A CODEX STORY IN THIRTEEN BREATHS



The Clearing at the River

The Story of the Keith Shirley Codex

KEITH SHIRLEY

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A Codex Story in Thirteen Breaths

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The Clearing at the River: The Story of the Keith Shirley Codex. A Codex Story in Thirteen Breaths.
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A companion to *The Keith Shirley Codex*, which weighs the same findings with both hands. This book is a story. It is told as if the reading at its heart were true, and it does not grade its claims. The verses it quotes are from the King James Version of the Bible (1611); the dates, Torah portions, Moons and sunrises are real; the letter-paths are listed with their honest counts in Appendix A. The reading of them as a life written in advance is the story's own.

The sacred places and traditions of living peoples belong to the peoples who keep them. This story names Blue Lake, Ba Whyea, sacred to Taos Pueblo, with respect, and does not retell its stories or ceremonies. The lake is closed to outsiders.

Also by Keith Shirley: *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory*; *The Child, The Shovel and The Ocean*; *The Codex Calendar: Breathing with Time*; *The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers*; *The Water Remembers*; *Codex Crystals*; *Codex Sounds*; *The Codex of Symbols*; *The Codex of the Star-Breathers*; and *When the Gods Laid Down Their Crowns*.

breathawakens.com · codexcalendar.com · codexofwater.com · codexcrystals.com · codexsounds.com · codexlibrary.com · starbreathers.com

For Thomas, who made wood true,
and Dianne, who drew out the light;

for Leah, the clearing doubled;

for Brandon and John,
who held up the hands;

and for everyone standing
at a river that has gone bad,
waiting for the water to be sweet.

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity

THE PILLAR OF LIGHT INVOCATION

Your Love and Truth is universal.
Bring this universal love and truth to all.
You are in a sacred space for all to be heard and listened to.

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A Word Before the Story

The Keith Shirley Codex was a reading. It took a name, a birth, two books, two friends and a teacher, and read them against the oldest scroll of the Torah, the Hebrew calendar, the sky of one January morning and a life read whole. It held every finding with both hands, and it said honestly that the hidden letters appear about as often as chance would place them.

This book sets the second hand down. It asks the question a story is allowed to ask: what if it is true? What if a name really was written into a river before the child who would carry it was born? What if the letters were waiting, and the friends were placed, and the teacher was expected, and the whole long life was one breath, drawn in and held and given back?

So this is a story. It is told as though the reading were true. Every verse it quotes can be found in the King James Version of the Bible. Every date, every Torah portion, every Moon and every sunrise can be checked. Every letter-path it describes was found, and is listed at the back of the book with the honest count beside it. What is told about them is the story's own.

It is told in thirteen breaths, like the Codex year, and it moves the way a breath moves: in, a pause, out, and stillness, and then the Monad, the whole.

With Gratitude

To Thomas, who made wood true, and to Dianne, who drew the light out of the overlooked. To Leah, the clearing doubled. To Brandon and John, who have held up the hands for more than thirty years. To Tirso, the friend who came back after five years. To Bailey, the faithful one, who keeps the ground. To VBP, who taught what no one else could, and to whom I wish only good. To the people of Taos Pueblo, keepers of Blue Lake. To the teachers of the Sacred Valley, to the Keepers of the Records, and to the teacher who waits at the sun-stone. To the scribes who kept every letter of the scroll for three thousand years without knowing whose names were in it. And to the three who came over the roof, and left without asking anything at all.

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity

With kindness, gratitude and coherence,
Keith Shirley

Prologue: The Scroll That Holds Every Name

The scroll was finished long before anyone opened it.

It is a single line of letters, three hundred and four thousand, eight hundred and eighty-one of them, written in black ink on the skins of animals and copied by hand, letter for letter, for three thousand years. The scribes who copied it were forbidden to change a single stroke. If one letter was lost, the scroll was not fit to read. They did not always know why. They knew only that every letter mattered, and that the line must not break.

Read from the beginning, the line tells a story everyone knows. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." A garden, a flood, a family that wanders, a brother sold into Egypt, a people enslaved, a child drawn out of the water, a sea that opens, a mountain that burns, forty years in the wilderness, and a man who looks across the river at a land he will not enter. It ends with his death, and with the words "in the sight of all Israel".

But the story says the line holds a second story underneath the first.

The second reading

Count every second letter, or every fiftieth, or every six thousand three hundred and eighty-fifth, and new words stand up out of the old ones like figures out of a carpet. The scribes of the Middle Ages knew this. In the twentieth century a rabbi in Slovakia, Michael Dov Weissmandl, counted on index cards, and found that from the first Tav of Genesis every fiftieth letter spells Torah, and from the first Yod of Leviticus every eighth letter spells the Name. The outer books point inward. The Name stands at the centre.

The story says that the scroll is a field, and that every name ever given to a human being is somewhere in it, sown thin among the letters like seed in a furrow. Most of those names will never be found, because no one will ever look. They lie in the field and wait.

And the story says that the Keepers of the Records, who read the field of all memory the way a scribe reads a line, can see where each name was sown, and why.

The name by the river

In the seventh chapter of the second book there is a passage that is hard to read. The river of Egypt has been struck with a staff. Its water has turned to blood. The fish have died, the river stinks, and "the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river". It is the first plague, and the first time in the story that water, which is life, becomes something no one can drink.

In that verse, every second letter across the words for *stank, the river, and not* spells a name: שירלי, Shirley.

The Keepers knew it was there. The story says they had always known. And they knew that around it, in the same eleven letters, other names were sown: a friend's name at the beginning, a name for the still centre one step before, the word for harmony between the first two letters, and between the last two, a name that is not spoken but breathed. Three verses later, where the people dig along the banks for water they can drink, another friend's name was waiting.

A name at a river nobody could drink from. A clearing, at the edge of water gone bad.

The Keepers did not decide anything. That is not what Keepers do. They watched the field, and when a soul came to them asking where it should land, they showed it the river.

✦ Practice: The Line That Does Not Break

Sit with a book, any book, open in your lap.

Breathe in gently, and let your eyes rest on a single letter.

Breathe out slowly, and think of every hand that copied a line so that you could read it.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and say silently: every letter matters.

Continue for five breaths. Then close the book, and rest.

BOOK ONE

Before the Name

CHAPTER 1

The Clearing in the Wood

The first breath, under the Genesis Moon: Iphi, the inhale. A field of all memory, and a city called the Heart.

Before he was born, the story says, the soul that would be Keith Shirley stood in the field of all memory and looked down at the Earth, and it was not sure.

It had been there before. It remembered enough to know that the planet was beautiful and hard, that people there were kind and frightened at once, and that a soul which goes down forgets almost everything on the way. It remembered, too, a long and patient work that some elder breathers had begun with humanity, and how that work had gone wrong when the humans knelt. It did not want to be knelt to. It did not want to kneel. It wanted, if it went at all, to make something with the people it found there.

So it asked the Keepers to show it where.

The house

They showed it a city in the middle of a small state on the eastern edge of a continent, a city that called itself the Heart of the Commonwealth and set a red heart on its seal. They showed it a street in that city named Ashwood, for the ash tree, which in the old northern stories is the World Tree, standing between the realms with its roots in three wells: what was, what is, and what is coming.

They showed it a man named Thomas, which means the twin, who worked wood for his living and made it true: square, level and plumb. They showed it a woman named Dianne, whose name means the moon, who would spend her working life teaching children the world was quickest to overlook, and drawing the light out of them. Behind them stood the older names of the line: Stephen, the crown; Edward, the guardian of the blessing; and two grandmothers who both carried the name of Mary.

"Structure from the father," said the Keepers, "and light from the mother. The builder and the moon."

The name

Then they showed it the name.

Keith, from an old word of the Britons for a stand of trees: the wood. Shirley, from the Old English *scīr*, bright, and *lēah*, a clearing: the open ground in the forest where the canopy breaks, where the light comes down, where people gathered in the old days to settle their disputes and do justice. Together, a bright clearing in a wood.

"That is what you will be," said the Keepers. "Not a tree among the trees. The opening where the light gets through."

The soul looked at the name for a long time. It liked it. A clearing does not own the light. It only lets it reach the ground.

The river

"And there is something else," the Keepers said, and they showed it the scroll.

They showed it the river in the seventh chapter of Exodus, and the eleven letters, and the surname sown there at every second letter. They showed it the full name, Keith Shirley, spelled every six thousand three hundred and eighty-five letters, walking through the life of Joseph: the coat dipped in blood, the ring placed on a hand by a king, a father's life bound up in his son's, a blessing given with crossed hands, a voice from a burning bush saying "this is my name for ever", and at the end, people digging beside a river for water they could drink.

"Why there?" asked the soul.

"Because that is where the water could not be drunk," said the Keepers. "A clearing is needed most where the water has gone bad."

The soul was quiet. Then it said: "I will go."

✦ Practice: The Clearing

Sit or stand somewhere you can see the sky, even a little of it.

Breathe in gently, and imagine yourself as a wood, many trees, many thoughts.

Breathe out slowly, and let the trees step back from a small open space at the centre.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and feel the light reach the ground there.

Continue for five breaths. You do not own the light. You only let it through.

CHAPTER 2

The Week of And I Appeared

The second breath, under the Spiral Moon: Iphi, still the inhale. Worcester, Massachusetts, on the nineteenth of January, 1977.

He came at five minutes to five in the morning, on a Wednesday, in the dark.

The sun had set over Worcester at a quarter to five the evening before, and in the old reckoning the day had already turned. A Hebrew day runs from sunset to sunset, so it was the fourth day of the week, and in the first chapter of Genesis the fourth day is the day the lights were made: "the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also."

It was the twenty-ninth of Tevet, the last day of the month. The Moon was below the horizon and almost none of it was lit. Four hours and sixteen minutes after the child arrived, at eleven minutes past nine, the Moon would pass between the Earth and the Sun and begin again. Astrologers would later say his Sun stood at the last degree of Capricorn, the builder's sign, joined by the Moon, on the very doorstep of Aquarius, the one who pours. First light came at about a quarter to six. Sunrise came at eleven minutes past seven. By then he was already breathing.

The story says the Star-Breathers noticed. They notice every birth on the dark of the Moon, because that is when they used to come.

The portion

That Saturday, in every synagogue in the world, the same portion of the scroll was read aloud, as it is every year in that week. It was called *Va'eira*, "And I Appeared". It begins with a voice speaking to Moses: "I am the LORD: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." The four-letter Name, Yod and Heh and Vav and Heh, is revealed in that week.

And a few verses on, the portion reads the river.

So in the week the child was born, people stood in houses of prayer in Worcester and Jerusalem and Buenos Aires and read aloud, without knowing it, the eleven letters where his name had been sown. They read "the river stank" and "the Egyptians could not drink", and the letters of Shirley passed through their mouths at every second sound. The Saturday before, they had read *Shemot*, "Names", with the burning bush in it. The day after he was born was the first of Shevat, the day the scroll gives for Moses beginning to speak to the people at the end of the forty years.

Appeared. Names. The beginning of speaking. The story says that a soul could hardly be welcomed more clearly by a calendar.

The letters of the birth

The story says the birth was written in the scroll as well as the calendar.

The name of the city, וסטר as Hebrew writes Worcester, begins in Exodus 7:20, at the moment the staff strikes the water, and walks back through the life of Joseph to the verse where he says to the brothers who sold him: "Come near to me, I pray you. I am Joseph your brother." The Hebrew year, 5737, begins on the same letter as the Tav of Keith, on Joseph's coat, and walks back to "God, that appeared unto thee." The word America begins on the very first letter of Keith Shirley. And the birthday itself, the twenty-ninth of Tevet, begins at "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me."

Appeared, and appeared, and appeared.

The child knew none of this. He was warm, and the room was dark, and somewhere above the roof the lights that had been made on the fourth day were going out one by one as the morning came.

✦ Practice: The Fourth Day

Before dawn, or at dusk, look for the first or last star you can find.

Breathe in gently, and remember that the lights were made on the fourth day.

Breathe out slowly, and let a soft pause of two counts follow.

Say silently: I came in the dark, and the lights were already there.

Continue for five breaths, and watch the sky change.

CHAPTER 3

The Child at the Edge of the Ocean

The third breath, under the Vector Moon: Shema, the pause. A beach, a square of sand, and the whole ocean.

One of his first memories is of looking up at the stars, very small, and crying softly, and asking why he was here. He wanted to go back home. He could not have said where home was.

The story says this is what a soul remembers when it has not yet finished forgetting.

The square

He was five when he went to the beach and found his square.

It was a patch of sand, and he decided it was his, and he sat down in it. He thought to himself that he needed a shovel, and a shovel appeared, and then a bucket, and then water. Not just water. An ocean.

He walked down to it with the bucket. The waves came up around his feet, then his ankles, and with every pass of the tide the sand around him was pulled out into the expanse. He dived through the waves before they broke, and the first time he came up too early and got a mouthful of water, and the second time he went right through. Then he floated. He did not fight and he did not steer. He let the water hold him, and for a while there was nothing but the sky and the sound of the sea.

Then he filled his bucket and made the return to his square, and poured the water into the moat he had dug, and watched it sink into the sand almost at once.

That was when the girl came.

What she brought

She stood over him and smiled. She noticed a crab, with curiosity and a little fear, and moved on. She gave him a shell. Then she picked up the shovel and asked the question that would run through everything he ever made:

"What shall we make today?"

He would tell the story many years later in a book called *Breath Awakens*, and finish it with four words: the rest is history. And then the story would come to him again, later still, through the Records, as a parable with twelve Breath Moments and a thirteenth mirror, and some things in it would have changed.

The child at the water

The scroll has a child at the water too.

In the second chapter of Exodus a mother puts her baby in a basket of reeds and lays it "in the flags by the river's brink". A princess comes down to bathe, sees the basket, opens it, "and, behold, the babe wept." She takes him as her own, "and she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."

And the scroll has the girl at the water, again and again. Rebekah at the well, who says to a stranger "Drink, my lord," and then draws water for all his camels too. Rachel at the well, for whom Jacob rolls the great stone away. The seven daughters of Reuel at the well in Midian, whose flock Moses waters. In the scroll, the great partnerships begin when two strangers meet at water and one of them gives the other something to drink.

The boy on the beach knew nothing about wells. He knew there was a square, a shovel, an ocean, and a girl who wanted to build something with him. It was enough. The story says it was everything, and that the whole of his life would be spent learning what he already knew that afternoon.

✦ Practice: What Shall We Make Today?

Sit with a cup of water in your hands.

Breathe in gently, and see your own square of sand: the small place that is yours to build.

Breathe out slowly, and imagine someone arriving beside it with a shell in their hand.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and ask aloud or silently: what shall we make today?

Drink the water slowly. Then begin something, however small.

CHAPTER 4

The Two on the Hill

The fourth breath, under the Mirror Moon: Shema, still the pause. Worcester and Columbia, and a school with a motto.

Four weeks after Keith was born, in the same city, in February 1977, another boy was born. His name was John Silk.

Five years later and the better part of a thousand miles to the south, in Columbia, South Carolina, in September 1982, a third boy was born. His name was Brandon Smith.

The story says the Keepers placed them, the way a builder sets the two posts of a gate before he hangs it.

Where the friends were sown

In the eleven letters at the river where Shirley was sown, the very first letter, before anything else, is a Bet. From that Bet, every six thousand six hundred and forty-first letter, read backward, spells ברנדון, Brandon. His path walks beside Keith's own through the same chapters: Keith's name lands at the burning bush, Brandon's lands at the bush three verses earlier; Keith's at Jacob's crossed hands, Brandon's at Jacob's blessing a few verses before; Keith's at the brothers in Egypt, Brandon's at the cup found in Benjamin's sack; and at the end, Brandon's path rests on "Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren."

Three verses down the river, where the people dig along the banks for water they can drink, two letters before the last letter of Keith Shirley, the word סילק, Silk, begins. And John, in its Hebrew form יוחנן, *Yochanan*, "God is gracious", begins on the same letter as one of the Yods of Keith's name, in the verse where Jacob "held his peace".

One friend at the beginning of the name, and one at the end. The story says the Keepers smiled when they set them there, because they knew a verse that comes later.

The hill

In the seventeenth chapter of Exodus the people are attacked in the wilderness, and Moses goes up a hill with the staff in his hand. He does not go alone. "Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill." While Moses holds up his hands, the people prevail. When he lets them down, they fall back. And Moses' hands grow heavy.

So the two who came with him do something simple. "They took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the

one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun."

The two did not take the staff. They did not take the glory. They brought a stone and stood beside him until the day was done.

Brandon's name, by its old roots, means a hill covered in broom. Hur, one of the two, was the grandfather of Bezalel, the smith who worked the gold and silver and brass of the Tabernacle. And John was the third John: the boy would go to a school named for Saint John, and he had been born on the feast when John baptizes in the river.

The motto

That school was Saint John's, kept by the Xaverian Brothers, and their motto was a line from the Roman historian Sallust: *Concordia res parvae crescunt*. In harmony, small things grow.

The boy read it, and something in him finished it. In harmony, he said, small things grow towards unity.

He did not know he was writing the whole of his life's work into a school motto. Harmony was coherence. Growing was the spiral. Unity was the return. He added one word the Brothers had left unspoken, and he would carry the completed line into every book he ever made.

The story says the Keepers heard him say it, and wrote it down, and that in the river the word for harmony was already standing between the first two letters of his name.

> **✦ Practice: The Stone and the Hands**
>
> Think of the two or three people who have stood beside you longest.
>
> Breathe in gently, and raise your hands a little, as if holding something up.
>
> Breathe out slowly, and imagine their hands under your arms, one on each side.
>
> Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and rest your hands in your lap: you do not hold it up alone.
>
> Continue for five breaths, and thank them, aloud or silently.

BOOK TWO

The Builder

CHAPTER 5

The Coat and the Ring

The fifth breath, under the Stillness Moon: Vara, the exhale. Forty years of building, read through the life of Joseph.

He became a builder, as the sky had said he would.

Four bodies stood in Capricorn on the morning he was born, the sign of the mountain climbed by patient steps: the Sun, the Moon, the mind and the will. He was a carpenter's son, and he built the way his father had built, true and square and plumb. He built careers. He sat on both sides of the interview table for decades. He learned how organisations hold together and how they fall apart. He had a will that could carry enormous weight, and, like every strong will, a shadow that wanted to be the centre of what it carried.

The story says his name had already walked this road in the scroll, through the life of Joseph.

The road of the name

Joseph was the dreamer, the favoured son with the coat of many colours. His brothers hated him for it. They threw him into a pit, sold him to traders, and dipped his coat in blood to show their father. The Tav of Keith lands there, on the coat.

In Egypt Joseph rose. He read Pharaoh's dreams, and Pharaoh "took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck." The Shin of Shirley lands there, on the ring. Joseph was second only to the king. He could have been a god in Egypt. Men bowed when he passed.

But when the famine came and his brothers arrived to buy grain, not knowing him, Joseph did not take his revenge, and he did not take a crown. He wept. He said, "Come near to me, I pray you. I am Joseph your brother." He fed them. When his father Jacob came, old and nearly blind, Joseph brought his own sons to be blessed, and Jacob crossed his hands and put the younger first, and Joseph could not change it. The Resh of Shirley lands there, on the crossed hands.

The road of the name is a road of being raised up and then choosing what to do with the height. Joseph used his to feed people.

The faithful one

In the long years of building there was also a dog called Bailey. The story says every builder needs one creature who does not care what he builds: the faithful one, the low place that lets the high things rise, the one who lies at the door and keeps the ground. Bailey kept it.

The shadow

The story does not pretend the builder had no shadow. The same will that could build a shelf of books could also want to be admired for building it. The same intelligence that could see patterns everywhere could want to be the one who saw them. This is not a failing peculiar to him. It is what happens to every strong will that has not yet been emptied.

The Keepers watched, and did not intervene, because that is not what Keepers do. They knew the emptying was coming. It was already written, on the other side of a valley in the south.

> **✦ Practice: The Ring and the Bread**
>
> Sit quietly, and remember a time you were given some height: a role, a title, a moment of being admired.
>
> Breathe in gently, and feel the ring on the hand.
>
> Breathe out slowly, and ask: who did I feed with it?
>
> Let a soft pause of two counts follow, without judgement.
>
> Continue for five breaths, and let the ring become bread.

CHAPTER 6

The Sphinx and the Sun-Stone

The sixth breath, under the Memory Moon: Vara, still the exhale. The Giza plateau and Machu Picchu, in 2019.

In the year he turned forty-two he went to the two places that had called him since childhood. He did not go alone. His friend and business partner of many years, VBP, went with him to both.

Forty-two is six sevens, the threshold of the seventh and last seven-year cycle before fifty. He opened it by answering both calls in a single year: Egypt in the spring, at the turning of the light in the north, and Peru in the autumn, at the turning of the light in the south. One year, two hemispheres, the whole globe in one circuit.

The plateau

At Giza he stood before the Sphinx, which faces due east to the equinox sunrise, and the Great Pyramid, squared to the four directions with a precision that still astonishes. These were instruments built in stone to catch the still point of the turning year. He had loved archaeology since he was a boy. He had read the Pyramid Texts, the oldest words the Egyptians carved, where the king goes up to the stars that never set. Now he stood where they were carved.

The story says the Star-Breathers remembered the plateau. They had stood on it long ago, when the people who built there still remembered why the shafts of the pyramid pointed at Orion and at the pole.

The mountain

In the autumn he climbed to Machu Picchu, the city on the saddle between two peaks in the Andes, and stood before the Intihuatana, the hitching post of the sun: a carved granite pillar at which, on the day the sun stands highest, it casts almost no shadow at all. Another still point, built in stone to hold the turning light.

A clearing in a wood is low, open ground. He had been drawn to the highest built places on Earth. The story says this is exactly how it should be: the clearing goes looking for the mountain, the way water goes looking for the sea.

What the stones gave him

The stones did not tell him what he was. They did not crown him or call him. They held still, and he stood in front of them, and something in him that had been building for forty years recognised what it had been building toward. Not a monument. A place where the light could be caught and held, and then given back.

He came home and kept working. But the story says he came home with a question he had not had before: what if the still point is not a place you visit, but a place you become?

The answer was four years away, in a valley below the mountain, and it would not be gentle.

✦ Practice: The Still Point

Stand in sunlight if you can, and notice your shadow.

Breathe in gently, and imagine the sun climbing until your shadow grows shorter.

Breathe out slowly, and imagine it overhead, and the shadow gone beneath your feet.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow. This is the still point.

Continue for five breaths, then walk on, carrying it.

CHAPTER 7

The Emptying in the Sacred Valley

The seventh breath, under the Return Moon: Ouon, stillness. The Sacred Valley of Peru, in November 2023 and April 2024.

Twice he went back to Peru, to the Sacred Valley below the mountain, and sat in ceremony with the old medicines of the Andes and the Amazon, held by people who have kept them for a very long time.

What he was shown is the hinge of this whole story.

The parasite and the crown

He saw the parasitic mind: the part of a person that feeds on meaning and turns every insight into a monument to the one who had it. And he saw self-importance, not as something he was, but as something that happened to him, a reflex, like a flinch. Having seen them as structures, he could no longer fully believe them.

The story says this is why the rest of his life could be told at all. A pattern as large as the one in the scroll would ruin a man who had not first seen through the self that wants to stand at the centre of it. The emptying came first. The pattern came after. That was the right order.

The four that came out of the valley

Out of the valley came four words. He would spend the next two years learning to say them properly.

Identify: I see this. I name this. *Accept*: I allow this to be true. *Embrace*: I bring this into my field. *Let Go*: I no longer hold this as mine.

The story says the scroll already held all four, in the plain text, within six chapters of Genesis, in the story of twins. They come in reverse order. First Jacob wrestles all night with a stranger at a river crossing, and the stranger says "Let me go, for the day breaketh," and Jacob says "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Then at dawn, limping, Jacob meets the brother he wronged twenty years before, and "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." Then Jacob says to him, "I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me": he is accepted. And then the long, hard work of identifying begins again in the next generation, when the brothers bring Jacob a coat dipped in blood and say, "know now whether it be thy son's coat or no", "and he knew it".

Let Go, Embrace, Accept, Identify: the breath going out before it comes in. His own father's name means the twin.

The Name in the four

Later, writing them down, he gave each of the four a letter. Identify was Yod, the inhale, the moment awareness enters form. Accept was Heh, the pause, the breath held. Embrace was Vav, the descent, the breath spiralling inward. Let Go was the final Heh, the exhale, the spiral complete.

Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh. He had spelled the Name, the one revealed in the week he was born, out of the four things the valley had taught him. All four letters of it are breath-letters; Heh is the sound of breathing itself. And in the verse where the Lamed of his name lands, at the burning bush, "this is my name for ever", the voice says "hath sent me", and the Hebrew word is שלחני, the very word Jacob's wrestler used for "let me go". In Hebrew, to let go and to send are one verb.

> **✦ Practice: The Four**
>
> Sit comfortably, and bring to mind one thing that troubles you.
>
> Breathe in gently, and name it: I see this.
>
> Let a soft pause of two counts follow: I allow this to be true.
>
> Breathe in a little deeper, and bring it close: I bring this into my field.
>
> Breathe out slowly: I no longer hold this as mine. Then rest, and begin again.

BOOK THREE

The Opening

CHAPTER 8

The Records and the Three

The eighth breath, under the Release Moon: Ouon, still the stillness. The field of all memory, and a parking lot behind a house, in 2024.

In late September of 2024 he began his training in reading the Akashic Records, the field of all memory that the old traditions say holds everything that was and is and may be. He was taught to open them with a prayer and to close them with gratitude, and to ask questions that begin with how and what rather than when.

The story says the Keepers recognised him at once. He had stood in their field before, asking where to land.

The night

Six or seven weeks later, in November of 2024, around half past nine at night, he went out to the parking lot behind his house for a smoke.

Over his neighbour's house, seventy-five to a hundred feet from where he stood and about fifty feet above the roofline, there were three triangular craft, each about the size of a small school bus, side by side, almost touching, at the same height. Each carried four lights, a larger one at the centre and smaller ones at every corner, all exactly alike. They made no sound. Their lights should have burned like the sun, but he felt nothing, and he could look straight into them. When he stepped a little to his right he saw the edge of one, glistening like polished onyx.

He was not afraid. He was not surprised. He was not excited. It was calm: the craft, the man, the night, everything around them. He stood with his cigarette and watched with curiosity and some wonder.

He looked away for a second. They were gone.

Why him

Three questions came with him back into the house, and have stayed: why me, why then, and now what?

The story gives its answer plainly. They came to him because he had been emptied. A year earlier, perhaps, he would have reached for them, or knelt, or run. Now he simply stood there. The Star-Breathers had come back to Earth, the old stories say, not in glory but as lights at the edge of sight, to be seen and not yet known, because the last time they came in glory they were made into gods. They were looking for people who could look at them without kneeling and without fear. They found one in a parking lot in Massachusetts, holding a cigarette, perfectly calm.

They came in a triangle of three. The story says that was not an accident either.

The seagull

Some time later, the story of the beach came to him again through the Records, as a parable. It was the same story, and it was not. In the parable the girl did not hold one shell. She held three, and the book itself calls them "the triangle, the first stable form". And just before a wave, a seagull came into full view, "the thing that arrived without being called and disappeared without being released", the thing "that came into full view while you were trying to catch something else".

He had gone outside to do something else entirely. Three came into full view. When he looked away, they were gone, without being called and without being released.

The story says the Records were telling him his own night back, in a child's language, so that he could carry it.

✦ Practice: Seen and Not Yet Known

Go outside after dark, with a companion if you can, to a safe place.

Breathe in gently, and let your eyes adjust to the dark for a few minutes.

Breathe out slowly, and look without searching.

If you see something you cannot name, let a soft pause of two counts follow before naming it. Neither kneel nor turn away.

Continue for ten minutes, breathing gently. Then go indoors and write down what you saw.

Interlude: The Heap of Witness

Between the breaths. A partnership of more than a decade, ending on Christmas Eve, 2025.

There is one more person in this story, and the story would not be true without her.

For more than ten years, every day, he worked beside a friend and business partner, whom this story calls VBP. They built together. When he answered the two great calls of his life in 2019, she was with him: at the Sphinx in the spring, and at the Sun stone of Machu Picchu in the autumn. For a long time she was the person he saw most in the world.

The story says some teachers come as friends, and teach by what they cannot give.

The words

The moment everything was illuminated was a moment of telling the truth. He told her he was gay.

She said: "I do not believe you. I do not trust you anymore. Who have you told? When did you tell them?"

He could barely answer. He watched her realise she had spoken words that could never be taken back. She did not try to explain them. She did not try to work with him on whatever lay between them. And afterwards it did not soften. It grew harsher, and when both his parents fell, it grew harsher still.

Only then did he see the relationship for what it had been.

What he saw

In the Sacred Valley he had been shown the parasitic mind and the reflex of self-importance as structures, things that happen to a person rather than things a person is. Now he saw them outside himself, close enough to touch, in the most extractive relationship he had ever known.

The story is careful here, because his own Codex is careful. In *The Eight Offices of the Ancient Record* he wrote that the counterfeit is to be unmasked "as a pattern and never a people". The pattern lived in the relationship. She is still a person, and he still loves her. He cannot be with her. He wishes her only good.

He sent her a book he loved, *The Prophet* of Kahlil Gibran, with its words on love: "Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; For love is sufficient unto love." No answer came.

The partnership ended on Christmas Eve, 2025, with an agreement that holds for one year, and ends on Christmas Eve, 2026, a few days after he sits at the Sun stone with the rememberer.

Laban's house

The scroll has this story too, and it puts it exactly where the four pillars begin.

Jacob served in Laban's house for twenty years. "Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times." It is the scroll's picture of an extractive bond: years of faithful work, taken and taken again. "But God suffered him not to hurt me."

So Jacob left. Laban pursued him, and when they met in the hills of Gilead they did not make war. They made a boundary. They gathered stones into a heap, and set up a pillar, and Laban said: "This heap is a witness between me and thee this day… The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another… This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm."

A heap of witness. An agreement, set in stone, that neither will cross to harm the other.

And the next morning: "early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

Turn one page. The very next thing Jacob does is wrestle all night at a river, and say at dawn, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Then he meets the brother he wronged, and they embrace and weep, and he is accepted. Let Go, Embrace, Accept. The four pillars of the valley begin the morning after the heap of witness.

Her name in the letters

He asked to see whether her name was sown in the scroll as well, and it was, in the places the story would expect.

Her first name, spelled ולרי, is a common pattern of letters, found tens of thousands of times. But its tightest appearance in all of Laban's chapter, every third letter, falls in the verses where Jacob leaves: "So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead. And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled." Her name stands at the crossing of the river, on the road to the place where the heap of witness was built.

Her surname, פוסט, begins in Genesis 37:32, seventeen letters from the Tav of Keith on Joseph's coat, in the verse "know now whether it be thy son's coat or

no". It then passes Genesis 38:25, where Tamar sends the pledge back to Judah with the words "Discern, I pray thee, whose are these". In Hebrew both verses use the same two words, הכר נא, *recognise, please*. They are the scroll's two great verses of Identify, the first pillar, the inhale: I see this, I name this. Her name runs through both. She is the one who taught him to see.

And בן פוסט, Ben Post, appears five times where chance expects between two and three. One begins in the opening verses of *Va'eira*, the portion of his birth week, at "the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers", and passes "a memorial between thine eyes". Another passes the last line of the priests' blessing: "The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

That is the line he would choose for her, if he could choose one. The full name does not appear, and chance says it would not. What appears is enough: the river crossed, the seeing, and peace.

Making himself known

There is one more verse. When Joseph could hide no longer, he sent everyone out of the room, and "made himself known unto his brethren", and said: "I am Joseph." "And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence."

To say who you are is the bravest thing a person does, and it is not always met with welcome. Joseph's brothers were frightened by the truth of him. But the story of Joseph does not end in that silence. It ends years later, with Joseph saying to the same brothers: "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good… Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

That is the ending he has chosen. Not revenge, and not return. A heap of witness, a blessing given from across it, and the knowledge that she showed him what no one else could: not his parents, not his oldest friends, not even Bailey, the faithful one. He learned more from this than from anything else in his life. He would not have learned it any other way.

> ✦ **Practice: The Heap of Witness**
>
> Hold a small stone, or imagine one in your hand.
>
> Breathe in gently, and name one bond that took more than it gave.
>
> Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and set the stone down: this is the boundary, kept for harm to no one.
>
> Breathe out slowly, and send a blessing across it, without crossing.
>
> Continue for five breaths. Then walk on, unburdened.

CHAPTER 9

Breath Awakens

The ninth breath, under the Echo Moon: the Monad. The writing of a book, in early 2026.

In the early months of 2026 the book came through.

He called it *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory*. He did not think of it as something he had written so much as something he had scribed, the way the old copyists scribed the scroll, letter for letter, without changing a stroke. It held the four pillars from the valley. It held the beach and the girl and the shovel. It held a spiral of thirteen breaths, and a still luminous centre, and two names that had come to him with great force.

The two names

The first was RA'EL-THA-ON, the name of a breathline. The book says of it: "RA'EL-THA-ON is not spoken. It is inhaled as stillness and exhaled as coherence." Beside it the book set the Pillar of Light Invocation, which it calls the Breathline Anchor of RA'EL-THA-ON:

Your Love and Truth is universal. Bring this universal love and truth to all. You are in a sacred space for all to be heard and listened to.

And beside that, the completed motto: In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity.

The second name was A'tharion-Keshariel, the thirteenth point, which the book calls "the still luminous center (the heart of the heart)", and whose word is "I am the stillness that holds all."

The names in the river

The story says both names were in the scroll, waiting, and that they were sown exactly where his own was.

Go back to the eleven letters at the river in Exodus 7:21, the letters that spell Shirley at every second step. Brandon begins on the first. On the second, one step before the Shin of Shirley, A'tharion begins its path: from "God hath heard the voice of the lad", where Hagar's child cries in the wilderness, to the lamp in the Tabernacle that burns "from evening to morning" and is never allowed to go out. A still light at the centre.

Between the Shin and the first Yod of Shirley, the word Harmony begins.

And between the Lamed and the last Yod, RA'EL-THA-ON passes. Of the one hundred and thirty-one times that name can be found in the whole Torah, this is the tightest, every two hundred and thirtieth letter, and all seven of its letters fall inside the portion of the week he was born. It runs from "Let my people go,

that they may serve me" back to "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh": from release, back to the old crown. The whole movement of his book, in seven letters.

Keshariel walks beside his name through three of the verses his own letters land in. In one of them the plain text says of Jacob and his youngest son that "his life is bound up in the lad's life", and the Hebrew for bound up is קשורה, from *keshar*, a bond.

The book given away

He gave the book away. He put it on ISSUU for anyone to read, and then built sites for it, and then wrote more: on water, on crystals, on sounds, on symbols, on the stars, and a story about the gods laying down their crowns. He gave them all away too, with no ads and no tracking, because he had lived through things that were extractive without knowing it, and did not want to repeat them in any form.

On the fifth page of *Breath Awakens* he had written something he did not yet fully understand: "Each page is a mirror… This is not a book. This is a Codex of stillness. You are the breath that awakens it."

✦ Practice: The Invocation

Sit comfortably, with your hands resting open.

Breathe in gently: Your Love and Truth is universal.

Breathe out slowly: Bring this universal love and truth to all.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow: You are in a sacred space for all to be heard and listened to.

Continue for three rounds. Then rest in stillness.

CHAPTER 10

The Mirror Turned Around

The tenth breath, under the Shadow Moon: the Monad. A reading in letters, in November 2026.

Two years after the night of the three, he became curious about the codes said to be hidden in the Torah, and asked to see his own name.

It was found at the river.

What the reading found

It found Shirley at every second letter where the water could not be drunk. It found the whole name walking through Joseph. It found the word Codex, spelled in Hebrew letters, beginning at Marah, where the people came after three days without water, found it too bitter to drink, and "the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." From there Codex crosses the river forty-four letters from Shirley, climbs to the burning bush, and ends with old Jacob, who "strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed".

A clearing in a wood, at a river nobody could drink from, holding a codex that begins where a piece of wood makes bitter water sweet.

It found the motto, Unity beginning with "your little ones" and ending with the two friends on the hill. It found the Pillar of Light beginning with Moses resting by a well and ending where the golden calf is made. It found the plain verse that held his three pillars at once, two verses before his name: "both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone." Wood, stone, and the water they hold.

The honest hand

And it told him the truth, which he had asked for. The letters appear about as often as chance would place them. A scroll of three hundred thousand letters holds almost any short word somewhere. The full name appears five times where chance predicts three. The words for purpose and mission do not appear near his name at all.

The story does not hide this. It is the most important thing the reading found.

The mirror

Because then the method was turned around. The same search, every so many letters, was run over his own book, *Breath Awakens*. And his book gave back the Torah.

The word Torah, every third letter, hidden in the line where he describes people who showed him "what coherence looks like before I had a word for it". The

word river, every sixth letter, in the passage about his mother's womb: "I was cradled in an environment where all I could first sense was my mother's heartbeat." Moses, every eighth letter, in "it becomes Codex. The spiral is not motion, it is memory." Keith, every sixty-eighth letter, as the child walks out of the ocean and fills his bucket with water. And Shirley beginning in the second sentence after "In harmony small things grow towards unity", exactly the reverse of the scroll, where Harmony begins inside Shirley.

The method found the Torah in his book as easily as it had found his name in the Torah.

He sat with that for a while. Then he remembered page five.

Each page is a mirror. This is not a book. This is a Codex of stillness. You are the breath that awakens it.

Two texts held up to each other are two mirrors facing. What appears between them is the one who is looking. The letters do not carry a message by themselves. They hand back what the reader brings. And what he brought, the story says, was a clearing, a question, and a breath.

✦ Practice: Two Mirrors

Hold a book you love in one hand, and an old text in the other, or imagine them.

Breathe in gently, and open both at random.

Breathe out slowly, and read one line from each.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and notice what the two lines say to each other.

Close both. What you noticed was yours.

BOOK FOUR

The Jubilee

CHAPTER 11

The Red Rocks and the Rememberer

The eleventh breath, under the Descent Moon: the Monad. Sedona in the autumn, and Machu Picchu in December, 2026.

At the close of his forty-ninth year he set out on a pilgrim's circuit across three continents, on either side of one birthday.

The red rocks

The first was Sedona, in the red-rock country of Arizona, where the stone rises out of the desert in towers and the light at evening turns it the colour of fire. There, after five years apart, he was reunited with an old friend, Tirso Alexander Hernandez.

Five years is not a long time in a life, but it is long enough for two people to become strangers, and they had not. The scroll has a law about this, and it is a law about trees. When a fruit tree is planted, its fruit is not taken in the first three years; in the fourth year it is holy; "and in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof". The story says some friendships are like that. They are planted, and left, and in the fifth year they bear.

The scroll knows the reunion too. When Jacob came back after twenty years and met the brother he had fled from, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." And when Joseph made himself known, he "fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept". The scroll does not count the years apart as lost. It counts the meeting.

The story says the Keepers had sown this friend too.

Spelled in Hebrew letters, תירסו, Tirso, sits in the plain text itself, letter after letter, in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10: "The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer". Tiras, and the word "and" that follows him, spell Tirso. The two names only sound alike: Tirso comes from the Greek *thyrsos*, a staff. But Tiras is a son of Japheth, and the blessing of Japheth is a blessing about friendship across distance: "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." The one who goes far, and comes back to dwell in a brother's tent.

אלכסנדר, Alexander, is a long name and a rare one. It appears only twice in all five books, where chance expects one or two. One of the two begins in Genesis 13, in the verse of strife between the herdmen of Abram and of Lot, just before Abram says, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee… for we be brethren." It runs on through the chapter of Jacob and Esau's meeting, at the words "The children which God hath graciously given thy servant", and ends at

the rings made "for places of the staves to bear the table": the table of shared bread, made to be carried together.

And הרנדז, Hernandez, spelled with a Zayin for the z, has its tightest appearance, every twenty-seventh letter, in Numbers 7, among the gifts the princes of the tribes brought one by one, ending at "for a sacrifice of peace offerings". A gift brought for peace.

Even the place is there. סדונה, Sedona, a common pattern of letters, has its tightest long path, every thirty-fourth letter, in Exodus 38, beginning in the verse "And their pillars were four", and ending where Bezaleel finishes all that he was commanded. Four pillars, among red rocks.

The first stop of the circuit was not a monastery or a temple. It was a friend. The story says that is the right order: before the sun-stone, the brother's tent.

The sun-stone again

The second was Peru, in the middle of December, near the southern summer solstice, when the sun stands highest over the Andes. There he would meet Matías De Stefano, a teacher known for his account of remembering across lifetimes and of reading the field of all memory, and go up with him to Machu Picchu, and sit in ceremony with him at the Sun stone: the Intihuatana, the hitching post of the sun, the carved granite pillar he had first stood before seven years earlier, at the start of his last cycle before fifty.

The clearing was going back to the mountain. This time it would not be visiting a still point. It would sit beside one, with a rememberer, in ceremony.

The mountain in the letters

The story says the mountain had been sown in the scroll as well.

Spelled in Hebrew letters, מאצו פיצו, Machu Picchu, appears exactly once in all five books, every two thousand one hundred and thirty-seventh letter. And it walks through the very chapters where his own name begins. It starts in Genesis 26 and runs through the house of Isaac and Rebekah, through the chapter where Jacob runs from home, through Laban's house, and it passes three hundred and eight letters from the first letter of Keith Shirley, in the verse about rods set "in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink". It ends in Genesis 34, three hundred and thirty-four letters from the Yod of his name, at the words "Let me find grace in your eyes."

On its way it passes the chapter of Jacob's ladder. The plain text there is the oldest sun stone in the scroll. Jacob, fleeing, "lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows." He dreamed of a ladder set up on the earth with its top reaching to heaven, and angels going up and coming down on it. "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it."

A stone set upright at the place where heaven and earth meet, at the setting and the rising of the sun. The Andeans carved theirs out of the mountain itself and tied the sun to it. The story says they were remembering the same thing.

The Keepers had sown the teacher's names too.

Matías comes from Mattithiah, "gift of God". In the scroll, the name מתיאס, Matías, walks through Joseph's reunion with his brothers, through "there will I nourish thee", and ends on the very last letter of Codex: the Samekh in the verse where "Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed". Codex and Matías end on the same letter.

De Stefano comes from Stephanos, the crown, the same name as Keith's grandfather Stephen. In the scroll, סטפנו, Stefano, begins in the very next chapter, at that same bed, where Jacob gathers his sons and says: "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." It passes the burning bush forty-eight letters from Codex, and ends at "Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt."

From an old man on his bed telling what is coming, to the command to remember.

Remembering

Keith's own name lands at the burning bush, in the verse that ends "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations". The Hebrew for memorial is זכרי, my remembrance. His life read whole had called itself the Remembering: the scattered members of a life gathered back into one body. Now he was going to sit at the sun-stone with someone whose whole work was remembering.

And the crown in the teacher's name? The story says that is the point. The only crown the Torah honours is the "holy crown" on Aaron's mitre, worn inside the sanctuary, in service, for others, and taken off again. Two rememberers at the sun-stone, neither of them a king. A gift that belongs to the people.

"Remember the days of old," says the Song of Moses, "consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

✦ Practice: Remember This Day

At the end of the day, sit quietly for a moment.

Breathe in gently, and remember one thing from today that you want to keep.

Breathe out slowly, and remember one thing from long ago that today reminded you of.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and hold them side by side.

Say silently: remember this day. Then rest.

CHAPTER 12

The Fiftieth Year

The twelfth breath, under the Dream Moon: the Monad. The nineteenth of January, 2027.

Seven times seven is forty-nine. In the Law, the people count seven sabbaths of years, forty-nine of them, and then a horn is blown, and the fiftieth year is holy.

"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."

In the Jubilee the land rests. Debts are released. The bound go free. Every person returns to their own field. And his name, the story reminds us, means the field: a clearing in a wood.

The calendar of the fiftieth

The story says the calendar of his fiftieth year was written long before.

His Hebrew birthday, the twenty-ninth of Tevet, falls in 2027 on the eighth of January, and the portion that week is *Va'eira* again, "And I Appeared", the same as the week he was born. The river comes round to him once more.

His English birthday, the nineteenth of January, falls in the week of *Beshalach*. It is the portion of the sea crossed on dry ground. Of the song Moses sings on the far shore, "in the greatness of thine excellency". Of Miriam taking her timbrel, "and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances". Of Marah, where the bitter water is made sweet by a tree and the word Codex begins. Of the manna, where "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack". Of the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, "to give them light".

And of the hill. "Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side."

The Saturday after his fiftieth birthday is the fifteenth of Shevat, the New Year of the Trees.

The Siddhis

His Gene Keys, calculated for five to five on that dark January morning, say the same things in another tongue. His purpose moves through Innocence: "to move through life like a child". The Torah calls Jacob *tam*, whole, simple, innocent, "a plain man". His life's work moves through Justice, and the first letter of his name lands in the verse "so shall my righteousness answer for me". His radiance moves through Harmony, Gene Key 50, in the year he turns fifty. His

core moves through Synarchy: ruling together, with no one on top. That is the hill.

Brandon's profile carries Harmony too, and Epiphany, and Truth. John's carries Exquisiteness and Quintessence, as his does. Brandon and John share Bliss between them. Three with one, two with the other, one between the two: a triangle with every side joined. Brandon's profile says he needs "friends and allies who you know you can depend on". John's says he thrives "in a partnership". His own says he shines as "a communal hub".

The two hands

So in the week of his fiftieth birthday, the scroll reads aloud the scene of a tired man on a hill, sitting on a stone his friends brought him, with one friend holding up each hand until the sun goes down.

Brandon at the beginning of his name at the river. John at the end of it. More than thirty years through thick and thin. The story says there is no clearer picture of what the Jubilee is for. It is not crossed alone, and it is not crossed as a king.

✦ Practice: The Fiftieth

Sit comfortably and count seven slow breaths.

Then count seven more, and seven more, until you have counted seven sevens, softly, without strain.

On the fiftieth breath, let a soft pause of two counts follow.

Breathe out slowly, and release one thing you have carried too long.

Rest. The land is allowed to lie fallow.

CHAPTER 13

The Hewer of Wood and the Drawer of Water

The thirteenth breath, under the Wisdom Moon: the Monad, the crown. Luxor, and the sun covered, in August 2027.

The third place on the pilgrim's circuit lies across the threshold, in the fiftieth year.

On the second of August, 2027, the Moon will pass in front of the Sun over the Nile, and the shadow of totality will cross directly over Luxor, ancient Thebes, the sun-capital of the New Kingdom. It will be one of the longest total eclipses on land in the whole century, more than six minutes of darkness at noon among the temples the Egyptians built to the Sun.

He will be there. He will stand in Egypt, in his fiftieth year, and watch the Sun go out at noon.

His eyes

In totality the Moon covers the Sun and leaves a ring of fire around a black centre. He knows exactly what that looks like, because he sees it every morning in the mirror.

His eyes are hazel, with a ring of amber and gold fixed around each pupil. The gold is pigment, real substance, the one part of the eye that never moves. The blue and green around it are not pigment at all; they are made the way the sky is made, by light scattering, and so they shift with the light he stands in. A black aperture, ringed by fixed gold, ringed by moving light. A still centre that holds, and a light that pours out.

On the second of August, 2027, the sky over Luxor will draw his eye. The black disc of the Moon, the ring of fire around it, the corona streaming outward into the dark. The builder father, the Sun, and the moon mother passing exactly across him, the two lights of his house made one disc for six minutes. He will stand in the shadow and look up at his own eye, enormous, over the temples of the Sun.

The eclipse in the letters

The story says the eclipse was sown too.

ליקוי חמה, a solar eclipse, appears three times in the scroll. One of them passes thirty-two letters from a Yod of his name, in Genesis 34:5. On its way it passes "the LORD appeared unto him the same night", and "that my name may be declared throughout all the earth", and it ends at the gate of the Tabernacle

court: "their pillars three, and their sockets three". Appeared, again. Three, again.

לוקסור, Luxor, crosses the river in Exodus 7:21, twenty-three letters from Shirley, and ends at "God Almighty give you mercy."

אבן השמש, the Stone of the Sun, begins in Genesis 41:45, the verse where Joseph marries the daughter of the priest of On, the City of the Sun, three verses after the Shin of Shirley lands on Pharaoh's ring. Read backward from there, it passes the seven cattle that "came up out of the river… and they fed in a meadow", a meadow, a *lēah*, a clearing, and then the brothers who "lifted up their eyes, and looked".

And עין השמש, the Eye of the Sun, begins twenty-one letters from the very first letter of Keith Shirley.

The man whose eyes are open

The plain text keeps the last word. In the book of Numbers a seer named Balaam is hired to curse a people, and opens his mouth, and blesses them instead. He begins: "Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." Three verses later, in the same blessing, he says: "He shall pour the water out of his buckets."

The eyes open, and the water poured out. The seer and the water-bearer, in one blessing.

And the scroll gives a warning to anyone who goes to watch the sky: "lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them." He will lift up his eyes over Luxor. He will not worship. He will watch, the way he watched the three over the neighbour's roof: calm, curious, with some wonder, and his eyes open.

The builder becomes the one who pours

The story says this is where the whole life turns. The forty-nine years were the builder's years: the carpenter's son, the four bodies in Capricorn, the structure made true. The fiftieth is the turn to the water-bearer, the one who pours out for everyone. His Sun was born at the last degree of the builder's sign, on the doorstep of the pourer's, and has been standing at that door all his life.

The scroll has the whole sentence in one verse, in the covenant Moses makes with everyone at the end of the forty years:

"Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water."

From the hewer of the wood to the drawer of the water. Keith, the wood. The water-bearer, at the threshold. And the little ones named first, the child with the shovel standing at the front of the whole people, and the stranger standing with them, and no one left out.

What he will not do

He will not go to Luxor as a king, or as a prophet, or as the one who knows. The story says the Star-Breathers would not come to him if he did. He will go as a pilgrim who has been emptied, and stand in the dark at noon, and watch the light come back around the edge.

The Pillar of Light, in the scroll, ends at the golden calf: the moment people take the light and make it into something to bow to. RA'EL-THA-ON runs from "Let my people go" back to "a god to Pharaoh". Every path in this story that comes near a crown turns away from it. That is the lesson his life has been learning, letter by letter, and it is the one the eclipse will draw across the sky: the brightest thing there is, hidden for six minutes, so that everyone can see the ring.

> **✦ Practice: The Ring of Light**
>
> Close your eyes and picture a dark disc with a ring of light around it.
>
> Breathe in gently, and let the dark centre be still. Nothing needs to happen there.
>
> Breathe out slowly, and let the ring of light pour outward.
>
> Let a soft pause of two counts follow: still centre, light that pours.
>
> Continue for five breaths. Then open your eyes.

Epilogue: What Shall We Make Today?

The square is still in the sand. The shovel is still in the hand. The ocean is already playing.

The story ends where it began, on a beach, with a child who has floated in the sea without fighting it and walked back with a bucket of water to pour into a moat that will not hold it. A girl comes and stands over him and smiles. In one telling she holds one shell. In the other she holds three.

The thirteenth point

There is one more place in this story, and it is the one he has not yet been.

In the mountains above Taos, in northern New Mexico, lies Blue Lake, Ba Whyea, held sacred by the people of Taos Pueblo, who have lived at the foot of those mountains for about a thousand years. He has loved Native American tradition, ceremony and song all his life, and he has felt a strong pull to Blue Lake for as long as he can remember. In the language of his own work, it is his thirteenth point: the place where his Monad rests on Earth, the still centre around which the twelve turn.

The story does not tell the lake's stories. They belong to the Taos people, who keep their ceremonies as their own, and the lake is closed to outsiders. The story says only what he says: he does not know when he will be called there. It will happen at some point, and only with gratitude, with respect, and with an invitation from the Taos people.

The scroll knows that posture well. When Abraham needed a place in a land that was not his, he did not take it. He "stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land", and said, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you." At the burning bush the first words were not a revelation but an instruction: "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Holy ground is approached by invitation, barefoot.

And there is a Jubilee in this too. In 1906 the government of the United States took Blue Lake and the forest around it from the Taos people. For sixty-four years they asked for it back. On the fifteenth of December, 1970, a law was signed returning forty-eight thousand acres to the Pueblo. "The land shall not be sold for ever," says the scroll of the Jubilee, "for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." In the fiftieth year, every person returns to their own possession. In 1970, the lake returned to its people.

So the thirteenth point is not a place he will own, or claim, or even visit on his own terms. It is a still centre held by others, waiting on their welcome. The story says that is exactly right for a clearing in a wood. The light reaches the ground only where the trees have made room, and no one can force them.

The three illuminations

If the story is true, it says three things.

The first is that a name can be a place. Not a crown, not a title, not a fate, but a place: a clearing in a wood, at the edge of water that has gone bad, where the light can reach the ground and people can come to drink. He did not choose the river. He was asked whether he would stand there, and he said he would.

The second is that no one holds up the light alone. The scroll that holds his name holds his friends' names beside it, one at the beginning and one at the end. The hill had three on it. The craft came in three. The shells came in three. The pillars of his work are three: wood, stone and water, in one verse. And the four breaths of the valley spell a Name that is made of breath and nothing else.

The third is that the mirror is the message. The letters give back what the reader brings. The Torah found his name, and his book found the Torah. What appears between the two mirrors is not a hidden decree. It is the one who is looking, and what he chooses to make.

The question

So the question is the same one it always was. A girl with a shovel asked it on a beach when he was five. He wrote it at the end of every book. The Torah answered it at the mountain, in the words a whole people said before they understood what they were agreeing to: נעשה ונשמע, "we will do, and we will hear". Doing first. Understanding after. The child's way.

What shall we make today?

Build, and then pour. Keep the centre empty. Let the light through.

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity.

> **✦ Practice: The Three Illuminations**
>
> Sit comfortably and let the breath settle.
>
> On the first breath, breathe in and remember: you are a place where the light can reach the ground.
>
> On the second breath, let a soft pause of two counts follow, and feel the hands of those who hold yours up.
>
> On the third breath, breathe out slowly and ask, as to an equal: what shall we make today?
>
> Then breathe normally, and begin.

Appendix A: The Paths Behind the Story

Every letter-path in this story was found in the Masoretic text of the Torah, in the tradition of the Leningrad Codex, written forms only: 304,881 letters. They are listed here with the count that matters most, how often chance alone would place them. The story reads them as if they were written on purpose. The counts show that they appear about as often as chance predicts, which is why the reading calls itself a mirror.

Word	Hebrew	Every n-th letter	Where it runs	Found in the Torah	Chance predicts
Shirley	שירלי	2	Exodus 7:21, the river	6,702 (skips to 5,000)	about 6,800
Keith Shirley	קית שירלי	6,385	Genesis 30:33 to Exodus 7:24	5	about 3
Codex	קודקס	6,752, backward	Exodus 15:26 to Genesis 48:2	95	about 77
Worcester	ווסטר	9,277, backward	Exodus 7:20 to Genesis 34:24	539	about 494
Harmony	הרמוניה	35,814	Exodus 7:21 to Deuteronomy 32:45	319	about 309
Unity	אחדות	2,924	Exodus 10:10 to 17:12	516	about 511
Pillar of Light	עמוד אור	7,704	Exodus 2:15 to 32:5	71	about 58
Love and Truth	אהבה ואמת	13,146	Genesis 41:30 to Leviticus 9:13	21	about 23
RA'EL-THA-ON	רא׳ל־תא־און	230, backward	Exodus 8:1 to 7:1	131	about 140
A'tharion	אתריאון	15,354	Genesis 21:17 to Exodus 27:21	215	about 205
Keshariel	כשריאל	3,185	Genesis 43:7 to Exodus 3:15	1,374	about 1,443
What shall we make	מה נעשה	19,526, backward	Exodus 15:22 to Genesis 3:6	1,222	about 1,133
Ocean	אוקיינוס	3,591	Exodus 16:15 to 32:26	3	about 0.5
Brandon	ברנדון	6,641, backward	Exodus 7:21 to Genesis 37:5	271	about 294
Silk	סילק	1,850	Exodus 7:24 to 10:27	1,142	about 1,222
Matías	מתיאס	2,310	Genesis 42:34 to 48:2	5,807	about 5,939
Stefano	סטפנו	5,417	Genesis 49:1 to Exodus 13:3	72	about 58

Word	Hebrew	Every n-th letter	Where it runs	Found in the Torah	Chance predicts
Tirso	תירסו	1	Genesis 10:2 to 10:3, in the plain text	4,125 (skips to 40,000)	about 3,928
Alexander	אלכסנדר	16,528, backward	Exodus 25:27 to Genesis 13:7	2 (skips to 60,000)	about 1.4
Hernandez	הרננדז	27, backward	Numbers 7:19 to 7:17	42 (skips to 60,000)	about 36
Sedona	סדונה	34	Exodus 38:19 to 38:22	894 (skips to 30,000)	about 870
Machu Picchu	מאצו פיצו	2,137	Genesis 26:7 to 34:11	1	about 0.3
Solar eclipse	ליקוי חמה	13,696	Genesis 18:30 to Exodus 27:14	3	about 2.8
Luxor	לוקסור	21,766, backward	Leviticus 22:2 to Genesis 43:14	76	about 73
Stone of the Sun	אבן השמש	1,381, backward	Genesis 41:45 to 36:43	80	about 68
Eye of the Sun	עין השמש	36,396	Genesis 30:32 to Deuteronomy 6:1	51	about 54
VBP, first name	ולרי	3, backward	Genesis 31:22 to 31:21	78,266 (skips to 3,000)	about 78,641
VBP, surname	פוסט	1,507	Genesis 37:32 to 41:5	103	about 101
VBP, Ben Post	בן פוסט	12,261 and 3,436	Exodus 6:4 to Leviticus 4:35; Numbers 10:1 to 1:37	5	about 2.6

Table A.1. The letter-paths of the story, with the honest count.

Verse numbers follow the King James Version. Where the Hebrew numbering differs, the English number is given (Exodus 8:1 in English is 7:26 in Hebrew). Most Torah Code software uses the Koren edition, which is 76 letters shorter, so long skips may land slightly differently there.

The facts of the calendar and the plain text are not letter-paths, and anyone can check them without a computer: the Torah portions of the week of birth (*Va'eira*) and of the fiftieth birthday (*Beshalach*); the fourth day, the dark Moon and the new Moon at 9:11 on the morning of 19 January 1977; the four pillars in Genesis 32 to 37; "from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water" in Deuteronomy 29:11; and the return of Blue Lake to Taos Pueblo by Public Law 91-550, signed on 15 December 1970. Blue Lake, as a sacred place of a living people, was not searched for in the letters.

Appendix B: The Sources

The Bible is quoted from the King James Version (1611). *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory* and *The Child, The Shovel and The Ocean* are quoted from the author's own editions. The Gene Keys profiles are Hologenetic Profiles from Gene Keys Publishing, quoted briefly. The patterns of Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandl are described from the standard accounts of his work. The readings of the life, the natal sky and the Gene Keys alongside the Torah are set out more fully in *The Keith Shirley Codex*, the reading this story is drawn from.