the Lady of Ash and Darkness to Erebus, where she requisitioned an anvil from Adalhei of the Shadows.

One by one, the Lady of Ash and Darkness drew a Cthonian from Terra, set him upon the anvil, and hammered him into a new shape<sup>122</sup>. Two shapes were given to the Cthonians: one male and one female. Together, these two shapes fit as the pieces of a puzzle, and infused in these shapes was the impulse to complete the puzzle.

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<sup>121</sup> I guess carnival season without sex would be a letdown. Giving humanity bodies capable of sexual intercourse is the only overtly good deed done by the Lady of Ash and Darkness. It seems completely out of character for her. She's not a creator. She has only dealt with the powers. And I thought she was supposed to be evil. At least they had alcohol. I stopped at my buddy Jerry's house earlier. He gave me a bottle of absinthe and half a box of sugar cubes. Joséphine bought me the tap as a graduation present. She said, "You can drink zees oll you want now, Jean, that your studies are over." Between Joséphine running away, her house being torched, Roland siccing the cops on me, and random old men threatening me, I think I deserve it.

<sup>122</sup> That's the Lady we know and don't love! What originally sounds like a generous gift turns out to a vicious assault. I'm glad they made the sexual monster a woman. I don't think women get their just reward for being sexually monstrous. Men have feelings too. It hurts just as bad when we get used... I'm glad I don't normally reread anything I write. I sound pathetic.





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I must have fallen asleep . god my head hurts. Mobius travel

‘Lady,’ said the Cthonian. ‘You have shown me the All-Thing within me, and I thank you. Now I shall seek the All-Thing without.’ Away the human went, more aware than all humans before, and happier for it.

**The first wedding is ruined.**<sup>125</sup>

Knowing Cthon would seek retaliation for her alteration of his person, the Lady of Ash and Darkness withdrew to the walled grove that housed the seed she planted so long ago. She found her hidden seed had grown into tree that produced a fragrant bloom and golden apples<sup>126</sup> pleasing to the senses. Eating of the tree, she learned of the Lord Ush’s imminent return and a connection soon to be severed.

Planning to share her discovery with the other Powers, the Lady of Ash and Darkness took an apple from the Hidden Tree as a gift to give in conjunction with her dark revelation. To the celestial palace she flew with these generous tidings. When she arrived, her entry was barred, for the Powers had gone to Terra to witness the first wedding procession<sup>127</sup>. The Lady of Ash and Darkness returned to Terra.

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<sup>125</sup> I feel like my footnotes have become more of a journal than a supplement for a scholarly text. Turns out I wasn’t hallucinating. Someone broke into my house last night and knocked me out. That’s what I was hearing. Nothing was taken. And the police won’t take my calls. They threatened to come arrest me if I keep “prank calling” them. What the hell? I’m alone in this. I need to lie low.

<sup>126</sup> A goddess born of strife now has golden apples. I wonder who she could correlate to.

<sup>127</sup> The gods show up to a Cthonian wedding because it is the first in the world. I assume the wedding is construed in a good way.

Despite her promises of gifts, the Lady of Ash and Darkness was rebuked by the Cthonians as a Demon. Enraged by this insult, she hurled the golden apple into the midst of the ceremony. Inscribed on the apple was a single word that indicated it belonged to the best in attendance but meant 'death' in the language of Shadows. This curse was bestowed on all for breaking the immortal rite of hospitality. Away from the Cthonians and Powers, the Lady of Ash and Darkness waited for her revenge to unfold<sup>128</sup>.

The first flower ever to bloom near the Paradise built by the Lady of Ash and Darkness was Love. Her perfume was an aphrodisiac that inspired the Cthonians in their new bodies to come together. Love was rumored to be a fallen star, for she shown with a brightness that other flowers lacked.

The bridegroom gave the apple that belonged to the best in attendance to Love, for the wedding was made possible because of her influence. She graciously received the gift and ate it.

The flower that was Love was indeed a star fallen from the Sky, where she was once affixed as the morning and evening star<sup>129</sup>. The Morning Star<sup>130</sup> learned she was a part of the fractured spirit once named Prometheus, sister-self to the bound ha-satan and the falling warrior spirit.

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<sup>128</sup> This story combines aspects of *Genesis* and the judgment of Paris in a new take on the dangers of ignorance and knowledge, for if men or the gods knew the Shadow meaning of the apple's message, perhaps they would not have been so quick to pass it to their favorite Power.

<sup>129</sup> Venus.

<sup>130</sup> Lucifer was called the Morning Star. The Satan figure reemerges in the form of Love.

In horror, Love flew from that place to Mount Lykos where, nailed to the cliff face, ha-satan wept rivers. The two spirits' faces reflected the other's face, and they knew they were one. Together in identity and pain, Love and ha-satan wept at their newfound knowledge.

'You, who are me,' said ha-satan. 'You incite wickedness in mankind, for they worship false gods and deny the spirits who mean them good will.'

'I incite affection,' said Love. 'Hate is found in my absence.'

Ha-satan rebuked Love: 'Wrongful love! Your blindness<sup>131</sup> is the bane of right love.'

Love fled from Mount Lykos. To save the world from her blind influence and the rebellion she feared she inherited from Prometheus, she threw herself into Hydros and drowned.

### **The Cthonians become wicked.**

In the absence of Love's influence, the Cthonians turned to those things listed in their book of acid writing and metal pages as sinful<sup>132</sup>. Murder, rape, and cannibalism were rife in the world. Violence and hedonism were sought out by mankind, for no good deeds granted satisfaction any longer.

Seeking to slow his people's descent into wickedness<sup>133</sup>, Cthon demanded blood sacrifices of all sinners. A wicked king summoned all the good people in his land to his palace under a banner of good will. There, his evil people fell upon the good, including his two virtuous

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<sup>131</sup> "Love is blind." How many clichés can she shove into one text? I'm staying at Jerry's place while he's on vacation. Seemed like a good idea to get out of dodge for a little while.

<sup>132</sup> "Without evil there can be no good, so it must be good to be evil sometimes." There's always room for more, I guess. I've started a drinking game: count the clichés. There are eighteen beer bottles on Jerry's coffee table. You tell me.

<sup>133</sup> For no apparent reason. He certainly has no compunctions about being wicked himself.

sons<sup>134</sup>. The first prince fled from his home, for the king demanded he be roasted in a bull made of copper. The second prince, named Briclant, remained to speak against the king. For this, he was imprisoned.

The first prince tracked his way through the forests of his father's land. The kind moon pitied him and took him into the Sky through a well. In place of the prince, the moon left a pack of white wolves, which hunted and tore to pieces the wicked king.

### **The deluge precedes the Cavemen.**

Hating the chaos<sup>135</sup> that ensued, Cthon called for the Lord Thunderer to unleash a great deluge to wipe out all that walked upon Terra. As the waters rose, the good king Briclant and

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<sup>134</sup> The constant battle between the old and the young generations typically make way for new growth in society, but the autobiographical nature of this myth's content brings a story to mind. Joséphine only has one memory lapse since her first memory. She told me about it once. From moving to the U.S. to joining the Coast Guard, she did everything to spite Roland, to dig at his elitism, but nothing worked, so when she went to visit him after her time in the service, she disobeyed the biggest prohibition he ever gave her. She followed him to one of his "secret meetings" in Masclat. She said when she was on the same continent as Roland, the shadows seemed to shudder. Well, they started to shudder when she reached the house in Masclat. She started hearing these horrible keening sounds then everything went blank. Roland apparently saved Joséphine but she doesn't remember how. They never talked about it, but he stayed with her in the hospital. After that, she never tried to spite him again. I only met him once. It was the strangest thing to see a grown woman change her voice and manner so drastically to seem like a child for her uncle. It was fine for him to be a monster, but she had to stay some innocent little girl. I didn't like the vibe I got from that whole relationship.

his wife escaped by climbing up Mount Lykos and hiding in a cave where their feet did not touch Terra<sup>136</sup>.

After the waters of the Lord Thunderer's deluge receded, Briclant and his wife climbed to where ha-satan wept and bled. They followed his advice and shouted words of creation to the top of the mountain. An avalanche of heavenly substances, rock, and Briclant's echoing words fell upon the slate of Terra, creating new men and women<sup>137</sup>. These men and women were called Cavemen, for their royal parents found refuge in a cave on Mount Lykos.

In honor of their human creators, the Cavemen sought the greatest and most dangerous creature that survived on Terra: the Sphinx, who moved not because the Lord Ush stirred in his sleep. In a territory named for the Iron Queen, the Cavemen encased the Sphinx in stone<sup>138</sup> that they might keep her forever. In a territory named for Atlanta, the Cavemen gathered bricks and mortar that they might build the greatest and most magnificent structure on Terra in celebration of humanity: a ziggurat.

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<sup>135</sup> Though he was stated as being the most like Chaos, the Ancient. These gods are contradictory assholes. Maybe I'll take a drink every time one of them sucks. No, I'll die.

<sup>136</sup> Apparently, gravity does not work in the cave, saving Briclant and his wife by a technicality.

<sup>137</sup> Similar to the outcome of the Deucalion Deluge.

<sup>138</sup> This dates where we currently are the grand scheme of this myth. As the Sphinx still exists as a stone sculpture, Part 3 has not taken place yet if there is any truth to the story. Joséphine was always so protective of this text though. Maybe it's the truth *and* a message...? Now that I think of it, I have no idea where the primary *Ush* text came from. Is it legit? Her possession of it, I mean.

### **Ush creates the Fresh People.**

Hearing the cheerful cries of the humans, the Lord Ush woke to create once more. He found a grove surrounded by an adamant wall that contained garden with a tree the bore golden apples at its center<sup>139</sup>. That small Paradise did the Lord decide to populate with tame beasts and few people.

Rather than forming his Fresh People from himself, the Old Ones, or allowing them to spring from a spirit's death, the Lord used the clay from the banks of the rivers that found their source in ha-satan's tears. Two figures and two figures alone did Lord Ush sculpt. He found favor in the shapes the Lady of Ash and Darkness had formed, so he imitated these shapes, but gave them divine faces as he gave the spirits.

The male Fresh Person lifted the female Fresh Person from where they were born in the grass, and they explored their home. There, they met the Lord Ush, who gave them names: Epaphras for the male and Acantha for the female.

### **Cthon seduces the Fresh People.**

While the People marveled at their home and one another, they found nothing to inspire their love<sup>140</sup>, and so when the Lord commanded them to be fruitful, they cried in futility. Cthon heard the Fresh People's lament. Cthon, who called himself god, knew the Lord Ush meant for Epaphras and Acantha to replace the Cthonians. This greatly displeased Cthon. He took on his spirit form of the fiery serpent<sup>141</sup>, hiding his face, and went to the Paradise.

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<sup>139</sup> Ush chooses the territory owned by Strife to create new humans. Nothing can possibly go wrong with that plan!

<sup>140</sup> Because Love is dead.

<sup>141</sup> The original form of the spirits.

When Cthon met Epaphras, the spirit spat venom into the Fresh Person's eyes to blind him. Acantha climbed a tree to escape Cthon. Epaphras followed his companion's cries to the tree, where he clung to its branches<sup>142</sup> but was unable to climb or navigate elsewhere.

Cthon ascended the tree after Acantha. Like the male Cthonians, Cthon found favor in the female's shape. He laid her upon her back across the tree's branches and mounted her. For five days<sup>143</sup>, Cthon raped Acantha before he spilled his impure seed and departed.

The two Fresh People lay in and under the tree, too weak and hungry to move from that place. They were unable to provide for themselves and so ate the golden apples of the tree, unaware of the fruit's power<sup>144</sup>. Then they were aware of the generations of mankind, of the Powers' carelessness, of Zagreus's banishment, of Cthon's wickedness, of Love's death, of the Cavemen's birth, of their own imminent deaths<sup>145</sup>. These things tormented Epaphras and Acantha, who thought themselves the only people in the world, for the Lord Ush did not wish them to mingle with other generations of mankind.

Epaphras and Acantha ran out of the Paradise to throw themselves into Hydros, just as Love did after she ate of the golden apples. As they reached the beach, the smell of an aphrodisiac drew their attention. A tiny weed bore a flower bud that shown with a brightness that

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<sup>142</sup> This story finds parallels in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*, in which Damian has sex with May up a tree while the blind January clings to the tree to keep possession of his young wife. All this takes place in a symbolic Garden of Eden.

<sup>143</sup> In Jewish legend, a woman's menstruation comes from the serpent's seed; the serpent had sex with Eve before Adam did. Gross.

<sup>144</sup> In Byron's "Cain: A Mystery" Lucifer shows Cain that people have been made before.

<sup>145</sup> The effect of this tree's apples mimics the litany of curses that Atlanta issues in battle.



other flowers lacked. As Epaphras and Acantha stroked and smelled the blossom, they fell in love.

Epaphras and Acantha dug up the Love blossom's roots so that they could replant the flower everywhere on Terra<sup>146</sup>. No longer would Cavemen and Fresh People and any other surviving generation of mankind live without Love of themselves and one another.

### **Ush retaliates and departs.**

The Lord Ush turned on the fiery serpent Cthon. The Lord crippled the spirit that he may only crawl upon Terra rather than fly as other spirits<sup>147</sup>.

Unsatisfied with this punishment, Ush turned to the rest of creation. The rebel warrior who was once part of Prometheus still fell through the Sky after being cast down from the Lord's court. When Lord Ush saw the ziggurat the Cavemen had constructed for the glory of mankind, he shook with rage. He hurled the rebellious spirit at the ziggurat.

The rebel warrior struck the ziggurat, which froze with the force of the spirit's lost divinity. Terra herself split from the force of Ush's blow, and the pieces of shattered earth floated on Hydros away<sup>148</sup> from the unholy place where he who my people call a Demon landed<sup>149</sup>.

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<sup>146</sup> Humans resurrect Love. I saw something on the news today that made me sick. A woman was found buried alive in the cemetery in my neighborhood. That's demented, but what actually made me nervous was the street cam footage they played. Around the time they suspect the woman was buried, a guy shows up on the footage, and I swear it's Roland, her creepy uncle, Roland. I think this is related in some way. I think Joséphine got out of dodge before Roland went batty. I think she must have seen this coming. They were really close. And this is the guy who has the police ignoring my calls. I need to move. I need to find Joséphine!

<sup>147</sup> As God cursed the serpent who seduced Adam and Eve in *Genesis*.

Atlanta's territory where the rebel warrior fell through the Cavemen's ziggurat sank into Erebus<sup>150</sup> with the Demon, leaving behind an ocean<sup>151</sup>. The fallen one became lodged in Erebus. Only his tears, which contained the final traces of his divinity, fell to the ocean on the other side of the world and created a ring of fire<sup>152</sup> beneath Hydros's surface.

The Paradise where Epaphras and Acantha once dwelled sank in Terra's depths as well, taking the Hidden Tree planted by the Lady of Ash and Darkness with it. Adalhei's thread strung through the Tree's core pulled at the Lord's heart, but he felt no sorrow<sup>153</sup>. Satisfied with the destruction he wrought, the Lord Ush quit the universe.

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<sup>148</sup> Pangaea splits into pieces that become the continents.

<sup>149</sup> The rebellious spirit finally lands from being cast out of the celestial court in Part 1.

<sup>150</sup> How Atlantis sank.

<sup>151</sup> The Atlantic.

<sup>152</sup> A circle of underwater volcanoes in the Pacific Ocean.

<sup>153</sup> Any hope of redemption for Ush/Roland is obliterated when he loses his heart without batting an eye. This tyrant overlord character must be Joséphine's way of communicating about this dangerous man. I wish I had read this sooner. I wonder why she never reported him if she thought he was this bad. I know he was in the police force, but surely *someone* could override his influence. I think a trip to her burned house is in order. They'll have to listen if there's proof Roland is not on the level.

### Part 3

#### The Men of the West found Quietness.<sup>154</sup>

Witnessing the power of the Lord Ush and the spirits below him, the Men of the West<sup>155</sup> did not tremble but clenched their fists. Severed from their fellow men<sup>156</sup> and ostracized by their creator, the Men of the West moved out of the Lord's sight. They delved deep into Terra, where the broken bones of ages before and splintered apparatuses of a war<sup>157</sup> not spoken of were hidden away.

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<sup>154</sup> This is just getting worse and worse. I went to Joséphine's house—or what was left of it. *Now* it hits me. All that weird shit in her house... Roland had moved in. That explains who'd been feeding Bosco. It doesn't stop there. Yes, it gets better. The safe box Joséphine kept in her closet was intact. I found her father's birth certificate. Nothing of Roland's. Turns out her father *was* a smuggler, but not of drugs. Roland had all the police reports and photos and torn-out sheets from documents on the D'arc and du Lys family smuggling ring. There were all these files of facsimiles and scanned iconography. Nothing was in English, or French surprisingly enough. I couldn't place the language of any of the documents. It looked a little like the *Ush* text. I know she could read dead languages, but who would smuggle things that belonged in a museum? And why? Joséphine's things were kept separate. Birth certificate, passport, copies of different IDs, pictures, and stories in child-scrrawl about Mother Earth taking care of frightened children and shadows. That's what really hit me hard. Her story about telling stories to the shadows... it's true. Ever since she was young. You can't fake these.

<sup>155</sup> A group of humans.

<sup>156</sup> By the reshaping of Terra.

<sup>157</sup> Earth is filled with these in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*.

‘Here will be our home,’ said the Men. After its tranquil air, they called the hidden place Quietness. Atop the ruins of old, the Men of the West built a new civilization<sup>158</sup> of wood and stone and steel.

Under the Men of the West, Quietness thrived. The rulers of Quietness were a proud, resourceful people. They loved poetry, music, and art, but revered their inventors most of all. Without the aid of the Powers<sup>159</sup>, the Men learned to improve the world around them. Astrologers dyed the clouds with wine on days of celebration. Fair farmers exposed their bodies to orchards and farms to inspire the seasons’ blooms with their beauty. Masons devised structures that halted the process of decay on bloody meat, linens, and plants. Healers concocted potions and salves that allowed the Men to retain their strength, wits, and beauty into old age<sup>160</sup>. There was nothing the Men of the West wanted for.

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<sup>158</sup> The cyclical nature of mankind’s rise and fall is illustrated by the war machines from all different historical eras. What we figuratively do, the Men of the West literally do: build new civilizations on remnants of the old. I met a girl who said something about that the other day. I say “met.” It was more like a mugging. She was a little thing, but pink and very alive-looking. Couldn’t have been eighteen. She jumped me outside of Joséphine’s house. Had a gun and everything. I had gone back to get the rest of the documents I found in the lockbox. She told me to “butt out,” that I was going to get myself killed, that anything that was once Joséphine’s now belongs to “her organization.” It shook me up pretty hard, even though I wasn’t *sure* she would shoot me. I thought she was going to start crying on me. Clearly, Joséphine had something valuable these people want. I wonder if this myth isn’t *entirely* fake...

<sup>159</sup> This sect of mankind rejects the gods and flourishes. For a time.

<sup>160</sup> The scientific advancements of old seem laughable in this secular age, but are they really?

## **The Men of the West create Golems.**

The most beloved of all inventors were the toy-makers, for they took on the loftiest of all projects: they created men of their own<sup>161</sup>. At first, the men were statues of marble. Then lifelike figures of wax were cast. A third sort was animated men of tin that whirred and sang like mechanical nightingales.

Because the Men of the West feared that the gods would take revenge on them<sup>162</sup>, they set to creating guards for Quietness. Just as not all the Powers were loving, not all the Men of the West were good. The criminals were given to generals to be morphed into guards<sup>163</sup>.

Under the altering blade of the generals, criminals changed into beings called the Werush<sup>164</sup>. The Werush were grotesque creatures with no arms or legs, sewn eyes and ears, split tongue and members<sup>165</sup>, which could only writhe and moan terribly. No human, beast, or

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<sup>161</sup> Cyclical history: the first race of humanity made little men out of clay; this late race of humanity make men out of marble and metal.

<sup>162</sup> For rejecting the gods and creating their own people.

<sup>163</sup> Forced rehabilitation puts a dark mark on this happy society. It turns out they are just like every other Utopian society: screwed up.

<sup>164</sup> Wer-Ush: Man-Ush. The monstrous guards of Quietness are named after the tyrant god Ush, from whom the humans want to protect themselves.

<sup>165</sup> This description fits that of the Imbunche, a mythical creature that symbolizes a person deprived of individuality, identity, and even existence. Joséphine talked about the Imbunche myth when she felt down. She blocked her windows with black tarp, and once she tried to caulk shut her doors to get away from the world; she said she couldn't be who she really was but could never really explain.

wandering spirit who beheld the Werush could bear to be near them, nor did they find peace in dreams for many nights after. Thus was Quietness secured.

The greatest inventor of Quietness was Necabali, who worked tirelessly on a manmade person of his own, but he did not wish to use metals or minerals for his construction. Necabali used parts of criminals transformed into Werush for his person's limbs, a prostitute's trunk, a wise man's brain, an artist's fingers, a poet's tongue, and a seer's eyes<sup>166</sup>. He did not wish his beloved person to bear the countenance of a dead citizen of Quietness, so he made the face out of porcelain and clay from the banks of the oracle's river<sup>167</sup>, the source of which was weeping hasatan atop Mount Lykos.

Necabali brought his person, which he named Golem, to life with a word of creation<sup>168</sup> that was found inscribed on a tablet in the oracle's treasury.

A fine toy for the Men of the West was Golem. Unaged and untempered by time, she served as mother to children, lover to the passionate, and caregiver to the elderly. Golem was revered above all other beings in creation<sup>169</sup>.

### **Ush creates New Children.**

The joyous cries of the Men of the West did not reach the spirits' palace or the Shadows realm in Erebus but the place that is the center of the universe, where all roads converge, where the Lord Ush<sup>170</sup> is affixed by his own Shadow, placed there while he dreamed by Adalhei.

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<sup>166</sup> Eugenics.

<sup>167</sup> The last humans Ush makes in Part 2 as well as the Golem in Jewish myth are made of clay from the nearby riverbank.

<sup>168</sup> This is the same way the clay men are brought to life in Part 1.

<sup>169</sup> The Men of the West worship their science.

‘A third time shall I create human children for myself,’ said the Lord. ‘These shall be superior to all other mankinds ever to walk upon Terra, and their children shall never turn away from me, for I shall give them no means for children. This means<sup>171</sup> I reserve only for myself.’

The Lord Ush descended upon Terra where, with the help of his chained servant ha-satan, he found every woman upon her<sup>172</sup> terrestrial body. Asking no leave of any mortal, the Lord went into each woman, virgin<sup>173</sup> and matron alike, and begat a New Child.

The Men of the West who dwelled in Quietness offered Golem to Lord Ush that he might spare their women, but the Lord was not deterred, and he took the Women of the West as he did the others. He took them, except for Golem, and begat New Children.

‘You have failed us,’ cried the Men of the West to Golem. ‘You have failed us just as the gods failed us in the past<sup>174</sup>.’

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<sup>170</sup> If humans changed the sounds of joy, maybe Ush would stop waking up to ruin everything. Joséphine has the strangest laugh. It sounds like she’s whispering behind her hand. Not really a hissing sound exactly but something close to that. Apparently dear Uncle Roland didn’t like shrill noises. Or any noises at all.

<sup>171</sup> Of reproducing.

<sup>172</sup> Terra’s.

<sup>173</sup> An immaculate conception of this nature and scale puts a demented spin on the stories of Jesus’s birth. God never asked Mary in the Bible if she wanted a child in the first place. Sexual transgression becomes a big theme at this point in the myth. Science and the monstrous Imbunche couldn’t save women from the tyrant’s assault. Joséphine devoted her life to research and lived isolated for so long, and for what? Roland still came.

Golem addressed the Men of the West thus: ‘I cannot be greater than my creator<sup>175</sup>. Neither Necabali nor any of you stopped this catastrophe.’ The Men saw their failure and spared her.

The New Children begotten of the Lord Ush and human women ran upon their birth<sup>176</sup>. They spoke in their infancy, and composed lyrics in their youth.

As they aged, humanity realized the New Children were perfect, and many sought their companionship. Many humans who had turned away from the gods smiled on the heavens once more, and the Lord was pleased.

### **The second Celestial War is waged.**

Though perfect in body and mind, the New Children were unable to conceive children of their own. Concerned by this affliction, the New Children followed the rivers of the world to the base of Mount Lykos, which is the center of creation.

There, the eldest New Child, called Lotus<sup>177</sup>, addressed the others: ‘We, the youngest people of Terra are no less worthy of divine gifts than the first humans, but we have been denied children and families to nurture.’ Lotus bowed to her brothers and sisters, sexless and perfectly made in the Lord’s image. ‘How shall we thank our father for his dual gift?’

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<sup>174</sup> Science fails humanity, just as the gods fail humanity. With no driving outside force, humanity flounders and casts blame rather than solving the problem at hand.

<sup>175</sup> A perfect world cannot come from an imperfect creator.

<sup>176</sup> In Jewish apocrypha Cain, the first kin-slayer, was said to be able to run when he was born.

<sup>177</sup> A symbol of rebirth and Horus, who avenges his wronged parents.



Primrose was the youngest and wiliest of the New Children. ‘Let us ask of our father-creator for a place in his court, for we are half divine,’ he said. ‘He is blinded to our misery, and will suspect no ill will of our request.’

Together the New Children called up the mountain for the Lord Ush.

‘My Children,’ said the Lord. ‘Why have you left your places on Terra and come to the mount of my palace?’

‘We are half-divine,’ said Lotus. ‘Take us into your realm for half of our lives<sup>178</sup>. That is our birthright.’

The Lord Ush was moved by his Children’s request. These were the first of his beloved humans who asked to be nearer to him, and he did not deny them. Ush took the New Children up Mount Lykos into the Sky, where they entered his palace of clouds and stars and adamant protrusions.

In the Lord’s arsenal was every weapon ever wielded by a Power since the creation of the world. There were Ignorance, Fear, Hate, adamant blades, the weapons of the brother spirits, the raincloud, bows made of color and light<sup>179</sup>, pillars of fire, and the Lord’s seed, which was forced upon the New Children’s mothers.

Primrose was the first to take up a weapon against his father-creator<sup>180</sup>. The New Children armed themselves with weapons of the Powers and fell upon the Lord Ush.

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<sup>178</sup> Adonis spent half of his life with Persephone in the Underworld and the other half in the realm of the living in Greek myth because of his shared “parentage” and his role as a dying god.

<sup>179</sup> Rainbows. In Jewish apocrypha God’s weapon was a bow, which he laid down after he wiped out mankind with the great flood.

<sup>180</sup> This follows the Greek myth pattern of the youngest son overthrowing the tyrannical father.

Seeing the Lord thus waylaid, half of the Celestial Host hurried to his aid without weapons, for their arms had been seized by the New Children<sup>181</sup>. Only Atlanta retained his weapon of old. He issued his litany of curses to the Children in which he divulged the history of mankind to walk upon Terra. From the first slain children of Ush to Prometheus's clay men to mankind sprung from Zagreus's death who became Cthonians to the constructed Helen to the wicked people who followed to the Stone Men and Ush's second pair to the mixed generations of the Last Deluge to the Golem-creating Men of the West, the New Children beheld their predecessors and their tiny position in the universe as seen by the first face of Lady Faireyes.

Many of the Children were brought to their knees by Atlanta's curses, but the strongest of the New Children knew that their youth and size rendered them no more inferior to older mankind than the tongues of their scattered nations did to each another. The Children slew half of the Celestial Host<sup>182</sup> where they fought in the Lord's palace.

Lotus cast a Sleep of Shadows upon Ush, and he passed into the realm outside of the universe, where dreams ensnared and held him.

'This place we call Heaven,' called Lotus to the New Children and remaining Celestial Host, 'belongs to this generation of humanity who owes no allegiance to Power or Golem.' Thus the second Celestial War concluded.

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<sup>181</sup> This echoes the first Celestial War in which weapons are destroyed to alter the outcome of the war. Trickery is the only way to overthrow wicked parents.

<sup>182</sup> Leaving a third of the original number of the Celestial Host.

**The Powers and mankind form a pact.**<sup>183</sup>

Blood rained down from Sky upon Terra. She turned her soil as a farmer did before planting new a new crop, and what was on her surface was buried deeper into her core.

The seed that was threaded by the Lord's Ush's single heartstring, buried so long ago, fell into Erebus. Roiling and snarling Shadows cast the seed into the forge Adalhei first drew it from. The deep fire severed the thread from the smelted seed. Suspended deep in Terra's core, the Lord's heartstring was torn at and chewed upon by the Shadows for all eternity.

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<sup>183</sup> I saw the little girl who pulled the gun on me the other night while I was on a wine-run. I couldn't help myself. I followed her. She went to this huge townhouse that was having a black-tie gig. I went home to change and came back. I might have been a little drunk to work up that kind of nerve. This place was *old*. Ancient wallpaper, hand-carved crown molding, a chandelier that looked like someone stole it from the Palace of Versailles. Decadent. I was milling around a big buffet table when I heard his voice. I knew that skeezy French accent anywhere. It was Roland. He was talking to these two creepy old men. I recognized one as the one as the old man who threatened me a few months ago when this all began. They spoke like they were good friends, but Roland looked really shifty, like he couldn't stand to be around them. One of them mentioned Masclat, and Roland looked pissed. The other old guy said something along the lines of: "She always did love the Earth so." That struck me as particularly menacing, just something about the way he said it. If looks could kill... Roland said, "*Oui*, I am certain she ees much 'appier in her new poseeshon." He didn't look innocent either. I can't put my finger on what it was, but there was something just not cricket about him. It makes me sick to my stomach to think about what they all might have meant.

Free from Ush's sentence<sup>184</sup>, the Sphinx that was Adalhei climbed Mount Lykos to liberate ha-satan as well. She tore the nails from his arms and legs that he might chase away the eagle that feasted on his body. The two descended and turned away from the mountain, for they knew what was to come<sup>185</sup>.

'Humans are builders and explorers by nature,' said Lotus. 'Let us reshape the world that humanity can continue to grow.'

Silent for so long, the voice of Terra was hushed then boomed to the Sky. 'No more shall I be altered without leave.' Earthquakes shook the foundation of the celestial palace. 'If you wish to change me, I wish to change you.'

On behalf of the New Children, Lotus acquiesced to Terra's concession. The Powers and humanity made a pact that would create a new spiritual realm that coexisted with creation and a new universe for mankind live in. Terra and Sky sacrificed portions of themselves to make room for what the New Children called the Grave. Hydros offered ether and foam as architecture for the Upper Grave, and Fire offered a thousand of its tongues for the Lower Grave.

'What are these places?' Terra asked.

Primrose responded: 'Our stories of old tell of these places, these afterlives, where the dead live on after they are laid to rest in the ground. Now that we see the stories were wrong<sup>186</sup>, we shall correct them.'

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<sup>184</sup> Did Adalhei plan this all along? Did she know the seed-severing plan would free her from Ush? Is Ush harmed by the damage to his heartstring?

<sup>185</sup> Were these two always omniscient? Is this where Prometheus's gift of foresight comes in?

<sup>186</sup> Up until this apocalyptic moment, there has been no divine justice or afterlife for humanity. I know the whole of Part 3 hasn't been realized yet, but I hope this part has been. It's hard to put

The Grave, whose rulers were the Iron Queen and the Kind One<sup>187</sup>, transformed into a new shape that was of human conception and swayed by human perceptions of justice. Under orders of the new rulers of Heaven, the rulers of the Grave created a time for laughing and a time for crying<sup>188</sup>. For every moment in life a man caused another to laugh, so too did he laugh ten times that number of years in death. For every moment in life a man caused another to cry, so too did he cry ten times that number of years in death. The New Children smiled on the first construction of their design.

Terra addressed the New Children: ‘For your end of the pact, your people must destroy their Golems<sup>189</sup>.’

‘All of them?’ wailed the Children.

‘And any apparatuses gifted by the spirits,’ said Terra.

‘But mankind will starve and die,’ said the Children.

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this to words. I went to the morgue. I wanted to see the Jane Doe they’d found buried alive. The old men and Roland talking about Joséphine loving the Earth got me thinking... Her face was all messed up. I don’t know how anybody could have IDed her, but they let me try. She had a ring. It was an heirloom ring. Joséphine’s heirloom ring. It was her. They did it. They buried her. They said she loved the Earth.

<sup>187</sup> See note: 72.

<sup>188</sup> This is a medieval Catholic conception of the afterlife, in which one’s time on earth laughing or crying is inverted after death.

<sup>189</sup> A symbol of the New People’s entire spectrum of scientific advancements. Science and technology must be destroyed by mankind to make this visionary apocalypse possible.

‘Some of mankind will die,’ said Terra. ‘The rest will act in according to their nature, and they will thrive<sup>190</sup>.’

The New Children sent word to humanity to destroy their Golems and divine apparatuses. Just as they shunned the gods, so too did humanity shun their and the spirits’ inventions. For the humans’ sacrifice, Terra sent word to the Sphinx and ha-satan to give new shape to the world.

No longer bound by the Lord’s heartstring and nails, the Sphinx and ha-satan flew from Terra, past the Sky, to the far reaches of the universe, where the gulfs of the All-Father and Chaos could be seen. There, they told the Ancients of the pact humanity made with the Powers, and asked that the Ancients join the pact<sup>191</sup>.

‘No,’ said Chaos.

‘Yes, and that is final,’ said the All-Father, for these two Ancients were always opposed, and his mark sealed the pact.

‘Yes, and that is final,” said Chaos to spite the All-Father<sup>192</sup>.

Lady Faireyes granted the Sphinx and ha-satan the power to do as they were commanded. The pair tore apart the dams<sup>193</sup> that held the gulfs of time and space at bay. Men who hid their

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<sup>190</sup> Acting in accordance with one’s nature prolongs one’s life. Joséphine spent so long stifling who she really was that she wanted to become an Imbunche. It seems like this stifling finally took its toll on her. And the paper hasn’t printed her name, that she was IDed, even though I did it over a week ago. More of Roland’s influence, I can only guess.

<sup>191</sup> These two figures of rebellion and questioning do not impose their wills upon other Powers. They are not tyrants as Ush is.

<sup>192</sup> Chaos uses its knowledge of eternal opposition with the All-Father to trick the other Ancient into agreeing with it. While time is constant, chaos is not orderly. Chaos breaks their pattern.

compasses and time pieces saw their devices turn the wrong ways and cease to work. Their bodies ceased to note the passing of the sun and moon. The maps in the celestial palace failed to accurately record the shape and breadth of the world.

‘Go now,’ said Terra, both larger and smaller in voice than before. ‘Go struggle in your infinite bodies<sup>194</sup> toward the possibilities of your infinite minds, but never again turn to spirits or Golems.’

‘This we vow,’ swore the New Children, and they left the celestial court.

### **Ush questions silent Adalhei.**

From outside this world, in a place where the dreams of dead gods dwell, called by my people the Court of Woe<sup>195</sup>, came a lone voice. “Why?” Ush uttered into the void.

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<sup>193</sup> A new deluge takes place, one of pure time and space into an existing world. The laws of physics break down. The world is shapeless and disorderly, and this seems to be the new world the humans wanted.

<sup>194</sup> Not only is the world changed. Humanity is also reshaped, apparently lifting their curse of infinite minds trapped in finite bodies.

<sup>195</sup> Sometimes people are so evil that we have to imagine new levels of Hell just for them. Take Roland for instance. He was found dead two days ago. I just got back from his funeral. It stormed the whole time. Looks like Satan doesn’t want him any more than we do. He was not a man of many friends. There were a handful of us beside the priest. The two old men I saw at that weird hall place looked like they were just there to make sure he was really dead. The one that threatened me pretended I didn’t exist. The creepiest thing about the whole experience was when I went to look at him in the casket—I sure as hell wasn’t paying any respects. He looked so much

Only the Sphinx, the first echo of the Lord Ush, heard his question. She stretched her body over Terra, caressing her young and ancient daughter underfoot, and smiled in the every-direction of nothingness that contained Ush. She smiled, and said nothing<sup>196</sup>.

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like Joséphine. Pale skin, blue-black hair, over-sized features, even the jaw structure. And he was smiling.

<sup>196</sup> Can she answer if she wants to? Is she really free of Roland? He can't follow her where she is now, can he? The Sphinx survived Ush, but what of my Joséphine? How could he save her just a few years ago to let her die now? I wish I could make sense of this whole thing. I could have sworn I saw her as I was leaving the funeral.



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## Vita

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