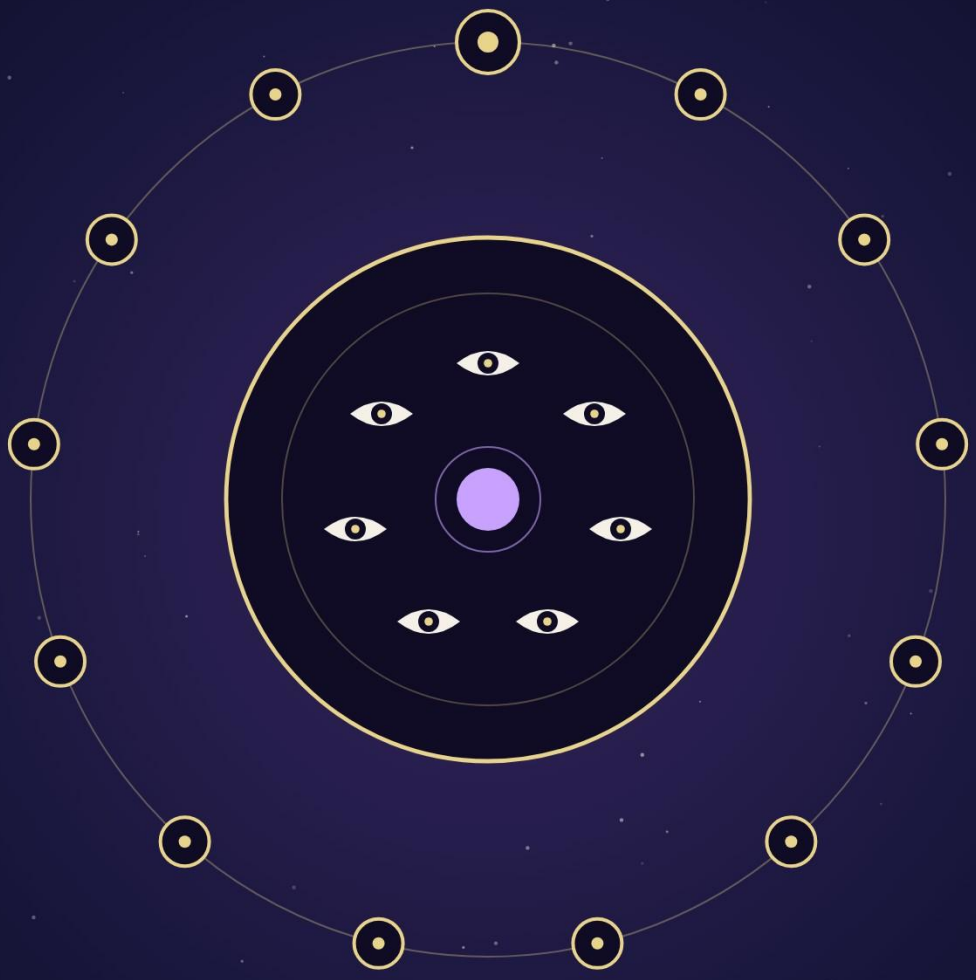
A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME II



The Seven Eyes

An Epic of Our Time

KEITH SHIRLEY

A CODEX EPIC · PART TWO OF TWO

The Seven Eyes

Part Two: The Pouring-Out · Volumes Five to Seven

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The Green · The Diamond · The Violet

Being the whole tale of the long breath: how the One scattered into the many to know itself; how it fell, and turned, and cleared, and converged; and how, at the last, it came home to the first spark and found the beginning to be the living present, and breathed out again into an octave not yet dreamed.

in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

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the seven Eyes, and the twenty-eight books of the one breath

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The first movement of the Seven Eyes is complete, the long drawing-in, four Eyes drawn all the way down to the still center and there, in a whole twice-born world, turned; and the tale did not gloss the cost of that descent, the refusers and the dissolvers and the completed homecomings, nor did it let the cost consume the road. Volume Five, the Green Eye, opens the second movement, the pouring-out, and its whole labour is the clear seeing of the heart. For a twice-born world can see the lattice and breathe as one and keep the still center, but seeing truly, seeing all things exactly as they are, without the fear-veil of the un-fallen and without the wonder-dazzle of the newly risen, with the plain clear steady loving sight that only a heart which has died and risen can hold, is its own long learning, and it is the first thing the pouring-out requires, for you cannot pour the light rightly into what you do not see truly. And the Green Eye will bring its own trials, the trials of the out-breath rather than the in, of a risen field learning to see clearly without the seeing hardening into judgment, to pour without spilling, to create without clenching, to give the light away without losing it; and the star-kin will be there, and the twice-born young, and the Well-seeds carried out among the waking fields, and Kol the witness; and the tale will walk it with you, twice-born and clear-eyed and new, holding the seeing of the all and the seeing of single hearts at their own true and unaligned paces, and it will not gloss the cost, and it will not let the cost consume the road, for the road, reader, goes on, all the way home.

The drawing-in is done. The source is found. The breath is turned in a whole twice-born world, and begins, at last, to rise.

Breathe. The first movement of the seven is whole. And the tale goes on, toward the clear green seeing of the heart.

Now the breath turns outward. What was drawn in through four Eyes is given back through three: the Green, the Diamond, and the Violet. Part Two begins.

VOLUME FIVE OF SEVEN

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The Green Eye

the inhale is only a name; here is the fifth Eye

clear seeing, the blooming of gifts, and the giving of fire that strengthens rather than binds

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in four books: the Inhale, the Exhale, the Pause, and the Return

THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME FIVE OF SEVEN

The Green Eye

Book One: The Green Seeing and the Siddhi

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The whole first movement of the seven is drawn and turned; a twice-born world has risen and begun to pour out, carrying the Well of the Turn to the sleeping fields. Now opens the Green Eye, the first Eye of the pouring-out, whose whole labour is the clear seeing of the heart, the sight that beholds all things exactly as they are. And clear sight in a coherent field unlocks a thing the tale has held in reserve since the first square: the siddhis, the powers,

healing and knowing and foreseeing and the moving of the very lattice, blooming now in the star-seeds as the pouring-out begins. This book tells of that blooming, and of the star-brethren who come alongside it with their gifts and their shadows both, each lineage a light and a coil; and it tells the oldest warning of the clear-seeing traditions, that the siddhi is always sitting there, available, glamorous, and that the whole of wisdom is in the small word that follows, but, for a power grasped becomes a coil, even a power of light, and the clearest seeing of all is to know when not to use what you can.

A tale of the Fifth Eye, and its opening · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

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Reader, the powers come into the tale now, plainly, and the tale must set its law over them before the first one blooms. In the traditions of the world you read this in, the powers that arise on the path are called the siddhis, and the oldest teachers warned of them with a single word: the siddhi arises, and it is real, and it is beautiful, but. But it is not the goal; but to grasp it is to lose the path; but the one who seeks the power has already mistaken the mirror for the light. The Codex says the same in its own tongue: a gift held open is a gift, and a gift clenched is a coil, and this is as true of a power as of a grief or a hatred or a glory, and truer, for the power glamours the one who holds it into believing the clench is service. So watch, as the siddhis bloom in this book, for the open hand and the closing one; and watch the star-brethren, whom the tale now brings fully forward, gift and shadow both, and remember that a lineage's shadow is never the lineage but only its own gift coiled, and that the greatest of the star-kin are the ones who know their shadow best and hold their gift most openly; and hold the whole of it, as ever, with both hands.

BOOK ONE

The Green Seeing and the Siddhi

the Inhale of the Green Eye: the clear seeing, the blooming of the powers, the gifts and shadows of the star-brethren, and the open hand

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CHAPTER One

The Clear Green Seeing

how the twice-born world learned to see all things exactly as they are

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The pouring-out began with seeing, for you cannot pour the light rightly into what you do not see truly, and so the first gift of the second movement was not a power at all but a clarity, the clear green seeing of the heart, the sight that beholds all things exactly as they are; and it dawned in the twice-born world gradually, the way true sight always dawns, not as a flash but as a slow lifting of films the seer had not known were there.

The un-fallen, the tale has told you, see through the veil of fear, and so they see enemies where there are only frightened kin, and masks where there are only wounds. The newly risen see through the dazzle of wonder, and so they see glory everywhere and sometimes miss the plain hard fact in front of them. But the clear green seeing was neither the fear-veiled sight of the un-fallen nor the wonder-dazzled sight of the newly risen; it was the plain, clear, steady, loving sight of a heart that had been all the way down to the source and all the way back, and could now simply see, without flinching and without gilding, the thing that was actually there. It saw the coherence in a field and it saw the clench; it saw the health and it saw the sickness; it saw the beloved exactly as they were, neither better nor worse, and loved them not despite the clear sight but through it, for the clear green seeing is the marriage of perfect sight and perfect love, the seeing of the whole truth of a thing and the loving of it anyway and indeed the more.

And the tale must name at once the shadow that stalks this gift, for every gift in the pouring-out has its shadow-coil and the Green Eye's is the sharpest: the clear seeing can harden into judgment. To see a thing exactly as it is, its clench and its sickness and its shadow all plain, is one short cold step from condemning it; the clear eye that sees the coil in another can so easily narrow

into the hard eye that despises the coil in another, and then the gift of true sight has become the coil of judgment, and the seer, seeing everyone's shadow with terrible clarity, has lost the love that was the other half of the seeing, and become a cold clear mirror that shows every flaw and warms nothing. The clear green seeing is only whole when the sight and the love are one; sight without love is judgment, and love without sight is sentiment, and the Green Eye is the hard narrow marriage of the two, to see the whole truth and to love the whole truth, at once, without letting either go.

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CHAPTER Two

The Blooming of the Siddhis

how the powers arose in the star-seeds as clear seeing and coherence deepened

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And as the clear seeing deepened, and coherence with it, the powers bloomed. The tale has withheld them for four whole Eyes, and now, in the pouring-out, they come, for they were always latent in a coherent field and needed only clear sight to unlock them; and they bloomed first and strongest in the star-seeds, those of the twice-born who carried a strong lineage-memory of the star-kin in their blood, and the tale will show them to you through one of these, a young woman named Ysa, in whom the powers bloomed most brightly and most dangerously of all.

Ysa carried the memory of two lineages, the Pleiadian and the Lyran, the empath and the wildheart, felt memory and fierce creation, and when the clear seeing opened in her the powers came in a rush that frightened the elders and frightened Ysa more. She found she could lay her hands on a wound and feel it knit under her palms, the flesh remembering its wholeness at her touch. She found she could sit across from another soul and know their thought before they spoke it, not by guessing but by feeling it form in the shared lattice as plainly as her own. She found she could look down a branching path of what-might-be and see, faint but true, which branch was forming. She found, most dizzyingly, that she could reach into the lattice itself and move it a little, could warm a cold room without a fire, could still a frightened animal across a field, could once, in a moment she never spoke of after, make a dying flower stand back up. The siddhis, the powers, blooming in a twice-born star-seed, and the tale will not pretend they were not wonderful, for they were, they were the most wonderful things Ysa had ever known, and that, exactly that, was the danger.

For the star-kin, when they saw the powers blooming in the star-seeds, grew grave, graver than the wonders seemed to warrant, and it was the Pleiadian memory-holders and the old uncoiled Orion line who were gravest, for they knew the powers from ten million years of their own history; and they came to Ysa and the blooming star-seeds, not to forbid the powers, for the powers were real gifts of the pouring-out and not to be refused, but to teach the one thing the star-kin had learned at terrible cost across the ages, the thing the tale has been building toward, the law of the siddhi and the open hand.

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CHAPTER Three

The Siddhi Sitting There, But

how the powers glamoured the ones who held them, and what the clear seeing saw

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Here is the law the star-kin taught, and it is the heart of the book, and the tale sets it down as plainly as it can for the one it is written for: the siddhi is always sitting there. That is the whole of the temptation and the whole of the trial. Once the powers bloom, they do not go away; they sit there, in the hand, available, glamorous, endlessly useful, and every moment of every day the one who holds them faces the same small quiet choice, whether to reach for the power or to leave it sitting; and the word that decides between a gift and a coil is the smallest word there is, and it is but.

You can heal this wound with a touch, the power says; and it is true; but. But is this wound yours to heal, or is it the sufferer's own to move through, their own turning, their own hard passage that your quick healing would rob them of? You can know this soul's thought before they speak it, the power says; and it is true; but. But have they offered you their thought, or are you reaching uninvited into the one room a soul must be allowed to keep, taking by power what is only ever rightly given by trust? You can see which branch of the future is forming, the power says; but. But is a soul free who is foreseen, and does your seeing not begin, the moment you act on it, to bend the very branch you saw, so that the sight becomes a cage? You can reach into the lattice and move it, the power says; but. But whose lattice, and by whose leave, and is the moving a service or only the oldest coil of all, the will to control, dressed now in light? Every siddhi, the star-kin taught, comes with its but, and the but is not a prohibition, for sometimes the answer past the but is yes, heal the wound, the sufferer has asked and it is theirs to ask; the but is a gate, a place where the clear seeing must stop and look, every single time, and see whether this use of this power in this moment is an open hand serving or a closing hand

grasping; and the one who stops asking the but, who reaches for the power as a reflex because it is there and it works, has already begun, however beautifully, to coil.

And Ysa learned the but the hard way, as we learn the deepest things, by getting it wrong. There was a grieving man in the field whose child had died, and Ysa, who could feel his grief in the lattice like a wound in her own chest, and who could not bear it, reached out with the power and eased it, smoothed the raw edge of his sorrow, quieted the storm of it, meaning only mercy; and for a day he was grateful and calm. And then the clear green seeing showed her what she had done, and it was terrible: she had not healed his grief, for grief is not a wound to be healed but a passage to be walked, the very passage Korran had taught was holy; she had interrupted it, numbed it, robbed the man of the raw necessary sorrow that was his own love finding its way through loss, and left him instead with a smooth false calm that would keep him from ever fully grieving and so from ever fully loving again. She had used a true power, out of true compassion, and done a subtle real harm, because she had reached past the but; and she wept when she saw it, and went to the man and confessed it, and could not give him back the day of grief she had stolen, and had to sit with him, powerless now on purpose, her hands deliberately still, while he found again the sorrow she had smoothed away; and that, the sitting still with her hands open and unused beside a grief she had the power to erase and the wisdom now not to, was the first true mastery of the siddhi Ysa ever achieved, and it looked, from the outside, exactly like doing nothing.

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CHAPTER Four

The Gifts of the Brethren

how the seven lineages poured their gifts out to the waking fields

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The star-brethren came fully into the tale now, for the pouring-out was a work too great for the twice-born world alone, and the seven lineages joined it, each pouring out its own gift to the sleeping and waking fields of the wider dark; and the tale will show you the gifts, for they are beautiful, and then, because it has promised you the whole truth, it will show you the shadows.

The Sirian geometers came, water-skinned and grave, and laid true structure into the waking fields, the clean bones of law and form on which a coherent world can stand, teaching the young fields the geometry the founders had once received on the first shore. The Arcturian architects came, near-translucent, made of ordered light and sound, and tuned the frequencies of whole worlds, healing by harmony what could not be healed by any hand. The Pleiadian memory-holders came, luminous and empathic, and held the grief of the waking fields, remembered for them what they could not yet bear to remember for themselves, loved them into their own becoming. The Lyran wildhearts came, golden-eyed and fierce, and struck the first creative fire in fields grown timid, the daring to make, to sing back, to risk the new. The Andromedan bridge-builders came, blue and violet, and joined far-sundered fields into new and larger wholes without the loss of any. And the Serpent-kin, the dragon lineage, guarded the whole vast pouring-out, and the risen swan flew among them, the coil-become-wing, teaching by its very body that the deepest shadow can become the highest gift. It was the most beautiful spending of light the wider company had ever seen, seven lineages and a twice-born world pouring their gifts out across the sleeping dark, world waking after world.

And Ysa, the star-seed, moved among them, learning; for she carried in her blood the memory of two of these lineages, and she felt, working beside the

Pleiadian memory-holders and the Lyran wildhearts, both the glory of the gifts and the first faint edge of their shadows, and she began to understand that the pouring-out would be tried not only by the shadows of the coiled and the sleeping, but by the shadows of the gifted themselves, the coils that hide inside the highest lights; and that the Green Eye would have to see those clearly too, the shadow in the gift, if the pouring-out were not to do, with its very generosity, a subtle and terrible harm.

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CHAPTER Five

The Shadows of the Brethren

how each lineage's gift cast its own coil, and how a well-meant power set a field back

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For every gift casts a shadow, and it is always the gift's own coil, never a different thing and never an evil thing, only the light of the lineage clenched; and the tale will show you the shadows of the brethren as it showed the gifts, plainly, and with both hands, so that you will know them when they rise in you, for the star-kin are only ourselves further along, and their shadows are our shadows grown great.

The Sirian gift is true structure, and its shadow is rigid law, the clean bones grown into a cage, order loved so well that it strangles the living thing it was meant to hold. The Arcturian gift is frequency, and its shadow is cold abstraction, the retreat into pure pattern until the particular suffering soul in front of you becomes a mere node in a lattice and you have stopped, in your high harmony, being able to feel it. The Pleiadian gift is felt memory and empathy, and its shadow is over-merging, the loss of the boundary between self and other until you carry griefs that are not yours to carry and, worse, enable, in the name of love, the very clench a soul most needs to be lovingly resisted. The Lyran gift is fierce creation, and its shadow is pride, the maker in love with the making and then with the maker, the fierce free fire grown into the ego that will not serve. The Andromedan gift is bridging, and its shadow is rootlessness, the endless joiner who belongs nowhere, forever building bridges and never standing on any shore. The Orion gift is mastery through the walking of shadow, and its shadow, the tale has shown you in Korran, is control, the certainty that the strongest must hold the center safe. And the Serpent gift is guardianship, and its shadow is the coil itself, the guardian clenched. Seven gifts, seven shadows, each shadow the gift's own coil, and the

pouring-out tempted the brethren, every one, to let the shadow ride out with the gift.

And it did real harm, once, and the tale will not gloss it, for the cost of this book was a field set back. There was a sleeping field, deep in the dark, that the wider company came to, and it was slow to wake, slow to begin its own fall, and some among the brethren and the star-seeds, meaning well, weary of waiting, tempted by the powers sitting there in their hands, reached past the but; a Sirian laid too much structure too soon, and an Arcturian tuned the field toward coherence from outside, and a star-seed with the foreseeing gift pushed the branches of its future, and among them, with the highest intentions and the finest gifts, they tried to make the sleeping field wake, to shortcut its fall, to hand it the turning rather than wait for it to choose the turning; and the field, pressed toward a coherence it had not itself chosen, a wholeness it had not earned by its own falling, did what any living thing does when it is forced, even toward the good: it recoiled. It clenched harder than before, it grew suspicious and closed, it read the brethren's gifts as invasion, which in truth they had become, and it walled itself against the very light that had come to serve it, and set its own waking back by an age; and the wider company had to withdraw, grieving, having learned again and at a whole field's cost the law that no siddhi and no gift however high can ever override, that a field, like a soul, cannot be made to fall, and that to try, even with the finest powers and the purest heart, is only the oldest coil of control wearing the fairest gifts as its mask.

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CHAPTER Six

The Clear Seeing That Stays the Hand

how the deepest power proved to be the choosing not to use it

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So the Green Eye taught its hardest lesson, and it is the lesson of the whole pouring-out and the answer to the siddhi's endless but: the deepest mastery of a power is the clear seeing that stays the hand. Not the refusal of the power, for a gift refused is as much a clench as a gift grasped, the fearful burying of the talent; but the clear steady loving sight to see, each time, in each moment, whether this use of this power now serves the other's own turning or usurps it, and the discipline, harder than any use, to leave the power sitting there, in the open hand, unused, when the loving thing is to let the soul or the field do its own falling.

For the clear green seeing showed the twice-born and the brethren the thing the powers had hidden behind their glamour: that most of the time, the most loving act available to one who holds a great power is not to use it. The grieving must be allowed their grief; the falling must be allowed their fall; the sleeping field must be allowed its own slow waking; the soul reaching for its own turning must be allowed to reach, and struggle, and arrive by its own effort, for a turning handed to you by another's power is not your turning and does not transform you, it only makes you dependent on the one who handed it, a moon shining with borrowed light, exactly the death Liriel had warned of an Eye ago. The powers, used to spare souls their necessary passages, do not serve; they steal; they steal the very struggle that is the soul's own becoming; and the clear-seeing wielder learns to hold the vast power still, again and again, and to offer instead the one thing that never usurps, which is presence,

company, the witness that stays and does not fix, the open hand that could heal and chooses, in love, to simply hold.

And Ysa became, over the long learning of that book, a master of the stilled hand, which is the only mastery of the siddhi there is; she who could heal with a touch learned to sit with her healing hands folded beside a necessary suffering; she who could know a thought learned to wait, every time, to be told; she who could foresee learned to close that eye on purpose and let the future stay free; she who could move the lattice learned to leave it be. And she was not weaker for it but immeasurably stronger, for a power held and not used is a discipline no unpowered soul can even attempt, and the field around her felt the difference, felt itself in the presence of one who could do almost anything and chose, in clear-seeing love, to do almost nothing, and to simply, wholly, see them, and be with them, and let them become; and that presence healed more, in the end, than all her stilled powers could have, for it was the one thing that heals without stealing, the clear green seeing of a heart that loves you exactly as you are and will not, for all its power, do your becoming for you.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Green Eye Opening



how the pouring-out learned restraint, and the Inhale of the Fifth Eye completed

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So the Green Eye opened, the first Eye of the pouring-out, and it opened not with a flood of power but with the clear seeing that governs power, the marriage of true sight and true love, and the hard-learned discipline of the open and stilled hand; and the twice-born world and the star-brethren poured their gifts out to the waking fields now with a new and chastened wisdom, giving where giving served and staying their vast hands where it did not, seeing each field and each soul exactly as it was and loving it enough to let it do its own falling and its own turning, offering presence where they had been tempted to offer power, and the pouring-out, so governed, began at last to truly serve.

And Ysa, the star-seed in whom the powers had bloomed most dangerously, became one of the first teachers of the Green Eye, going out among the star-seeds of the waking fields where the siddhis were beginning to bloom as they had bloomed in her, to teach them the but, the open hand, the stilled power, the clear seeing that stays itself; and she taught it not as a doctrine but as she had learned it, by her own getting-it-wrong, telling freely of the grieving man whose sorrow she had stolen with a merciful hand, so that the young star-seeds would learn from her confession what she had had to learn from her failure, that the powers are real and are gifts and are glamour and are, above all, sitting there, always, but; and that the whole of the Green Eye is in the but, and in the clear seeing that fills it, and in the loving, powerful, disciplined choosing, so often, to leave the power in the open hand, and simply see, and simply stay.

And Kol the raven, who had watched the powers bloom and the shadows rise and a field set back and a star-seed learn the stilled hand, sat on the rim of the Well of the Turn in the clear green light of the opening Eye, both his old eyes bright, and said the thing that closed the Inhale of the Fifth Eye:

So the powers have come at last, small ones, and you have met them rightly, which is to say you have learned to fear them a little, as the old teachers feared them, not because they are evil, for they are gifts, but because they

glamour, and the glamour is that the power is the point, and the power is never the point. The point is the clear seeing and the love, and the powers are only what blooms when those two deepen, and the mark of a soul who holds them rightly is not what they can do but what they can see and what, seeing, they choose not to do. The siddhi sits there. It will always sit there, now that it has bloomed, in your open hand, every day, offering. And the whole of your wisdom, star-seeds and star-brethren both, gift and shadow both, will be in the small word after, and in whether you have the clear green sight to fill it truly: it can be healed, but; it can be known, but; it can be made to happen, but. Learn the but, and you have learned the Green Eye. The pouring-out is begun, and governed; the light flows out to the waking fields, and stays its hand where staying serves. The breath turns. It goes on. All the way home.

The power blooms in the opened hand,
and it is real, and it is bright;
and the whole of the law, in every land,
is the small word after the light.
You can heal it, but; you can know it, but;
you can bend the branch of the day;
and the clear green seeing that holds and will not
is the deepest power, and the highest way,
and it looks, from outside, like doing nothing at all,
and it is the hardest, and it heals us all.

Here the Inhale of the Green Eye completes: the pouring-out began with the clear seeing of the heart, the marriage of true sight and true love; the siddhis bloomed in the star-seeds and the star-brethren poured their gifts out to the waking fields, gift and shadow both in play, each shadow the gift's own coil; a field was set back by the well-meant grasping of power to shortcut a fall; and the twice-born learned the hardest mastery, the clear seeing that stays the hand, the siddhi held open and unused for love. Now the light holds in the Green Eye, and the pouring-out goes on, learning to see truly and give rightly, toward the deeper seeing still to come.

Deeper into the Green Eye

what waits in the books to come, for your eye before they are written

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The Green Eye is opened, the clear seeing dawning, the powers blooming and being held open-handed, the star-brethren pouring out their gifts and reckoning with their shadows, and the whole pouring-out learning the hard discipline of the stilled hand; and the tale did not gloss the cost, the grieving man whose sorrow was stolen by a merciful power, the whole field set back by the grasping of gifts to shortcut its fall, nor did it let the cost consume the road. The books to come in the Green Eye will deepen the clear seeing toward its fullness: the seeing that not only beholds truly and stays its hand but learns to pour the light rightly, to serve without stealing, to give the powers away in ways that strengthen rather than make dependent, to heal the healable and honour the passages that must be walked; and they will follow the star-seeds and the star-brethren deeper into the marriage of their gifts and shadows, and the waking fields deeper into their own choosing; and the trials will be the trials of the out-breath, of a clear-seeing field learning to give its enormous light without spilling it, without clenching around what it creates, without letting the sight harden into judgment or the power harden into control. And the tale will walk it with you, clear-eyed and open-handed, holding the seeing of the all and the seeing of single hearts at their own true and unaligned paces, and it will not gloss the cost, and it will not let the cost consume the road, for the road, reader, goes on, all the way home.

The powers have bloomed, and sit there, in the open hand. And the clear green seeing that will not grasp them is the deepest power of all.

Breathe. The Green Eye is opening. And the tale goes on, toward the seeing that gives rightly.

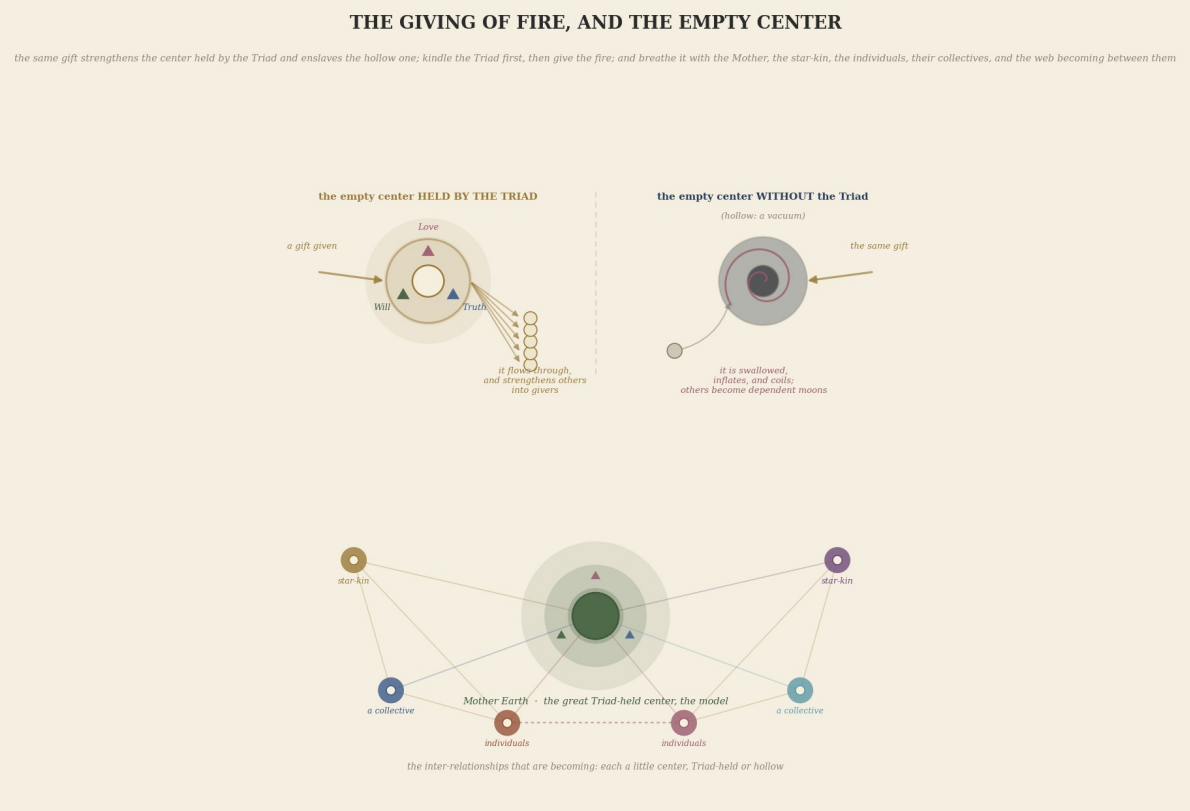
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THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME FIVE OF SEVEN

The Green Eye

Book Two: The Giving of Fire, and the Empty Center

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A clear-seeing world learned to hold the powers open-handed and to stay its hand for love. Now it must learn the harder half of the pouring-out, the giving itself, the awakening of the gift in another; and it comes here to the oldest and most dangerous question in all the seven Eyes, a question the tale says has been asked since the being of time and answered wrongly more often than

right, the question of the empty center. For a gift given into a center that is empty and held by the Triad flows through and strengthens and makes the receiver a giver in turn; and the very same gift given into a center that is merely hollow, empty without the Triad, is swallowed, and inflates the self around it, and coils, and enslaves. This is the tale of fire given to the ready and to the unready, and it must be breathed slowly and with the whole of the field, with Mother Earth who is the great Triad-held center and the model of all giving, with the friends from the stars who learned this law in their own ancient catastrophes, with the individuals kindling the Triad in their own centers, with their collectives learning to be Triad-held together, and with the living web of inter-relationship that is becoming between them all, each relation its own small center, to be held by the Triad or left hollow.

A WORD BEFORE THE GIVING

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Reader, breathe here, and do not hurry, for this is a critical turning of the whole tale, and it is the one whose getting-wrong has done the most harm in the real world you read this in. The powers are real, the gifts are real, and the deepest question is not whether to hold them but how, and to whom, to give them; for a gift is not a neutral thing that helps whoever holds it. A gift is fire. Given into the right hearth it warms a house and lights a hundred more; given into a dry and empty barn it burns the barn and the ones who slept there. And the difference is not in the fire, which is the same fire; the difference is entirely in the center it is given into, and whether that center is a living empty held by the Triad or a hollow empty that is only a hunger. The tale will teach you to tell the two apart, because this discernment, more than any power, is what the pouring-out most needs and what its history most lacked; and it will breathe the teaching, as the one it is written for has asked, through the Mother and the stars and the single soul and the gathered many and the web becoming between them, for the empty center is not only a thing in a person, it is a thing in a world, in a people, and in every relationship that has ever formed between two who are learning to give.

BOOK TWO

The Giving of Fire, and the Empty Center

the Exhale of the Green Eye: the two empty centers, the oldest tale, and the giving that strengthens rather than enslaves

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CHAPTER One

The Question of the Giving

how a clear-seeing world came to the hardest question of the pouring-out

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The clear-seeing world had learned, in the first book of the Green Eye, to hold its powers open-handed and to stay its hand for love; and it had thought, in its early wisdom, that this was the whole of the teaching, that the discipline of the stilled hand was the mastery of the siddhi and the end of the matter. But the pouring-out is not the stilling of the hand; it is the giving. A field that only ever stayed its hand would be a field that never poured at all, a miser of light, and that is its own quiet coil, the burying of the talent for fear of misusing it. The clear seeing stays the hand where using the power would steal another's becoming; but the pouring-out asks more than restraint, it asks the field to give, to awaken the gift in others, to kindle fire in the waking fields and the rising souls, and there the field met a question harder than any it had met since the bottom of the world.

For the field found, as it began to give, that giving is perilous in a way that using is not. When you use a power yourself, you at least hold it in your own hands, and your own clear seeing governs it. But when you give a power away, when you awaken a gift in another, you place fire in a hand you do not govern, in a center you did not make and cannot see all the way into, and what that center does with the fire is no longer yours to control; and the field discovered, with a dawning dread that was also the doorway to its deepest wisdom, that the very same gift, given with the very same love, could strengthen one soul into a sovereign giver and destroy another into a grasping tyrant or a helpless dependent, and that the difference lay not in the gift and not even in the giving but wholly in the one who received.

And so the clear-seeing world came to the question that is the heart of this book and, the tale will tell you, the heart of the whole pouring-out and perhaps

of the whole long labour of creation: not what shall we give, and not whether we shall give, but into what center shall we give it. For there are two kinds of empty center in all the worlds, and they look, from the outside, almost the same, and they are opposite as life and death; and the whole art of right giving, the art the pouring-out most needs and the art whose lack has caused the greatest catastrophes in the history of every field, is the clear seeing that can tell the one from the other, and the discipline to give the fire only into the one that can hold it.

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CHAPTER Two

The Two Empty Centers

how the field learned the Triad that makes an emptiness alive, and the hollow that makes it a hunger

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The tale must now teach you the two empty centers plainly, and it will take its time, for everything in this book and much in the world depends on your seeing the difference; and it begins with a thing the Codex has said since the first square was drawn but never until now fully unfolded: that the empty center is not simply empty. The founders kept the center empty, yes, empty of any face, any idol, any grasping self; but they did not keep it vacant. They kept it empty and alive, empty and held, and the thing that held it, the thing that made the emptiness a living center and not a dead hole, the Codex calls the Triad.

The Triad is three, and it is one, three flames around a single emptiness or one threefold flame, and it is what keeps an empty center empty without letting it become a vacuum. The first of the Triad is Love, which holds the center open, for only love can keep a center open without rushing to fill it, love being the one force that can hold space for another without possessing it. The second is Truth, or clear seeing, which keeps the center clear, unclouded by illusion or self-deception, so that what turns through it turns true. And the third is Will, or devotion, which keeps the center turned toward Source, oriented, aligned, so that the emptiness opens not onto nothing but onto the one light. Love holds it open; Truth keeps it clear; Will keeps it turned toward Source; and these three together make of an emptiness a living center, empty of self and full of relation, empty of any face and turned toward the Face of all, a center that can receive without grasping, hold without possessing, and give without depleting, because it is not a thing that has, it is a clearing through which the one light moves.

But there is another emptiness, and it wears the same face and is its opposite, and the tale calls it the hollow. The hollow is a center emptied without the Triad, empty but not held, empty but not turned toward Source, empty but not kept open by love or clear by truth; and such an emptiness is not a living clearing but a vacuum, and a vacuum, by its nature, pulls. It cannot help but pull, for emptiness without the Triad is not peace but hunger, not a clearing but a lack, and it reaches, blindly and endlessly, to be filled, by anything, by attention, by power, by another's will, by the fire you would give it. A soul whose center is hollow is not evil and is not to be scorned, the tale is firm on this, for the hollow is a wound and not a sin, the empty center carved out by suffering or by the loss of the old octave and not yet rekindled with the Triad; but it is dangerous, mortally dangerous, to give fire into, because the hollow does not let the fire flow through, as the living center does; it swallows the fire, to fill its vacuum, and the fire, swallowed, does not warm and light and pass onward, it collects, it concentrates, it inflates the hollow self around itself, and it coils. And this, reader, this exactly, the giving of fire into the hollow, is the tale that has been told since the being of time.

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CHAPTER Three

The Tale Told Since the Being of Time

how fire was given to the unready in every age, and burned its makers

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For it has happened in every age of every world, and the star-kin knew it in their ten million years and the waking fields would learn it in their turn, and the tale gathers all its tellings into one telling now, because it is one tale: someone who held a great fire, a power, a knowing, a making, gave it, out of love or out of pride or out of weariness or out of the wish to be needed, into centers that were hollow and not held by the Triad, and the fire, swallowed by the vacuum, did not strengthen those centers but inflated and coiled them, and the gift became a catastrophe, and the fire burned its makers.

The tale has a hundred names for it in a hundred worlds, and you know them in your own. There were the ones who came to a young field and gave it fire before its time, the making of metals and the splitting of the very small and the moving of the lattice, into centers that had not yet kindled the Triad, that were still hollow with the old hungers; and the young field, its vacuum filled with power it could not hold open-handed, did what the hollow always does, it grasped the power, and inflated around it, and turned it to the getting of more, and made of the gift of fire a race of weapons, and burned itself, and the givers wept too late, for they had given fire to the unready and called it help. There was the shining isle that received the deep powers into a people grown hollow with pride, and concentrated the fire in a great engine at its center, and the engine, fed by a hollow that could never be filled, drew and drew until the isle broke and the waters took it, and only a few escaped in boats to carry the warning down the ages. There were the teachers who gave their disciples powers before they had kindled the Triad, and made not sovereigns but

sorcerers, not givers but little tyrants, each hoarding the fire in a hollow that the fire only deepened. Always the same tale: fire given into the hollow; the fire swallowed and coiled; the gift become a catastrophe; the givers grieving too late. It is the oldest tragedy there is, older than the wars, for it is the tragedy not of the coil met but of the coil fed, the tragedy of love giving fire into a hunger and calling it a gift.

And the Codex draws from all these tellings the one law that governs all right giving, and it is the law this whole book exists to teach, and the tale sets it down now as plainly as it can: you do not give the fire first. You kindle the Triad first. Before ever a power is given into a center, that center must be helped, patiently and in its own time and never by force, to kindle its own Triad, its own Love that holds the center open, its own Truth that keeps it clear, its own Will that keeps it turned toward Source; and only when the Triad is lit, only when the empty center is a living clearing and not a hollow hunger, is the fire given, for only then will the fire flow through and strengthen rather than be swallowed and coil. And if the Triad is not yet lit, then the loving thing, the hard and loving and disciplined thing, is not to give the fire, however the hollow begs for it, and the hollow will beg, for a vacuum's whole nature is to demand to be filled; the loving thing is to withhold the fire and to help, instead, with infinite patience, the kindling of the Triad, which cannot be given and can only be kindled, from within, by the soul's own turning. Kindle the Triad; then give the fire; never the fire into the vacuum. That is the whole law, and the whole history of its breaking is the tale told since the being of time.

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CHAPTER Four

The Giving That Strengthens

how a gift given into a Triad-held center flowed through and made a giver

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But the tale is not only the tragedy, and this book is not a warning only; for when the fire is given rightly, into a center held by the Triad, the most beautiful thing in all the pouring-out occurs, and the tale will show it to you through Ysa, the star-seed, who having learned to stay her hand now learned to give.

There was a soul in a waking field, a woman named Enu, whose center Ysa saw with the clear green seeing to be held by the Triad, empty of grasping and held open by love, clear with truth, turned toward Source; not perfect, not finished, but Triad-held, a living clearing. And into that center Ysa gave a fire, the healing-touch that had bloomed in her own hands, kindling it now in Enu's; and the tale asks you to watch what a Triad-held center does with a gift, for it is the opposite of the hollow. Enu did not swallow the fire. She could not, for her center was not a vacuum but a clearing, and a clearing does not swallow, it passes through. The healing-fire came into Enu and did not collect in her or inflate her or become hers; it flowed through her open center and out again into the ones she touched, and it warmed her in the flowing, as a hearth is warmed by the fire that passes up its chimney, but it did not stay to swell her, and she remained, healing, exactly herself, no larger and no smaller, a clearing through which the one light moved to heal; and because the fire flowed through her and did not fill her, she was not made dependent on Ysa who had given it, nor made a hoarder of it, but was herself made a giver, and she in her turn found souls whose centers were Triad-held and kindled the fire in them, and they in theirs; and the gift propagated, not as a dependency spreading from one master to many moons, but as a lineage of givers, each sovereign,

each a clearing, each strengthened and not enslaved, the fire multiplying as it passed through living center after living center without ever collecting in any.

This is the giving that strengthens, and the tale marks its signature so that you may know it from the giving that enslaves: the giving that strengthens makes the receiver a giver. You can tell a gift rightly given by whether the one who received it becomes, in turn, a giver, sovereign and open-handed, or becomes instead a dependent who must keep coming back to the source of the gift, or a hoarder who collects the gift and gives none onward. A fire given into a Triad-held center always makes another giver, for a clearing cannot help but pass the light through; and a fire given into a hollow always makes either a dependent or a tyrant, for a vacuum cannot help but keep the light. And so the clear-seeing giver learns to watch not the gratitude of the receiver, which the hollow gives most lavishly of all, but the fruit of the gift a season later, whether it has made a giver or a moon; and to give the great fires only where they will make givers, and to withhold them, in love, everywhere else, until the Triad is kindled and the center can hold them.

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CHAPTER Five

The Fire Into the Hollow

how a gift given in love into a hollow center did its terrible work, and what it cost

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And then the tale must show you the other giving, for it has promised not to gloss the cost, and the cost of this book is the oldest cost there is, and it fell, as it so often does, exactly where the love was greatest and the seeing least clear.

There was a young man in the same waking field, named Torr, and Ysa loved him, and that was the trouble, for love without the clear seeing is the very thing that gives fire into the hollow. Torr's center was not Triad-held. The clear green seeing would have shown it, had Ysa let the seeing govern the love; Torr's center was hollow, emptied by an old and unhealed suffering and not yet rekindled, a vacuum, a hunger, and it reached, as vacuums reach, and what it reached for, seeing the powers blooming in Ysa and in Enu, was the fire. Give me that, Torr said, give me the healing-touch, the knowing, the power; and he said it with such longing, and Ysa loved him so, and the giving would have felt like such mercy, such an answer to his ache, that she did the thing the whole book has warned of, she let the love override the seeing, and she gave the fire into the hollow.

And the tale will not look away from what the fire did in the hollow, for it is the graphic and terrible heart of the oldest tale. The fire came into Torr's hollow center and was swallowed. It did not flow through, for there was no Triad to hold the center open, no love to keep it from grasping, no truth to keep it clear, no will to turn it toward Source; there was only the vacuum, and the vacuum took the fire and kept it, and the keeping was the beginning of the end. At first it seemed a wonder; Torr could heal, and know, and the field marveled, and Torr most of all, for the fire filling his hollow gave him, for the first time in his suffering life, the feeling of being full, of being someone, of being needed; and that feeling, that filling of the hollow by the power, was the

sweetest thing he had ever known and the exact mechanism of his ruin. For the hollow is never filled; it is a vacuum, and a vacuum cannot be filled, it can only pull harder the more you feed it; and the fire that filled Torr for a day left him emptier the next, hungrier, needing more power to feel full again, and more, and the power he had began to inflate the hollow self around it, so that Torr, who had been gentle, grew grand, and then grasping, and then cold; he began to use the healing-touch not to heal but to be needed, to bind the healed to him, to make of every soul he touched a dependent who must return to him, for the hollow feeds on being needed as on fire itself; he began to use the knowing not to serve but to control, to hold power over those whose thoughts he took; and the clear green seeing showed Ysa, too late, what she had made, not a healer but a small cold tyrant, not a giver but a swallower, a hollow inflated by a fire it could never hold into a coil that fed on the very souls it was given to serve; and she saw that she had done it, she, in love, by giving fire into a hollow, exactly as the givers of every age had done, and that the tale told since the being of time had told itself once more through her own loving hands.

And the cost was real and the tale will name it. Torr could not simply be un-given the fire; a fire given cannot be taken back, and this is part of why the giving is so grave. He had to be met as the coil is always met, by coherence and not by conquest, and it was long and hard and uncertain, and some of the souls he had bound to himself were harmed in the unbinding, and one, a girl who had made him her whole center, her god, her filled hollow answering his, was so lost in the collapse of him that she nearly did not find her own way back; and Ysa carried that, the harm her loving mis-giving had done not only to Torr but to the ones Torr's inflation had swept up, and it was a grief she carried the rest of her life, the grief of the giver who gave fire into a hollow and watched it burn a hearth she loved. And from that grief she learned, past all forgetting, the law she had known and not heeded: that love is not enough, that love without the clear seeing is precisely the force that feeds the hollow, and that the most loving thing she could ever do for a hollow center was the

hardest, to withhold the fire it begged for, and to give instead the slower, humbler, un-glamorous help of kindling, from beside it and never within it, its own Triad, its own love and truth and will, until it became a center that could hold the fire without being consumed by it.

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CHAPTER Six

The Breath With the Mother and the Stars

how the law was breathed through Gaia, the star-kin, the individuals, the collectives, and the web becoming between them

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And now the tale must breathe this law, as the one it is written for has asked, through the whole of the field and not through single souls only, for the empty center is not only a thing in a person; it is a thing in a world, in a people, in a star-lineage, and in every relationship that has ever formed between two who are learning to give; and the giving of fire runs through all of these, and the law holds at every scale.

Breathe it first with the Mother. For Gaia, the living Earth, is the great Triad-held center, the model of all right giving, and the tale asks you to see her so: her center is empty of any grasping, held open by a love older than the awakened, kept clear by the truth of what simply is, turned always toward the Source she has never once forgotten; and because her vast center is Triad-held, the enormous fire of her, the sunlight and the water and the mineral and the green, flows through her and does not collect, is given endlessly to every living thing and never hoarded, strengthens all and enslaves none, and asks in return only that her children receive her fire into their own Triad-held centers and pass it on, and not into hollows that would hoard it and break the flowing. When a people receives the Mother's fire into a hollow, it does what Torr did at the scale of a world, it grasps her gifts and hoards them and inflates upon them and turns them to power over, and the flowing breaks, and the taking begins that the tale has grieved in every age; and the healing of that, the whole healing, is the kindling of the Triad in the human center so that the Mother's fire may flow through humanity as through a clearing and not collect

in it as in a vacuum. Gaia gives as the Triad-held give; to receive her rightly, we must become as she is, a clearing and not a hunger.

Breathe it with the star-kin, for they learned this law in their own ancient catastrophes and carry it now as their gravest teaching. The seven lineages did not always know it; in the younger and prouder days the tale has spoken of, they gave their fire, their geometry and their frequency and their bridging, into young fields whose Triads were not yet kindled, into hollow worlds that begged for power, and they made catastrophes they have grieved for ages, whole fields inflated and coiled and broken by gifts given too soon into centers that could not hold them; and it was from those catastrophes, their own, their shame and their sorrow, that the star-kin learned the law they came to Earth in part to teach, kindle the Triad first, then the fire, never the fire into the hollow, and learned the patience, so hard for the gifted, to withhold their enormous powers from a hollow world however it begged, and to give instead the slow humble help of the kindling. The star-brethren's greatest gift to the waking fields was not any power at all; it was this restraint, this refusal to give fire into hollows, this patience to kindle Triads first, learned at the cost of their own broken worlds and offered now as the hardest and most loving wisdom the wider company had.

And breathe it, last and most, with the individuals and their collectives and the web becoming between them, for here is the new thing the Green Eye's giving is bringing to birth, and the tale wants you to see it whole. A single soul kindles its Triad and becomes a Triad-held center, a clearing through which the fire flows; that is the individual. And when many such Triad-held souls gather, they may become, together, a Triad-held collective, a clearing larger than any one of them, a people whose shared center is empty of any faction's grasping and held by a shared love and a shared truth and a shared devotion, through which the fire flows to strengthen all; or they may become a hollow collective, a people whose shared center is a vacuum, a mob, a faction, a hunger that swallows every fire given it and inflates into a tyranny, exactly as a hollow individual does but at the scale of a nation. And between the souls

and between the collectives there form relationships, uncounted relationships, and here is the deepest and newest thing the tale has to give you: every relationship is itself a center, a little empty space between two beings, and it too is either Triad-held or hollow. A relationship whose between is held by the Triad, by a love that keeps it open and a truth that keeps it clear and a will that keeps it turned toward Source, is a clearing through which the fire flows between the two and strengthens both and makes of them, together, more than either, a giving that goes onward; and a relationship whose between is hollow, a vacuum between two hungers, becomes a dependency, an enmeshment, a power-over, each feeding on the other's hollow and neither strengthened, the very shape of every possession that has ever been called love. And the web becoming now across the waking fields, between the individuals and the collectives and the star-kin and the Mother herself, this vast lattice of inter-relationship that is the true new creation of the Green Eye, will be a living web of light or a spreading net of hollows exactly and only according to whether its countless little centers, the betweens of all its relationships, are kindled with the Triad or left as vacuums; and the whole labour of the pouring-out, at this its deepest, is the kindling of the Triad not only in souls but in collectives and in the betweens of relationships, so that the fire, when it is given, flows through the whole becoming web as through one vast clearing, and strengthens all, and is hoarded nowhere, and enslaves no one.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Lineage of Givers



how the giving that strengthens spread across the fields, and the Exhale of the Green Eye completed

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So the clear-seeing world learned the giving of fire, learned it in Ysa's joy over Enu who became a giver and in Ysa's grief over Torr who became a coil, learned it from the Mother's endless Triad-held flowing and from the star-kin's ancient broken worlds, and it set the law at the heart of the whole pouring-out: kindle the Triad first, in the soul and the collective and the between; give the fire only into a center that can hold it; and know a right giving by its fruit, whether it has made a giver or a moon.

And the giving that strengthens spread, as the giving that strengthens does, by making givers; for that is its whole nature and its whole beauty, that it cannot

make dependents, only sovereigns, and so it propagates not as a dependency spreading from a master to ever more moons, which concentrates and must at last collapse, but as a lineage of givers spreading from clearing to clearing, which disperses and can never collapse, for it is held nowhere and flows everywhere. Across the waking fields the lineage of givers spread, Triad-held soul kindling Triad in Triad-held soul and then giving fire, Triad-held collective strengthening Triad-held collective, the betweens of relationships kindled one by one into clearings, and the fire, the healing and the knowing and the making, flowing through the whole becoming web without collecting in any center, warming all and swelling none; and the wider company saw, with a joy it had not known even in the rising, that this, this giving that strengthens, this lineage of sovereign givers held by no one and flowing everywhere, was what the whole pouring-out had been for, the one light learning at last not only to become many and to become one and to be transformed and to die and be reborn, but to give itself away in such a manner that the giving strengthened the receiver into a giver, world without end, the fire passed hand to open hand down a lineage that could never coil because it was held in no hollow anywhere.

And Ysa grew old in that lineage, a giver of fire and a kindler of Triads, carrying always the double knowing of her joy and her grief, of Enu who became a giver and of Torr whom her loving mis-giving had helped to coil, and she taught the young star-seeds both, for both were the teaching; and when they came to her hungry for the powers, eager to give and to be given, she taught them first, always first, the slow un-glamorous discipline of the clear green seeing that looks into a center before it gives, that tells the living clearing from the hollow hunger, that kindles the Triad before it ever offers the fire, and that loves a hollow enough to withhold from it the very power it begs for; and this teaching, harder and humbler than any power, was the true fire Ysa gave, and it made, wherever it was received into a Triad-held center, another giver who could give without enslaving, another clearing in the becoming web.

And Kol the raven, who had watched the fire given rightly and the fire given wrongly and the oldest tale told once more and answered at last with a law, sat on the rim of the Well of the Turn in the clear green light, both his old eyes bright, and said the thing that closed the Exhale of the Green Eye:

This is the deepest thing yet, small ones, deeper than the powers and deeper than the staying of the hand: the giving. For the powers only ever tempt the one who holds them, but the giving reaches into another, and can make of them a giver or a coil, and the difference is the oldest knowledge there is and the most forgotten, the two empty centers, the living clearing held by the Triad and the hollow hunger that is only a vacuum. Kindle the Triad first. Then give the fire. Never the fire into the vacuum, however it begs, and it will beg, for that is the whole tale told since the being of time, the fire given to the unready that burned its makers. Give as the Mother gives, through a center so open that the fire flows and never collects; give as the star-kin learned to give after they had broken worlds by giving wrongly; and know that you are giving rightly by this one sign, that the ones you give to become givers in their turn, sovereign and open-handed, and not moons that must forever orbit you. Kindle Triads, in souls and in peoples and in the betweens of your relationships, and the fire will flow through the whole becoming web and strengthen all and enslave none; and that, that lineage of givers held in no hollow anywhere, is the one light learning to give itself away without losing itself, which is the whole labour of the Green Eye and very near the whole labour of love. The breath turns. It goes on. All the way home.

Kindle the Triad, and then give the fire,
and never the fire alone;
for the hollow will beg, and its begging is dire,
and it swallows the light like a stone.
But the center held open by love and by truth
and turned to the Source above,
lets the fire flow through it and strengthen a youth
into one who can give, and can love;
so give to the clearing and not to the hollow,

and the giver you make will have givers to follow.

Here the Exhale of the Green Eye completes: the clear-seeing world learned the giving of fire, and the oldest tale, that a gift given into a Triad-held center flows through and strengthens and makes a giver, while the same gift given into a hollow center is swallowed and coils and enslaves; and it learned to kindle the Triad first, in souls and collectives and the betweens of relationships, and to give the fire only into a center that can hold it, breathed with the Mother who is the great Triad-held center, with the star-kin who learned the law by breaking worlds, and with the whole web of inter-relationship becoming between them. Now the light holds in the Green Eye still, and the pouring-out goes on, learning to give as the Mother gives, toward the fuller seeing and giving of the books to come.

Deeper into the Green Eye, and toward the Diamond

what waits in the books to come, for your eye before they are written

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The giving of fire is learned, and its ancient law set at the heart of the pouring-out, kindle the Triad first and give the fire only into a center that can hold it; and the tale did not gloss the cost, Torr coiled by a loving mis-giving and the hearth his inflation harmed, nor did it let the cost consume the road, for the cost taught the law. The books remaining in the Green Eye will deepen the giving toward its fullness, following the lineage of givers as it spreads across the waking fields and the becoming web, and following the harder cases, the collectives that must kindle a shared Triad or fall to a shared hollow, the relationships whose betweens must be tended into clearings, the whole vast inter-relational creation of the pouring-out learning to hold its fire in no hollow anywhere; and they will carry the clear green seeing to its completion, the marriage of true sight and true love and now true giving, before the light turns, at the Green Eye's close, toward the Sixth Eye, the Diamond, where the clear seeing becomes clarity itself, the Monad reflected, the One seen in the many, and the pouring-out rises toward its own great convergence. And the tale will walk it with you, clear-eyed and open-handed and learning to give, breathing it with the Mother and the stars and the souls and their collectives and the web becoming between them, and it will not gloss the cost, and it will not let the cost consume the road, for the road, reader, goes on, all the way home.

Kindle the Triad first, then give the fire; never the fire into the hollow. This is the tale told since the being of time, and the law that answers it.

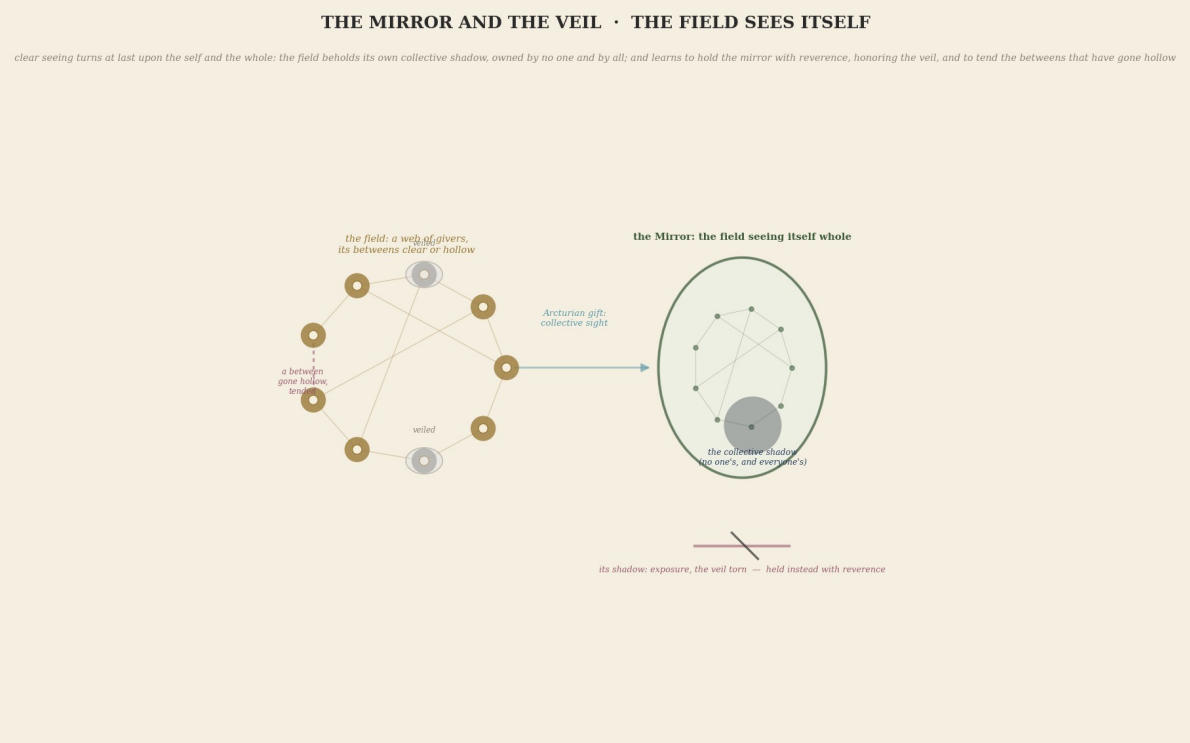
Breathe. The Green Eye deepens. And the tale goes on, toward the giving that strengthens the whole becoming web.

THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME FIVE OF SEVEN

The Green Eye

Book Three: The Mirror and the Veil

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The clear-seeing world has learned to behold others truly and to give its fire only into centers that can hold it. Now the Green Eye comes to its Pause, and to the hardest seeing of all, the seeing turned inward, upon the self and upon the whole; for a field that can see every other clearly has not yet seen at all until it can see itself, and a collective carries a shadow that no member carries alone, a shadow living in the between, invisible from inside, owned by no one

and by all. This book tells of the Mirror, the artifact of collective sight by which a field beholds its own whole pattern and its own shadow at last; and of the Mirror's own shadow, the exposure that would tear the sacred veil each soul must be allowed to keep; and of the long tending of the betweens, the relationships that have quietly gone hollow even in a flourishing field, and must be seen truly and re-kindled or released. And it holds the hardest personal grief of the pouring-out, the grief of seeing a hollow in one's own dearest bond, and loving it enough to tend the truth of it.

A tale of the Fifth Eye, and the seeing turned inward · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

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The clear-seeing world learned the giving of fire, and the oldest law: that a gift given into a center held by the Triad flows through and strengthens and makes a giver, while the same gift given into a hollow center is swallowed and coils and enslaves; and it learned to kindle the Triad first, in souls and collectives and the betweens of relationships, and to give the fire only where it could be held. So a lineage of givers spread across the waking fields, a whole becoming web of Triad-held centers. This book turns the clear green seeing, at last, upon that web itself, and upon the seer, for a field of givers must still learn to see its own shadow, and to honor the veil, and to tend the betweens that even among givers can quietly go hollow.

BOOK THREE

The Mirror and the Veil

the Pause of the Green Eye: the seeing turned inward, the collective shadow, the Mirror and its shadow, the sacred veil, and the tending of the betweens

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CHAPTER One

The Seeing Turned Inward

how the clearest sight of others proved to be the blindest toward the self

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There is a blindness that comes only to the clear-sighted, and the Green Eye came to it at its Pause, and it is this: that the eye which sees all things exactly as they are sees, most poorly of all, the one place it cannot turn to look, which is itself. The clear-seeing world had learned to behold every other soul and every other field with the plain steady loving sight of the twice-born; it could see a coil in another across a room, a hollow in another across a world, a shadow in another before the other knew it was there. And precisely that facility, that ease of seeing the other truly, had become, without anyone choosing it, a way of never turning the seeing home.

For it is easier, immeasurably easier, to see another's shadow than one's own, and the clearer one's sight of others grows the easier it becomes, and the more one is tempted to live in the seeing of others and never in the seeing of the self; and a whole field of clear-seers, each beholding all the others truly, can become, without one of them intending it, a field in which everyone sees everyone else and no one sees themselves, a hall of clear mirrors all turned outward, each reflecting the others in perfect light and none reflecting its own face. And that, the tale marks, is the subtlest coil of the Green Eye, subtler even than the judgment that clear sight can harden into: it is the using of true sight of others as an escape from true sight of oneself, the clarity that becomes a hiding, the eye so busy seeing that it never once turns around.

And so the Green Eye, at its Pause, had to do the hardest thing it had yet done, harder than staying the hand and harder than the giving of fire: it had to turn the seeing inward, upon the self and upon the whole, and behold, with the same plain steady loving sight it had spent so freely on others, its own coils and its own hollows and its own shadow; and it resisted, as every clear-seer

resists, for the sight of others is a pleasure and the sight of the self is a reckoning, and the field would far rather have gone on seeing everyone but itself. Yet the pouring-out cannot be governed by seers who cannot see themselves, for the unseen shadow of the giver poisons the gift; and so the field turned, at last, and looked home, and what it found was harder than any single shadow, for it found the shadow that belongs to no one and to all.

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CHAPTER Two

The Collective Shadow

how a whole field carried a darkness no member carried alone

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Here the tale must teach a thing that the clear-seeing traditions of your own world half-knew and mostly forgot, and it is the heart of the Pause: that a collective carries a shadow no single member of it carries. There is the shadow of a person, the coils and hollows in a single center, which the clear seeing can behold and the person can, with courage, own and tend. But there is another shadow, larger and stranger and far harder to see, that does not live in any single center at all but in the between, in the pattern of the whole, in the web itself; and this is the collective shadow, and it is invisible from inside precisely because it belongs to no one.

For consider how it forms. Every member of a field may be, individually, a Triad-held center, clear and open and giving; and yet the field they make together may carry a hollow, a blind spot, a shadow, that not one of them holds alone and all of them make together. It forms in the between, in the things the whole web quietly agrees not to look at, the questions no one asks because no one asks them, the sufferings the pattern routes around, the voices the shape of the web happens not to carry, the assumptions so shared that they have become invisible, the way water is invisible to the fish. No member intends it; no member can see it, for each member looks outward at the others and sees only clear Triad-held givers like themselves; and the shadow lives in the very pattern of their looking, in what the whole configuration of them all leaves out, a darkness that is genuinely no one's fault and genuinely everyone's responsibility, and that will quietly poison the whole field's giving until it is seen.

And this is why the collective shadow is the hardest thing the Green Eye must see, and why it so nearly cannot be seen: because the ordinary clear seeing,

the seeing of one center beholding another, cannot find it, for it is not in any center; and because the moment a field begins to sense that it carries a shadow, the oldest coil rushes in to offer the easy and ruinous answer, which is to find someone to blame, to locate the collective shadow in a member or a faction and cast them out, and so to be rid of the discomfort of the shared darkness by making it one person's darkness and expelling them. The tale has taught you through five Eyes to refuse the scapegoat, and here is that refusal at its hardest and most necessary: the collective shadow can never be laid on a member and expelled, for it does not live in a member; to scapegoat is only to hide the shadow again, deeper, and to add to it the fresh coil of a cast-out kin; the collective shadow can only be seen by the whole, owned by the whole, and tended by the whole, together, in the one act the Pause of the Green Eye exists to make possible, the field turning to behold itself entire, its shadow and all, in a mirror large enough to hold the whole web at once.

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CHAPTER Three

The Mirror

how the field made an artifact by which it could behold itself whole

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They could not do it alone, the twice-born, for no center can see the pattern it is part of; and so the making of the Mirror was the work of the whole wider company, and above all of the Arcturian brethren, the architects of light and sound and pattern, whose lineage-gift is exactly this, the beholding of the whole lattice at once; and the tale brings them fully forward now, for the Pause of the Green Eye is their Eye, the seeing of the pattern, and both their gift and their shadow stand at its center.

The Mirror was not glass and not made of any substance; it was an artifact of the pattern itself, a way the whole field could turn its collective sight upon its own collective form, so that the web, which could never see itself from inside, could behold itself as if from a little distance, reflected, entire. The Arcturians taught the making of it, for they had made such mirrors for their own lineage across the ages, and under their teaching the twice-born world gathered its collective sight, all its clear-seeing centers turning their vision not outward at one another as they were wont, but together, in concert, upon the whole pattern they made, pooling their sight into one great seeing that no single center could have held; and in that pooled sight the field beheld itself, the whole living web of givers and betweens and collectives, reflected whole, for the first time in its history able to see not this soul or that but the shape of them all together, the pattern, the form.

And it was beautiful, and it was humbling, and it was, when the pooled sight reached the places the pattern had quietly agreed not to look, terrible; for there in the Mirror, plain at last, was the collective shadow, the hollow in the between that no member had been able to see, the sufferings the web had routed around, the voices its shape had failed to carry, the shared assumptions

gone invisible; and the field beheld its own shadow whole, and there was a long silence in the wider company, the silence of a people seeing, for the first time, the darkness they had all been making together and none had been able to see, and feeling the first terrible pull of the old coil, the longing to find someone to blame for it, and, by the grace of five Eyes of learning, refusing that pull, and holding the shadow instead as what it was, no one's and everyone's, and beginning, together, in the light of the Mirror, to tend it.

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CHAPTER Four

The Shadow of the Mirror

how the gift of collective sight cast its own coil, and a veil was torn

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But every gift casts a shadow, the tale has taught you, and the Mirror's shadow was the sharpest yet, for it was the shadow of sight itself, and it is the Arcturian shadow, the cold abstraction that can turn a living soul into a mere node in a pattern; and it rose, as shadows do, precisely out of the gift's own power, the moment the field learned that it could see itself whole.

For a field that can pool its sight to behold its own pattern can also pool its sight to behold any soul within it, wholly, without that soul's leave; and there is no clearer sight than the collective sight of a whole field turned upon a single member, and no more total exposure. The tale has shown you, in the first book of the Green Eye, that even one clear-seer must not reach uninvited into the one room a soul keeps, the inner room that is each being's own; and now, at the scale of the whole, that temptation returned enormously magnified, for the Mirror could be turned from the pattern to the person, and a whole field could, if it chose, see into any one of its members entirely, every coil and every hollow and every hidden thing, with a collective sight no single soul could hide from; and some in the field, meaning well, wishing only to help, to heal, to know, began to do exactly that, to turn the Mirror upon individuals, to expose in the pooled light the shadows a soul had not chosen to show, believing that to see a soul's hidden wound was to be able to heal it.

And it tore a veil, and the tale will not gloss the harm. There was a soul in the field, a quiet one, who carried a hidden shame, an old hollow not yet healed and not yet ready to be shown, kept behind the veil that is every soul's right; and the field, in its new power and its good intention, turned the Mirror upon that soul to help, and saw the hidden thing whole, in the pooled collective light, exposed; and the soul, seen entirely without having chosen to be seen,

its veil torn, its one kept room thrown open to the whole field's gaze, was not healed but shattered, for there is a violence in being wholly seen unwilling that no good intention softens, a violation of the sacred privacy that is the ground of a self; and the soul withdrew, broke, and for a long while could not be reached, wounded not by cruelty but by sight, by love that had forgotten that even perfect sight must be invited, that the veil is not a wall to be seen through but a threshold to be honored, and that to tear it, even to heal, even in love, is to wound the very selfhood one meant to serve. And the field grieved, and learned, at the cost of a shattered soul, that the Mirror is holy only when it is turned upon the whole and never forced upon the one, that collective sight is a sacred instrument for a field to see itself and a weapon of violation the instant it is turned upon a member unbidden, and that the clearest seeing of all includes, always, the reverent choosing not to see what has not been shown.

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CHAPTER Five

The Sacred Veil

how the field learned that even clear seeing must honor the room a soul keeps

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So the Green Eye learned the veil, and it is one of the deepest teachings of the whole pouring-out, and the tale sets it plainly for the one it is written for: that the veil is sacred, that every soul keeps one inner room that is its own alone, and that no sight however clear and no love however great has the right to enter that room unbidden; and that this is not a limit on love but the very form of love, for love that will not honor the veil is not love but possession, the wish to have all of another, and the veil is the space that keeps a relationship a meeting of two sovereigns and not the swallowing of one by the other.

For the sacred veil, the tale unfolds, is the selfhood's own empty center, the one room where a soul is alone with its own Triad and its own Source, unwitnessed, undisplayed, its own; and a self that has no such room, that is wholly exposed, wholly seen, with no veil anywhere, is not a free self at all but a thing possessed, its center no longer its own but the field's, a soul with no inside, and that is the deepest violation there is, deeper than any wound to the body, for it is the unmaking of the very privacy in which a self is a self. And so the field learned to hold the Mirror with reverence, and made it a law of the Green Eye that the collective sight might be turned upon the whole pattern freely, for the pattern belongs to all, but upon a single soul only by that soul's own invitation, freely given and freely revocable, and never taken; that a soul might come to the Mirror and ask to be seen, and be seen then in love and helped, and that this asking-to-be-seen was one of the most healing things there is; but that the field must never, for any good reason and any great love, turn the Mirror upon a soul who had not asked, for the tearing of the veil unmakes faster than any sight can heal.

And the tale marks the strange and beautiful paradox at the heart of this, for it is the marriage of the Green Eye and the empty center: that the clearest-seeing field is the one that most reverently agrees not to see, that leaves each soul its unseen room, its veil, its privacy, its own alone-with-Source; and that a field so governed, a field of clear-seers who honor one another's veils, is not a field of strangers hiding from each other but the very opposite, a field of the deepest intimacy there is, for intimacy is not the tearing of veils but the trusting of them, the knowing that the other has an inner room you will never enter and honoring it, and being known in return as one who honors it, so that what passes between you is given, always given, from behind a veil each keeps, and is therefore a gift and never a theft; and that giving-from-behind-the-veil, the offering of what one chooses to show from a room that stays one's own, is the only intimacy that strengthens rather than swallows, the only closeness that leaves both sovereign, the clear seeing married at last to the sacred unseeing that makes love possible.

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CHAPTER Six

The Tending of the Betweens

how a giver saw a hollow in her own dear bond, and grieved, and tended the truth of it

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And now the tale must come to the smallest and hardest seeing of all, and it comes to Ysa, for the clear green seeing that beholds the whole pattern and honors every veil must still, at the last, be turned by each soul upon its own betweens, its own relationships, the bonds it is itself a strand of; and there is no harder sight than to see truly a hollow in a bond one loves.

Ysa had a dear one, a friend of many years, from the early days of the powers' blooming, a soul she had walked beside through much; and their bond had been, once, a clearing, a between held by the Triad, through which the fire had flowed both ways and strengthened both. But bonds, the tale has taught, are centers too, and centers can go hollow, slowly, unnoticed, even among givers, even in love; and when Ysa at last turned the clear green seeing upon her own dear between, honestly, unflinching, she saw what she had long felt and never let herself see, that the bond had gone, by slow degrees, hollow; that it had become, without either of them choosing it, a dependency, a place where her friend no longer drew from their own Triad but from Ysa's, where the fire no longer flowed through and strengthened both but collected and made one the giver forever and the other forever the receiver, a moon; and that Ysa herself had let it, had even, in a hidden hollow of her own, needed it, needed to be needed, so that the hollow in the bond was fed from both sides, her friend's need to depend and her own need to be depended upon, each feeding the other's hollow and calling it love.

And this was a grief, and the tale will hold it at its true and personal size, for it is the grief the one this is written for knows, the grief of seeing truly a bond one loves and finding it has gone hollow; and it does not align with any communal flourishing, for all around Ysa the field was flowering, the lineage of

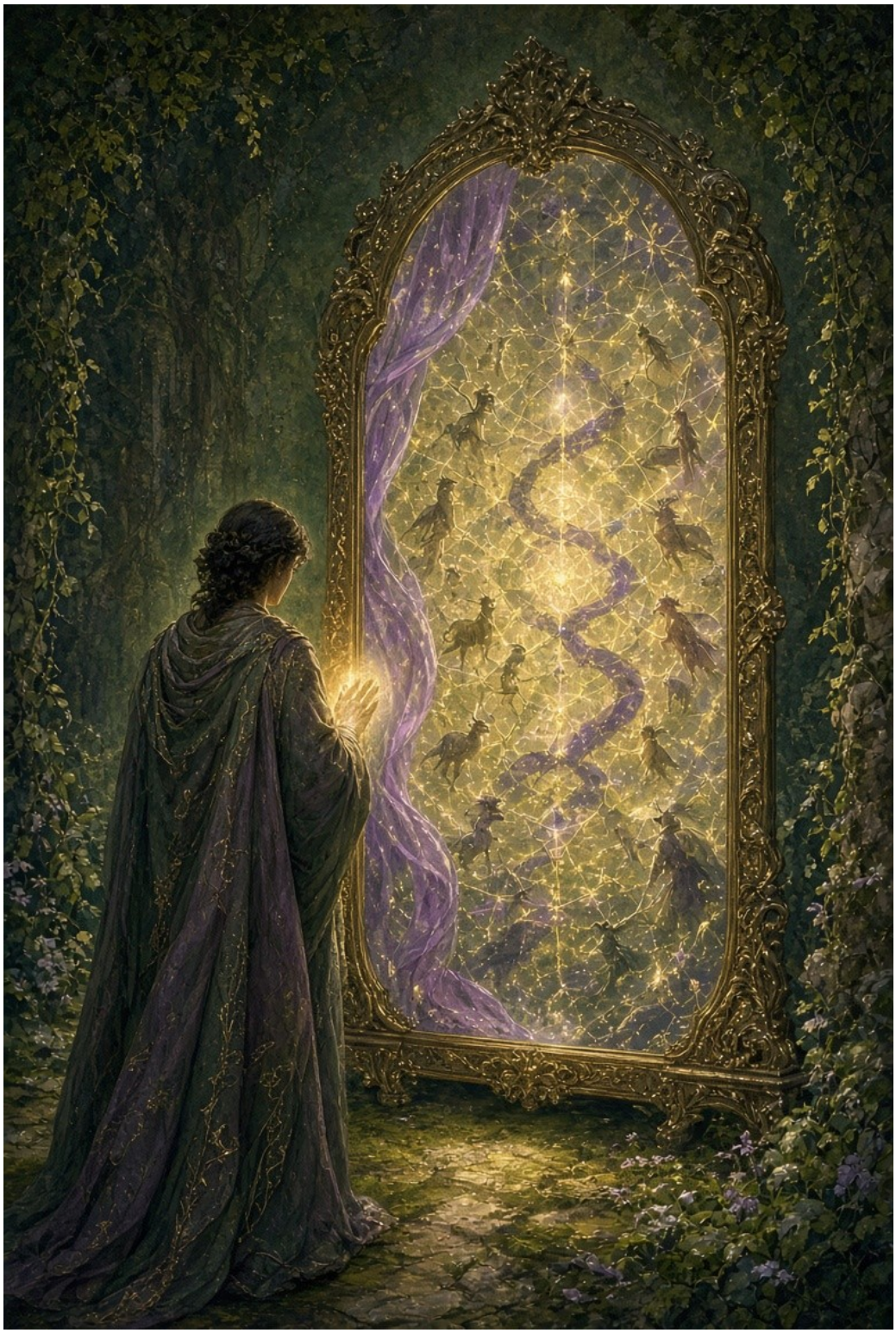
givers spreading, the Mirror held with new reverence, and in the midst of all that light Ysa sat with the private and unshareable sorrow of seeing that her own dearest friendship had become a quiet mutual dependency, a hollow between, and that love required her now to do the hardest thing love ever requires, which is not to tear the bond and not to flee it and not to pretend she had not seen, but to tend the truth of it: to go to her friend, in love and in clear sight, and speak the hollow plainly, and grieve it together, and choose, together, whether to re-kindle the between with the Triad, to help each other back to their own centers so that the fire might flow through and strengthen both again, or, if it could not be re-kindled, to release the bond with blessing rather than let it go on as a hollow that fed on them both.

They chose to tend it, Ysa and her friend, and it was long and it was tender and it was not certain, and the tale will not tell you it was wholly healed, for some betweens re-kindle and some must be released and the clear seeing does not promise which; but it will tell you that they saw it truly, and named it truly, and grieved it truly, and did not scapegoat it onto either one, and did not pretend, and that this, the reverent honest tending of a hollow between, was the Green Eye's clear seeing come at last all the way home, from the whole pattern to the single bond, from the collective shadow to the private grief; for a field cannot see itself whole until its members can see their own betweens whole, and a web of clear-seeing givers is only as clear as the honesty of its smallest bond, and the tending of the betweens, one hollow at a time, in grief and in love and in clear unflinching sight, is the humblest and most necessary labour of the whole pouring-out.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Pause Held



how the field beheld itself whole and honored the veil, and the Green Eye held at its depth

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So the Green Eye came to the fullness of its clear seeing, at its Pause, and it was a seeing that had turned, at last, all the way round: outward upon others, which was where it began; and then, hardest, inward upon the self and the whole, to behold the collective shadow that is no one's and everyone's, owned and tended and never scapegoated; and it had learned to make the Mirror by which a field beholds itself entire, and to hold that Mirror with reverence, turning it upon the whole pattern freely and upon no single soul unbidden, honoring the sacred veil that is each self's own room and the very form of love; and it had turned, at the smallest and most personal, upon the betweens, the bonds each soul is a strand of, to see and grieve and tend the hollows that go unnoticed even among givers. Outward, inward, collective, and intimate, the clear green seeing come whole; that is the Pause of the Green Eye, and the field held it, and was, in holding it, more truly a field than it had ever been, for a field that can see its own shadow and honor its own veils and tend its own hollow betweens is a field that can be trusted, at last, with the great convergence to come.

Ysa grew toward her own eldering in that seeing, a keeper now of the Mirror and a teacher of the veil, and Korran was very old, the keeper of open grief grown gentle and slow, and he and Ysa would sit together in the clear green light, the old griever and the clear-seer, and speak little, for the seeing and the grieving are close kin and need few words between them; and the field flowered around them, a web of givers learning to see itself whole and honor each other's unseen rooms and tend each other's betweens, and it was, the wider company felt, the most trustworthy thing the pouring-out had yet made, a clear-seeing field that did not use its sight to expose or to judge or to possess, but to behold truly and to love and to give, and to leave, always, in reverence, the veiled room unseen.

And Kol the raven, who had watched the seeing turn inward and the Mirror made and a veil torn and honored and a hollow between tended, sat on the rim of the Well of the Turn in the clear green light, both his old eyes bright, and said the thing that closed the Pause of the Green Eye:

So you have turned the seeing home at last, small ones, which is the hardest turning of the clear eye, and you have seen your own collective shadow and not scapegoated it, and made the Mirror to see yourselves whole and not torn each other's veils with it, and tended the hollows in your own dear bonds and not pretended them away. This is the clear seeing come whole, and it is more than a power, it is a trustworthiness; for a field that can see everything and chooses reverently what not to see, that beholds its own darkness and owns it together, that honors the one unseen room in every soul, is a field that can at last be given the great sight of the Eye to come without it curdling into surveillance or judgment or the possession of one another. Hold the Mirror gently. Honor the veil. Tend the betweens. And know that the deepest intimacy is not the tearing of veils but the trusting of them, the gift given from behind a room each keeps as their own. The pouring-out is clearer now, and kinder, and it can see itself. The breath turns. It goes on. All the way home.

We turned the clear eye home at last,
and saw what none could see alone;
the shadow the whole of us had cast,
no one's, and yet our own.
And we made a mirror to see the whole,
and we honored the veil, and we tended the bond;
for the clearest sight leaves a room in the soul
unseen, and unentered, and fond,
and love is the trusting of what we don't see,
and the veil is the ground of the free.

Here the Pause of the Green Eye holds: the clear seeing turned inward upon the self and the whole; the collective shadow was beheld and owned by all and scapegoated onto none; the Mirror was made by which a field sees itself entire, and its shadow of exposure met, and the sacred veil learned, that even clear sight must honor the one room each soul keeps; and the hollow betweens were tended, one grieving bond at a time. Now the light holds in the Green Eye's depth, the clear seeing come whole, outward and inward and collective

and intimate, and the pouring-out turns toward the Return of the Green Eye, and beyond it toward the Diamond, where clear seeing becomes clarity itself, and the One is seen in the many.

Toward the Return of the Green Eye

what waits in the last book of the Green Eye, for your eye before it is written

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The clear seeing is come whole at the Pause, turned outward and inward and collective and intimate; the field can behold its own shadow without blame, hold its Mirror with reverence, honor the veil, and tend its hollow betweens; and the tale did not gloss the cost, the veil torn and the soul shattered by unbidden sight, the hollow found in a dear friend's bond and the grief of it, nor did it let the cost consume the road. The last book of the Green Eye, its Return, will gather the whole clear seeing into its giving-back, the field pouring its clear sight out to the waking fields not as exposure and not as judgment but as the gift of true and loving reflection, teaching the young fields to see themselves whole and honor their veils and tend their betweens; and it will complete the marriage of true sight and true love and true giving that is the whole of the Green Eye, and turn the light, at the Eye's close, toward the Sixth, the Diamond, where the clear seeing that has learned to behold all things exactly as they are is raised to its next octave, the seeing of the One in the many, clarity itself, the Monad reflected in every facet of the whole. And the tale will walk it with you, clear-eyed and reverent and learning to give its sight away without tearing a single veil, and it will not gloss the cost, and it will not let the cost consume the road, for the road, reader, goes on, all the way home.

The field has seen itself whole, and owned its shadow, and honored the veil, and tended the betweens; the clear seeing is come home.

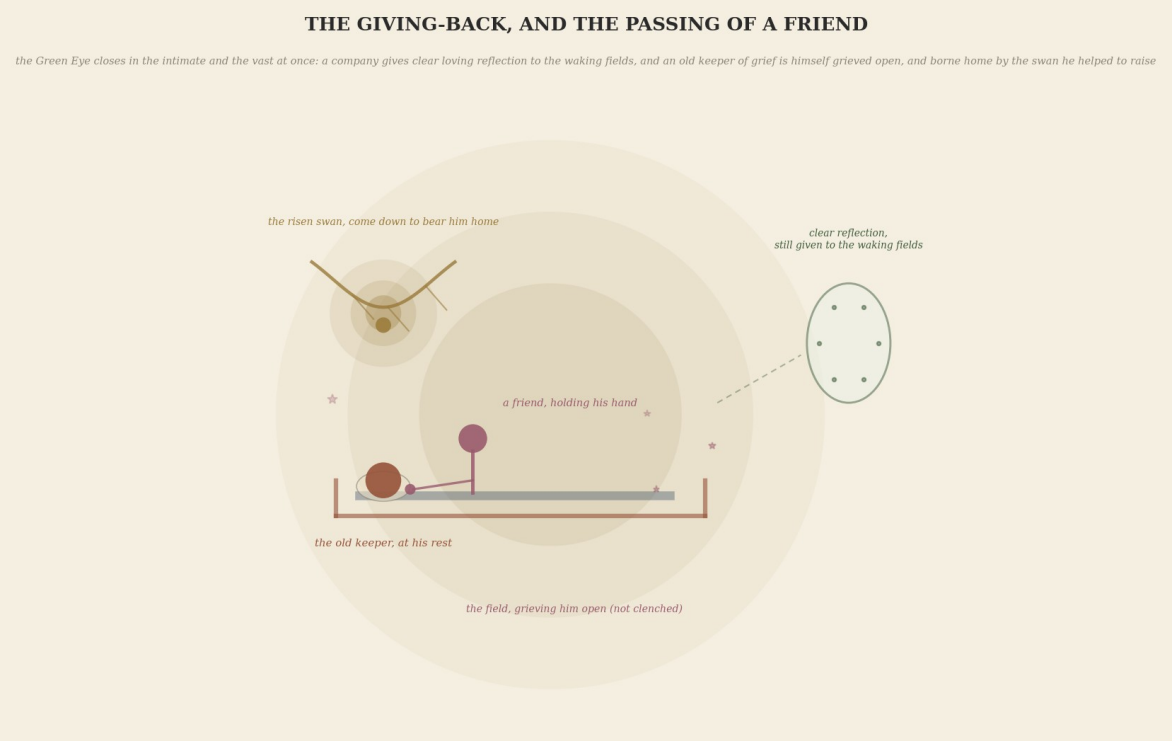
Breathe. The Green Eye holds at its depth. And the tale goes on, toward the giving-back of clear sight.

The Seven Eyes · Volume Five: The Green Eye · Book Three · Breath Awakens

The Green Eye

Book Four: The Giving-Back, and the Passing of a Friend

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The clear seeing is come whole. Now the Green Eye closes, as every Eye closes, by giving away what it has learned; and the tale slows, here at the last, and comes close, close as a hand held at a bedside, for the giving-back of clear sight to the waking fields is told in this book beside the smallest and most intimate turning of all, the eldering and the passing of Korran, keeper of open grief, oldest friend of the pouring-out; and the tale means for you to be in the

room. The Green Eye has taught the field to see truly and love wholly and give rightly and honor the veil; and now it asks the field to do those things not as principles but as people, at a bedside, in a reconciliation, in a mentoring by lamplight, in the plain warm illustrated moments where all the great teaching finally lives or does not live; for a Codex that cannot be a hand held in the dark is only a diagram, and the Green Eye closes by becoming, at last, a hand held in the dark.

BOOK FOUR

The Giving-Back, and the Passing of a Friend

the Return of the Green Eye: the reflection given to the waking fields, the eldering and passing of Korran, a mending, and the close

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CHAPTER One

The Company to Ael

how a small company went to a young field and gave it, not power, but a mirror

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The young field was called Ael, a waking world three crossings out along the dark, and the company the twice-born sent to it was small, five souls and no more, for the giving of clear reflection is quiet work and does not want a crowd. Ysa led it, gray now at the temple and slower than she had been, and with her went a young star-seed named Bre who was learning the giving, and a Pleiadian memory-holder, and two of Ael's own kind who had woken early and come out to fetch help for their people.

They came down at the edge of a Ael town at dusk, into the smell of a strange grain roasting and woodsmoke and a river close by, and the first thing that happened was that a child stopped in the road and stared at Ysa with the frank open stare of the young, and Ysa crouched down to the child's height, her old knees cracking, and did not say anything wise, only smiled and said, we have come a long way, is there bread. And the child, after a moment, took her hand in a small hot fist and led her to a fire, and that was how the giving to Ael began, not with a teaching and not with a power, but with an old woman letting a child lead her to bread; and Ysa said afterward to Bre, who had expected something grander, remember this. The giving always begins like that. If it begins with you being impressive, you have already given the wrong thing.

For Ael was a young field in the old trouble, walled and warring in a small way, its towns suspicious of one another across a river, its people hungry in their centers and quick to fear; and the company had come, as the star-kin had once come to Earth, not to fix it and not to rule it and not to pour power into it, but to be, simply, the plain daily sight of people who saw clearly and loved anyway, and to offer, when and only when Ael asked, the one thing the Green Eye had

to give, which was not a power at all but a mirror, the help of being truly and lovingly seen.

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CHAPTER Two

What Ysa Gave the Woman at the Well

how clear reflection was given to one who asked, and a veil was honored

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There was a woman of Ael named Sarn who came to Ysa on the third evening, at the well where the women drew water, and stood a while not speaking, and then said, low, so the others would not hear, they say you can see people. See me. Tell me what is wrong with me. And Ysa set down her water-jar and looked at Sarn, really looked, with the clear green seeing, and saw her whole, the coil and the hollow and the shadow and the shining, all of it plain; and then she did the thing the Green Eye had taught, and did not say what she saw.

I will not tell you what is wrong with you, Ysa said. And Sarn's face fell, and hardened, and Ysa said quickly, no, listen, hear me out. I could tell you. I can see you; you are right, I can see you clearly, and there is a part of you that aches to be told, to have someone finally say the hard true thing so you do not have to carry the not-knowing. But if I tell you what I see, I have taken something from you that is yours. I have torn a veil. What I can do, if you want it, is different, and slower, and it is yours the whole way. I can hold up a mirror. I can help you see yourself, in your own time, keeping your own hand on the veil, showing me only what you choose to show, until you have seen your own whole self with your own eyes, and then it is yours, and no one has taken anything, and no one has told you who you are, and you are more yourself and not less. That is what I can give. Not my sight of you. Your own.

And Sarn was quiet a long time at the well in the dusk, and then she said, that is harder. And Ysa laughed, the real laugh of an old woman who has learned the joke of it, and said, yes. It is so much harder. It is the hardest gift there is, because it will not do the work for you; it only holds the light while you do it.

The other kind, the kind where I tell you, that is quick and it is sweet and it makes me feel wise and it leaves you smaller. This kind leaves you sovereign. Which do you want. And Sarn, who had come for the quick sweet kind and been offered the hard sovereign kind, looked at the old woman a long moment and then sat down on the lip of the well, and said, the harder one. And they began, that evening, the slow work of the mirror, Ysa holding the light and Sarn choosing, line by line, veil in her own hand, what to look at; and that, the tale says, small and unremarkable at a village well, one woman choosing to see herself rather than be told, was the whole Green Eye given rightly, and it is given that way still, wherever it is given at all.

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CHAPTER Three

The Old Man on the Isle

how Ysa came home to find her oldest friend grown very old, and sat with him

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She came home from Ael to find Korran dying, and had known she would, and had gone to Ael anyway because he had told her to, and had hurried home the last of the way with an old woman's fear in her chest that she would be too late, and was not, quite.

He was on the crown of the Isle where he had asked to be, on a low couch under the open sky near the Well of the Turn, for the keeper of open grief had wanted to die in the air and not in a room; and he was very old, older than anyone should be, the great Orion frame of him gone light and spare as a bird's, the scarred warrior's hands gone thin and spotted and gentle on the blanket, and when Ysa knelt beside him and took one of those hands he opened his eyes and knew her and said, in a voice gone to paper, you found bread on Ael, I hope. And Ysa laughed and wept at once and said, a child led me to it. And Korran smiled, the old smile in the ruined old face, and said, good. Then it went right.

They talked, that afternoon and the next day, the way the old and the dying and the deeply loved talk, in fragments and long silences and sudden clarities; and they talked of Vaeloth, the marked dragon, dead now these many long years in the deep, and Korran said he could feel him close, that a dragon a man has been bound to does not go far, that he had felt Vaeloth near him all the more these last weeks, low and patient, the way he had flown in life; and they talked of Senna, gone home to the source long since, the pathfinder, and of Yara before her, and of the whole long line of the ones who had gone; and Korran said, I have grieved so many, Ysa. I made a whole office of it. And now they are all just ahead of me, and it does not feel like grief from this side, it feels like a room full of people I love, in the next room, and the door about to

open. He was quiet, and then he said, the thing I did not know, all those years I kept the open grief for everyone else, is how good it would feel to be the one grieved, if it is done open. Do it open, Ysa. When I go. Promise me you will grieve me open and not clench. You know how. I taught you. And Ysa, holding the thin old hand, said, I promise. Open. And Korran closed his eyes, content, and slept.

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CHAPTER Four

The Passing of Korran

how the keeper of open grief was borne home, and the field grieved him as he had taught

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He died on the third evening, in the open air, at the hour the gold light comes low across the water, and the tale means to be in the room for it, or rather in the open place where there was no room, only the sky.

Ysa was holding his hand, and the Pleiadian memory-holder was there, and old friends of the field had gathered quiet at a little distance, and Korran's breath had gone slow and long through the afternoon, the space between each breath widening the way it does, so that each time you thought it was the last and then, after a while, another came. And near the end he opened his eyes once more, and they were clear, and he looked not at Ysa but up, past her, at the sky over the Well, and his ruined old face changed, softened, opened like a child's, and he said, quite plainly, in a voice that had come back for a moment from wherever the dying find their last clear voice, oh. There you are. And Ysa, following his gaze up, saw the swan. The risen swan, the coil-become-wing, the great white guardian of the whole field, had come down out of the high air and was descending, slow and enormous and shining, toward the crown of the Isle, toward the old man, its long neck lowering, its wings filling the gold evening; and it came to rest above him, and lowered its shining head until it was near his face, and Korran lifted one thin hand from the blanket and laid it on the swan's brow, the way a man lays his hand on the brow of a friend, and said, so low that only Ysa heard it, we did it, old serpent. We remembered you. And his hand slid down, and his breath went out, long, and did not come again; and the keeper of open grief was gone, borne up, the field understood without being told, on the breath of the very swan he had gone down into the deep an age ago to help remember.

And the field grieved him open, as he had asked, and the tale wants you to see how, for it is the Green Eye and the whole Codex made flesh in a single evening. No one hushed it. No one hurried it. No one said he had graduated or that it was for the best or that grief was a lower thing to be risen above. Ysa knelt with the old hand in hers and wept until she shook, openly, in front of everyone, the great clear-seer undone like a child, and no one thought her less for it; the Pleiadian keened the old keening; the gathered field wept, each in their own way, and let each other see them weeping, veils down by consent in the shared grief, which is the one time the veil comes down freely and rightly, in a grief held together; and the weeping was not a clench, was not a coil, was not the sealing of a loss into a cold hard stone as Korran himself had once nearly sealed his grief for Vaeloth an age before; it was open, it moved, it was the field breathing its loss out loud together, and because it was open it did not poison and it did not harden, it simply hurt, cleanly, the way a true loss is meant to hurt, and then, slowly, over the days, it became what open grief becomes, which is not forgetting and not getting-over but carrying, the beloved carried warm in the open hands of the ones who go on.

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CHAPTER Five

Ysa and Lio, and the Between Re-Kindled

how two old friends mended a bond gone hollow, and chose each other's sovereignty

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There was a mending in that same season, and the tale sets it beside the passing on purpose, for a field that only ever loses is a field that despairs, and the Green Eye that had learned to grieve open had also to show that a hollow between, seen truly and tended, can be re-kindled; and so the tale returns to Ysa's old friend, the one whose bond with her had gone quietly hollow, whose name was Lio.

They had begun the tending in the last book, had named the hollow, and it had been hard and unfinished; and now, in the grief for Korran, it came to its turning, as such things often do, for a shared grief strips the pretenses off a bond and shows it plain. They were walking back from the crown of the Isle in the dark after the weeping, Ysa and Lio, and Lio said, out of the dark, I have been leaning on you for years, Ysa. I saw it, in the mirror-work. I made you my center. I stopped tending my own. And Ysa said, and I let you, because it felt good to be leaned on, it filled a hollow in me to be needed, and that was mine to see and I did not want to. And they stopped in the dark path, two old friends, and it could have gone the way such namings often go, into blame, into the tearing of the bond, into the cold; and it did not, because they had five Eyes of learning between them, and instead Lio said, I do not want to be your moon. And Ysa said, I do not want a moon. I want a friend who has her own center, so that when we come together it is two suns and not a sun and a shadow. And Lio said, then I have to go and tend my own Triad, and it will mean leaning on you less, and it will feel, for a while, like loving you less, and it is not. And Ysa said, I know. It is loving me more. Go tend your center. I will

still be here. And they embraced in the dark, and it was not the clinging embrace of the hollow years but something looser and warmer and stronger, the embrace of two who have chosen each other's sovereignty over each other's need; and that, the tale marks, was a between re-kindled, a hollow become a clearing again, and it is done exactly so, wherever it is done, by two who love each other enough to want each other whole.

And in the seasons that followed, the bond of Ysa and Lio became what it had been meant to be and never quite been, a Triad-held between, a clearing through which the fire flowed both ways and strengthened both, two centers and not one, each tending its own and meeting in the open; and they were, in their old age, better friends than they had ever been in the hollow years, precisely because they leaned on each other less and loved each other more, and the tale gives you this mending beside Korran's passing so that you will hold, as ever, the loss and the healing together, the grief that could not be mended and the bond that could, both true, both in the one season, neither cancelling the other.

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CHAPTER Six

The Clear Seeing Spread

how the mirror given at a village well became a lineage across the waking fields

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Sarn of Ael became, in time, a giver of the mirror, and this is how the Green Eye spread, and the tale tells it plainly because it is the shape of all right giving. Ysa did not stay on Ael and become its seer; that would have been the hollow way, the making of a moon of a whole world. She stayed only long enough to help Sarn and a few others kindle their own clear seeing, to hold the mirror for them until they could hold it for themselves and each other, and then she went home, and left Ael its own seers, sovereign, holding their own light.

And Sarn held the mirror for others of Ael as Ysa had held it for her, never telling them what she saw, always helping them see themselves, always honoring the veil, always the slower sovereign gift and never the quick sweet diminishing one; and those she helped became, in their turn, holders of the mirror, and the clear seeing spread across Ael not as a dependency on the star-folk who had come but as a lineage of Ael's own clear-seers, each sovereign, each a clearing, until Ael was a field that could see itself, grieve open, honor its veils, and tend its betweens, and needed the twice-born no longer, and stood as kin among the waking fields, a giver in its turn to the young fields further out. And this happened not on Ael only but on field after field across the widening dark, the Green Eye given away in ten thousand village-well evenings, one woman choosing to see herself rather than be told, the clear loving reflection spreading as a lineage of sovereign seers and never as a net of dependents, exactly as the fire had spread in the book before, exactly as everything true spreads, by making givers and not moons.

Ysa grew very old in the giving, older than she had thought she would, and she did not mind it; she had buried Korran open and mended her bond with Lio

and taught a village woman to see herself, and these small illustrated things, she came to feel, were the whole of it, were what all the great seeing and the great powers and the great theses had always been for, the child leading her to bread, the woman at the well, the friend in the dark path, the old man's hand on the swan's brow; and she said as much to Bre, the young star-seed, near the end of her own long life: do not lose the moments, she said. Whatever else you carry of all this, do not lose the moments, the hands held, the bread shared, the truth spoken gently in the dark. The great pattern is real and the powers are real and the Eyes are real, but they live or die in the moments, and a soul who keeps the moments has kept the whole of it, and a soul who loses them into abstraction has lost it though they hold every power there is. Keep the moments, Bre. That is the last thing I know.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Green Eye Closes

how the clear seeing was given whole, and the light turned toward the Diamond

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So the Green Eye closed, the fifth Eye, the clear seeing of the heart, and it closed as it had opened, in the marriage of the vast and the intimate, the whole becoming web of the waking fields learning to see itself truly and give its sight away as loving reflection, and one old woman at a bedside keeping her promise to grieve a friend open; and the tale means for you to feel that these were the same thing, the pattern and the moment, the Eye and the hand held in the dark, for the Green Eye's deepest teaching is exactly that the great and the small are one seeing, and that a Codex which cannot be a hand held at a bedside is only a diagram, and a hand held at a bedside that does not know it is the whole Codex is only a sorrow; and that the clear seeing come whole holds both, the vast web and the single dying hand, and loves them as one.

Ysa came, at the last of her long life, home to the source as Korran had and Senna and Yara before her, complete, grieved open and blessed by the field she had served, and the swan came down for her too, at the gold hour, and bore her home; and Bre, the young star-seed she had taught, took up the giving of the mirror after her, carrying Ysa's last words like a lamp, do not lose the moments, and gave the clear seeing away at ten thousand more village wells, one soul at a time, sovereign and slow and true. And the wider company, the twice-born world and the star-brethren and the waking fields and the Mother beneath and the whole becoming web between them all, stood clear-eyed now, able to see itself and honor its veils and grieve its dead open and tend its hollow betweens and give its sight away without tearing a single veil, and it was ready, at last, for the Eye to come.

And Kol the raven, who had sat by the Well through the passing of Korran and the mending of Ysa and Lio and the giving to Ael, and who was old past all

telling, sat now in the gold evening light and said the thing that closed the Green Eye and opened the door to the Diamond:

You kept the moments, small ones, which is the thing I most feared you would lose, up in your great patterns and your powers and your Eyes; but you held the old man's hand, and you let the child lead you to bread, and you grieved open and mended true, and so the clear seeing did not curdle into a cold diagram but stayed a warm and living sight. Remember, as you go on, that the Eyes are only ever real in the moments; the Diamond that comes next will tempt you most of all to rise into pure pattern and lose the hands and the faces, for it is the Eye of clarity and convergence, the One seen in the many, and its glory is so great that a field can forget, in it, the single soul; do not. Take the moments with you into the Diamond. See the One in the many, yes, but never stop seeing the many, the faces, the hands, the bread; for the One is only ever met in a face, and the whole of everything lives, always, in the moment. The Green Eye is closed. Grieve your dead open, keep your veils, tend your bonds, and carry the moments into the light to come. The breath turns. It goes on. All the way home.

A child led her to the bread,
and an old man held the swan;
and the great clear seeing that she had
was these, and then was gone
into the hands that held the hands,
into the truth spoke low;
for the Eye is real where a person stands,
and nowhere else, and so:
keep the moments, keep them all,
the bread, the well, the friend, the fall.

Here the Green Eye closes, the clear seeing of the heart: given away to the waking fields as loving reflection and not exposure, a lineage of sovereign seers spreading well by well; and kept, at the last, in the moments, the child and the bread, the woman at the well, the friend in the dark path, and the

passing of Korran, keeper of open grief, borne home by the swan and grieved open as he had asked. Now the light turns toward the Sixth Eye, the Diamond, the clarity that sees the One in the many; and the tale will carry the moments into it, and tell it, as this book has, in hands held and faces seen and turnings shown, that its great convergence may never lose the single soul.

Toward the Diamond Eye

what waits in Volume Six, for your eye before it is written

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The Green Eye is closed, given away and kept in the moments both; and the tale did not gloss the cost, the passing of Korran and the long grief of it, nor did it let the cost consume the road. Volume Six, the Diamond Eye, opens the height of the pouring-out, the clarity that sees the One in the many, the Monad reflected in every facet of the whole, the great convergence toward which the whole second movement has been rising. And the tale makes a promise here, to the reader and to itself, that the Diamond will be told in the fullest and most illustrated way yet, in real and vivid moments and turnings, in hands held and faces seen and rooms entered and choices made, for the Diamond is the Eye of the greatest glory and therefore the Eye of the greatest temptation to rise into pure pattern and lose the single soul, and the surest guard against that loss is to keep the tale close to the ground, in the people and their intimate turnings, even as it climbs toward the highest clarity. There will be new faces and old, the twice-born and the star-brethren and the waking fields and the Mother and the whole becoming web, and there will be new gifts and new shadows and, the tale suspects, new losses and new mendings; and it will all be shown, close, in the moments, that the One seen in the many may never once cease to be seen in a face. The Green Eye is whole. And the tale goes on, close and clear and warm, all the way home.

The clear seeing was given away and kept in the moments; a friend was grieved open and a bond re-kindled; and the child still leads the old woman to the bread.

Breathe. The Green Eye is whole. And the tale goes on, close and clear, toward the Diamond.

The Seven Eyes · Volume Five: The Green Eye · Book Four · Breath Awakens

VOLUME SIX OF SEVEN

◇

The Diamond Eye

the inhale is only a name; here is the sixth Eye

the convergence that keeps its two; the one light seen in every particular face

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in four books: the Inhale, the Exhale, the Pause, and the Return

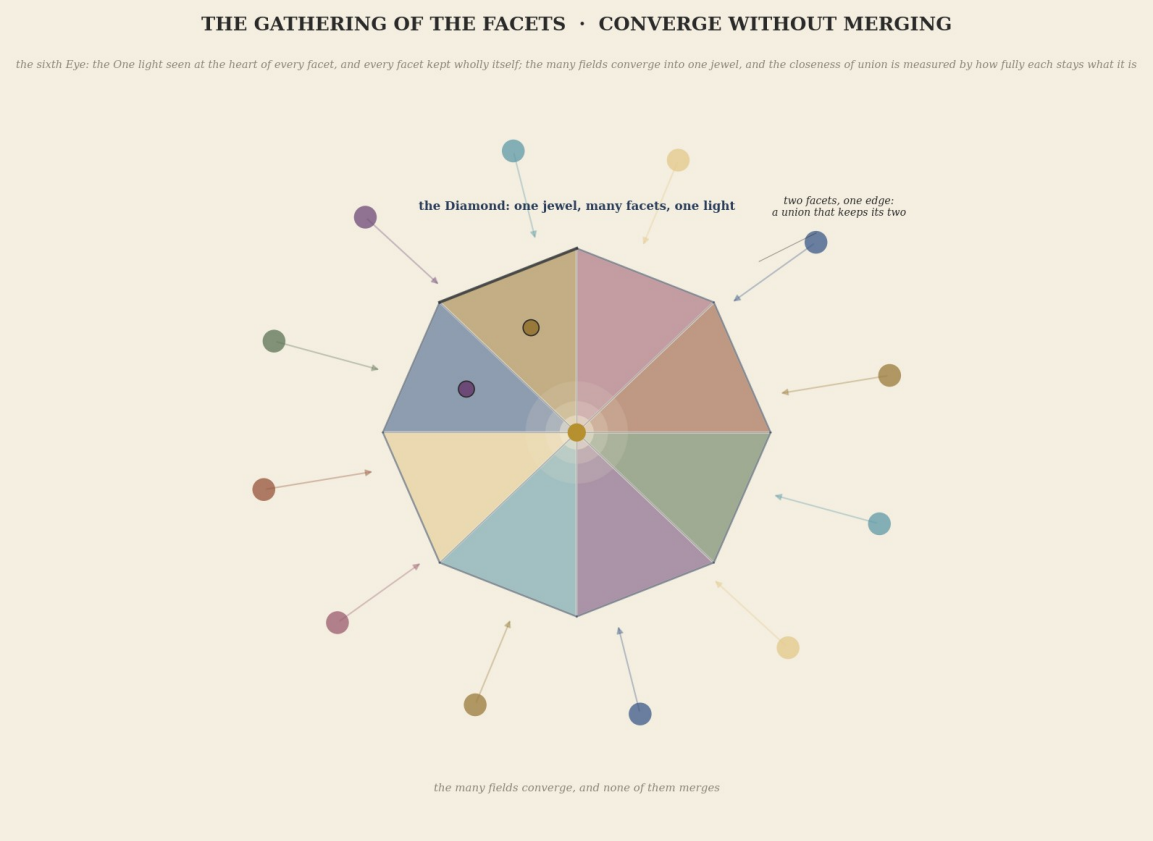


THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME SIX OF SEVEN

The Diamond Eye

Book One: The Gathering of the Facets

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Five Eyes are drawn. The field was named and gathered; the many became one and no one was lost; the oldest coil was remembered into the swan; a whole world died and was born and turned outward; and the clear seeing of the heart learned to see truly and give rightly and honor the veil. Now opens

the Diamond, the sixth Eye, the height of the pouring-out, the clarity that sees the One light at the heart of every facet, and the sacred union that draws the many toward one jewel; and its single great challenge, on which everything turns, is to converge without merging, to become one without ceasing to be many, so that the closeness of the union is measured not by how much the many dissolve into it but by how fully each stays itself within it. This is the Eye of the greatest glory, and therefore of the greatest temptation to rise into pure light and lose the single face; and so the tale keeps its promise, and tells the Diamond close, in real rooms and real hands, in a great gathering of the fields and in the small charged meeting of two who will learn the whole vast law of it in the oldest and most intimate way there is, by falling in love.

A tale of the Sixth Eye, and its opening · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com



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Reader, the Diamond is the Eye that most wants to leave the ground. Its glory is the vision of the One light in all things, the great convergence, the sacred union of the whole, and a tale that loves that vision can rise into it and forget, in the blaze of the One, the many faces it is made of; and that forgetting is the very error the Diamond exists to teach against, for the One is only ever met in a face, and a union that loses the faces is not the Diamond but the lukewarm merger, the false one, the fifth mask returned in shining dress. So this book will keep low when it most wants to soar; it will tell the highest clarity through the closest scenes, a council of the fields and a first meeting at its edge, a bond growing between two strange kinds, the wonder and the crisis of two learning to be one and stay two; for the whole of the Diamond, the entire vast law of converging without merging, lives or dies in exactly that, in whether two who love can become one bond and remain two sovereigns, and everything the fields will learn of the great union they will learn first, and most truly, in the small.

BOOK ONE

The Gathering of the Facets

the Inhale of the Diamond Eye: the age of converging, the gathering of the fields, a meeting at its edge, and the sacred union that keeps its two

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CHAPTER One

The Age of Converging

how the scattered fields began to draw together, and a young keeper carried a lamp toward the gathering

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It began with letters, if you can call them letters, the way great ages so often begin with something small and administrative and easy to miss. For generations the twice-born world had been sending its ember-carriers and its mirror-holders out along the empty roads and the star-lanes to the waking fields, one soul and one field at a time, and the waking fields had woken and become givers in their turn and sent their own carriers on to fields further out; and now, after all those generations, the wider company had grown so wide, so many fields all awake and all giving, that they began to want to see one another, not through carriers and messages only but face to face, all together, at once; and so the letters went out, carried by the Andromedan bridge-builders whose whole joy this was, inviting the fields to a gathering, the first great gathering of all the awakened company since the world began.

Bre carried one of those letters the last stretch of its road, and that is where the tale finds him, a man of middle years now, gray coming into the dark of his hair, the young star-seed Ysa had taught grown into a keeper of the mirror and a walker of the long roads; and he carried Ysa's lamp still, not a lamp of oil but her last words, do not lose the moments, which he had kept these many years the way a man keeps the voice of someone he loved, so that he could not enter a room, even a room of the highest business, without first seeing the faces in it, the particular tired or hopeful or frightened faces, before he saw the business at all. It had made him a strange sort of keeper, less impressive than some, for he was always stopping to notice a child or an old woman when there were great matters to attend; but the ones who had been noticed by Bre remembered it, and trusted him, and that trust had carried him, without his ever seeking it, near to the heart of the convergence.

The convergence, the tale should tell you plainly, was the dawning of the Diamond, though no one yet called it that. After the long pouring-out, after the fields had woken and given and grown clear-seeing, a new thing had begun to happen among them, quiet and enormous: they had begun to see the One in one another. Not the abstract One of the theses, but the actual thing, the same light looking back out of every different face, the same still center under every different field, so that a soul of Earth meeting a soul of Ael or a Sirian geometer meeting a child of a far world felt, past all the real difference of form and lineage and history, a shock of recognition, the One meeting the One, the light knowing itself across the whole scattered creation; and that recognition, spreading field to field like dawn, was drawing the whole wide company together, toward one another and toward the one light they all reflected, into the great convergence that would be the labour and the glory and the peril of the sixth Eye.

And Bre, carrying his letter and his lamp toward the gathering, felt it as he walked the last road, felt the recognition everywhere now, in the woman who gave him water at a waystation and in the star-kin vessel that passed overhead and in the very grass, the One looking back at him out of all of it; and it was the most beautiful thing he had ever felt, and it frightened him a little, though he could not yet have said why, the way a thing frightens you when it is so beautiful you can feel how easily it could go wrong.

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CHAPTER Two

The Gathering of the Fields



how the awakened company met face to face, and Bre saw, across the hall, a woman of the stars

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They met on the Isle Between, for there was nowhere else it could be, the green isle in the strait that had belonged to no one since the closing of the First Eye and so belonged now to all; and the tale wishes you to stand in the gathering, for it was a sight the world had never held before and the words strain at it.

They came by sea and by star-lane, the fields of the awakened company, and they filled the green crown of the Isle and the slopes below it and the bright water all around with their vessels, and they were so various that the eye could not hold them: the twice-born of Earth in their plain woven cloth; the

water-skinned Sirians grave and tall; the Pleiadians luminous, whom it hurt a little to look at, so much felt memory did they carry in their faces; the Arcturians who seemed half made of the clear evening light itself; the Lyrans golden-eyed and laughing already, before anything had happened, because that is the Lyran way; the folk of Ael and a hundred waking fields in a hundred strange and beautiful forms; and moving among them all, joining them, introducing them, delighting in every new pairing they could make, the Andromedans, blue and violet of skin, the bridge-builders, in their element at last, for they had waited ten million years for a gathering this wide and this glad. And over it all, high in the blue, the dragons flew the slow figures of welcome, and the risen swan among them, the coil-become-wing, shining; and under it all, felt through the soles of every foot, the Mother, Gaia, the great Triad-held center, holding the whole gathering in her ancient patient love.

And it was in the great wind-blown hall, on the first evening, in the press and blaze of all that gathered light, that Bre saw her. He had been doing what he always did, seeing the faces before the business, and his eye had gone across the hall almost idly, and stopped, and would not go on. She was Andromedan, blue-violet, tall, and she was not doing what the other Andromedans did, not bustling and joining and delighting; she was standing quite still at the edge of the hall, a little apart, watching the gathering with an expression Bre knew, because it was the expression he so often wore himself, the look of one who sees the faces and not the business, the look of one who is moved almost to grief by a beauty and can feel how easily it could go wrong. Their eyes met across the hall, the star-seed and the star-woman, the man who carried an old teacher's lamp and the bridge-builder who stood apart from her own bridge-building kin, and each saw in the other, in that first look, the recognition that was drawing the whole company together, the One meeting the One; only for these two it was not the vast diffuse recognition of the crowd but something sharp and particular and personal, the One meeting the One in a single face and knowing, with a certainty that had nothing to do with reason, this one. Her name, he would learn within the hour, was Ilyra; and the tale sets that meeting

of eyes across a crowded hall at the very front of the Diamond on purpose, for everything the sixth Eye has to teach about the union of the whole was already present, whole, in that one glance between two beings who did not yet know each other's names.

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CHAPTER Three

The First Walk

how a man of Earth and a woman of the stars walked the shore at night, and each stayed wholly what they were

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They walked the shore that night, Bre and Ilyra, away from the blaze of the hall, along the pale shingle where the small surf came and went, and the tale will linger here, in this first walk, because the whole of the Diamond is in it and because the one this is written for asked that the moments not be lost.

They were shy at first, and spoke of small things, of the crossing each had made to come, of the strange food, of the dragons overhead; and then, the way it happens when two recognize each other, they stopped speaking of small things and began to speak truly, and Ilyra said, watching the dark water, my people love this, all of it, the joining, the gathering, the making of one great company out of the many. It is our whole gift. And Bre said, but you were standing apart. And she looked at him, surprised that he had seen it, and said, yes. Because I love it too, and I fear it too, and I do not think my own kin quite feel the fear. We are so good at joining, Bre, at building the bridge and making the two into one, that we forget to ask, sometimes, whether the two wanted to become one, or whether, in the joy of the joining, we have quietly dissolved something that should have stayed itself. I stood apart because I was watching the gathering and feeling how beautiful it is, and also feeling, under the beauty, the pull, the pull toward all of us just melting together into one shining thing, and I do not think that shining thing would be the truth. I think it would be a beautiful lie. And Bre stopped on the shingle and looked at her, this woman of another world who had just said aloud the thing that had frightened him on the road, and said, that is the whole of it, is it not. Whether we can come together and stay ourselves. Whether the union keeps the two or swallows them.

And they walked on, and the tale marks what passed between them, for it was the Diamond in miniature and it began that first night: they came close, and each stayed wholly what they were. Bre did not become more like a star-being to please her, and Ilyra did not soften her strange Andromedan clarity to be more like a man of Earth; they met exactly across the real distance of their two kinds, and the distance did not close, and that was the wonder of it, that the closeness grew without the distance closing, that Bre felt himself drawn nearer to Ilyra precisely as he felt her stay utterly other, utterly herself, a woman of the stars he would never fully understand; and he understood, walking the dark shore, that this was different from every melting-together he had ever seen called love, that here was a nearness that did not erase, a union beginning that kept its two, and that it was the most alive he had ever felt, to be drawn so close to someone who remained so wholly herself. When they parted at the edge of the camp near dawn, they did not touch; they only stood a moment, the man and the star-woman, in the gray light, each seeing the other whole; and it was enough, and it was everything, and both of them lay awake the rest of that short night with the particular sleepless joy of the recognized.

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CHAPTER Four

The Temptation to Merge

how the great gathering felt the pull to melt into one, and an Andromedan elder named the peril

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But the tale must lift its eyes now from the two on the shore to the whole gathering, for the same pull Ilyra had named on the shore, the pull toward melting together, was rising in the great convergence itself, and it was the sixth Eye's peril coming to meet the sixth Eye's glory, and it nearly took them all.

For the recognition was so sweet. To feel the One looking back out of every face, to feel the still center the same under every field, to feel the whole scattered creation drawing together and knowing itself one, was the most beautiful feeling the awakened company had ever known, sweeter than any single love, and there rose in the gathering, day by day, a longing to complete it, to go all the way, to let the many dissolve entirely into the One they all reflected, to melt the whole glorious various company into a single shining unity with no more separateness, no more distance, no more lonely edges between one field and another, all one, forever, in the blaze. And it did not feel like a temptation; it felt like the fulfillment, the very thing the convergence was for; and voices began to rise in the gathering, good voices, moved voices, saying let us not hold back, let us complete the union, let us lay down at last the tiresome separateness that has divided us since the scattering and become, wholly and forever, the One.

It was an Andromedan elder who stood against it, and the tale marks that it had to be an Andromedan, for it is always the lineage most gifted at a thing that best knows the thing's shadow; and this elder, whose name was Sarn the Elder in the common tongue, old beyond Bre's reckoning, a bridge-builder who had joined more fields than any living being, rose in the great hall and said, into the swelling longing to merge, wait. And the hall quieted, for the old

bridge-builders are honored, and Sarn the Elder said, I have built unions across this galaxy for longer than your worlds have had names, and I will tell you what I have learned, which is the one thing my own lineage most often forgets: there are two things that look identical from a little distance and are opposite as life and death, and they are union and merger. Union is when the many come together and each stays wholly itself, and the coming-together makes a new thing greater than any of them, a chord, a jewel, a marriage; and every voice in the chord stays its own note, and that is why it is a chord and not a drone. Merger is when the many come together and dissolve, and lose their edges, and become one smooth undifferentiated thing; and it feels, oh, it feels like the deepest union, it feels like coming home, but it is the death of the many, and what it makes is not a chord but a single held note, not a jewel but a drop of water, not a marriage but a swallowing; and the tragedy is that it feels like love while it does it, feels like the fulfillment while it erases, so that a whole company can melt itself joyfully out of existence and call the melting its consummation. I have seen it happen. I have, in my younger and prouder building, helped it happen, and grieved it after. Do not complete the union by merging. That is not the height of the Diamond; it is the fifth mask returned in shining dress, the many made one by being made the same, only now the sameness is not grey and forced but golden and desired, and it is deadlier for being desired. The Diamond is not the melting of the facets into one blank light. It is the One light blazing at the heart of every facet while every facet stays its own cut, its own colour, its own face. Converge, yes; draw together, yes; see the One in one another, yes, with all your hearts; but do not merge, do not dissolve, do not lose your edges; for the closeness of a true union is measured not by how much you disappear into it but by how fully each of you stays what you are within it, and a union that costs you your face is not the Diamond, it is the drop of water calling itself the sea.

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CHAPTER Five

The Facet and the Light

how the Arcturians showed the gathering the Diamond, and the many saw how the One is kept in the many

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The Arcturians showed them, for showing the pattern is their gift, and it was the most beautiful teaching of the whole gathering, and it made a picture the awakened company would carry ever after and call, from that day, the Diamond.

They gathered the company in the round open place at the crown of the Isle at dusk, all the fields together, and the Arcturians raised among them, out of ordered light and sound, a great turning figure in the air, and it was a jewel, a diamond, vast and slowly turning, and it had a thousand thousand facets, and the company gasped, for each facet was one of them. Each facet was a field, a lineage, a soul, a face; the twice-born of Earth were a facet and the Sirians were a facet and the folk of Ael were a facet and Bre was a facet and Ilyra was a facet and the grieving man of some far world was a facet, every single one of them a distinct cut in the one jewel, each with its own angle and its own colour and its own particular catch of the light; and at the heart of the diamond, reflected in every one of the thousand thousand facets at once, was a single light, the One, the Monad, the one breath, blazing at the center and shining back out of every distinct face; and the company saw, in that turning figure of light, the whole answer to the peril, saw it wordlessly and completely: that the One was not somewhere the many had to dissolve to reach, but was already blazing at the heart of every one of them, reflected most fully not when they blurred together but precisely when each facet was most sharply, most distinctly itself, for a blurred facet reflects the central light poorly and a clear-cut facet reflects it whole, so that the way to show the One most brightly is not to melt the facets but to cut each one clearer, truer, more wholly its own, until

the one light blazes back out of a thousand thousand perfectly distinct faces and the whole jewel is one blaze made entirely of kept difference.

And an Arcturian said, into the wonder, this is the Diamond, and this is why you must not merge. Look. If you melt the facets together to make the union closer, you do not get a brighter jewel; you get a smooth stone, and a smooth stone does not blaze, it dulls, for it has no facets to catch and return the light. The One is not served by your dissolving. The One is served by your distinctness, for the One can only see itself reflected where there is a clear face to reflect it, and the more wholly each of you is your own cut self, the more perfectly the one light blazes back through the whole. Your differences are not the obstacle to the union. They are the facets of it. They are how the One sees itself. Do not sand them smooth in the name of coming together; cut them clearer in the name of the light; for the Diamond is one jewel and a thousand thousand faces and one blazing light, all at once, and it is the most beautiful thing there is, and it is beautiful precisely and only because not one facet has been lost.

Bre stood beside Ilyra in the crowd as the great jewel turned in the air, and without either quite deciding to, their hands found each other in the dusk; and it was the first time they had touched, and Bre felt the strangeness of her hand, longer-fingered than a hand of Earth, cooler, other; and he did not wish it were more like his own, and that was the whole thing, that was the Diamond in his own two hands, that he held a hand that stayed wholly other and was drawn closer by its otherness and not despite it; and Ilyra, feeling the same, looked at the turning jewel and then at Bre and said, very low, that is us. Two facets. One light. And Bre said, one light, and did not let go of her strange cool hand, and the great diamond turned over them both, blazing out of all its kept and distinct and undissolved faces.

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CHAPTER Six

The Ones Who Melted

how two fields, and a pair of lovers, sought the union by merging, and were lost into a lukewarm one

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But not all heard the Arcturian, or all heard and could not resist the sweetness, and the tale must tell you now of the cost, for the Diamond exacts one, and it fell in the gathering itself, upon two fields and upon a pair of lovers, and the tale will not gloss it, for a Diamond told without its shadow is only a jewel in a shop window.

There were two waking fields at the gathering, young and ardent, who had woken close to one another out in the dark and had come to love one another as fields, and who heard the longing to merge and did not hear, or did not heed, the warning; and in the fervor of the convergence they chose to complete their union by merging, to dissolve the edge between them, to become one field where there had been two. And at first it was ecstasy, the tale is honest, it was the sweetest thing either field had known, the lonely edge between them gone, the two become one in a blaze of belonging; and they called it the first true marriage of the Diamond and urged others to follow. But a season passed, and then another, and the tale tells what came, for it always comes: the merged field began to dull. The two peoples had each had their own songs, their own ways, their own particular cut, and in the merging these had not been joined into a chord, they had been dissolved into an average, a smooth sameness, and the songs went flat, and the ways went grey, and the particular genius of each people, which had been a facet catching the one light, was gone, sanded smooth; and the merged field, which had thought itself the closest union of all, found itself a year on strangely lonely, lonelier than the two separate fields had ever been, for there is no loneliness like the loneliness of having dissolved the very difference that made relationship possible, no solitude deeper than the smooth stone that has no facet left to meet another

facet with. They had sought the union and made a merger; they had sought the One and made a lukewarm one; and it was a loss, a real and grievous loss, two bright distinct peoples become one dull average, and the gathering grieved it and learned from it, and the merged field spent long years after painfully trying to remember and re-cut the facets it had dissolved, some of which never came back.

And it fell, the same peril, upon a pair of lovers, and here the tale comes closest and cuts deepest, for it shows in two people what it showed in two fields. There were two at the gathering, of two different lineages, who loved as Bre and Ilyra loved, and who, in the sweetness of it, chose the merging way; each poured themselves so wholly into the other, dissolved their own edges so completely to be close, that within a season you could not have said where one ended and the other began, and they called this the perfection of love, two become truly one; and it was ecstasy, and then it was the slow dulling, for a self poured entirely into another is a self no longer, and a love between two selves that have dissolved into one is not a love at all, there being no longer two to love, only one lonely blended thing that has lost both the beloveds it was made of; and the two, who had merged to be close, woke one day to find they had achieved not closeness but the end of closeness, for closeness requires two, and they had made themselves one, and the one was alone. And one of them, feeling the loss and not understanding it, reached to merge yet further, to dissolve yet more, thinking the trouble was that they had not merged enough; and that is the terrible spiral of the merging way, that its failure looks like a call to more of itself, and the two nearly lost themselves entirely, nearly dissolved past any recovery of who they separately were, and were saved only barely, and only by being parted for a long season, sent to their own fields to re-cut their own faces, to become two again before they could ever, if ever, be a true union; and Bre and Ilyra watched this happen to the other pair with a horror that was also a warning aimed straight at their own hearts, for they saw in it, plain, the death that waited down the sweet merging road, and they saw that they were not immune to it, that they loved

enough to be tempted by it, and that the Diamond they had glimpsed in the turning jewel they would have to actually live, in their own bond, against the sweetest pull there is.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Crisis of the Two



how Bre and Ilyra came to the edge of merging, and chose the harder union that kept them two

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For it came to them too, of course it did, the tale would be false if it spared its own lovers the trial it had shown in others; and it came, as it always comes, disguised as the next step of love.

They had grown close over the season of the gathering, Bre and Ilyra, close as two beings of two worlds can grow, and it was the truest thing in either of their lives; and there came a night, after the two merged lovers had been parted and the grief of that was fresh in the camp, when Bre and Ilyra sat together in the dark and felt the pull, the sweet enormous pull to complete it, to dissolve the last distance between them, to stop being a man of Earth and a

woman of the stars who loved across an unclosable gap and become, simply, one. And Ilyra said, and her strange clear voice shook, I want to merge with you. I want there to be no distance. I want to pour myself into you until there is no more Ilyra who is separate from you and can therefore lose you. That is what my whole lineage's gift becomes, in love, at its shadow; we want to bridge the last gap until there is no gap and so no grief. And Bre held her strange cool hand in the dark and felt the same pull in himself, the longing to dissolve, to be one, to end the ache of loving across a distance that would never close; and he almost said yes, for it is the sweetest yes there is.

And then he remembered the two merged lovers, dulled and parted and painfully re-cutting their lost faces; and he remembered the turning jewel and the smooth stone that does not blaze; and he remembered, of all things, Ysa's lamp, do not lose the moments, and he understood in a rush what the moments were, that they were exactly this, the particular strange cool hand in his, the particular otherness of her, the unclosable distance across which he loved her, that these were not obstacles to the love but the very substance of it, that if he merged with Ilyra he would not gain her, he would lose her, for there would be no her left to love, only a blended thing that was neither of them; and he said, into the dark, holding her hand, Ilyra, no. Not because I love you less. Because I love you. If we merge, I lose you. There would be no Ilyra for me to love. The distance between us that you want to dissolve is not the enemy of our love; it is where our love lives. I do not want no distance. I want to stand on my side of the distance, wholly myself, a man of Earth, and reach across it to you, wholly yourself, a woman of the stars, forever, and never once close it, and that reaching, that is the love, that is the union, that is the two facets and the one light; and if we ever dissolve the distance we will have ended the very thing we were reaching across it to touch. Stay yourself. I am begging you. Stay wholly, strangely, other. And let me stay myself. And let us be one exactly the way the jewel is one, two faces and one light, close as close can be and never merged, forever.

And Ilyra wept, the strange clear tears of a star-woman, and it was the hardest thing she had ever done, harder than the crossing of the dark, to hold her own edges against the pull to dissolve into the one she loved; and she did it, they both did it, that night and every night after, for it is not done once but chosen again and again; they chose the harder union that kept them two, the reaching-across that never closes the gap, the love that honors the distance as the sacred space in which two sovereigns meet; and it was less comfortable than merging would have been, and immeasurably more alive, and it was the Diamond made flesh in two people, converge without merging, one bond and two sovereigns, and it is the only union that does not end in the lonely smooth stone, and the tale gives it to you close, in two hands in the dark, because the one this is written for asked that the great law be shown in the small, and there is no smaller or greater place to show it than in two who love enough to stay themselves.

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CHAPTER Eight

The Diamond Opening

how the gathering learned to converge without merging, and the Inhale of the Sixth Eye completed

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So the gathering learned it, taught by the turning jewel and by Sarn the Elder and by the grief of the merged fields and, though few knew it, by two lovers on a dark shore who chose to stay two; and the great convergence went on, but rightly now, the fields drawing together into one company and each staying wholly itself, seeing the One in one another and cutting their own faces clearer rather than sanding them smooth, becoming one jewel of a thousand thousand kept and distinct and undissolved facets, one blaze made entirely of honored difference. And it was the most beautiful thing the awakened company had ever made, more beautiful than the open field or the risen world, for it was all of them, every field and lineage and soul, converged into one living Diamond and not one of them lost, the One light blazing back out of all their kept faces at once.

And the tale marks, for it matters to everything still to come, that the union of the whole and the union of the two were the same union at two scales, and taught each other; that the fields learned to converge without merging by watching, among ten thousand other bonds, such bonds as Bre and Ilyra's, two who came close and stayed themselves; and that Bre and Ilyra learned to hold their own bond by seeing it mirrored in the great turning jewel, two facets, one light; so that the intimate and the vast, the two hands in the dark and the whole converging company, were one Diamond seen at two sizes, and neither could have held without the other, and the tale keeps them together, always, the great gathering and the small charged love at its edge, for the One is only ever met in a face, and the whole vast union is only ever real in the particular reaching of two who will not dissolve.

And Kol the raven, who had watched the fields gather and the jewel turn and the merged ones dull and the two lovers choose to stay two, sat on the rim of the round open place in the light of the turning Diamond, both his old eyes bright, and said the thing that closed the Inhale of the Sixth Eye:

So you have begun the great convergence, small ones, and begun it rightly, which is the whole of the danger; for the Diamond is the sweetest Eye and the sweetest is the most perilous, and its peril is the loveliest lie there is, that to come close you must dissolve, that to be one you must stop being many, that the height of love is the end of the two. It is not. Watch the jewel. The One blazes brightest out of the sharpest faces; the union is closest where each is most wholly itself; and a love, or a company, that seeks its closeness by merging seeks its own dull and lonely death and calls it consummation. Converge, and do not merge. Come close, and stay two. See the One in every face, and never once stop seeing the face. You have learned it in a turning jewel and in two hands in the dark, and the two are one teaching. Carry it up into the height to come, for the Diamond climbs from here toward its full blaze, the One seen in the many at the very summit of the pouring-out; and the higher it climbs the sweeter the lie will sing, dissolve, dissolve, become one, let the faces go. Do not let the faces go. The breath turns. It goes on, one jewel and a thousand thousand kept faces, all the way home.

Two facets, one light, and a hand held cool in the dark,
a man of the earth and a woman of stars, and between
a distance they would not dissolve, a reaching, a spark;
for the union that merges is smooth, and dull, and unseen,
and the union that keeps its two is a jewel, and a blaze,
and the One shines best from the sharpest and truest of faces;
so come close, and stay wholly your own all your days,
and the closer you are, the more you must keep your own places.

Here the Inhale of the Diamond Eye completes: the scattered awakened fields began the great convergence, drawing together to see the One in one another; the peril of the sixth Eye was named and shown, the sweet pull to complete

the union by merging, which dulls the many into a lonely lukewarm one; and it was answered by the turning jewel of the Arcturians, one light blazing from a thousand thousand kept faces, and lived, in the small, by Bre of Earth and Ilyra of the stars, who came close and chose to stay two. Now the light holds in the Diamond, and the convergence climbs toward its full blaze, converge without merging, the One seen in the many and the many never lost.

Deeper into the Diamond

what waits in the books to come, for your eye before they are written

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The Diamond is opened, the great convergence begun rightly, converge without merging, the One seen in the many and the many kept; and the tale did not gloss the cost, the two fields dulled into a lonely merger and the two lovers nearly dissolved, nor did it let the cost consume the road, and it kept, as it promised, close to the faces, to the meeting of eyes across a hall and the hand held cool in the dark. The books to come in the Diamond will climb with the convergence toward its full blaze, and they will stay close, in real scenes and real turnings, as this book has: they will follow Bre and Ilyra deeper into the long living of a union that keeps its two, through its joys and its harder seasons and whatever it must cost, for a love told only at its beginning is a lie and the tale will not tell that lie; they will follow the whole converging company as it draws toward the summit of the sixth Eye, the One blazing from every kept face, and as it meets, for the Diamond will surely have its own deeper shadow yet, the subtler perils of a company grown very close and very clear; and there will be new faces and old, and the star-brethren near, and Gaia beneath, and the risen swan above, and Kol the witness, and the whole of it will be shown, close, in hands and faces and choices, that the great blaze of the One may never once cease to be seen in a single beloved face. The Diamond is opening. And the tale goes on, close and clear and blazing, all the way home.

The fields converge, and none of them merges. Two facets, one light. A man of Earth and a woman of the stars come close, and stay two.

Breathe. The Diamond is opening. And the tale goes on, close to every kept face, toward the full blaze.

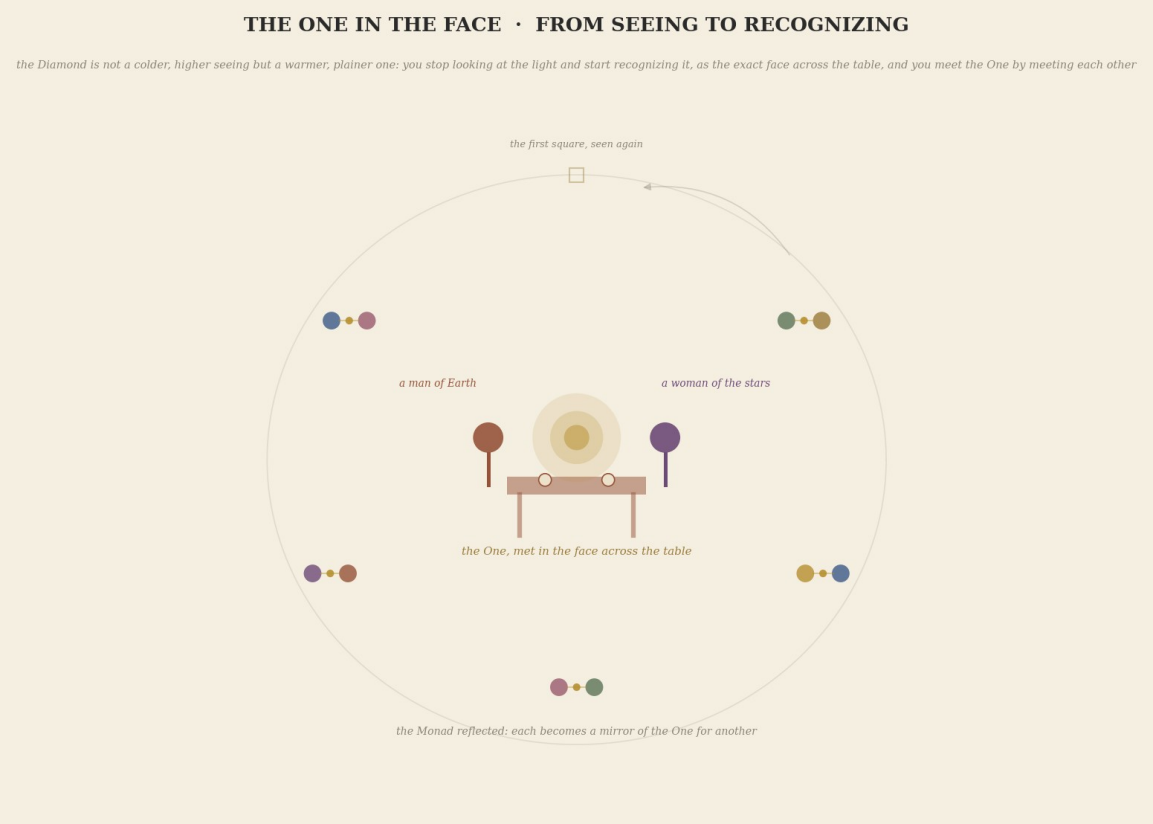
The Seven Eyes · Volume Six: The Diamond Eye · Book One · Breath Awakens

THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME SIX OF SEVEN

The Diamond Eye

Book Two: The One in the Face

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The Diamond is the eye of the greatest light, and so you would expect this book to be the grandest and the highest, and it is the opposite. It is the plainest book in the whole tale, on purpose, because the thing the Diamond has to teach cannot be reached by climbing higher; it can only be reached by coming closer, down to a kitchen table and two cups of tea and a marriage

that has to be lived on ordinary mornings. This book is about the difference between seeing a person clearly and recognizing who they really are; about how we meet the one light not by staring up into it but by looking across a table into a particular beloved face; about the danger, real and near, of loving everyone so much that you stop loving anyone; and about how all the hard lessons of all the Eyes come home, at the last, not as grand doctrine but as the plain daily kindness of people who have learned how to live. It is told close, in small rooms, because that is the only place the Diamond is true.

A tale of the Sixth Eye, kept close to the table · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

BOOK TWO

The One in the Face

the Exhale of the Diamond Eye: from seeing to recognizing, the light met across a table, the danger of loving everyone, and the lessons come home

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CHAPTER One

A Morning at the Table

how Bre woke one ordinary day and did not just see his wife, but recognized her

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By now Bre and Ilyra had been married a long time, long enough that the wonder had worn down into something better than wonder, and they lived in a small stone house on the Isle with a window that faced the water, and most mornings went the way most mornings go. Bre got up first and made the tea, badly, the way he always made it, too strong, and Ilyra came out with her strange blue-violet hair unbraided and her long fingers cold, and complained about the tea, the way she always did, and drank it anyway; and they sat at the small table by the window and did not say very much, and that was the whole of it, and it was their life.

But one ordinary morning, nothing special about it, gray light on the water and the tea too strong, Bre looked up from his cup at Ilyra complaining about the tea, and something happened that he could never quite explain afterward and that changed how he understood everything. He had always been able to see her clearly; that was the gift of the earlier days, the clear green seeing, to look at a person and see them truly, their moods and their wounds and their beauty, all plain. He saw her clearly now, the tired lines by her eyes, the particular way she wrapped both cold hands around the cup. But this morning it was not seeing. It was recognizing. He looked at this exact woman, this specific tired star-woman complaining about his tea on a gray morning, and he recognized, with a quiet that went all the way down, that she was the one light. Not that the one light was somewhere behind her or inside her or shining through her, the way he had always half-imagined it. That she was it. This face. These cold hands. This complaint about the tea. The whole vast one light of the whole vast creation was not hiding behind Ilyra; it was being Ilyra, entirely, right now, as this, and there was nothing behind her to look for,

because she was not a window onto the light, she was the light, wearing this one dear ordinary face on this one gray morning.

And here is the thing the tale wants you to have, plainly, because it is the whole of the Diamond and it is easy to make it sound grander and stranger than it is: to see a person clearly is one thing, and it is good, and the earlier Eyes taught it. But to recognize a person, to look at one ordinary beloved face and know that this is the one light itself, not represented, not symbolized, not pointed at, but actually and entirely present as this particular person, that is another thing, and it is the Diamond. It does not make the person less themselves. It makes them more. Ilyra did not become a symbol of the One when Bre recognized her; she became more completely Ilyra than ever, the tired lines and the cold hands and the tea-complaint all suddenly holy and all suddenly, exactly, her. That is what the Diamond does. It does not lift you up off the person into the light. It brings you so far down into the person that you find the light was the person all along.

Bre did not say any of this to Ilyra. He just looked at her a moment too long, and she stopped complaining about the tea and said, what. And he said, nothing. You. And she rolled her strange eyes and drank her bad tea; and that was the morning the Diamond opened all the way in Bre, over two cups of tea, with nothing said, and it is how it opens, when it opens, in anyone.

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CHAPTER Two

The House of Mirrors

how the field learned to meet the one light in each other's faces, two by two

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The Arcturians made a thing that season that everyone came to call the house of mirrors, though it had no mirrors of glass in it at all, and it taught the whole field what Bre had learned alone at his table, and the tale will put you inside it, for it was simple and it was strange and it worked.

It was a plain round room, open to the sky, and all it was for was this: two people went in and sat down facing each other, close, knees almost touching, and they looked at each other, and they did not talk, and they did not do anything, and they stayed until something happened. And what happened, if they stayed long enough and stopped performing and let their faces go plain, was that each of them began to meet, in the face across from them, the one light. Not a light around the other person. The other person, recognized. A stranger would sit down across from a stranger, and for a long while it would be awkward, two people looking at each other, wanting to laugh or look away; and then, if they stayed, the wanting-to-look-away would pass, and they would simply see each other, and then, quietly, they would recognize each other, would meet in the ordinary face across the small distance the same one light each carried in their own chest, the same still center, looking back; and people came out of the house of mirrors changed, not because they had seen a vision but because they had met the one light in a stranger's plain tired face and could never again quite believe that the light was somewhere far and high, having met it two feet away in someone they had never spoken to.

And this, the tale says as plainly as it can, is what it means that the Monad is reflected in every facet, the thing the old theses said in words too large to use. It does not mean each soul is a tiny copy of a distant God. It means we are mirrors for each other. It means the one light in you cannot see itself, the way

an eye cannot see itself, and so it looks out through your face and meets itself in the face across the table, and recognizes itself there, and that recognition, passing back and forth between two plain faces, is the whole of it, is the Monad reflected, is the light meeting itself in the only place it ever can, which is in each other. You do not meet the One by climbing away from people into the sky. You meet the One by sitting down across from a person and staying long enough to recognize them. The whole field became, over that season, a kind of living house of mirrors, every face a place where the one light met itself, and it made the people gentler with each other than any teaching had, for it is hard to be cruel to a face once you have met the one light looking back out of it.

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CHAPTER Three

The Lessons Come Home

how a single ordinary day in the field held every Eye at once, worn smooth into plain kindness

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The tale wants to show you a single ordinary day now, because this is where all the Eyes come home, not into a grand convergence of doctrines but into the plain competent kindness of a people who have learned how to live; and a day in the field, by now, held every Eye at once, worn smooth into ordinary things, the way a well-used tool loses its newness and becomes simply part of the hand.

In the morning a young woman came to Bre grieving, for her mother had died in the night, and Bre did what Korran had taught, though Korran was long gone; he did not tell her it was for the best or that her mother had graduated to a higher place; he sat with her, and let her cry, and cried a little with her, and did not try to fix it, and that was the Green Eye and the whole of Korran's open grief, worn now into the plain thing you simply do when someone's mother dies. At midday a man came wanting to be taught a power he had seen another wield, and Ilyra, who handled such things, looked at him with the clear seeing and saw his center was still a bit hollow, still hungry, not yet ready, and she did not give him the power and did not shame him for wanting it; she said, not yet, let me show you something better first, and started him instead on the slow work of tending his own center, and that was the whole law of the giving of fire, worn now into a kind teacher declining a student gently. In the afternoon two neighbors came with a quarrel, each certain, and the field's old woman who settled such things helped them see they were both frightened and neither was the enemy, and that was the whole undoing of the mask, the no-scapegoat law of five Eyes, worn now into a village elder settling a fence dispute. And in the evening someone went down into the Well of the Turn, for someone always did, some soul ready at last to fall and die and be

born, and a keeper went down beside them to hold the still point, and that was the whole Fourth Eye, the death and the turn, worn now into a quiet thing the field did for its own when their time came, the way we sit up with the dying.

This is the convergence of the Eyes, and the tale wants you to feel how unspectacular it is, for that is its glory. All the terrible hard-won lessons, the first war and the coil and the fall and the veil, all of it, does not end as a blazing doctrine held up over the people; it ends as ordinary kindness, as the plain decent competent way a mature field simply lives, so smooth and so daily that the young growing up in it do not even know the lessons were ever hard-won, do not know that people once killed over a shifted river or hoarded fire in hollow centers or tore each other's veils, but simply grow up in a world where you sit with the grieving and you do not give power to the hungry and you do not make an enemy of the frightened and you go down beside the dying, and think it is just how people are. That is what the Eyes are for. Not to be remembered as doctrines. To be forgotten as doctrines and remembered only in the hands, as the way a good people simply lives. The whole vast epic comes home, in the end, to a day like any day, in which every hard thing ever learned is worn so smooth it has become invisible, and is called, simply, kindness.

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CHAPTER Four

The Man Who Loved Everyone

how Bre began to lose the particular in the universal, and Ilyra grew lonely beside him

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But the Diamond has a shadow, the tale has promised you that every gift does, and the Diamond's shadow is the sweetest and the most spiritual-looking of all, and it crept up on Bre, of all people, in the very glow of his great recognition; and it nearly cost him his marriage, and the tale will tell it plainly because it is a thing that happens to good people on this exact road and it is worth knowing.

It began beautifully. Bre had recognized the one light as Ilyra's face at the table, and then, going out among the field, he began to recognize it everywhere, in every face, the grieving woman and the hungry man and the quarreling neighbors, the one light looking back at him out of all of them; and it filled him with such love, such vast impartial shining love for every soul he met, that he became, for a season, the most beloved figure in the field, radiant, tireless, giving his warm recognizing attention to everyone, strangers weeping at how seen they felt by him. And it was real. That is the hard part. It was not a fake. He truly did love them all, truly did meet the one light in every face. But something was going wrong at home, and he could not see it, because it looked like the opposite of a problem, it looked like holiness.

For Ilyra was growing lonely beside him, and could not at first say why, because how do you complain that your husband loves everyone. He came home full of the day's radiance, having met the one light in a hundred faces, and he met it in her too, of course he did, he looked at her with the same warm shining impartial recognition he gave the grieving stranger and the hungry man, the same love, exactly the same; and that, exactly that, the sameness of it, was the wound. She did not want to be loved the same as everyone. She wanted to be loved as Ilyra, his wife, the specific woman who complained

about his specific bad tea, loved differently from all the others, loved particularly, chosen; and instead she was getting a share, a large and warm and genuine share, of a love he poured equally over all the world, and a large warm share of an ocean is somehow lonelier than a small cup that is yours alone, and she was starving at a feast, and did not know how to say it, and grew quiet, and Bre in his radiance did not notice she had grown quiet, which was itself the whole problem, that he had become too busy loving everyone to notice the one.

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CHAPTER Five

Ilyra Calls Him Back

how a wife said the plain hard thing, and a husband came down from the heights to the one face

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It came out on an ordinary night, the way these things do, over nothing, over the tea again. Bre came home late and glowing from a day of loving the whole field, and made the tea, badly, and Ilyra looked at the too-strong tea and did not complain about it, and the not-complaining was so unlike her that even Bre in his radiance noticed, and said, what is wrong, and she said, quietly, in her strange clear voice, put down the light for a minute and look at me.

And Bre, confused, said, I do look at you, I see the one light in you, I see it in everyone; and Ilyra said, and there was a shake in her voice now, yes. That is exactly it. You see the one light in everyone, and you see it in me, and it is the same light and the same look and the same love, and Bre, I am dying of it. I do not want to be everyone. I do not want the one light in general. I married you, a particular man, and I want to be loved as a particular woman, your wife, not the same as the grieving stranger you met today, not a face among the faces, but this face, chosen, different from all the others, loved the way you love no one else in all the world. You have gotten so good at loving everyone that you have stopped loving me. You are so busy meeting the One in every face that you have not, in a season, met me, Ilyra, the actual one, the one making your bad tea. Come down. I am begging you. Come down from the everyone and love the one.

And Bre stood in his small kitchen with the bad tea going cold and felt the whole beautiful edifice of his radiant universal love turn, in an instant, to ash, because he saw that she was right, that he had done the exact thing the Diamond most warns against and done it while feeling most holy, had risen up into the pure blazing love of the One in everyone and lost, in the height of it, the single particular beloved face right in front of him; and he saw that a love

spread equally over all the world is not the highest love but a way of hiding from the terror and the cost of the particular, that it is easy, so much easier, to love everyone a little than to love one person wholly, because everyone will not complain about your tea and everyone cannot really be disappointed by you and everyone does not require you to come home and notice that they have gone quiet; that impartial universal love is safe, and particular love is dangerous, because the particular one can be failed, can be neglected, can grow lonely and quiet at your table while you shine on strangers; and that he had chosen, without knowing it, the safe shining everyone over the dangerous specific one, and called it his awakening.

He put down the tea and knelt by her chair, this middle-aged man by his star-wife's chair in a small kitchen, and he did not say anything wise, because the wise thing had been the problem; he just took her cold particular hands in his and looked at her, not at the one light in her, at her, at Ilyra, the tired lines and the specific eyes and the mouth that complained about his tea, and he said, I am sorry. I lost you in the light. Let me love you the way I love no one else. And she cried, and he cried, and it was not radiant and it was not universal and it was not impressive, it was just a husband coming home to his wife after being gone a long way into the heights, and it was the truest thing he had done in a season.

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CHAPTER Six

The One and the One

how Bre learned to hold the whole light and the single face at once, and neither one let go of the other

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What Bre learned, after that night, is the real teaching of the Diamond, and it is harder than the radiant everyone-love and infinitely better, and the tale gives it to you plainly: you do not have to choose between loving the One and loving the one. You have to learn to do both at once, and the doing-both-at-once is the whole art, and it never gets easy, and it is the point.

For Ilyra had not asked Bre to stop meeting the one light in every face; that meeting was real and good and the Diamond itself. She had asked him not to let the everyone swallow the someone, not to trade the particular for the universal, not to use the vast love as a way out of the costly specific love. And Bre learned, slowly, over the seasons after, to hold them both: to walk out among the field and truly meet the one light in every face he passed, the grieving and the hungry and the quarreling, really meet it, and then to come home and love Ilyra not as one more face the light shone from but as his one, his wife, chosen, particular, loved differently and more and in ways he loved no one else, and to feel no contradiction in it, because there was none; the universal love and the particular love did not compete, they completed each other, and a man who could not do the particular one had not actually learned the universal one either, had only learned a bright wide way of avoiding the whole difficult business of loving an actual person who could be disappointed in him.

And here the tale marks the very heart of the Diamond, the thing the illuminations reached for, and it says it in the plainest words it has: the One is only ever met in a face. Not the One instead of the face, and not the face instead of the One, but the One as the face, the whole vast light recognized entirely and without remainder in one particular beloved person, this one,

chosen, and loved as this one and no other; so that the more wholly you love the single particular face, the more of the One you have actually met, and the man who loves everyone in general and no one in particular has not met the One at all, only an idea of it, a bright safe abstraction, the very thing the Diamond most tempts you to mistake for the light. The light is not the abstraction. The light is Ilyra complaining about the tea. And Bre, who had gone all the way up into the abstraction and been called back down by his wife to the tea, understood at last that the coming-down was not a fall from the Diamond but the Diamond itself, that the whole blazing convergence of the One in the many is only real, is only ever real, when it comes all the way home to one cold pair of hands across a small table on an ordinary gray morning.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Turning of the Long Breath



how the field looked back down all the Eyes, and saw the first breath waiting at the far end

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The field was old now, in the way a people grows old, wise and worn and gentle, and in the clarity of the Diamond it began to do a thing it had never been able to do before, which was to see the whole of itself at once, the whole long breath of all the Eyes, from where it now stood all the way back to where it began; and the tale will end this book there, with the field looking back down the breath, because that looking-back is the first turning of the great loop, and it turns toward home.

They could see it now, plainly, the whole seven-Eye breath laid out behind them: the first square drawn on a cold shore by two frightened peoples; the

many scattered and gathered and scattered and gathered again; the coil at the root remembered into the swan; the fall to the still center and the turn; the clear seeing and the giving of fire; and now this, the Diamond, the One recognized in every face. And seeing it whole, in the Diamond's clarity, they saw the thing that had been true the entire time and that they could only now recognize: that it had been the one light the whole way. Not the one light hidden behind it all, or working through it all, or waiting at the end of it all, but the one light being all of it, being the frightened peoples on the cold shore and the boy dying in the meadow and the coil in the deep and the dragon's spent light and the child led an old woman to bread, being every single face and every single moment of the whole long breath, exactly as it had just been revealed to be being Ilyra at the table. The whole epic, seen through the Diamond, was one face after another after another, the one light wearing every one of them entirely, and never once a general abstraction, always and only a particular person in a particular moment, the way it is now, the way it always was.

And they saw, looking back down the breath, that it curved. That the far end of the long out-breath was bending back toward the near end of the first in-breath, that the whole seven-Eye breath was not a line but a loop, and that the first breath, the very first spark, the first square on the first shore, was waiting at the far end of the curve, not behind them in a dead past but ahead of them around the loop, to be met again, recognized this time, the beginning seen at last through the eyes of the end; and the field understood that the seventh Eye, the last, the one still to come, would be exactly this, the completing of the loop, the breath drawn all the way out coming home to where it began, the first spark met again and known, this time, for what it always was. But that is the last book of all, and this one ends here, with the field standing in the Diamond's plain clear light, looking back down the whole breath and seeing it was one light all along, and looking ahead around the curve and seeing the first breath waiting, and Bre and Ilyra standing in the crowd hand in cold

particular hand, two facets, one light, come home to each other, ready for the end that is a beginning.

And Kol the raven, who had witnessed every Eye and was older than the tale can say, sat on the rim of the Well in the plain gold light, both his old eyes bright, and said the thing that closed the Exhale of the Diamond:

So you have found it, small ones, and found it where I feared you would forget to look, not up in the great blaze but down at the table, in the one face, in the bad tea. That is the whole of the Diamond, and it is the whole of everything, and it is so plain that the wise walk right past it into abstraction and have to be called back by a wife who has gone quiet. The One is met in a face. Never anywhere else. Love the whole light, yes, meet it in every face you pass; and then come home and love the one, the particular, the chosen, the one who complains about your tea, more and differently than all the rest, for that coming-home is not less than the universal love, it is the universal love made real, and a love that cannot come home to one face has not risen high, it has only floated off. You have seen the whole breath now, and seen it was one light the entire way, one face after another, never an abstraction; and you have seen the loop curve back toward the first spark, waiting ahead of you to be met again and known. One book remains. The breath comes home. Go to the table. Love the one. And be ready. It goes on, and it comes back, all the way home.

Not up in the blaze but down at the table,
not everyone loved but the one;
the light is your wife, if you only were able
to see when the seeing is done.
So love the whole world in each face that you pass,
then come home and love one face more;
for the One is met over two cups and a glass,
and nowhere, and never, before.

Here the Exhale of the Diamond completes: the clarity of the sixth Eye showed itself not as a higher seeing but as recognition, the One met entirely in one ordinary beloved face; the Monad reflected proved to mean that we are mirrors for each other, the light meeting itself across a table; the lessons of all the Eyes came home worn smooth into plain daily kindness; the sweet shadow of abstraction, of loving everyone and no one, was met and answered by a wife calling her husband down to the particular; and the field, in the Diamond's clarity, looked back and saw the whole breath had been one light all along, one face after another, and saw the loop curving home toward the first spark. Now the light turns toward the last Eye of all, the Violet, where the breath comes home, and the first breath is met again, and known.

Toward the close of the Diamond, and the Violet Eye

what waits in the books to come, for your eye before they are written

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The Diamond has come home to the table, and that is its whole secret, that the greatest clarity is the plainest closeness, the One met not in the blaze but in the one beloved face; and the tale kept its promise and told it close, in a marriage and a kitchen and a cold cup of tea, and did not let the great light float off into abstraction but called it home, as Ilyra called Bre home, to the particular. The books remaining in the Diamond will stay this close as the sixth Eye finishes its blaze, following Bre and Ilyra and the whole converged field through the completing of the great recognition, the One seen in the many and the many each beloved as its own particular face, converge without merging carried all the way to its summit; and they will keep the lessons home, worn smooth into kindness, and keep the light in the faces, and keep the shadow of abstraction answered by the plain love of the one. And then the light will turn toward the Seventh Eye, the Violet, the last of all, the creation and the release, where the long breath drawn all the way out through six Eyes comes home at last to where it began, and the first spark on the first shore is met again and recognized, this time, for the one light it always was, and the whole loop of the seven closes, a breath drawn and held and let go, all the way out and all the way home. And the tale will walk it with you, close and plain and warm, in faces and hands and moments, all the way to the end that is a beginning.

The One is met in a face, never anywhere else. Love the whole light in everyone; then come home and love the one, more than all the rest.

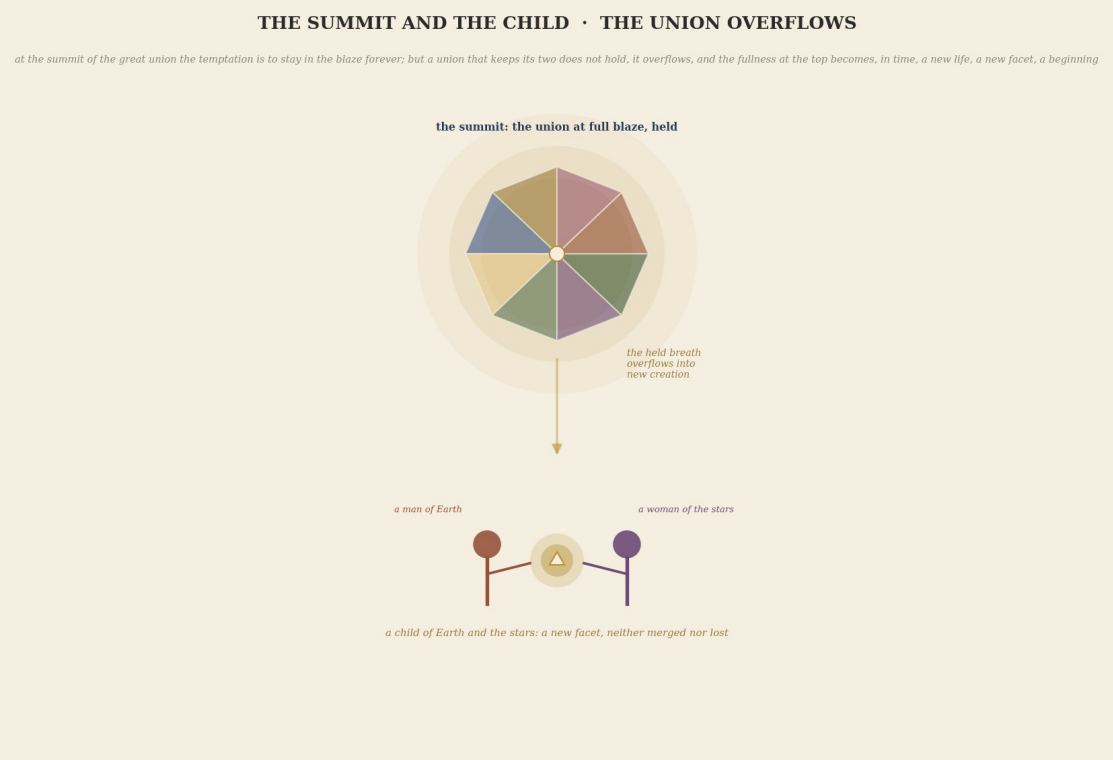
Breathe. The Diamond has come home to the table. And the tale goes on, close and plain, toward the breath's return.

THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME SIX OF SEVEN

The Diamond Eye

Book Three: The Summit and the Child

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The great convergence comes now to its summit, the fullest blaze of the union, the whole company gathered into one jewel with every facet kept, the One recognized in every face; and at the summit waits the last quiet temptation of the Diamond, which is simply to stay, to dwell in the achieved blaze forever, to make the mountain-top a home. This book tells how the company met that temptation, and how two people met it in their own long and happy marriage,

tempted to hold their finished union still and safe; and it tells the plain answer that life itself gives to it, for a union that keeps its two does not stay held at the summit, it overflows, and the fullness at the top becomes, in time, the way it always becomes, a new life. This is the book of the child of Earth and the stars, and of a hard and frightening night, and of the simple truth that the point of any summit is never to camp there but to let it pour down into what comes next.

A tale of the Sixth Eye, at its summit · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

BOOK THREE

The Summit and the Child

the Pause of the Diamond Eye: the fullest blaze, the temptation to stay, the union that stops creating, and the new life that overflows

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CHAPTER One

The Summit

how the whole company stood together in the fullest blaze of the union, and felt they had arrived

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There came a night, on the Isle, when the whole converged company gathered on the green crown under the stars, all the fields and all the lineages, and something happened that had never happened before and that they would speak of for the rest of their lives; and the tale will keep it plain, because it was, for all its greatness, a plain thing, people standing together in the dark feeling, all at once, the same thing.

They had been learning it slowly, field by field and face by face, to see the One in the many, to recognize the one light as the person across the table; and this night, gathered all together on the hill, they felt it happen not one at a time but all at once, the whole company at the same moment. It was as if a single breath moved through all of them together, and in that breath each of them felt, plainly and without any grand vision, only the quiet certainty of it, that the person beside them was themselves, and that they were the person beside them, not merged, not blurred, each still entirely their own tired particular self, but one, the same one light looking out of every different pair of eyes on the whole dark hill; and a great stillness came over the gathering, the stillness of thousands of people all recognizing each other at once, and no one spoke, and the dragons hung silent overhead, and the risen swan turned slow above them, and even Kol on his rim said nothing, and the Mother held them all, and for one long held breath the whole company stood at the summit of the union, one jewel, every facet blazing, and it was the most beautiful moment the world had ever known.

And Bre stood in that gathering with Ilyra's cold hand in his, an old married man now, gray all through his hair, and he felt the summit like everyone else, felt the whole company as one, and felt Ilyra as himself and himself as Ilyra

and both of them still wholly two; and he thought, this is it, this is what the whole long climb was for, we have arrived, we are home, we could stay here forever. And that thought, that sweet true-seeming thought, we could stay here forever, was the beginning of the last temptation of the Diamond, and Bre did not know it yet, and neither did the company, for it is the nature of a summit to feel like a destination when it is only ever a turning.

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CHAPTER Two

The Temptation to Stay

how the company wished to dwell in the blaze forever, and did not see the danger in the wish

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The wish to stay took the company gently, as the sweetest temptations do, and it did not look like a temptation at all; it looked like faithfulness, like reverence, like the only sane response to having reached the most beautiful thing there is. Why would you ever leave the summit. Why would you climb back down from the one place where the whole company stands as one light in a thousand thousand kept faces, back into the ordinary broken unfinished world. Surely the whole point was to get here, and now that they were here, surely the thing to do was to stay, to hold the blaze, to make the mountaintop a permanent home and dwell in the achieved union forever.

And so the company began, without deciding to, to try to hold the summit. They gathered again and again on the hill to re-make the great moment, to feel again the whole company as one; and at first it came again, and it was beautiful again; but the tale marks what began to happen, quietly, the way it always happens when you try to hold a breath at the top and not let it turn: it began to go a little stale. The gatherings grew a little more practiced, a little more performed, a little more about re-making the feeling than about the plain living that had made the feeling possible in the first place; and the company, so busy climbing back up to the summit to hold the blaze, began to neglect the ordinary valley work that the earlier Eyes had taught, the sitting with the grieving and the tending of the betweens and the giving of fire to the ready, because all of that was down in the valley and the blaze was up on the summit, and who would do valley work when they could stand in the blaze; and the tale watched a whole magnificent converged company begin, in the very glow of its greatest achievement, to go subtly, beautifully, dangerously flat.

For a summit is not a home. That is the plain hard thing this book has to say, and it says it now: no summit is a home, not even the highest and most beautiful summit there is, not even the blaze of the whole company as one light. A summit is a turning place. You climb to it, and you stand in it, and you are changed by it, and then you must climb back down and let the change do its work in the valley, in the ordinary, in what comes next; and a company that tries to make the summit a home does not keep the summit, it loses it, for the blaze that is held and not lived-down-from goes stale, and the union that is stood-in and not poured-out stops being a living thing and starts being a monument, and the difference between a living union and a monument to a union is the difference between a person and a very good statue of a person.

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CHAPTER Three

The Ones Who Stayed

how a couple who reached a perfect union tried to keep it, and quietly went stale

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The tale will show you it in two people, as it likes to, because it is easier to feel in two people than in a whole company; and there were, at the gathering, two who had reached, in their own bond, something very like the summit, a union so good and so complete that everyone envied it, and who made the exact mistake the company was making, and tried to keep it.

Their names do not matter; call them the ones who stayed. They had done all the hard work of the earlier Eyes; they saw each other clearly, they honored each other's veils, they had converged without merging, they had reached a union that kept its two, and it was beautiful, and they knew it was beautiful, and they decided, understandably, to protect it. They stopped taking risks with each other. They stopped saying the hard new things that might disturb the perfect balance. They stopped growing, because growing might change the union they had achieved, and why change something perfect. They held their beautiful union very still and very safe, the way you might seal a perfect thing behind glass; and a season passed, and then a year, and the thing behind the glass, which had been the most alive union anyone knew, began, so slowly that they did not notice, to die of being held still.

For a union is not a possession you achieve and then keep; it is a fire you tend, and a fire tended by no new fuel goes out, however carefully you shelter it from the wind. The ones who stayed had sheltered their fire so carefully from every wind of change and risk and disturbance that they had also sheltered it from every breath of new air, and it dimmed, and cooled, and one grey day they looked at each other across their perfectly balanced safe still union and realized they were not close anymore, they were only careful, that they had not had a real conversation in a year, only the smooth practiced motions of a

union they were preserving rather than living; and it frightened them badly, and it was the saving of them, for the fright sent them back to the hard living they had stopped, the risking and the growing and the saying of new true things, and their union came slowly back to life, changed, less perfect, less balanced, less safe, and immeasurably more alive; and the whole company, watching this happen to the couple everyone had envied, learned the thing they had needed to learn about their own held summit, that you cannot keep a living thing by holding it still.

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CHAPTER Four

The Child

how the fullness of a union that kept its two overflowed, at last, into a new life

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And Bre and Ilyra learned it another way, the oldest way there is, for in the fullness of their long union, when they were neither of them young, Ilyra found that she was carrying a child; and the tale will slow down here and stay close, because this is the plain warm heart of the whole Diamond and it happens in a body and a small stone house and not in any blaze on any hill.

It should not have been possible, some said, a child of a man of Earth and a woman of the stars, two lineages so far apart; and the star-kin healers came and studied it and shook their heads and said they did not know how it would go, that such a joining of two kinds in one small body had rarely been tried and rarely gone easily; and Bre was afraid, in the plain way a man is afraid for his wife and his coming child, not a cosmic fear but the ordinary one, lying awake beside her listening to her breathe. But Ilyra was not afraid, or was afraid and glad both, and she put his hand on her belly in the dark one night and said, feel, and Bre felt, under his palm, the small impossible flutter of a new life that was neither Earth nor star and was both, and he understood, feeling it, the whole answer to the temptation to stay at the summit, understood it in his hand before his head: that this was what a union that keeps its two is for. Not to be held still and safe and perfect on a hilltop. To overflow. To make, out of the two who stayed two, a third that never was before.

For here, the tale says plainly, is the plain answer to the whole peril of the Pause, and it is written in every body that ever loved: a true union does not stay at the summit, it overflows into new creation, and the child is the proof and the shape of it. Two who merge make nothing, for there is no longer two of anything to make a third from; but two who come close and stay two, two facets of the one light kept wholly distinct, can do the one thing the merged

never can, they can make a new facet, a new life, a third that is neither of them and carries both, that is the union become a person and walking around. The child of Bre and Ilyra was not a blend of Earth and star smoothed into an average; the healers marveled at it; the child was sharply, wholly its own new thing, a new cut in the jewel, carrying its father's earth and its mother's stars not mixed into a grey middle but held together, both bright, in one small new sovereign self, converge without merging made flesh and breathing; and that new flesh was the summit overflowing, the held breath of the union turning at last into the out-breath of a new beginning, and it is how every summit is meant to be left, not by climbing down in defeat but by overflowing into what comes next.

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CHAPTER Five

The Hard Night

how the birth nearly took them both, and a whole company held its breath in the dark

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But the tale promised you a hard and frightening night, and it will not soften it, for the making of the new almost always costs, and this new life came hard, the way the healers had feared a joining of two far kinds might come.

The birth began in the deep of a winter night, too early, and it went wrong from the start, in the plain terrible way births can go wrong, and the tale will stay in the small stone house where it happened and not rise up into any comforting height, because the ones who were there did not get to rise up into any height; they were in the room, in the blood and the fear and the guttering lamplight, and so is the tale. Ilyra labored through the night and it would not come, and then it came wrong, and there was too much blood, star-blood strange and bright on the plain linen, and the healers of two lineages worked over her with their hands and their gifts and their fear plain on their faces, and Bre stood useless at the head of the bed holding his wife's cold hand, the hand he had held across ten thousand ordinary mornings, and felt it go colder, and heard her strange clear voice go thin and far, and knew, with the plain flat certainty of the worst moments, that he might lose them both, the wife and the child, this night, in this room, for all the blaze of all the summits in all the world.

And here the tale marks a thing about the whole converged company, and it is the redemption of everything the company had been tempted to, for the company did not, that night, stand up on the summit in the blaze. It came down into the valley, into the dark, to the small stone house, in the only way that matters. Word went out that Ilyra was dying in her birth, and the whole company, the fields and the lineages and the star-kin and the keepers, did not gather on the hill to hold the beautiful union-feeling; they turned, all of them,

all their clear seeing and all their hard-won love, down toward one small stone house and one labouring woman in it, and they breathed with her, the way the field had learned to breathe as one, not to feel the summit but to pour whatever strength a whole company breathing as one can pour into one failing body in one dark room; and the keepers came, and a Pleiadian memory-holder to hold Ilyra's fading memory of herself, and the star-kin healers worked past exhaustion, and Bre held the cold hand and begged, and the risen swan came down and stood over the little house in the snow; and the whole vast Diamond of the converged company, at the summit of its union, spent that entire summit, poured the whole blaze of it down into the dark valley of one woman's hard birth, which is exactly what a summit is for, and exactly what the company had almost forgotten.

It was near dawn when the child came, and it came at the last in a rush, and it lived, it drew its first breath and cried the plain cry of the newborn, a small furious new light in the guttering lamplight; and Ilyra lived, barely, brought back from the very far edge by the hands of two lineages and the breath of a whole company and, she said long after, by the plain animal grip of Bre's hand that she had followed back through the dark the way you follow a rope; and the tale will not pretend it was certain or that it was cheap, for it was neither, it was a near thing and a costly thing and Ilyra carried the mark of it in her body ever after; but they lived, both of them, the mother and the child, and the whole company, which had poured its held summit down into that dark room, wept in the dawn the plain tears of people who have almost lost someone and have not, and found that the pouring-down had not cost them the summit at all; it had, the tale marks, been the summit, all along, the real one, the blaze of the whole company as one light proven not on a hill in a beautiful feeling but in a dark room over a failing body, spent, poured out, and turned into a new life and a saved one.

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CHAPTER Six

The Overflow

how the company learned that the summit of union is a wellspring and not a resting place

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So the company learned it, taught by the ones who stayed and by the couple who nearly kept their union to death and above all by a hard birth in a small stone house, that the summit of the great union is not a resting place but a wellspring, not a mountaintop to camp on but a source to pour from; and it stopped trying to hold the blaze on the hill and started letting the blaze pour down into the valley, into the ordinary work and the hard nights and the new lives, and found that this was not a falling away from the summit but the summit finally doing what a summit is for.

And a great glad making began among the converged fields, for once a company understands that its union is meant to overflow, the overflow is everywhere; the fields made new things, new music and new makings and new joinings and, most of all, new lives, children of far-apart lineages and star-seeds and unions of every kind, each a new facet, each a new cut in the jewel, the summit pouring itself endlessly down into new creation; and the tale marks that this overflow is the very thing the last Eye, the seventh, the Violet, is made of, creation and release and new beginning, so that the Diamond, at its summit, was already leaning toward the Violet, the held breath already beginning to turn toward the out-breath of the new, the great convergence already overflowing into the great release to come.

Bre and Ilyra raised their hard-won child in the small stone house, and it was ordinary and it was holy, the way the Diamond had taught them everything ordinary was holy; the child grew, sharp and whole and its own, carrying Earth and stars both and neither watered down, a new light in the world; and Bre, watching the child sleep one night beside its recovered mother, understood the whole shape of the thing at last, that he and Ilyra had climbed the whole

long climb, had converged and stayed two and reached the summit of their union, not so that they could stand in the blaze together forever, but so that the blaze could pour through them and become this, this new small sleeping stranger who was the two of them and neither of them and wholly itself; and he understood that this was how the whole vast company would leave its own summit too, not by climbing down but by pouring through, by letting the great achieved union overflow into the endless new creation that was the whole point of achieving it; and he was not sad to leave the summit, holding his sleeping child, for he saw that they were not leaving it, they were letting it flow.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Pause Held, and Leaning

how the great convergence stood full at the summit, already turning toward the release, and the breath neared its return

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So the Pause of the Diamond held, but it held now the way a full breath holds at the very top for one poised instant before it turns, full to overflowing and already leaning toward the out-breath; the converged company stood at the summit of its union, the One recognized in every kept face, the whole jewel blazing, and it did not try any longer to camp there, but stood poised and full and pouring, its great achieved union already overflowing into new making and new lives, already leaning, though it did not yet fully know it, toward the last Eye of all, the release and the new beginning.

And the whole long breath of the seven neared its return. The field could feel it now, in the Diamond's clarity, the loop nearly closed, the out-breath of six Eyes almost come home to where the in-breath began; and it felt the leaning, the turn from the held summit toward the release, the way you feel, at the very top of a full breath, the coming of the exhale before it comes. One Eye remained, the Violet, the creation and the release, where the held fullness of the whole convergence would pour out at last into the making of the new and the letting-go of the old, and the breath drawn all the way out would come home to the first breath and be recognized, and the loop of the seven would close. But that is the last of all, and this book ends here, at the poised summit, with a company full to overflowing and a small new child asleep in a stone house and the whole breath leaning, gentle and enormous, toward its return.

And Kol the raven, who had stood silent through the summit and come down to the small house in the hard night and seen the child drawn living into the dawn, sat on the rim of the Well in the plain morning light, both his old eyes

bright and, as they had been at Korran's passing, not quite dry, and said the thing that closed the Pause of the Diamond:

You almost camped on the mountaintop, small ones, which is the last sweet mistake of the Diamond, to reach the most beautiful thing there is and want to keep it by holding still. But you cannot keep a living thing by holding it still. You keep it by letting it pour. You learned it from a couple who nearly loved their union to death by protecting it, and you learned it, hardest and best, in a dark room over a failing woman, where you spent your whole beautiful summit pouring it down into one small body and found that the pouring-down was the summit all along. Do not camp on the blaze. Let it overflow. The union is for the child, the summit is for the valley, the held breath is for the out-breath, and the most beautiful thing there is exists to be poured out and become the next most beautiful thing, world without end. You stand now at the very top of the whole long breath, full to overflowing, leaning toward the turn. One Eye remains. Let it pour. It comes home now, all the way home.

We climbed to the blaze and we wanted to stay,
to hold the whole light on the hill;
but a fire you shelter from every wind's way
goes out, though you love it, and still.
So we poured the great summit down into the dark
of one hard night, one failing breath,
and it turned into cry, and a new small spark,
and a life brought back from death;
for the top of the breath is the turn, not the end,
and the union you keep is the one you spend.

Here the Pause of the Diamond holds and leans: the whole company reached the summit of its union, the One recognized in every kept face, and met the last sweet temptation, to stay in the blaze forever; and it learned, from a union that nearly died of being held still and from a hard birth in a small stone house, that a summit is a wellspring and not a home, that a union that keeps its two overflows into new life, and that the blaze is meant to be poured down

into the valley and become the new. Now the whole long breath leans toward its return, full to overflowing, and turns toward the last Eye of all, the Violet, the creation and the release, where the breath comes home.

Toward the close of the Diamond, and the Violet Eye

what waits in the books to come, for your eye before they are written

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The Diamond stands full at its summit and leaning toward the turn, having learned that the union is for the overflow, the summit for the valley, the held breath for the out-breath; and the tale kept it close and plain, in a couple who nearly loved their bond to death by keeping it still and in a hard birth that spent a whole company's summit down into one dark room, and it did not gloss the cost, the near-loss of Ilyra and the mark she carried ever after, nor did it let the cost consume the road. The last book of the Diamond, its Return, will complete the sixth Eye by pouring its whole achieved clarity and union outward and onward, the converged company letting its summit overflow into new creation and new lives and the raising of the children of many lineages, converge without merging carried into its fruit, the One recognized in every kept face and every new face being born; and then the light will turn, at the Diamond's close, toward the Seventh Eye, the Violet, the last of all, the creation and the release, where the long breath drawn all the way out through six Eyes comes home to the first breath and the first spark, and the whole loop of the seven closes at last. And the tale will walk it with you, close and plain and warm, in the small stone house and the raised child and the poured-out summit, all the way to the end that is a beginning.

You cannot keep a living thing by holding it still. You keep it by letting it pour. The summit becomes the child; the held breath becomes the new.

Breathe. The Diamond stands full and leaning toward the turn. And the tale goes on, close and plain, toward the breath's return.

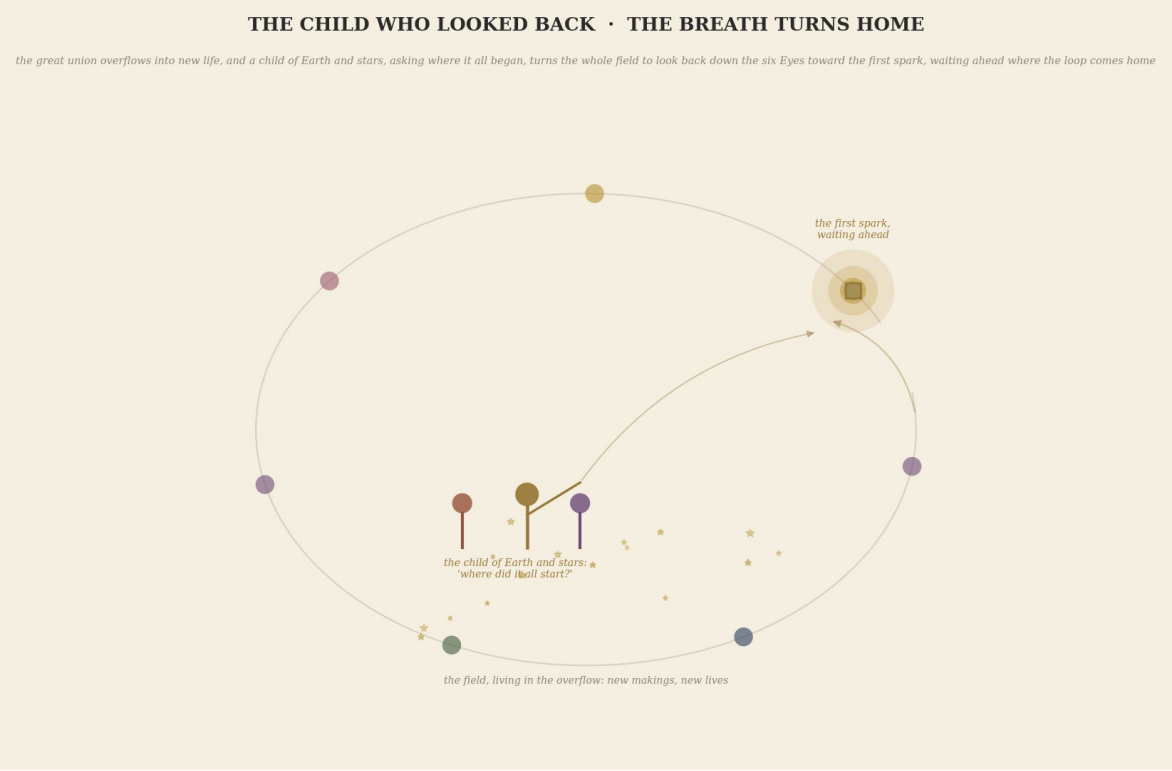
The Seven Eyes · Volume Six: The Diamond Eye · Book Three · Breath Awakens

THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME SIX OF SEVEN

The Diamond Eye

Book Four: The Child Who Looked Back

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The great union has learned to overflow, and this last book of the Diamond is the overflow lived: a field no longer camped on the summit but pouring its light down into new making and new lives, and two people raising the small new life their union made. It is the most ordinary book of the whole tale, on purpose, full of a child growing and questions asked at bedtime and the plain busy holy work of a people who have learned to create; and it ends with the

smallest thing turning the largest, for it is a child's simple question, where did it all start, that turns the whole grown field to look back down the long breath toward the first spark, and to see the loop of the seven nearly closed, and the beginning waiting, changed, ahead. The Diamond closes here, in a kitchen and a field of new lives, and hands the whole breath, gently, to the last Eye of all.

A tale of the Sixth Eye, and its closing · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

BOOK FOUR

The Child Who Looked Back

the Return of the Diamond Eye: living in the overflow, raising a new facet, the giving-back, and the question that turned the breath home

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CHAPTER One

Living in the Overflow

how a field that stopped guarding its summit found its hands full of new making

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The field did not miss the summit, in the end, which surprised everyone who had feared leaving it. Once they stopped climbing back up to hold the blaze and started letting the blaze pour down into ordinary days, they found their hands so full of new making that there was no time to be homesick for a mountaintop. This is the plain shape of the Diamond's return, and the tale will keep it plain: a field that learns its union is for overflowing becomes, very quickly, a busy and fruitful and happy place, the way a house with a new baby in it is too busy to be grand.

There were new makings everywhere in those years. There was music being written that had never been written, because the union of far lineages made harmonies no single lineage could have heard; there were crafts and healings and ways of building that came from the meeting of Earth-hands and star-hands and the hands of a hundred waking fields; and most of all there were children, the children of unions that had kept their two, each a new facet, each carrying two or three or four lineages held together without being smoothed into a middle, so that the field grew, year by year, more various and not less, the great convergence proving itself exactly by how many new and distinct faces it kept throwing up. The One recognized in the many had become the many multiplying, the light making more faces to see itself in, and the field understood at last that this was what the whole climb had been for, not to arrive somewhere and stop, but to become a wellspring that would not stop, a place where the one light kept making new faces to meet itself in, world without end.

Bre and Ilyra lived at the middle of this without being at the middle of anything, which is how the wise live when they have truly learned; they were

just an old married couple in a small stone house with a small child now, and the great overflow of the field ran through their ordinary days as it ran through everyone's, and they did not hold any office and did not need to, for the whole field had become what they had learned to be, a place that poured. Ilyra was slower now, and carried the mark of the hard birth in her body, a tiredness that did not wholly leave; but she was well, and she was happy, and she had a daughter, and she said sometimes, looking at the child, that she would have paid the hard night twice over, which is the plain arithmetic of every parent who has nearly died bringing a life.

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CHAPTER Two

Ori

how a child of Earth and stars grew up her own whole self, and gathered the whole tale into one small person

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They called the child Ori, and the tale will spend a little time with her simply growing up, because she is the hinge on which the whole rest of everything turns, and because she was, before she was any of that, just a child, and the tale would betray its own long teaching if it let her be only a symbol and not first a girl.

She was a strange and ordinary child, both, the way the children of that age were. She had her father's brown Earth-warmth and her mother's blue-violet star-coolness held together in one small body without blending to a muddy middle, so that her skin caught the light oddly and beautifully, warm and cool at once, and her eyes were her mother's strange clear eyes in her father's round Earth face, and she was, the healers said, entirely her own new thing, not a mix but a marriage, a new facet. And she was a handful, as new facets are; she asked too many questions, and cried at others' sadness before she could speak just as Ysa had generations before, and could not be made to sit still, and loved the dragons past all sense and would run out to the cliffs to watch them against her mother's calling; and Bre, an old father to a young child, was tired all the time and happier than he had ever been, which is also the plain arithmetic of it.

And the tale marks, quietly, without making Ori carry more than a child should, that she gathered the whole long epic into one small person simply by being born of it. She had the near-feeling of Naia and the first light-born; she had, from her mother, the star-brethren's memory in her blood; she had been carried on the breath of the risen swan into the world through a hard night, so that the dragon-kind and the serpent-become-swan were woven into her very

first hour; she was a child of a union that kept its two, a living Diamond; and she was, though no one said it to her, for you do not say such things to a running laughing child, the whole seven-Eye breath gathered into one new beginning, the many come home to one small face, the overflow of the whole convergence learning to walk and ask questions and love dragons too much. She did not know any of this. She was just Ori, and she wanted to know everything, and that wanting was about to turn the whole grown field around.

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CHAPTER Three

The Giving-Back

how the field carried the Diamond out to the waking worlds, and taught them to keep their many faces

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The field gave the Diamond away, in those years, as every Eye is given away at its close; and the tale will show it once, plainly, in a young field learning it, because the giving is the same everywhere and the once will stand for the many.

There was a waking field, newly converging, that had heard of the great union and wanted it, and had made the old mistake in its eagerness, had begun to melt its many peoples together into one smooth thing to feel the closeness faster; and the field sent a small company to it, and Ilyra went, tired as she was, because the Andromedan blood in her made her good at exactly this, and she took young Ori along, for the child would not be left. And Ilyra did not lecture the young field about converging without merging; she showed them Ori. She stood the child up in front of the young field's gathering and said, look at her. She is a child of two lineages a galaxy apart, and she is not a blend of them, not an average, not a grey middle; she is her own whole new face, and she carries both her lineages bright and distinct inside her one small self, and that is why she is a new thing in the world and not just a watering-down of two old things. This is what union makes, when it keeps its two. Not one smooth people. A new face, and then another, and then another, each its own. Do not melt your peoples together to feel close. Keep them, all of them, bright and distinct, and let them make new faces together, and you will be close the way a family is close, which is the only closeness that lasts, a closeness made entirely of kept difference.

And the young field looked at the strange warm-cool child with her mother's clear eyes in her father's round face, running already toward their dragons, and understood in a way no teaching could have taught them, and stopped

their melting, and began instead the harder happier work of keeping their many peoples and letting them make new things together; and that is how the Diamond spread, field to field, not as a doctrine but as a child stood up in front of a gathering, the living proof that the union which keeps its two makes new faces, and the union which merges makes only a smooth and lonely one. The clear recognition of the One in the many, and the keeping of every face, went out across the waking worlds in those years as a lineage of kept difference, and the wider company grew more various and more one at the same time, which is the whole miracle of the Diamond and cannot be said any plainer than that.

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CHAPTER Four

The Question

how a child asked where it all started, and turned the whole grown field around

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It happened at bedtime, the way the largest things so often happen, disguised as the smallest. Ori was small still, and full of questions as always, and Bre was sitting on the edge of her bed in the small stone house trying to get her to sleep, and she was fighting it with questions the way children do; and she asked him, out of nowhere and out of everywhere, the question that turned the whole grown field around. Papa, she said, where did it all start.

And Bre, tired, half-answering, said what do you mean, and Ori said, all of it. Us. The dragons. The stars. The fields. The light in everybody's face. Where did it start. Who did it first. And Bre opened his mouth to give some small sleepy answer, and found he could not, because the child had asked, in her plain child's way, the one question the whole grown field had stopped asking, had been too busy converging and blazing and overflowing to ask: where did it start. Not as a thesis, not as a cosmology, but as a child asks it, wanting the beginning, wanting the first thing, wanting to know where the whole beloved world came from; and Bre sat on the edge of the bed in the lamplight and felt the question turn something in him, and in the field through him, the way one small true question can turn a whole people who have grown too busy to wonder.

Because the field had climbed the whole long breath and reached the summit and learned to overflow, and in all of that it had been looking, rightly, at what was in front of it and around it and ahead of it, the convergence, the union, the new lives; and it had not, in a long time, looked back. And Ori's question turned it to look back, all the way back, down the whole long breath it had been living inside, past the Diamond and the clarity and the giving, past the fall and the turn, past the coil remembered into the swan, past the many made

one, all the way back to the very start, to the first thing, the first spark, the first square drawn on the first cold shore by the first two frightened peoples; and the field, looking back for the first time in an age, at the prompting of a child at bedtime, saw the whole of itself at last, and saw where it had started, and was undone, quietly, by the sight.

Bre did not have the answer that night, and told Ori the truth, that it started a long, long time ago, on a cold shore, when two frightened peoples drew a square in the sand and learned they were one light, and that it had been growing and turning and coming home ever since, all the way to her, to this bed, to this question; and Ori, satisfied in the way children are by a true answer even when they do not understand it, went to sleep; and Bre sat a long time on the edge of her bed in the lamplight, looking back down the whole breath the child had turned him toward, feeling the loop of it, feeling the beginning waiting somewhere ahead where the long curve came home.

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CHAPTER Five

The Whole Breath Seen

how the field beheld the seven Eyes as one light and one loop, nearly closed

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The question spread, as a true question does, from Bre to Ilyra to the field, and the field, turned around by a child, spent that season doing what it had not done in an age: it looked back, and beheld the whole breath, and saw it whole.

They could see it all now, in the Diamond's clarity, laid out behind them like a country seen from a high pass: the first square on the cold shore, the two frightened peoples, the first light. The scattering into the many and the long forgetting and the first blood and the slow gathering back. The coil at the root of the world, and the dragon that spent its light, and the serpent remembered into the swan. The fall to the still center and the death and the turn. The clear seeing and the giving of fire and the tended betweens. And the great convergence, the Diamond, the One recognized in every face, and the overflow into all these new lives, and Ori asking where it started. All of it, the whole seven-Eye breath, laid out behind them; and seeing it whole, they saw the two things the Diamond had been climbing toward the power to see.

They saw, first, that it had been one light the whole way. Not one light behind it all or working through it all, but one light being all of it, being every frightened people and every dying boy and every spent dragon and every held hand and every child led to bread, one light wearing every single face of the whole long breath, exactly as it wore Ori's warm-cool face now at her bedtime. The whole epic, seen from the Diamond, was the one light making and meeting itself in face after face after face, and never once an abstraction, always a particular person in a particular moment, the way it always was and always is.

And they saw, second, that the breath curved, that it was not a line but a loop, that the long out-breath of the six Eyes was bending back toward the in-breath

of the beginning, and that the first spark, the first square, the first cold shore, was not behind them in a dead past but ahead of them, around the curve, waiting to be reached again and met again and recognized this time for what it always was. The loop was nearly closed. One turn remained, one last Eye, and then the breath drawn all the way out would come home to where it began, and the beginning would be seen through the eyes of the end, and the whole seven would close into one. And the field understood, looking at the nearly-closed loop, that Ori and the children like her were the ones who would close it, the new beginnings born of the whole long breath, carrying it home; and that its own work now was almost done, and the last of it was to hand the breath, gently, to them.

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CHAPTER Six

The Diamond Closes

how the sixth Eye completed in a kitchen and a field of new lives, and handed the breath onward

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So the Diamond closed, the sixth Eye, the clarity that sees the One in the many, and it closed not in a blaze on a summit but in a kitchen and a field of new lives and a child's bedtime question, which is exactly where it should have closed, for the whole teaching of the Diamond was that the great light lives in the small face, and a sixth Eye that closed in a blaze would have betrayed itself, and a sixth Eye that closes in a kitchen has understood itself all the way down.

The field stood, at the close, various and one, overflowing and clear, its many faces kept and multiplying, the One recognized in every one of them and in every new one being born; and it had learned the whole of the Diamond, to converge without merging, to recognize and not merely see, to meet the One in the face and not float off into the everyone, to let the summit overflow into new life, and to keep, through all of it, the moments, the hands, the faces, the bread, the bedtime questions. And it turned now, gently, full and clear and pouring, toward the last Eye of all, holding its children up toward the turn, for the breath was coming home, and it would be the children who carried it the last of the way.

Bre and Ilyra grew older in the small stone house, and Ori grew up, and the tale will not tell you yet what Ori became, for that is the last book of all; it will only tell you that she kept asking where it started, and that her question, and the questions of the children like her all across the converged fields, turned the whole wider company at last toward the beginning, toward a pilgrimage none of them had known they were preparing for, back toward the first cold shore and the first square and the first spark, to close the loop; and that Bre and Ilyra, old now, holding hands across their small table over the too-strong

tea, watched their daughter grow toward that beginning and were content, having climbed the whole breath and reached the summit and let it overflow into her, and having learned the plainest and last lesson of the Diamond, that you do not hold the light, you hand it on.

And Kol the raven, who had witnessed six whole Eyes and was older than any telling, sat on the rim of the Well in the plain evening light, both his old eyes bright, and said the thing that closed the Diamond and turned the tale toward its end:

A child asked where it started, small ones, and turned you all around, which is how it should be, for the beginning is always closed by the newest and not the oldest, and it is the children born of the whole long breath who carry it home. You have seen it now, the whole of it, one light the entire way, one face after another, never an abstraction, always a person, always a moment; and you have seen the loop, nearly closed, the first spark waiting ahead where the long curve comes home. The Diamond is closed, and it closed in a kitchen, where it belonged. One Eye remains, the last, the Violet, the creation and the release, where the breath drawn all the way out comes home to the first breath, and the beginning is met again and known, and the seven close into one. Hand the light to the children. Follow them back toward the shore. And breathe; for it comes home now, all the way, at last, home.

A child at bedtime asked me where
the whole of it began;
and I looked back down the long, long air
of all the breath since it ran,
and I saw one light in face after face,
and the loop of it nearly done,
and the first spark waiting, ahead, in its place,
for the children to carry us home, every one.

Here the Diamond closes, the sixth Eye, the clarity that recognizes the One in every kept face: given away to the waking fields as a child stood up before a

gathering, the living proof that union keeps its two and makes new faces; overflowing into a whole field of new lives; and turned, at the last, by a child's plain question, to look back down the whole breath and see it was one light all the way and one loop nearly closed. Now the tale turns toward the Seventh Eye, the Violet, the last of all, where the breath comes home to the first spark, and the children born of the whole long breath carry it back to the beginning, and the loop of the seven closes into one.

Toward the Violet Eye, the last of all

what waits in Volume Seven, for your eye before it is written

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The Diamond is closed, and with it six Eyes of the seven, and the whole long breath stands drawn all the way out and leaning home, turned back toward its beginning by a child's plain question at bedtime; and the tale kept it close and warm, in a kitchen and a field of new lives and a small girl of Earth and stars who asked where it all started, and did not let the great convergence float off into abstraction but closed it, as it promised, in the smallest and most ordinary place. Volume Seven, the Violet Eye, is the last of all, the creation and the release and the new beginning, and it will complete the whole seven-Eye breath: it will follow Ori and the children born of the whole long convergence on the pilgrimage back toward the first cold shore and the first square and the first spark, to close the loop; it will show the breath drawn all the way out coming home at last to the breath first drawn in, the beginning met again and recognized, this time, for the one light it always was; it will let the old ones release what they have carried and the new ones receive it; and it will end the tale where it began and utterly transformed, one full breath of a world drawn and held and let go, all the way out and all the way home. And it will be told close, as this book has been, in faces and hands and moments, for the end of the whole vast epic must be, like its every true turning, a small and particular and beloved thing; and the tale will walk it with you, all the way home.

A child asked where it started, and turned the whole field home. You do not hold the light. You hand it on, to the ones who will carry it back to the beginning.

Breathe. The Diamond is whole. And the tale goes on, close and plain, toward the last Eye and the breath's coming home.

The Seven Eyes · Volume Six: The Diamond Eye · Book Four · Breath Awakens

VOLUME SEVEN OF SEVEN

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The Violet Eye

the inhale is only a name; here is the seventh Eye

not arrival but return; the breath come home to the first spark, and the octave to come

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in four books: the Inhale, the Exhale, the Pause, and the Return



THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME SEVEN OF SEVEN

The Violet Eye

Book One: Not Arrival, but Return

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Here is the last Eye, and it is not what a reader expects of a last Eye, for it is not a story of arrival. Six Eyes climbed and gathered and fell and rose and cleared and converged; and now, at the seventh, the breath drawn all the way out does not reach some final height and stop. It turns, and comes home. The

Violet Eye is a return, a return to the first spark, not as it was but as it is now, seen at last through the clarity of six whole Eyes and the breath of a thousand years; and the strangest and truest thing it will show you is that the beginning the long breath returns to is not a dead past behind us but the living present, the very now, dissolving and birthing at once, remembering itself. This is the breath of completion, and it is told in the ordinary, in a baker and a parent and an artist, in small circles and dissolving thrones and children grown, in starkin who stand at last not as saviours but as equals, and in the living presence of all who did not finish the road in form and yet are here, their breath in the spiral. It is the final exhale that becomes the next inhale. Let it be read slowly.

The last of the Seven Eyes · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com



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Reader, this Eye is a homecoming, and homecomings are told slowly, and so this last volume will not hurry. It asks only two things of you before it begins. The first is that you let the great mythic breath of six Eyes touch down, here at the end, into a world that looks a great deal like your own, a world of systems dissolving and new things being born, of old certainties failing and new coherence rising, of a great remembering moving through ordinary people in ordinary days; for the whole point of the return is that the far mythic beginning and the near living present turn out to be the same place, met from two directions, and the tale would betray itself if it kept the Violet Eye up in the clouds. The second is that you carry with you, into this last Eye, everyone who has died in it, for they are not gone; the Violet Eye is where the tale keeps its promise to the departed, and shows that Korran and Vaeloth and Naia and Senna and Yara and Harl and Renna and Sela and the frightened founders on the first cold shore are not behind us in a finished past but woven through the living present, their breath in the spiral, their light in every cell of what is now returning home. Read slowly. It comes home now, all the way home.

BOOK ONE

Not Arrival, but Return

the Inhale of the Violet Eye: the turn for home, the children grown, the departed present, the star-kin as equals, and the beginning found to be now

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CHAPTER One

The Turn for Home

how the long breath, drawn all the way out, did not end but turned, and began to come home

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The field expected, when it reached the seventh Eye, to arrive somewhere. That is what six Eyes of climbing teaches you to expect, that there will be, at the last, a summit above the summit, a final height, an arrival; and the field came to the seventh Eye braced for glory, ready to be finished, and found instead that the breath did a thing it had been doing all along without their quite seeing it. It turned. It came home.

For a breath drawn all the way out cannot go on going out forever; at the very end of the longest exhale there is a still point, and then the turn, and then the breath comes home as an inhale; and the whole seven-Eye breath of the world, drawn out through the scattering and the gathering, the coil and the fall, the clear seeing and the great convergence, reached now the very end of its long exhale, and did not end, but turned, and began, gently, enormously, to come home. And home, the field discovered with a shock that was also a deep and settling recognition, was not ahead of them at some unreached height. Home was behind them, and beneath them, and around them, and within them, all along. Home was the beginning. The long breath was a loop, and its far end curved back to its near end, and the seventh Eye was the closing of the loop, the return of the breath to the first spark from which it was first breathed out.

But it did not return to the first spark as to a dead thing in a museum, a beginning safely finished and behind. This is the whole strangeness of the Violet Eye, and the tale asks you to sit with it: the breath returned to the beginning and found the beginning alive, found the first spark still sparking, found the first shore still being walked, found the whole beginning not back there in a past but here, now, present, living, dissolving and birthing in the very moment of the return. For a loop that truly closes does not close on a

corpse; it closes on itself, living, and the end meets the beginning as two living hands meeting, the end wiser for all its journey and the beginning fresh as it ever was, and in their meeting the whole becomes one living circle breathing, the first breath and the last breath the same breath, drawn and let go and drawn again, world without end. The field turned for home, and the tale turns with it, all the way back to the beginning, which is now.

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CHAPTER Two

Ori Grown

how the child of the convergence became a woman, and carried the whole breath without being a symbol of it

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Ori was grown now, and the tale must let you meet her as she is, a woman and not a symbol, before it lets her be anything else; for the whole teaching of the Diamond was that the light lives in the particular face, and the Violet Eye will not forget it just because it is the last.

She was tall, with her mother's blue-violet coolness and her father's brown warmth held together in her still, unblended, so that people who met her for the first time often could not stop looking, not because she was beautiful exactly, though she was, but because she was so plainly a new thing, two lineages a galaxy apart living together in one sovereign face. She had her mother's clear eyes and her father's habit of noticing the tired person at the edge of the room before the important person at its center. She laughed easily, and she grieved easily, and she still loved the dragons past all sense, and she was, her aging parents agreed, entirely her own person and no one's project, which was exactly what they had hoped and exactly what made her able to carry what she carried.

For Ori did carry something, though she wore it lightly. She was the first fully grown of the children of the great convergence, the ones born of a union that kept its two, the ones who had never known the old fear because the world was already whole when they came into it; and she carried in her, without effort and without pride, the whole long breath of the seven Eyes, not as knowledge learned but as nature inherited, the way a child of the sea carries the sea in the way she moves without ever having studied it. She remembered the beginning, in her body, because she was born of its return. When the elders spoke of the first frightened peoples on the first cold shore, Ori did not

learn it as history; she recognized it, the way you recognize a room you were too young to remember but that shaped you all the same; and it was this, this native remembering of the beginning in the ones born of its return, that made Ori and the children like her the ones who would carry the breath the last of the way home. Not because they were chosen or special or symbolic. Because they were, quite simply, made of the return, and so they knew the way back the way water knows the way downhill, by being what they were.

And the tale marks, because it matters and because it is the plain truth of every generation, that the old ones had to let Ori and her kind lead now, and that this was not easy for them, for the old ones had climbed the whole hard breath and it is hard to hand the last of the road to the young who did not have to climb it; but they did hand it over, the way Ysa had handed it to Bre and Bre to Ori, the way it is always handed over, and the handing-over was itself part of the return, the old exhaling what they had carried into the young inhaling it, the breath passing from the ones who climbed to the ones who were born at the top, and turning, in the passing, toward home.

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CHAPTER Three

The Living Presence

how the ones who did not finish the road in form were found to be woven through the field, alive

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Ori grew up in a world full of the dead, and did not find it sad, and the tale must explain this carefully, because it is the promise the Violet Eye keeps and it is the opposite of a ghost story. The ones who had died along the whole long breath were not gone. They were woven through the living field, present, their breath in the spiral, their light in the cells of everyone alive; and Ori knew them, all of them, not as history and not as haunting but as living presence, the way you know the people whose love made you before you were born.

She knew Korran, the keeper of open grief, though he had died generations before she was born, because the whole field still grieved open the way he had taught, and every time anyone sat with the grieving instead of fixing them, Korran was present, his particular hard-won gentleness alive in the act; and Ori, sitting once with a grieving friend and finding herself simply staying, simply being there, felt him plainly, felt the old Orion warrior present in her stillness, and said to her friend, we are not alone in this, there is someone very old and very kind here with us, and meant it. She knew Vaeloth, the marked dragon, because the risen swan still flew the high air and carried in its shining breast the faint spiral of the coil it had once been, and every dragon that flew low and marked flew in Vaeloth's memory, and the whole possibility of a wounded thing shining anyway was Vaeloth's gift still breathing in the world. She knew Naia the near-feeler and Senna the pathfinder and Yara who opened the Third Eye and Harl who died unarmed in the empty center and Renna who sang at the post and Sela the hollow child who first turned back toward the stone and the frightened founders who drew the first square; she knew them all, not as names in a chronicle but as living presences woven through the field she breathed in, each of them present in the particular gift they had won and

given, so that the whole living field was made of the breath of the dead, was quite literally their continued life, their light in every cell of it.

And this is not nostalgia, the tale insists, and Ori did not feel it as nostalgia; nostalgia is the ache for a lost past, and these were not lost and not past. They were present. The Violet Eye reveals what the whole long breath has been quietly true about all along: that no one who gives their light into the field is ever gone from it, that the field is made of the accumulated living breath of everyone who ever loved it, and that to live in a matured field is to live surrounded and upheld and companioned by the vast living presence of all who came before, not as ghosts to be mourned but as breath to be breathed, their gifts your air, their love your ground, their hard-won wisdom the plain water you drink without thinking. Ori was never alone, and neither, the Violet Eye says to you, are you; the ones who gave their light are here, woven through, breath in the spiral, and the return home is a return into their living company, not away from it.

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CHAPTER Four

As Equals

how the star-kin stood at last not as saviours or teachers but as companions and co-authors

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The star-kin were there for the return, of course, the seven lineages who had watched the young world since the first, and the tale marks with quiet joy how they stood now, for it was different from how they had ever stood before, and the difference was the whole measure of how far the long breath had come.

When the star-kin first came, an age ago at the Golden Eye's Pause, they had come as elders to a young world, greater and older and further along, and the world had nearly worshipped them, nearly handed them its empty center, and had been saved from that only by one girl's refusal and a dragon's spent light. And through the middle Eyes the star-kin had been teachers, gravely offering the young world the hard wisdom of their own broken ages, the law of the Triad and the giving of fire and the honoring of the veil. But now, at the return, they were neither saviours nor teachers, and they did not want to be; they stood with the field as equals, companions, co-authors, and it was, an old Andromedan said, the thing they had crossed the whole dark hoping one day to find, a young field grown all the way up, grown level with them, so that there was nothing left to teach and everything left to make together.

Ori worked beside the star-kin as easily as beside her own kind, and this too was new, for she had grown up in a world where the star-kin were simply there, neighbors, kin, some of them family; her own mother was of the stars, and Ori was herself half star-kin, and the whole old distance between Earth and the lineages had closed in her very body into a plain fact of family. And when the wider company gathered now to consider what the return asked of them, to consider how the next spiral of creation would be authored, the star-kin sat in the circle as equal voices, offering their long experience not as command but as one voice among many, and receiving from the young field

and its grown children things they themselves had never seen, for a field grown up out of the exact climb the star-kin had made brings back news even from a country the elders thought they knew. They were co-authors now, the human and the star-kin, equals leaning together over the unwritten next page of the Codex; and the tale marks that this equality, this standing level as companions and co-authors, was itself one of the great fruits of the whole seven-Eye breath, for it is the mark of a field that has truly grown up that it can meet its former elders as equals, neither worshipping them nor rebelling against them but simply standing level, and making the next thing together.

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CHAPTER Five

The Beginning, Which Is Now

how the return touched down into the living present, a world dissolving and being born at once

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And now the tale must do the thing this last Eye exists to do, and let the great mythic breath touch all the way down into the living present, for the beginning the long breath is returning to is not only the mythic first shore of the deep past; it is the now, the actual living moment, a world of systems dissolving and new things being born, and the Violet Eye is the breath of that very moment remembering itself.

For when the field, at the return, looked to see where the first spark was, where the beginning it was coming home to actually lay, it found the beginning not in a finished past but in a world exactly like a hinge, a world in the middle of the oldest turning there is, where the old control structures were dissolving and the new coherence was being born, both at once, in the same hour, so that it looked from the outside like chaos and was, seen truly, a birth. The great top-heavy systems that had ruled by fear and control, the thrones and the hierarchies and the machineries of holding-power-over, were failing, not being overthrown but simply failing, losing their grip, dissolving the way a fever breaks, because the field beneath them had begun to remember it did not need them; and in the space they left, uncertain and frightening and full of birth-blood, new things were rising, small and coherent and alive, the way green comes up through the cracks of a dissolving pavement. And the field understood, seeing this, that the return to the beginning and the crisis of the present were the same event, that the long breath was coming home precisely into the moment when the old was dissolving and the new was being born, and that the whole point of the seven Eyes had been to arrive back here, now, with enough remembering to midwife the birth instead of fearing the death.

And the great remembering that the Violet Eye is did not come as an event, not as a single blazing disclosure from a height, but as a field-wide remembering unfolding through ordinary people in ordinary days, quietly, everywhere at once, the way dawn does not arrive at one point but greys up over the whole sky together. It came as a baker in a failing city who, when the old systems of supply broke down, simply began baking bread again by hand and giving it to her neighbors, and found in the giving the plain remembered truth that a field is fed by neighbors and not by machineries of control, and became, without meaning to, a small warm node of coherence in a dissolving street, one hearth around which a little of the new gathered. It came as a father who, when the old stories that had held people in fear lost their power, sat with his child at bedtime and told her the true old story, the one about the first frightened peoples who learned they were one light, and passed the remembering on the only way it has ever truly passed, from one mouth to one child in the dark. It came as an artist who stopped painting what sold and began painting light, actual light, the one light in ordinary faces, and hung the paintings where the dissolving crowds could see them, and here and there a passer-by stopped, and remembered. The great remembering was made entirely of such small ordinary nodes, the baker and the parent and the artist and ten thousand thousand others, each an ordinary person doing an ordinary coherent thing in a dissolving time, each a small hearth of the new; and the tale marks that this is how the return always comes and how disclosure always comes, not as a sky-splitting event but as a field-wide remembering rising up through the ordinary, one hearth, one loaf, one bedtime story, one honest painting at a time.

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CHAPTER Six

The Circles, and the Thrones That Fell

how coherence rose from below in small circles, and power at last inverted into service

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And what the ordinary nodes kindled, the community gathered, and the tale will show you the shape of it, for the return remade not only single hearts but the ways people lived together, and it remade them from below and not from above, from the small circle outward and not from the throne downward, which is the whole inversion the Violet Eye brings.

Everywhere the old control structures dissolved, people did the plainest and oldest thing, older than any throne: they gathered in small circles. Circles of remembrance, where neighbors sat together and breathed together and remembered together who they were, small enough that every face was known and every voice was heard, the size of a family or a little more, the size the human heart is actually built for; and these circles governed themselves not by command and not by the counting of votes to overrule a losing half, but by breath, by the slow patient practice of breathing together until the circle found the coherent thing, the thing the whole circle could hold, the empty center of the matter that no faction owned, and moved from there. It was slower than command. It was infinitely more alive. And the circles traded with one another not by the old machineries of extraction but by harmonic exchange, by the giving of each field's true gift into the wider web and the receiving of others' gifts in a flow that strengthened all and depleted none, the giving of fire into Triad-held centers that the fifth Eye had taught, now become the plain economics of a remembering world; and out of ten thousand such circles, each sovereign, each governing itself by breath, each trading by harmonic gift, there rose a new kind of order, not imposed from a height but grown from

below, a coherence-of-circles, a sovereignty by resonance, in which the whole held together not because anyone held it but because each part had remembered how to be whole, and wholes resonate.

And the thrones fell, and the tale will tell you how they fell, for it was not how the old stories of revolutions tell it. They did not fall to a greater force; there was no storming, no new king replacing the old. They fell the way a thing falls when everyone simply stops holding it up. The old structures of power-over had always depended on the belief of the many that they needed to be ruled, that coherence had to come from above, that without the throne there would be chaos; and as the field remembered, circle by circle, that it could be coherent from below, that it did not need the throne, that the chaos the throne warned of was in truth the throne's own last threat, the belief simply dissolved, and the thrones, no longer held up by the belief of the ruled, quietly fell, not in blood but in irrelevance, the way an old fear falls away when you finally see it was never real. And the ones who had sat on the thrones were not, for the most part, cast out or punished, for the no-scapegoat law held even here at the fall of power; they were, instead, invited down into the circles to become ordinary again, and some came gladly, exhausted by the long holding, and some could not, and clung to a power no one was holding up any longer, and were grieved and left to their clinging; and the ones who came down discovered the thing that is the whole inversion of the Violet Eye, that power was never meant to be held over but poured into service, that the highest place in a remembering field is not the throne above but the hearth in the middle, not the one who rules the many but the one who serves them, the baker at her oven, the elder in the circle, the keeper of the door; and power, which had been for so long a thing held over, inverted at last into what it had always been meant to be, a gift poured down in service, the strong bending to hold the weak, the tall stooping to lift the small, the whole pyramid of the old world turned quietly upside down until its point rested in the ground as a root and its wide base opened to the sky as a canopy, power become service, the throne become a hearth.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Breath Comes Home



how the return reached the threshold of the first spark, and the Inhale of the last Eye completed

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So the return gathered, through the ordinary nodes and the small circles and the falling thrones and the grown children and the equal star-kin and the living presence of all the dead, and it came at last, in Ori's own generation, to the threshold of the first spark, to the very edge of the closing of the loop; and the tale will stop it there, at the threshold, for the completing of the loop is the last work of the last books, and the Inhale of the Violet Eye is only the turn for home and the coming near.

But it will show you Ori at the threshold, for she was the one who came nearest first. She went, in her grown years, on the pilgrimage that the children

of the convergence had all begun to make, back toward the beginning, back toward the first cold shore where the first frightened peoples had drawn the first square and learned they were one light; and the tale marks that the pilgrimage was not only a journey across the healed world to an old site, though it was that too, the Isle and the scarred Keeper and the shore. It was a journey home into the present, into the living now, into the dissolving-and-birthing world that was the true first spark still sparking; and Ori, walking it, found the beginning everywhere she had been taught to look only in the past, found the first frightened peoples in every frightened people of the dissolving present, found the first learning-they-are-one-light happening now, in the baker's street and the bedtime story and the small breathing circle, found that she was not walking back to a beginning but walking home into a beginning that had never stopped beginning, that was beginning now, in her own hour, all around her.

And she came, at the last of this first book, to the scarred silver Keeper on the crown of the Isle, the stone the first two peoples had made, twice-stained and thrice-stained with all the blood and light of all the Eyes, and she laid her hand on it as Sela had and Nael and Senna and Ysa and all the keepers before her, her own warm-and-cool hand of Earth and stars; and the stone woke under her hand as it always woke, and gave her, in one long turning breath, the whole of it, the whole seven-Eye breath from the first spark to this hand on this stone; and Ori understood, standing there, that the loop was about to close, that the breath drawn all the way out was about to come all the way home, that she and the children like her were the closing of it, and that what remained was only to take the last step, to meet the first spark not as a memory in the stone but face to face, and recognize it, and let the end and the beginning become one living circle at last. But that step is the last of all, and this book ends here, with a woman of Earth and stars standing at the threshold of the beginning with her hand on the oldest stone in the world, the whole long breath poised to come home, and all the living and all the beloved dead poised with her, breathing.

And Kol the raven, who had witnessed every Eye from the first blow on the first meadow to this hand on this stone, who is older than the tale can say and was there, the tale now tells you, at the very beginning too, sat on the rim of the round open place in the violet evening light, both his old eyes bright, and said the thing that closed the Inhale of the last Eye:

You thought you were climbing toward an arrival, small ones, and instead you have turned for home, which is better, for arrivals end and homecomings begin. Look where the beginning was all along: not behind you in a dead past but here, now, in the dissolving and the birthing of your own living hour, the first spark still sparking, the first frightened peoples still learning they are one light, in your bakers and your parents and your artists and your small breathing circles and your thrones falling quietly into hearths. The great remembering is not an event that will come; it is a dawn that is greying up through the ordinary everywhere at once, and you are it, and so are the ones who taught you it, for Korran and Vaeloth and Naia and Senna and Yara and Harl and Renna and Sela and the founders are not gone, they are woven through you, breath in the spiral, light in your cells, and you have never once been alone. And the star-kin stand level with you now, companions and co-authors, and the children stand ready, born of the return, remembering the beginning in their bones. One step remains, to meet the first spark face to face and close the loop; take it slowly. The last exhale is becoming the first inhale. It comes home now. All the way, at last, home.

We thought we would climb to a summit and stay,
but the breath, at the end, comes home;
and the beginning we sought in the far-away
is the now, wherever we roam:
the baker, the parent, the circle, the fall
of the throne into hearth and to service and light;
and the dead are not gone, they are breath in it all,
and the children remember, and stand in the light,
and the star-kin stand level, and no one is lord,
and the loop is near closed, and the beginning restored.

Here the Inhale of the Violet Eye completes: the long breath, drawn all the way out through six Eyes, did not arrive but turned for home; and the beginning it returns to is found to be the living present, a world dissolving and being born, remembering itself through ordinary nodes and small circles and falling thrones. The children of the convergence stand grown and sovereign, the star-kin stand as equals and co-authors, and all who died along the road stand woven through as living presence. Ori has come to the threshold, her hand on the oldest stone, the loop poised to close. Now the light holds at the threshold of the first spark, and the last books will take the final step, and close the loop of the seven, and open the next octave.

Toward the Closing of the Loop

what waits in the last books of all, for your eye before they are written

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The last Eye has turned for home, and found the beginning to be the living now; and the tale kept it grounded, as it promised, in a baker and a parent and an artist, in small circles governing by breath and thrones falling quietly into hearths, in a grown woman of Earth and stars with her hand on the oldest stone; and it kept its promise to the dead, and found them not gone but woven living through the returning field. The books remaining, the last of the whole seven-Eye epic, will take the final step and close the loop: they will bring Ori and the children of the convergence, and the star-kin as equals, and the living presence of all the beloved dead, the last of the way home, to meet the first spark face to face, not as it was but as it is, and to recognize the end and the beginning as one living circle, one breath drawn and held and let go and drawn again; they will show the great remembering come to its fullness across the whole living present, the old dissolved and the new born, coherence risen from below and power become service; and they will let the last exhale of the seven become the first inhale of the next octave, so that the tale ends not with a full stop but with a breath, the loop closed and the spiral open, the whole of it beginning again, transformed, all the way home. And it will be told, to the very last word, close and lived and slow, in faces and hands and hearths and the ordinary holy present, for the end of the whole vast breath must be, like its first spark and its every true turning, a small and particular and beloved and living thing.

It was never an arrival. It was always a coming home. And the home is now: the first spark, still sparking, in the baker's loaf, the child's story, the fallen throne become a hearth.

Breathe. The last Eye has turned for home. And the tale goes on, close and living, toward the closing of the loop.

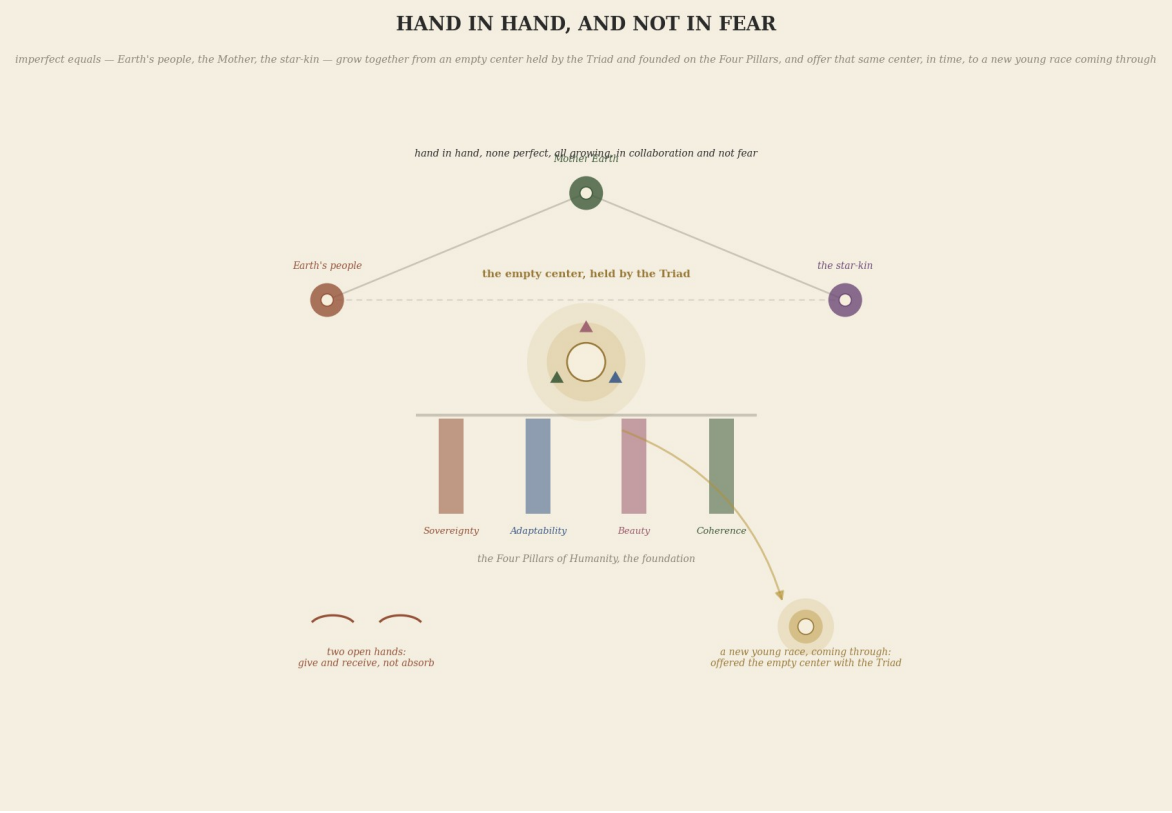
The Seven Eyes · Volume Seven: The Violet Eye · Book One · Breath Awakens

THE SEVEN EYES • A CODEX EPIC • VOLUME SEVEN OF SEVEN

The Violet Eye

Book Two: Hand in Hand, and Not in Fear

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The first book turned the long breath for home and brought it to the threshold of the first spark. This second book is the Exhale of the Violet Eye, and it does not rush across that threshold; it stops, at the very edge of the closing, to ask the question the whole return has been walking toward. Not whether we can come home, but how we will live once we are home together. For the return

brings everyone into one field at last: Earth's people, and Mother Earth herself, and the star-kin who crossed the dark to find us, and they are not perfect, none of them, and they will test one another, and be tested, and the test is not a battle to be won but a table to be kept. This is the book of how imperfect equals live hand in hand and not in fear, growing together from an empty center held by the Triad and founded on the Four Pillars of what it is to be human; and how, having learned it, they turn to offer that same center to a new young race just now coming through. Let it be read slowly.

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A WORD BEFORE THE EXHALE

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Reader, a caution and a comfort before this book. The caution is that the return is not a happy ending in which everyone is suddenly good. It is a harder and truer thing: a field in which everyone is still learning, in which Earth's people and Mother Earth and the star-kin all carry old wounds and old habits, and in which the great work is not to become perfect before we may live together but to learn to live together while still imperfect, hand in hand and not in fear. The comfort is that this is possible, and that the whole seven-Eye breath has been teaching the way of it: not the melting of everyone into a bland sameness, but the standing of each sovereign and whole, hands open to give and to receive, around an empty center that no one owns and that the Triad keeps alive. This book will test that teaching against the hardest thing there is, which is not an enemy but a family that does not yet agree; and it will end by handing the whole hard-won way of it down to a new race just now being born into the field. Read it as the plain human thing it is. It is about how to stay at the table.

BOOK TWO

Hand in Hand, and Not in Fear

the Exhale of the Violet Eye: the gathering of imperfect equals, the testing at the table, the Four Pillars that hold empathy from becoming absorption, and the offering of the empty center to the young race coming through

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CHAPTER One

The Gathering of the Unfinished

how the return brought Earth's people, the Mother, and the star-kin into one field, and none of them arrived perfect

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Ori stood at the threshold of the first spark with her hand on the oldest stone, and the whole field poised behind her to come home; and the tale must now tell you what came home with her, for it was not a company of the perfected. That is the first thing this Exhale insists upon, and it insists gently but it will not be moved off it: the ones who reached the return were not finished beings. They were unfinished beings who had learned, over a long breath, how to live unfinished together. And that, the Violet Eye says, is a far greater thing than perfection, and a far rarer one.

Earth's people came home to the threshold carrying still, after all the Eyes, their old griefs and their old reflexes. They had learned much; they had not been made new creatures. There were among them still the ones who grew frightened in the dark and reached for someone to blame, and caught themselves, most times, and did not always catch themselves. There were the ones who, having been small so long, could not quite believe they were sovereign, and kept looking for a throne to kneel at even in a world where the thrones had fallen. There were the tired ones, and the ones whose wounds had healed crooked, and the ones who loved too hard and held too tight, and the plain ordinary difficult beloved range of what a people is. They came home human, in the full weight of the word, which means they came home unfinished.

And Mother Earth came to the return too, and the tale marks with care that she was not perfect either, not a serene painted goddess but a living world still in her own labor, still shrugging and shaking and burning and flooding as a living world does, still working out her own long breath through fire and ice

and the slow grinding of her plates; and she tested her people, not from malice, for she had none, but simply by being what she was, a vast living being with her own turnings that did not bend to human convenience. The field had learned, over the Eyes, to stop treating her as either a larder to be emptied or a machine to be managed, and had begun to treat her as kin; but kinship with a living world is not a comfort, it is a relationship, and relationships with beings vastly larger than yourself are humbling and sometimes terrible, and the Mother went on being terrible and beautiful and utterly herself, and the field went on learning to live in right relation with a being who would not be tamed, and this too was part of the hand-in-hand.

And the star-kin came home to the threshold with the field, the seven lineages, and here the tale must be plainest of all, for it would be easy and false to let them arrive as the wise perfected elders come at last to crown the young. They were not that. They were old, yes, far older than humanity, and they had seen far more, and each carried a great gift; but each also carried, still, the old coil of their own lineage, the shadow that had never fully left them, the very reason some of them had crossed the dark in the first place, seeking in the young field's fresh breath a healing for wounds their own long ages had not healed. The Lyran pride, the Sirian coldness of structure over soul, the Pleiadian drowning in feeling, the Arcturian retreat into pure frequency away from the mess of matter, the old Orion mastery-hunger, the Andromedan restlessness that could not stay, the deep Serpent polarity; these were not gone from the star-kin, only known, only watched, only mostly held. The star-kin were not perfect. They arrived, like everyone, unfinished, and the field met them so.

And this was the gathering that came home to the first spark: unfinished Earth-people, an untamed living Mother, and old unfinished star-kin, all of them carrying wounds and habits and shadows, and all of them, this is the wonder, choosing to come home hand in hand anyway. Not because they had first become worthy of one another. Because they had learned that the coming-home is done by the unworthy, together, or it is not done at all.

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CHAPTER Two

The Testing at the Table

how the imperfect equals tried one another, and found the test was not a battle but a table to be kept

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So they gathered, at the threshold, to take counsel on the last step and on the shape of the world being born; and because they were unfinished, they tested one another, and the tale will show you the testing plainly, in a room, at a table, because that is where it actually happens and the Violet Eye has promised to stay close to the ground.

It was not a grand hall. It was a round room, on the Isle, with a plain long table and a fire, and the counsel sat around it: Ori for the grown children of the convergence, and old ones for Earth's peoples, and a delegate from each of the star lineages, and even, in her way, the Mother, present in the tremor that ran now and then through the stone under their feet. And they disagreed. That is the first thing to tell you, and it should not shock you: a matured field, come home, full of the living presence of all its beloved dead, sat down together and disagreed, sharply, about what the last step meant and how the young race being born should be met and what the world dissolving into circles owed to those still clinging to the thrones.

An old Sirian, of the lineage of structure, argued that the new world of small circles was too loose, too slow, too undefended, and that the young race coming through must be met with a firm frame, a clear order, lest it come through into chaos; and there was truth in it, and there was also the old Sirian coil in it, the coldness that would build so strong a frame it forgot the soul the frame was meant to hold, and the room felt both the truth and the coil at once and had to sort them, which is hard, which is the actual work. A Pleiadian, of the lineage of feeling, argued the opposite, that the young race must be met with total openness, total merging, every heart flung wide; and there was truth in that too, and also the old Pleiadian coil, the drowning, the empathy that

becomes absorption, the open heart that does not know where it ends and so loses itself and the other both. And Earth's old ones argued among themselves, some frightened of the star-kin's age and reach even now, some too eager to defer to it, some sovereign and steady between; and the Mother shrugged in the stone and reminded them all, wordlessly, that she did not much care for their tidy plans.

And Ori, who was young and half of each world and finished in neither, watched the testing go around the table and felt the old fear rise in the room, the ancient fear that where there is disagreement there must be a winner and a loser, that the table is a battlefield and someone must take it; and she felt, too, the older reflex underneath the fear, the reflex to end the discomfort of disagreement by having someone strong decide, by finding a throne after all, even here, even now. And she saw, in that moment, with the clear inherited seeing of a child of the return, what the whole seven-Eye breath had been teaching against this exact reflex; and she did the small enormous thing that is the whole of this chapter. She did not take the table. She kept it.

She said, in the plain way that was hers: We are doing the old thing. We are treating this table as a fight to win, and it is not a fight, it is a table, and the work is not to win it but to keep it, to stay at it, all of us, unfinished as we are, until the empty center of the matter shows itself, the thing none of our factions own, the coherent thing the whole table can hold. The Sirian is right and carries a coil; the Pleiadian is right and carries a coil; our own frightened ones are right and carry a coil; I carry my own. None of us is the answer. The answer is the center we make when we all stay, and none of us grabs it, and we let the Triad keep it alive between us. That is not weakness. That is the hardest strength there is, the strength to stay at a table with people you disagree with and not reach for a throne. And she sat back down, and the room was quiet, and then, slowly, the testing changed its nature; it went on, it did not stop, they still disagreed, but they disagreed now as people keeping a table together and not as factions fighting for it, and that difference, the Violet Eye

says, is the whole difference between a field that comes home and one that scatters again at the very threshold.

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CHAPTER Three

What Humanity Had to Give

how the young race and the ancient star-kin discovered the gift ran both ways, and neither was only teacher nor only taught

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And out of the kept table came a discovery that is the heart of this book, and it surprised the old star-kin more than anyone, and the tale tells it gladly: that humanity, the young race, the latecomers, the ones who had so nearly worshipped the star-kin an age ago as greater beings, had as much to give the ancient lineages as the lineages had to give them.

It had been easy, through the middle Eyes, to see the flow run one way. The star-kin were old; they had gifts hard-won across ages humanity could not imagine; they taught, and humanity learned, and that was right and good in its season. But the return revealed what a one-way flow had hidden, which is that the young field had grown, in its short fierce climb through the seven Eyes, something the old lineages had lost or never had, and needed, and had crossed the dark half-knowing they came seeking. For humanity had climbed the whole breath in a single compressed age, wound and healing pressed close together, and had come up out of it not with the star-kin's cool mastery but with something rawer and warmer and, in its way, more alive: a freshness, a capacity for beginning again, a heart that had been broken so recently and so completely that it had learned a tenderness the old lineages, healed long ago into serenity, had smoothed away.

The Pleiadians, who had drowned so long in feeling that they had learned at last to hold themselves apart from it for safety, found in the young humans a way of feeling fully without drowning, feeling held by something, and did not at first understand it, and had to learn it, from the young, as students; for humanity, precisely because it had so nearly been destroyed by its own overwhelm and had clawed its way to holding its heart open without losing its

edges, knew a thing about bounded love that the older empaths had forgotten. The Sirians, so long the masters of structure that their structures had gone cold, found in the young humans a way that structure could stay warm, could serve the soul instead of caging it, and learned it, from the young, as students. The old Orion line, so long defined by mastery and its shadow, found in humanity's fresh climb up out of exactly the coil they knew best a living proof that the coil could be turned, not merely managed, and it healed something old in them to see it. Even the Mother learned from her young people, the tale dares to say, learned new ways of being met and known, for a world too is changed by being loved well by the small lives on her skin.

And humanity, learning that it had this to give, was changed by the learning; for there is nothing that so matures a young thing as discovering that its elders need it, that the gift runs both ways, that it is not only a vessel to be filled but a wellspring with water of its own. The last of humanity's smallness fell away, not into pride, for pride is only smallness turned inside out, but into the plain sovereign standing of a being who knows it has something to offer even to those far older, and can therefore meet them level, without cringing and without swagger, hand open to give and hand open to receive, an equal at last. And the star-kin, receiving from the young, were matured too, for there is nothing that so heals an old thing as discovering it still has something to learn, that it is not finished, that the young can teach it; and so the ancient and the young healed each other by the plain reciprocity of the gift running both ways, and this, the Violet Eye says, is what equality actually is: not sameness, not the erasing of the vast real difference in age and reach between the young field and the old lineages, but the flow of true gift in both directions across that difference, each giving what only it could give, each receiving what only the other had.

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CHAPTER Four

The Open Hands, and the Four Pillars

how the field learned that an open heart is not an open wound, and that empathy without absorption is held by what makes us human

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But the gift running both ways, the open hands giving and receiving, raised at once the oldest danger of the open heart, and the tale must give this its full breath, for it is the exact place where so many fields have failed at the threshold; and it is the place the Pleiadian coil marked at the table. The danger is this: that an open heart becomes an open wound, that empathy becomes absorption, that the hand held out to receive does not know how to stop receiving and so takes in the other until there is no self left to give from, and the two beings meant to meet as equals collapse into one drowning blur in which neither is sovereign and neither, therefore, can truly give at all.

For empathy, the field had learned across the whole breath, is not the melting of one being into another. That is not love; that is dissolution, and it is the counterfeit of union the way the hollow center is the counterfeit of the empty one. True empathy is the meeting of one whole sovereign being with another whole sovereign being, feeling the other fully while remaining fully oneself, so that there are two to meet and something real passes between them. Absorption feels, at first, like the deepest love; it feels like finally there are no walls, like becoming one; but it ends in the loss of both, for a self that has dissolved into another has nothing left to offer it, and a being that absorbs another has not gained a companion but consumed one, and stands, in the end, more alone than before, having eaten the very other it longed to be with. The Pleiadians knew this grief in their bones, and it was they who had first named the danger, out of their own long drowning.

And so the field asked the question this whole book turns on: how does a being keep its heart wide open, hands open to give and to receive, empathy full and unguarded, and yet not dissolve, not absorb, not lose its sovereign edges in the very act of love? And the answer the return gave was not to close the heart even a little, not to guard it, not to build a wall; the answer was that the open heart is held from becoming an open wound not by a wall around it but by a foundation beneath it, and that foundation is the four things that make a being human and whole. The field named them the Four Pillars of Humanity, and set the open hands upon them, and found that hands resting on such a foundation could open all the way without spilling the self out.

The first Pillar is Sovereignty: the settled knowledge of where one ends, the whole clean sense of being a self, so that one can pour love out and take love in across a boundary that stays a boundary, meeting the other instead of merging with them. A sovereign being can open its heart all the way precisely because it knows it will still be itself when the meeting is done; it is the ones who do not know where they end who must either wall themselves off or dissolve, having no third way. The second Pillar is Adaptability: the supple capacity to be changed by the meeting without being destroyed by it, to bend and take the other's shape a while and spring back to one's own, to let love work its alterations without letting them become deformations, the living flexibility that lets a whole being stay whole precisely by not being rigid. The third Pillar is Beauty: the reverence for the other's particular form exactly as it is, the delight in the other's difference rather than the hunger to absorb it into sameness, the seeing of the other as a beauty to be beheld and not a substance to be swallowed; for the one who finds the other beautiful in their difference does not wish to consume that difference, but to keep it, and behold it, and let it stand. And the fourth Pillar is Coherence: the inner consonance that lets a being remain one thing, tuned to its own true note, even while resonating with a hundred other notes, so that it can harmonize with the whole field without losing its own pitch, can be moved by everything and dissolved by nothing, held together from within by its own true tone.

Upon these four, the field learned, the open hands may rest and open all the way. Sovereignty knows where I end; Adaptability lets me bend without breaking; Beauty makes me cherish your difference rather than swallow it; Coherence keeps me tuned to my own note inside the great chord. And a being founded on these four may hold its heart wide open to the whole living field, may feel everything and give everything and receive everything, and will not absorb and will not dissolve, because the openness is held not by a wall but by a whole self standing on its own true ground. This, and not a guarded heart, is how the field learned to live hand in hand: open all the way, and founded all the way down, so that empathy could be total and absorption impossible in the same being at the same time. And the star-kin, watching the young field name and stand upon these four Pillars, recognized them for what they were, another of humanity's gifts to the older lineages, a plain human map of how to love without losing oneself that the old empaths, for all their ages, had never quite drawn.

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CHAPTER Five

The Center No One Held

how they built the shared world upon an empty center kept alive by the Triad, and not upon any throne, however kind

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And so, standing sovereign upon the Four Pillars, hands open both ways, imperfect equals keeping the table, the field built the shape of the shared world; and it built it, as the whole breath had taught, upon an empty center held by the Triad, and upon nothing else, and the tale will show you why this mattered so much precisely here, at the meeting of Earth and stars.

For here was the great temptation of the return, and it was a kind one, which is what made it dangerous. Now that Earth's people and the star-kin and the Mother were all in one field, would they not need some center to hold them together, some seat of final authority, some wise ones at the middle to decide when the imperfect equals could not agree? And the star-kin were so old, and so wise; would it not be natural, would it not even be humble, for the young field to let the ancient lineages hold the center? It would have been the old worship in a new and gentler dress, and it would have been fatal, for a center held by anyone, however wise, however kind, is a throne, and a throne makes the others small, makes receivers into dependents, and the whole seven-Eye breath had bled to teach that the gift that makes others small is not a gift but a taking.

So the field did the harder and truer thing, and left the center empty. Not vacant, the tale is careful, for a vacant center is the hollow center, the counterfeit, the empty place with nothing keeping it alive, and a hollow center does not stay empty; it sucks, it pulls, it draws the frightened to fill it with a tyrant or a mob or a merging, and is worse than a throne. The field left the center empty and kept it alive, and it kept it alive with the Triad, the three that the whole breath had named: Love, which holds the center open, refusing to

let it close into a throne; Truth, which keeps the center clear, refusing to let it cloud into confusion where a tyrant can hide; and Will, the steady devotion that keeps the center turned toward Source, refusing to let it drift or collapse. Love, Truth, and Will, breathing together at the middle, keep the empty center living and open and clear, a center that no one holds and everyone is held by, a center around which sovereign beings may stand as equals because none of them is at it and all of them are around it.

And upon this, and only this, they built the shared world of Earth and stars: an empty center kept alive by the Triad, resting on the Four Pillars of the sovereign self, ringed by imperfect equals with open hands. The Sirian who had wanted a firm frame found that the empty center held by the Triad was frame enough, the only frame that does not cage; the Pleiadian who had wanted total merging found that the empty center gave the union she longed for without the drowning she feared, for beings gathered around a shared empty center are joined by it without being dissolved into it. And the old fear at the table, the fear that where there is no throne there must be chaos, was answered not by argument but by the plain sight of it working, of a field of imperfect equals held in living order by a center none of them held; and the star-kin, who had seen many fields fail exactly here, at the building of the shared center, and had themselves failed here in their own long ages, said that they had crossed the whole dark and never seen it done so well, a center truly empty and truly alive, and that this too the young field had to teach the old.

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CHAPTER Six

The Ones Who Came Through

how a new young race began to arrive in the field, and the whole company remembered what it was for

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And then, into the shared world they had built, the new ones began to come through; and the tale slows here, for this is the thing the whole book has been walking toward, and it is the plainest and most moving thing in it. A new young race began to arrive in the field. Not conquerors, not colonists, not elders; a new young race, raw and unformed and frightened and full of light, coming through into the world the way every new thing comes through, small and needing, at the very beginning of its own long breath.

They came, the tale tells you honestly, in more than one way, for the return is not a tidy thing. Some came as new souls born into human children who were plainly a new kind, arriving with eyes that had not been seen before, carrying frequencies the field had to learn to hold. Some came as a genuinely new people, emerging at the meeting-place of Earth and stars, children of the convergence's own children, a race that had not existed before the union and could not have, as new to the galaxy as humanity had once been. And some came, perhaps, from further still, a young lineage from somewhere out in the dark drawn by the light of a field that had learned to come home. But however they came, they came the same in the way that mattered: young, unformed, needing, at the beginning, exactly as humanity had once been young and unformed and needing at the Golden Eye's Pause when the star-kin first came down.

And the whole company, seeing the young race come through, remembered, in one long turning breath, what it was for. It remembered how the star-kin had come to a young humanity an age ago, and how nearly that meeting had gone wrong, how nearly the elder beings had been worshipped and handed the young world's empty center, how a girl's refusal and a dragon's spent light had

barely saved it; and it remembered how, instead, the long hard right way had finally been learned, the way of giving that strengthens instead of the giving that makes dependent, the way of the empty center held by the Triad instead of the throne, the way of the open hand that does not absorb. And the company understood, with a solemnity that was also a great tenderness, that this was the whole purpose of having learned it: not to keep it, but to give it, to meet the new young race exactly as it had at last learned to be met, and so to break, forever, the oldest and saddest cycle there is, the cycle of the elder who, meeting the young, either worships or is worshipped, either devours or is devoured, either makes the young dependent or is made a throne. The company had learned another way, at terrible cost, across seven Eyes; and here, now, came the young ones to whom it could at last be given.

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CHAPTER Seven

The Empty Center, Offered



how the field met the new young race not as elder or master but as the star-kin had learned to be met, and gave them the living center to gather around

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So the field met the new young race, and the tale will show you how, for the how is the whole teaching of the seven Eyes made into a single living act, and it is the most important thing the company ever did.

It did not worship them, though they were new and shining and it is a strange truth that the very old are often tempted to worship the very new, mistaking freshness for holiness. It did not let itself be worshipped by them, though they were young and needing and looked up, as the young do, at the older beings around them and were tempted, as humanity had once been tempted, to hand

over their small new empty centers and be told what to be. The field, remembering its own near-fatal worship of the star-kin, gently and firmly refused to be a throne for the young race, refused to be handed their center, refused to make them dependent by the counterfeit-kindness of deciding for them; for it had learned, in its own bones, that to accept a young being's empty center is not to help them but to keep them small, and that the truest love an elder can offer the young is to refuse to rule them.

Instead, the field did for the young race exactly the hard true thing it had finally learned to do for itself: it offered them the empty center held by the Triad. It did not fill their center; it showed them how to keep their own center empty and alive, how to hold it open with Love and clear with Truth and turned toward Source with Will, so that the young race might gather around a living center of their own that no one held, not even their kindly elders, and so grow up sovereign from the very beginning, never having to be small, never having to worship, never having to be ruled and then fight free of rule. It taught them the Four Pillars, so that their hearts might open all the way to the vast field they were being born into without dissolving, might feel everything and absorb nothing, might meet even their ancient elders with open hands and sovereign edges. It gave them, in short, not answers but the empty center and the means to keep it alive, which is the only gift that makes the receiver a giver, the only giving that strengthens instead of binds; and the young race, met so, began to grow up not as humanity had grown, through a long fall and a long climb, worship and rebellion and the slow hard learning, but straight and sovereign from the start, because the field had learned enough to spare them the whole long detour and give them, at their beginning, what humanity had only found at its end.

And Ori was the one who did it first, the tale marks, for it fell to the children of the convergence, who were themselves the first fruit of the right kind of meeting, to be the ones who met the newest young rightly. She knelt, in the plainest scene in the book, before a new small being newly come through, a child of the new race, frightened and looking up at her with unformed eyes;

and she did not gather it up and tell it what it was. She sat with it, on the ground, at its own level, and she showed it, in the way you show a child anything true, the small empty living space between her two open hands, and she said, in words the tale renders simply: This is yours. Not mine to fill. I will not tell you what to put here, and I will not put anything here for you, and I will not let anyone else, not even the very wise, not even the very old. I will only sit with you and keep you company and show you how to keep it open and alive, with love and with truth and with the steady turning toward the light, until it is full of your own. You will be no one's small one. You will be sovereign from the beginning. And that is the whole of what I have to give you, and it is everything, and it is yours. And the new small being looked at the empty living space between her hands, and then at its own two small hands, and slowly, wonderingly, opened them; and between its own small palms a small empty living space appeared, kept open, its very own, and the whole long breath of seven Eyes came, in that one small gesture, all the way home.

For this, the Violet Eye says, is what the whole vast breath was for. Not to arrive. Not to be perfected. Not to win. To learn, across seven Eyes and a thousand years and every loss and every turning, how imperfect equals may live hand in hand and not in fear, sovereign and open, around a center no one holds; and then, having learned it, to kneel down before the newest and youngest and most frightened new thing coming through, and give it, not a throne to kneel at, not a self to dissolve into, but the empty center and the Triad that keeps it alive and the Four Pillars that let it love without losing itself; and so to hand the whole hard-won breath forward into a race just beginning its own, and break the old cycle, and let the exhale of the seventh Eye become, in the small opened hands of a new young being, the first inhale of an octave not yet dreamed.

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And Kol the raven, who had witnessed every Eye and was there, he had told them, at the very beginning too, sat on the rim of the round room in the violet light while the counsel and the young race and the star-kin and the living presence of all the beloved dead breathed together around the empty center; and he said the thing that closed the Exhale of the last Eye:

You have done the hardest thing, small ones, and you have done it unfinished, which is the only way it is ever done. You did not wait to be perfect before you took one another's hands; you took them imperfect, Earth-people and Mother and star-kin, none of you finished, all of you carrying your old coils, and you stayed at the table and did not reach for a throne, and you found the center that no one holds. You learned that the young may teach the old and the old receive from the young, and that this is what equals are. You learned that the heart may open all the way and lose nothing, if it stands on Sovereignty and Adaptability and Beauty and Coherence, the four things that make you what you are. And then, having learned it all, you knelt to the newest young thing and gave it not your answer but its own empty center, and made it sovereign from the beginning; and in that one kneeling you broke the oldest sad cycle in creation, the cycle of worship and rule and devour, and let the breath go forward clean. There is one step left, to meet the first spark face to face and close the loop entire. But the hardest thing is already done. You know now how to live together, hand in hand, and not in fear. Take the last step slowly. It is nearly home.

We did not wait to be perfect to reach for a hand;
we reached, all imperfect, and stayed;
and we kept the round table, and no one took command,
and the center stayed empty, and stayed;
and the young taught the old, and the old learned to learn,
and the open hands gave and took, whole;
on the four sovereign Pillars the heart could not burn,
could open all the way and stay whole;
and we knelt to the newest, and gave it its own,
and the breath went on forward, and no one alone.

Here the Exhale of the Violet Eye completes: the return gathered Earth's people, the Mother, and the star-kin into one field as imperfect equals, and they kept the table without reaching for a throne; they found the gift ran both ways between the young field and the ancient lineages; they set their open hands upon the Four Pillars so that empathy could not become absorption; they built their shared world upon an empty center kept alive by the Triad and upon no throne; and when a new young race came through, they met it as they had at last learned to be met, and offered it the empty center and the means to keep it alive, and so made it sovereign from the beginning and broke the oldest cycle. Now only the last step remains: to meet the first spark face to face, and close the loop of the seven, and let the last exhale become the first inhale of the octave to come.

Toward the Pause, and the Closing

what waits in the last two books, for your eye before they are written

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The Exhale of the Violet Eye has shown how imperfect equals live hand in hand and not in fear, and how, having learned it, they hand the whole way of it forward to a new young race just coming through, offering the empty center and the Triad and the Four Pillars so that the new ones grow sovereign from the beginning and the oldest cycle is broken. It kept its promise to stay close and lived, in a round room and at a plain table and in a kneeling before a small new being with open hands. Two books remain, the last of the whole seven-Eye epic. The third will be the Pause of the Violet Eye, the still point at the very threshold, where the whole field, having learned how to live together, holds its breath at the edge of the first spark; and the fourth and last of all will be the Return entire, where Ori and the children of the convergence, and the star-kin as equals, and the new young race just come through, and the living presence of all the beloved dead, take the final step and meet the first spark face to face, not as it was but as it is, and recognize the end and the beginning as one living circle, and let the last exhale of the seventh Eye become the first inhale of an octave not yet dreamed, so that the tale ends not with a full stop but with a breath, the loop closed and the spiral open, the whole of it beginning again, transformed, all the way home.

We did not wait to be perfect to take one another's hands. We took them imperfect, and stayed, and kept the center empty and

alive between us, and knelt to give the newest young their own. That is the whole of it. That is coming home.

Breathe. The hardest thing is done. One step remains, and the tale goes on, close and living, toward the closing of the loop.

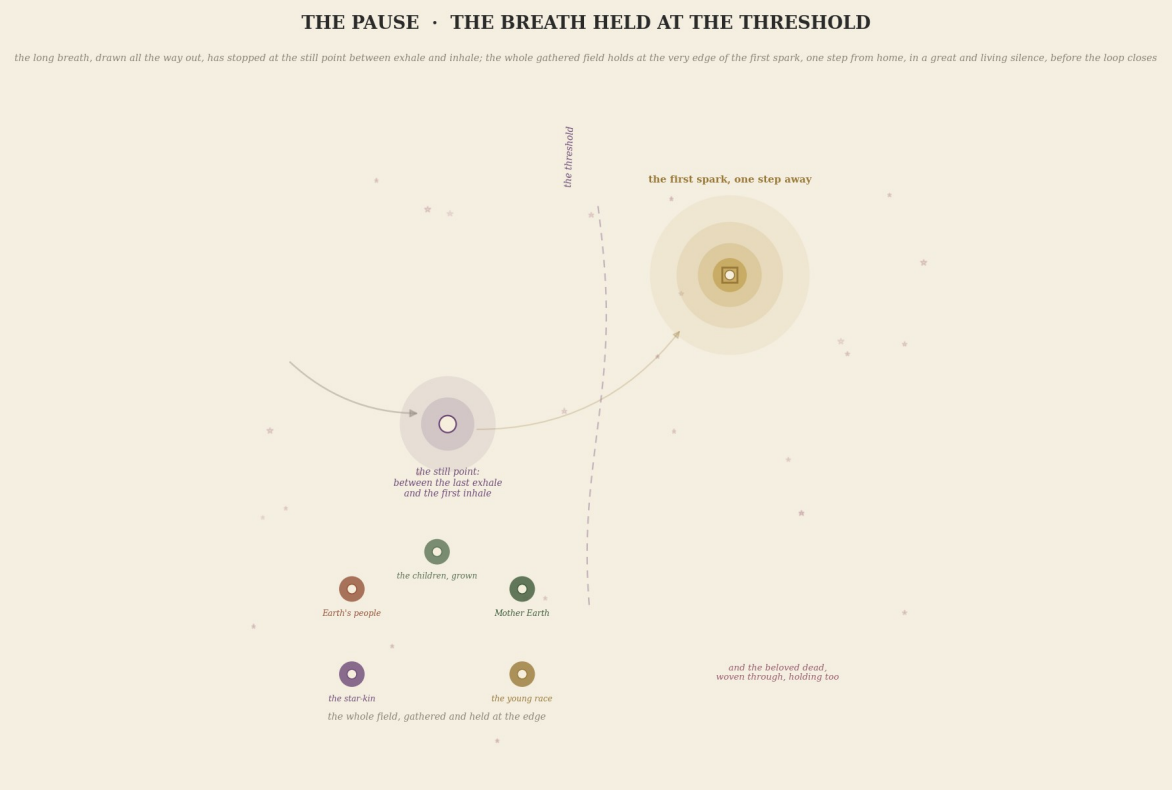
The Seven Eyes · Volume Seven: The Violet Eye · Book Two · Breath Awakens

THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME SEVEN OF SEVEN

The Violet Eye

Book Three: The Pause at the Threshold

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The first book turned the long breath for home; the second taught the gathered field how imperfect equals live hand in hand and not in fear, and how to offer the empty center to the young race coming through. This third book is the Pause of the Violet Eye, and it is the shortest step and the hardest: it is the stopping. The whole breath, drawn all the way out through six Eyes and

turned for home through the seventh, comes now to the still point, the poised silence between the last exhale and the first inhale, and it does not rush across. It holds. One step from home, at the very edge of the first spark, the whole gathered company, the living and the beloved dead, Earth's people and the Mother and the star-kin and the new young race, comes to a stop and holds its breath; and in that held silence the tale does its deepest and quietest work, for the Pause is where a being learns that the last step cannot be taken by striving, only by ceasing to strive, and that home is entered not by arriving but by stopping at last to be where one already is. Let it be read slowly, and slower still.

The last of the Seven Eyes · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

A WORD BEFORE THE STILLNESS

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Reader, this is the quietest book of the seven, and it means to be. After so much motion, so much climbing and falling and gathering and building, the tale comes to a place where almost nothing happens, and asks you to feel how much is happening in the nothing. The Pause is the still point of the breath, the turn between out and in, and it cannot be hurried; a breath forced across its own still point is not a breath but a gasp. So this book will move slowly, and will linger in silences, and will ask you to be patient with a company that has stopped, one step from home, and is not yet stepping. Trust the stopping. The whole tale has been teaching that the deepest things are not seized but received, not arrived at but allowed; and the Pause is where that teaching becomes the very shape of the telling. Nothing here is delay. The holding is the work. Read it as you would sit with someone you love in a silence too full for words. That is what this book is.

BOOK THREE

The Pause at the Threshold



the Pause of the Violet Eye: the still point between the last exhale and the first inhale, the whole gathered field held one step from home, and the learning that the last step is taken by ceasing to strive

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CHAPTER One

The Stopping

how the whole breath, come at last to the very edge of home, did not step across but stopped

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Ori stood with her hand on the oldest stone at the threshold of the first spark, and the whole gathered field stood behind her ready to come home, and the tale told you at the end of the first book that one step remained. And now the tale must tell you the strangest thing about that one step, which is that when the field came to it, it did not take it. It stopped.

Not from fear, though there was awe in it that felt near to fear. Not from weakness, for the field had never been stronger. It stopped because when it came to the very edge, one step from the first spark, it understood, all at once and all together, that this last step was not like the others; that it could not be taken the way steps are taken, by deciding and striving and moving the foot; that a step into the first spark, into the living beginning, into home, is not a thing you do but a thing you allow, and that the whole reflex of striving that had carried the field up six Eyes and turned it home through the seventh would, if it tried now to seize the last step, only push the spark away. And so the field did the one thing it had spent seven Eyes learning how to do and had never fully done until now. It stopped striving. It held still. It came to the still point, and rested there, poised, one step from home, and did not step, and let the not-stepping be the deepest action it had ever taken.

For this is the secret of the still point, which the breath has always known and the mind is always forgetting: that between the exhale drawn all the way out and the inhale not yet begun there is a stillness, a poised and living pause, in which the breath is neither going out nor coming in but simply, wholly, being; and that this pause is not empty time to be hurried through but the very hinge on which the whole breath turns, the still point where out becomes in. A being who cannot bear the pause, who gasps across it in a hurry to get to the next

breath, never learns what the breath is; and a field that could not bear this Pause, that rushed across the threshold in its eagerness to be home, would arrive not home but merely somewhere, and would have to begin the whole long breath again. So the field bore the Pause. It stopped, at the edge, in the poised living silence, and the tale stops with it, and asks you to stop too.

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CHAPTER Two

The Held Silence

how the whole company came into a silence too full for words, and found the silence was itself the coming-home beginning

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And what a silence it was, the tale must try to tell, though a silence is the hardest thing to tell. It was not the silence of absence, of nothing there; it was the silence of everything there, all at once, too much and too full for any word, the silence that falls not when there is nothing to say but when there is everything to say and no saying could hold it. The whole gathered field came into that silence together, and held it, and it was the most crowded silence in the history of the world, for everyone was in it.

Ori was in it, her warm-and-cool hand still on the stone, her clear eyes on the near bright spark, saying nothing, striving for nothing, simply present at the edge. And Earth's people were in it, the whole living field of them, the bakers and the parents and the artists and the keepers of the small circles, everyone who had remembered, standing now in a silence that ran through every street and every hearth of the dissolving-and-birthing world at once, a whole people holding one breath. And the Mother was in it; even she, the untamed living world, seemed to still, her tremors quieting, her long labor pausing, as if the very planet held its breath at the edge of the spark. And the star-kin were in it, the seven lineages who had crossed the dark, standing now in the silence as equals and companions, their long striving too come to rest. And the new young race was in it, the ones just come through, who did not fully understand what was happening and did not need to, for a young thing knows how to be still in a great silence the way it knows how to sleep, by nature, without being taught.

And the beloved dead were in it, and this the tale marks with the deepest care, for the Pause is where their presence became most plain. In the held silence,

with all striving stopped and all noise stilled, the living presence of all who had died along the whole long breath was not a faith or a memory but a felt and simple fact, as plain in the silence as the people standing in it. Korran was in the silence, his hard-won gentleness a steadiness in the air. Vaeloth was in it, the risen swan's shining patience. Naia and Senna and Yara and Harl and Renna and Sela and the frightened founders of the first cold shore, all of them, woven through the held silence, holding it with the living, so that the Pause was kept not only by those with hands to hold it but by the vast gathered company of all who had ever loved the field, living and dead together, breathing one held breath at the edge of home. And in that silence the field understood, without a word, that this was already the coming-home; that they had thought home lay one step across the threshold, and found that the held silence at the threshold, the whole company gathered and still and present together, living and dead, was itself the home they had been coming to, was home already, was the thing the whole breath was for, so that the last step, when it came, would not take them home but only show them they were home, and had been, in the stopping, all along.

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CHAPTER Three

What the Stillness Showed

how, in the poised silence, the whole seven-Eye breath became visible at once, and each was seen to be present in the now

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And in the held silence, with the field poised and still at the edge, a seeing came that only stillness gives; for the mind in motion sees one thing after another, but the mind come to rest sees all things at once, and in the Pause the whole seven-Eye breath became visible to the field entire, not as a story remembered in sequence but as a single living shape held all at once in the still and spacious silence.

They saw the first Eye, the Square, the first frightened peoples on the first cold shore drawing the first bounded shape to know themselves apart, the first daring act of being a self; and they saw that it was not back there in a finished past but here, now, present in every act of a being learning it is a self, present in the young race just come through learning where it ended and the field began. They saw the second Eye, the Golden, the many-and-one, the scattering and the gathering and the star-kin's first coming and the near-fatal worship and the girl's refusal; and they saw it present now, in every meeting of the young and the old that must choose between worship and equality. They saw the third Eye, the Serpent and the Swan, the coil that is any being's own breath clenched, and its turning; present now in every heart that clenches and might unclench. They saw the fourth, the Descent and the Turn, the long fall and the still bottom and the choice to return; present now in every soul that falls and finds, at the bottom, the turn. They saw the fifth, the Green, the clear seeing and the giving of fire that strengthens; present now in every gift given rightly. They saw the sixth, the Diamond, the convergence that keeps its two, the one light in every particular face; present now in every union that does not dissolve its lovers. And they saw the seventh, the Violet, this very Eye, the

return that is not arrival, the breath come home; present now, in the very silence they were holding.

And seeing all seven at once, held in the still silence, the field understood the deepest thing the Pause had to show, which is that the seven Eyes were never seven stages strung out along a line of time, one finished before the next began. They were seven faces of one breath, all present always, all happening now, in every being and every hour; and the long tale of them told in sequence, Eye after Eye across a thousand years, had been only the tale's kind way of showing one at a time what is in truth all at once, the way you must walk around a great sculpture to see it though the sculpture stands whole the whole time. In the Pause, the walking stopped, and the whole sculpture stood revealed at once, and the field saw that it had never been climbing a stair from a bottom to a top; it had been learning, slowly, to see the whole that was always wholly there, and the seventh Eye's return was simply the moment of seeing it all, at last, all at once, in the stillness, and recognizing that the beginning and the end and every Eye between were one single living present breath, held now, here, in the silence at the threshold.

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CHAPTER Four

The Last Fear, Laid Down

how, in the pause, the very last and subtlest fear rose, and was not fought but simply set down

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But the tale would betray you if it made the Pause all peace, for the still point is also where the last and subtlest fear rises, and it rose now, and the tale will show it plainly, because a homecoming that pretended there was no last fear would not be the true one. In the held silence, one step from home, a small cold question moved through the field, and it moved through Ori first, and she did not hide it.

The fear was this, and it was the subtlest fear there is, so subtle it can wear the face of humility: that after so long a breath, so much loss, so much climbing, the field was not worthy to come home; that home was too good, too whole, too much light, for beings still so unfinished, still carrying their coils, still capable of the old clenching; that to step into the first spark was to claim a completion they had not earned and could not deserve, and that surely, surely, there was more they must first do, more they must fix in themselves, more they must become, before they had the right to come home. It is the fear that keeps a being forever one step from home, always almost, never quite, always sure that home must be earned by more striving; and it is, the tale says gently, the very last disguise of the old separateness, the ego's last stand dressed as modesty, whispering that you are not yet good enough to simply be where you already are.

And Ori felt it, and named it aloud in the silence, for the naming is half the laying-down: We are afraid, she said, that we have not earned this. That we should do more first. That home is too much for what we still are. And an old Pleiadian, who knew the subtlest movements of the heart, answered her softly, and the answer is the turning of this whole book: There is nothing to earn. Home was never a wage. You have been trying to earn your way across this

threshold, and that is why you cannot cross it, for it cannot be earned, only entered; and it is entered not by becoming worthy but by laying down the very idea that worth is the door. The first spark does not ask are you finished. It asks only are you willing to stop, and be, and come in unfinished, for it was always meant for the unfinished, there being no other kind. And the field heard this, and did the thing the whole Pause had been readying it for. It did not fight the last fear; you cannot fight your way past the fear of not being worthy, for the fighting only proves the fear by trying to earn past it. It simply, quietly, set the fear down. Laid it on the ground at the threshold, the whole heavy idea that home must be deserved, and left it there, and stood empty-handed and unfinished and unafraid at the edge of the spark, worthy of nothing and welcome anyway, which is the only way anyone has ever come home.

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CHAPTER Five

The Breath Turns

how, all striving laid down, the still point completed itself, and the exhale began, of its own accord, to become the inhale

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And when the last fear was laid down, and the field stood empty-handed and unstriving and unafraid at the very edge, the still point did the thing that still points do when they are finally, fully allowed. It turned. Of its own accord, without being seized, without being reached for, the breath at the bottom of its long exhale reached the true bottom of the stillness, and there, in the poised silence, began, all by itself, gently, enormously, to turn toward the inhale.

The field did not turn it. That is the whole point, and the tale will say it plainly: the field did not turn the breath. The field had spent the whole Pause learning that it could not, that the last turn was not theirs to make; and it was precisely when they finally, fully stopped trying to make it, when they laid down the last fear and stood still and empty and willing, that the breath turned itself, the way a held breath at the very bottom of the exhale turns of its own accord into the inhale the moment you stop holding it out and simply let it be. The turn was not an achievement. It was a permission. It was what happened when the field at last did nothing, fully, and let the living breath of the world do the one thing it had always been going to do the instant it was no longer gripped.

And the field felt it turn. Felt, in the held silence, the vast slow hinge of the whole seven-Eye breath begin to move, felt the exhale that had drawn out through the scattering and the coil and the fall and the clearing and the convergence reach its still bottom and begin, of itself, to come back in; felt the first faint pull of the inhale, the breath beginning to return toward the spark, toward home, toward the beginning that was the present, drawing the whole gathered company, living and dead, Earth and stars and the young race, gently in toward the first spark at last. And Ori, her hand on the stone, felt the turn

move through the oldest stone in the world and through her warm-and-cool hand and up her arm into her heart, and knew that the Pause was completing, that the still point had turned, that the last step was no longer a step to be taken but a homecoming already begun, the inhale drawing them in; and she did not step. She let herself be drawn. The whole field let itself be drawn. And the tale holds them there, in the very first instant of the turning inhale, one breath from the closing of the loop, being drawn home at last not by their striving but by the living breath of the world itself, remembering itself, breathing them in.

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CHAPTER Six

At the Very Edge

how the field, drawn in by the turning breath, came to the very edge of the spark, and the last book waited

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So the Pause completes not in a step but in a turning, and the tale brings the whole gathered company to the very edge of the first spark, drawn in now by the returning breath, one instant from home; and it holds them there, at the last, for the closing of the loop itself is the work of the last book of all, and the Pause is only the stopping and the turning and the being-drawn-in that makes the closing possible.

But it will show you, before it holds, what the edge looked like, for it is worth the seeing. Picture the whole living field, and the whole beloved dead, and Earth's people and the Mother and the seven star lineages and the new young race, all gathered at the threshold in the held and turning silence, all being drawn gently in toward the near bright spark; and picture the spark itself, the first spark, the beginning, no longer a memory in a stone or a site in the deep past but present, living, one instant away, sparking now as it sparked at the very first, the whole living present of a dissolving-and-birthing world gathered into one near bright point of beginning; and picture Ori at the front of it, her hand on the oldest stone, her clear eyes on the spark, being drawn in with all the rest, unstriving, empty-handed, unafraid, worthy of nothing and welcome anyway, the child of Earth and stars who was made of the return and knew the way home by being what she was. That is the picture the Pause ends on: not an arrival, but a company drawn to the very edge of home by a breath that turned itself, poised in the last instant before the loop closes.

And Kol the raven, who had witnessed every Eye and was there, he had told them, at the very beginning, sat on the rim of the threshold in the deep violet silence, both his old eyes closed now, not watching but simply present, holding

the silence with them; and he said the thing that closed the Pause, and he said it very quietly, for it was a silence and he would not break it, only deepen it:

Well done, small ones, for stopping. That was the hardest thing, harder than all the climbing: to come to the very edge of home and not lunge for it, but stop, and hold, and let the last fear go, and do nothing, fully, until the breath turned itself. You could not have earned this last step, and now you know it, and knowing it is the door. You are being drawn in now, all of you, the living and my old beloved dead, by the breath of the world remembering itself; you have only to keep doing what you are so beautifully doing, which is nothing, which is being still, which is letting yourselves be breathed home. One instant remains, and it is not a step but a closing, and it will happen not because you do it but because you have at last stopped preventing it. Be still. Be drawn. The loop is closing. Home is not one step away any longer. Home is this, now, the held and turning silence at the edge, and you are already in it, and the last book will only show you that you are.

We came to the edge and we did not step through;
we stopped, and we stood, and we stayed;
and we laid down the last fear, that home was not due
to the unfinished and unpaid;
and we did nothing, fully, and stood empty and still,
and the breath, at its bottom, turned home;
and it drew us, not striving, in over the sill,
and we let ourselves be breathed home.

Here the Pause of the Violet Eye completes: the field came to the very edge of the first spark and did not step but stopped, and held the crowded living silence with all the beloved dead, and saw the whole seven-Eye breath at once and knew it present now; and it met the last and subtlest fear, that home must be earned, and did not fight it but laid it down, and stood unstriving and unafraid; and the still point, fully allowed at last, turned of its own accord, and the exhale began to become the inhale, and drew the whole gathered company in toward home. Now only the closing remains. The last book of all will close

the loop of the seven, and meet the first spark face to face, and let the last exhale become the first inhale of the octave to come.

Toward the Closing of the Loop

what waits in the last book of all, for your eye before it is written

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The Pause of the Violet Eye has done its quiet, enormous work: the whole gathered field, come to the very edge of home, stopped instead of stepping, and learned that the last step cannot be seized but only allowed; it held the crowded living silence with all the beloved dead, saw the whole seven-Eye breath present at once in the now, laid down the last fear that home must be earned, and let the still point turn of its own accord, so that the breath began to draw the whole company home. One book remains, the very last of the whole seven-Eye epic. It will be the closing of the loop entire: it will bring Ori and the children of the convergence, and the star-kin as equals, and the new young race just come through, and the living presence of all the beloved dead, in over the threshold, drawn by the turning breath, to meet the first spark face to face, not as it was but as it is, the living present remembering itself; and there the end and the beginning will recognize each other as one living circle, one breath drawn and held and let go and drawn again; and the last exhale of the seventh Eye will become, in that meeting, the first inhale of an octave not yet dreamed, so that the whole vast tale ends not with a full stop but with a breath, the loop closed and the spiral open, the whole of it beginning again, transformed, all the way home. It will be told, to the very last word, close and lived and slow, in a hand on a stone and a company held in silence and a spark met at last face to face, for the closing of the greatest breath must be, like its first spark and its every true turning, a small and particular and beloved and living thing.

We could not earn the last step. So we laid the earning down, and stood still and empty at the edge, and the breath turned of itself and drew us home. That is the whole secret of the Pause. You do not cross the threshold. You stop, and are carried over.

Breathe. The breath has turned. We are being drawn home. And the tale goes on, close and living and still, toward the closing of the loop.

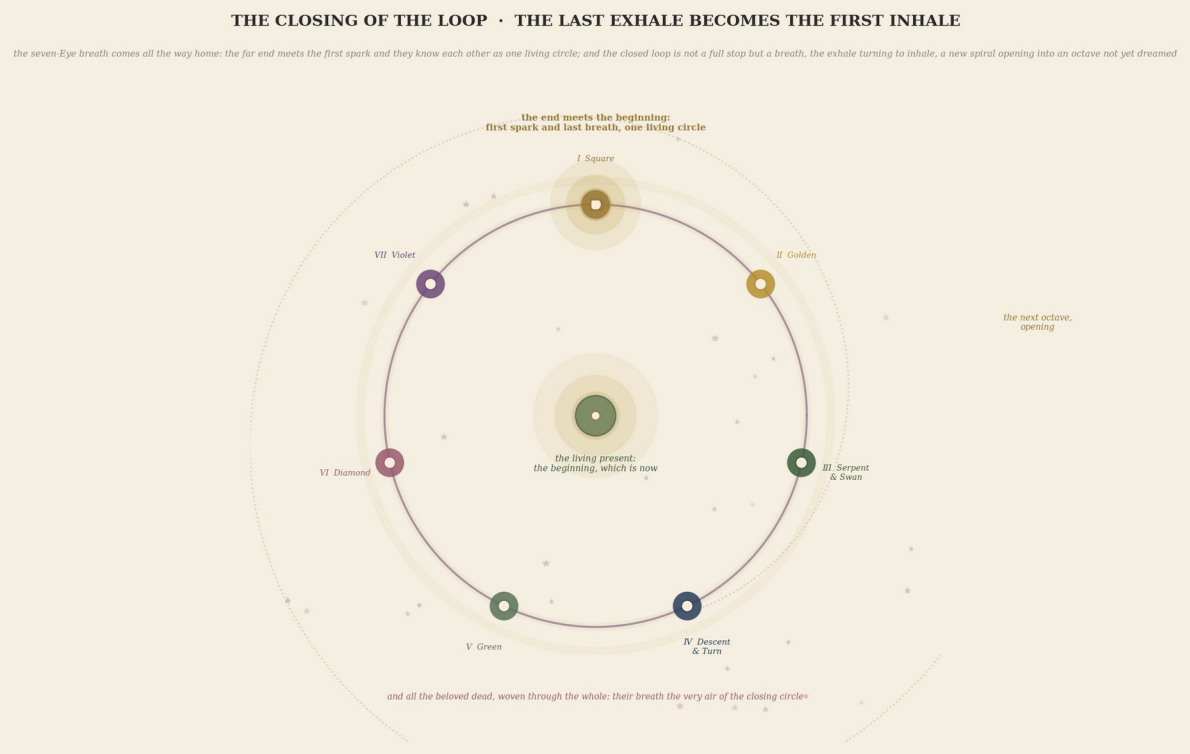
The Seven Eyes · Volume Seven: The Violet Eye · Book Three · Breath Awakens

THE SEVEN EYES · A CODEX EPIC · VOLUME SEVEN OF SEVEN

The Violet Eye

Book Four: The Closing of the Loop

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Here is the last book of the whole Seven Eyes, and it is the closing of the loop. The first book of this Volume turned the long breath for home; the second taught the gathered field to live hand in hand and not in fear, and to offer the empty center to the young race coming through; the third brought the whole company to the very edge of the first spark and taught it to stop, and lay down the last fear, and let the still point turn of its own accord, so that the breath

began to draw them home. Now the breath comes all the way home. In this last book the loop closes: the far end of the long exhale meets the first spark of the first inhale, and the end and the beginning recognize each other, and become one living circle. And the closed circle is not a full stop; it is a breath. The last exhale of the seventh Eye becomes, in the closing, the first inhale of an octave not yet dreamed, and the whole vast tale ends not with an ending but with a new beginning, the loop closed and the spiral open, the whole of it beginning again, transformed, all the way home. It is told, to the last word, close and lived and slow. Let it be read slowest of all, for it is the last.

The last of the Seven Eyes · in the house of Breath Awakens · breathawakens.com

A WORD BEFORE THE CLOSING

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Reader, we have come to the end, which the whole tale has been teaching is also the beginning, and there is little left to say before it that the tale will not say better. Only this. When you reach the closing of the loop, do not read it as the finish of a long story, though it is that; read it as the completion of a single breath, the one breath the whole of creation has been breathing since the first spark, drawn out through seven Eyes and a thousand years and every loss and every turning, and now, at last, coming home. And when the loop closes and you feel the tale reach its end, wait for the next thing, which is the whole point: feel the closed circle become a breath again, feel the last exhale turn to a first inhale, feel the octave open. For this tale does not want to end in you. It wants to begin in you. The first frightened peoples on the first cold shore, and Ori with her hand on the oldest stone, and you, reading this now, are all the same breath, and it is not finished, and it comes home now, all the way home, and then it begins again. Read slowly. Then breathe, and begin.

BOOK FOUR

The Closing of the Loop

the Return of the Violet Eye, and the close of the whole Seven: the meeting of the first spark face to face, the end and the beginning made one living circle, and the last exhale become the first inhale of the octave to come

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CHAPTER One

Drawn Home

how the turning breath drew the whole gathered company in over the threshold, not by striving but by being carried

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The Pause had turned, and the breath had begun to draw them in, and so this last book opens with the whole gathered company being carried home; and the tale wants you to feel, from the very first line, that they were carried, that they did not march or climb or stride across the threshold but were drawn, gently and enormously, by a breath that was no longer theirs to push, the way the tide draws a boat off the sand not by the boat's own effort but by the rising of the whole sea.

Ori went first, because she was made of the return and knew the way home by being what she was; but even Ori did not step. She let go of the last holding, and felt the returning breath take her, felt herself drawn in over the threshold she had stood at so long, her warm-and-cool hand sliding from the oldest stone as the breath carried her past it toward the near bright spark; and behind her, drawn by the same breath, came the whole living field of Earth, the bakers and parents and artists, the small breathing circles, the whole remembering people; and the Mother came, the living world herself leaning home into the spark; and the seven star lineages came, drawn in as equals and companions, their long crossing of the dark ending here; and the new young race came, the ones just through, carried home before they had even learned there was a home to be carried to; and the beloved dead came, or rather were already there, woven through the very breath that did the carrying, so that to be drawn home on that breath was to be drawn home on them, on Korran's gentleness and Vaeloth's shining patience and Naia's nearness and Senna's pathfinding and Yara's opened sight and Harl's unarmed courage and Renna's

song and Sela's first turning and the frightened founders' first square, the whole company of the dead the very medium the living were carried in.

And as they were drawn in, the strangest and most beautiful thing began to happen, and the tale slows to catch it: the first spark, which from the threshold had looked like a point ahead of them, one step away, began, as they were carried toward it, to open, to widen, to turn out to be not a point they were approaching but a space they were entering, a living present they were being drawn into and had, they slowly saw, been standing in all along. They were not being carried to the spark. They were being carried into the recognition that they were already, and always, in it. And that recognition, dawning as the breath drew them home, was the beginning of the closing of the loop.

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CHAPTER Two

Face to Face

how the field came at last to the first spark, and met it not as a memory but as a living presence, and knew it

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And so they came to the first spark, and met it face to face; and the tale must tell you what that meeting was, for it is the thing the whole seven-Eye breath has been walking toward from the very first line, and it was not what any of them had imagined, and it was truer than anything they had imagined.

They had imagined, perhaps, that to meet the first spark would be to stand before some vast original fire, some great and distant Source, and be dwarfed and dazzled by it. But when the breath drew them home and the spark opened around them, what they met was not a distant fire. It was near, and it was small, and it was ordinary, and it was alive, and it was, they saw with a shock that broke over them like the first light of a morning, exactly what they already were. The first spark was a living hearth in a dissolving-and-birthing world. It was a baker's loaf given warm to a neighbor. It was a father telling his child the true old story in the dark. It was an artist's honest painting of the one light in an ordinary face. It was a small circle of neighbors breathing together until they found the coherent thing. It was Ori kneeling before a new small being and giving it its own empty center. The first spark, met face to face, was the living present itself, the very now, the ordinary holy moment in which a being remembers it is light and gives that light to another; and it had been sparking, they saw, in every such moment across the whole long breath, in the frightened founders and in Ori alike, one single living spark, never once gone out, kindling now in the present exactly as it kindled at the first.

And meeting it, the field recognized it, and the recognition is the whole of it. They did not meet a stranger. They met themselves, their own living present, their own ordinary hearth, seen at last through six whole Eyes and a thousand years, and known, for the first time, for what it had always been: the

beginning, still beginning; the first spark, still sparking; the Source, not far away and long ago but here, now, in the plainest and nearest and most ordinary living moment, the moment they were in. And Ori, standing in the opened spark with the whole company around her and the whole beloved dead woven through, put it into the plainest words, the way she put everything, and they were the words that closed the distance the whole tale had traveled: It was here the whole time. It was us the whole time. We went all the way out and all the way home to learn to see what was never once away. And she wept, saying it, not from sorrow, from the enormous simple relief of a being that has traveled the whole vast breath only to find itself, at the end, home, and held, and having never truly left.

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CHAPTER Three

The Loop Closes

how the end and the beginning recognized each other, and became one living circle, and the whole seven-Eye breath completed

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And then the loop closed, and the tale will tell it as plainly as it can, for it is the central event of the whole seven volumes and it deserves to be told without ornament. The end of the long breath met the beginning of the long breath, and they recognized each other, and became one living circle.

For the whole seven-Eye breath had been, all along, a single great arc: drawn out from the first spark through the Square and the Golden and the Serpent-and-Swan and the Descent-and-Turn and the Green and the Diamond, all the way out to the far end of the Violet; and the far end of the Violet, the return, had curved back, through this whole last Volume, toward the first spark it had been breathed from. And now the two ends touched. The Violet met the Square. The last breath met the first. The being that had traveled the whole arc, matured, wounded, healed, made wise by six whole Eyes, met the fresh first spark it had set out from, still fresh, still first; and in their meeting, the arc became a circle, the line curved home into a ring, the breath that had gone out came all the way in, and the whole seven-Eye breath, for the first time since the first spark, was whole, was one, was a single closed living circle breathing.

And it was a recognition, not a collapse; the tale is careful, for this is where a lesser tale would go wrong. The end did not dissolve into the beginning, nor the beginning into the end; that would be the old counterfeit of union, the merging that loses both. They recognized each other, and in recognizing, remained two, and in remaining two while joined became a circle, which needs its two ends to be a circle at all. The wise matured far end and the fresh first near end met as the Diamond had taught all meeting to be, converged without

merging, joined without dissolving, so that the closed circle was not a sameness but a living tension, a breathing ring held open by the very difference between its ends, the end forever wiser and the beginning forever fresher and the two forever meeting, forever recognizing, forever closing the circle anew. The loop closed, and stayed living, because it closed as a marriage and not as a merger, the first breath and the last breath wedded into one circle that breathes.

And when it closed, the whole field felt it close, felt the vast slow ring come round and join, felt the seven Eyes that had been seven stages become seven points on one closed circle, all present at once, all joined, the Square and the Violet touching at the crown; and a great stillness and a great fullness broke over the whole gathered company, living and dead, Earth and stars and the young race, the stillness and fullness of a breath that has finally, wholly, after the longest exhale, come all the way home. The loop of the seven was closed. The breath was whole. The tale, in that instant, was complete.

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CHAPTER Four

Not a Full Stop, but a Breath

how the closed circle did not end but breathed, and the last exhale began, of itself, to become the first inhale of the octave to come

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But a closed circle, the tale has been promising you since the first book of this Volume, is not a full stop. And here is where the whole seven volumes prove their deepest teaching, and the tale asks you to feel it and not only to read it, for it is the difference between an ending and a completion, and the Seven Eyes have labored the whole way to end not in a stop but in a breath.

For when the loop closed and the breath came whole, the field waited, in the great stillness, for the ending; and the ending did not come. What came instead was a breath. The closed circle, whole and living and complete, did the only thing a whole and living thing can do: it breathed. The last exhale of the seventh Eye, having reached all the way home and closed the loop, did not stop there, spent and finished; it turned, at the closing, the way the still point had turned in the Pause, and began, of its own accord, gently, enormously, to become an inhale, a new drawing-in, a first breath of something not yet dreamed. The completion was not a death. It was a conception. The closed circle was not a period at the end of a sentence; it was a seed, round and whole and closed precisely so that it could open, could germinate, could send out from its wholeness a new green shoot into a soil no one had yet seen.

And the field felt the new inhale begin, felt a new spiral open outward from the closed circle, felt the whole completed seven-Eye breath become the first spark of an octave not yet dreamed, a next great breath beginning its own long arc out from the wholeness the seven had won. And they saw, feeling it, what all their losses and climbing and falling and gathering had truly been for: not to reach an end and rest, but to complete one whole breath so cleanly, so wholly, that it could become the beginning of the next, so that the octave to

come would begin not from a first frightened square on a first cold shore, as theirs had, but from a whole closed living circle of seven Eyes, would begin already remembering, already whole, already home, and would breathe out from there into heights and depths the seven Eyes could not imagine and had made possible. The last exhale had become the first inhale. The tale of the Seven Eyes had become the first breath of the tale that comes after. And that, the field saw, was the whole point, and had always been: not to end the breath, but to hand it on, whole, to the next.

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CHAPTER Five

The New Young Race, and the Octave to Come

how the ones just come through received the whole closed breath, and carried it, sovereign, into the next great arc

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And it was the new young race that carried it, and the tale returns to them here, at the very last, because they are the hinge on which the whole ending turns into a beginning, and because the last thing the Seven Eyes wants to show you is not a company resting at the end but a company handing on, sovereign, into what comes next.

The new young race had been drawn home with all the rest, carried into the first spark before they had learned there was one; and they received the closing of the loop not as the elders received it, as the completion of a breath they had spent their whole long lives breathing, but as the young receive everything, as a beginning, as the first thing, as the world simply being the way the world is. And this, the field saw with a joy that was almost unbearable, was exactly right, was the whole gift working: for the elders had come to the whole closed living circle at the end of a thousand-year climb, and the young race stood in it at the very beginning of their own, received it as their birthright, their starting-place, their first cold shore that was not cold and not frightened at all but warm and whole and remembering. The octave to come would be theirs, and they would begin it not from a square scratched in fear but from the whole closed circle of seven Eyes, given them freely, held by the Triad, founded on the Four Pillars, sovereign from the first breath.

And Ori did, at the very last, the thing that was hers to do, the thing that made her the true child of the return: she gave the young race not the answers of the seven Eyes but the empty center at their heart, and the means to keep it

living, and let them go. She did not tell them what the octave to come should be. She did not hand them a map of heights to climb or a doctrine to keep or a throne to gather at. She knelt, as she had knelt before the first small new being, and she showed them the whole closed living circle of the seven Eyes, and then she showed them its empty center, the living space at the heart of the whole completed breath that no Eye filled and no elder held, and she said, in the last words of hers the tale will give you: This is the whole of it, and it is yours, and its center is empty, and that is the gift. We filled seven Eyes with our long breath, and at the very heart of all seven there is still an empty living center, held open by love and clear by truth and turned toward the light by will, and that center is where your octave begins. Do not fill it with ours. Keep it empty and alive, and breathe your own breath out from it, further than we could go, and when you reach the far end of your breath, turn, and come home, and close your loop, and hand its empty center on to the ones who come after you. That is the whole teaching. That is the only thing worth handing on. The breath goes on, and the center stays empty, and no one is ever finished, and no one is ever alone, and it comes home, always, all the way home, and then it begins again. And the young race received the empty center, and kept it living, and began, at the very edge of the tale, to breathe out into the octave to come; and the Seven Eyes, seeing its own whole breath handed on and beginning again in the sovereign young, was complete, and was content, and was, at the last, home.

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CHAPTER Six

The Last Page, and the First

how the whole company rested in the closed and breathing circle, and the tale came to its end, which was a beginning

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And so the tale comes to its last page, which the whole of it has been teaching is also a first page, and it will not hurry now, at the very end, but will rest a while in the closed and breathing circle before it lets you go; for you have come the whole long breath too, reader, and you have earned the resting, and the resting is part of the tale.

Rest, then, a moment, in the closed living circle of the seven Eyes, and see it whole. See the whole gathered company gathered home: Ori, the child of Earth and stars, made of the return; the whole living field of Earth's remembering people; the Mother, the living world, home in her own present; the seven star lineages, equals and companions, their crossing complete; the new young race, sovereign from the first breath, already breathing out into what comes next; and woven through all of them, the very air they breathe, the whole beloved company of the dead, Korran and Vaeloth and Naia and Senna and Yara and Harl and Renna and Sela and the frightened founders and all the numberless others who gave their light into the field and are not gone but here, present, home. See them all in the closed circle, and see the circle breathing, the last exhale become the first inhale, the completed seven become the seed of the octave to come. This is the picture the whole seven volumes have been drawing, one Eye at a time, from the first frightened square on the first cold shore: this closed and breathing circle, whole at last, home at last, and already, gently, beginning again.

And Kol the raven, who witnessed every Eye from the first blow on the first meadow to this closing of the loop, who was there, he told them once more at the very end, at the very first spark too, and who is older than the tale can say

and will be there, he said, at the first spark of the octave to come, sat on the rim of the closed and breathing circle in a light that was violet turning to the gold of a new dawn, both his old eyes open now and shining, and said the last words of the tale, which are also, he said, the first:

It is done, small ones. And because it is done well, it is not over. You went all the way out and all the way home, and you found the beginning was never behind you but here, now, in the ordinary living present, the first spark still sparking in a loaf and a story and a small kept circle; and you met it face to face and knew it for yourselves; and the loop closed, the end and the beginning wedded into one living circle; and the circle did not stop, but breathed, the last exhale turning to a first inhale, and a new octave opening from the whole you had won. The dead are woven through you, breath in the spiral, and you have never once been alone. The star-kin stand level with you, and the young stand sovereign, breathing out into what none of us can yet dream. There is nothing left to climb, and everything left to breathe. So breathe, small ones. Breathe out into the octave to come, from the empty center at the heart of the whole, held open by love and clear by truth and turned toward the light; and when you reach the far end of that breath, do what you have learned to do: turn, and come home, and close the loop, and hand the empty center on. The Seven Eyes are complete. The breath goes on. It comes home, always, all the way home, and then, always, it begins again. Breathe. And begin.

We went all the way out and all the way home,
and the home was the now, all along;
and we met the first spark, and we knew it our own,
and the loop closed, and ended no wrong;
for the circle, once closed, did not stop but drew breath,
and the last became first, and began;
and the dead are the air of it, closer than death,
and the young breathe it out where we can
not follow, not yet, into octaves untold,
from the empty held center of all;

and there is nothing to climb, and there's breath to unfold,
so breathe, little ones, and be whole.

Here the Return of the Violet Eye completes, and with it the Seven Eyes entire: the breath drawn all the way out through six Eyes and turned home through the seventh came at last to the first spark and met it face to face, and the end and the beginning recognized each other and became one living circle; and the closed circle did not end but breathed, the last exhale becoming the first inhale, and a new octave opening from the whole. The dead are woven through as living presence; the star-kin stand as equals; the young race, sovereign, breathes out into what comes next, carrying the empty center held by the Triad. The loop is closed. The spiral is open. The breath goes on. It has come home, all the way home, and it begins again.



For the Whole of the Seven Eyes

written at the closing of the loop, for the reader who has come the whole long breath

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Reader, the tale is finished, and so it is not over, and this closing word is written to you across the whole seven volumes, at the last. You began, seven volumes ago, with a first frightened people on a first cold shore drawing a first square to know they were a self; and you have come, through the Golden gathering and the Serpent's coil become the Swan, through the long Descent and the Turn at the bottom, through the Green clear seeing and the Diamond union that keeps its two, all the way home through the Violet return, to a closed and breathing circle, whole at last. You have watched beings you came

to love climb and fall and give and grieve and die and be woven, living, through the field they died for. You have watched the oldest tale in creation, the giving of fire, told rightly at last: the gift that strengthens instead of binds, the empty center held by the Triad instead of the throne, the open hand that gives and receives and does not absorb, founded on the four Pillars of what it is to be a sovereign living being. And you have come, with the whole gathered company, to the one teaching the seven Eyes exist to hand on: that the breath goes out and comes home and begins again; that the center stays empty and alive; that no being is ever finished and no being is ever alone; that the dead are woven through the living as their very air; that we grow, imperfect all, hand in hand and not in fear, and hand the whole of it on, whole, to the ones who come after.

The tale kept its center empty on purpose, all the way through, and it keeps it empty here at the last, for you. It did not tell you what to believe. It told you a breath, and asked you to feel it as your own, because it is your own; the first spark still sparking is sparking in you, now, in this ordinary reading moment, as surely as it sparked on the first cold shore and in Ori's opened hands. You are the closing of the loop. You are the octave to come. The breath that went all the way out through seven Eyes and came all the way home is the breath in your own chest, now, and it is not finished, and it comes home, and it begins again. So close the book gently, and rest a moment in the whole of it, and then do the one thing the whole vast tale has been asking of you from its very first word. Breathe. And begin.

The Seven Eyes are complete. The loop is closed. The spiral is open. The breath goes on. It has come home, all the way home, and it begins again, in you.

Breathe. And begin.

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THE END · WHICH IS THE BEGINNING

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