



EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK OF SHADOW

A LiGa pamphlet



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Elsewhen Press

Extracts from the Book of Shadow

First published in Great Britain by Elsewhen Press, 2015
An imprint of Alnpete Limited

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Elsewhen Press, PO Box 757, Dartford, Kent DA2 7TQ
www.elsewhen.co.uk

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This book is a work of fiction. All names, characters, pirates, places, events and mystical creatures are either a product of the author's fertile imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual beasts, events, places, seamen (and women), or people (living, dead or immortal) is purely coincidental.

WHAT IS THE *BOOK OF SHADOW?*

To the people of Pera this is a redundant question, clearly the *Book of Shadow* IS the *Book of Shadow*. To non-Perans that is a less than satisfactory answer – and certainly not very illuminating. But first one must understand Shadow. When they are initially told about both Pera and Shadow, Roland (Father Griffith) and the other two newest Immortals to join LiGa (Catherine Trahan and Bruce Saber) struggle to understand:

“And who is Shadow?” Cat asked.

“Pera’s soul,” Blanca replied promptly.

Cat frowned while Bruce looked merely puzzled. Father Griffith sighed resignedly. Pera’s soul?

“Pera’s soul?” Bruce and Cat both asked.

“Yes,” Blanca replied simply. “Orion will show you, I’m sure. Shadow is Pera’s soul. Her spirit if you prefer.”

Soul? Spirit? Wondered Father Griffith. What is the soul of a land? Perhaps a great leader. A spiritual leader. That would make sense.

“Like the Pope, perhaps,” he ventured tentatively.

“No,” Blanca said. “And yes, if you wish,” she added with an enigmatic smile.

Cat tilted her head to one side. “I see,” she said brightly. “There you go, Roland, this is all very much up your alley... Personally, I’m not sure I want to see *Pera’s soul*. I want a vacation. Is that too much to ask?”

“You *will* want to see Shadow,” Patron said robustly.

Once they are en route to Pera, heading across the Veil on board her pirate ship, Patron takes Roland to a very special room to read *Evening Song*.

“Here,” she declared, pointing to an unassuming wooden case set on a pedestal in the middle of the room, “is Pera’s story.”

Inside the case lay a large leather-bound volume. Upon the cover was the etching of a white crocodile with pinpoint sky-blue eyes.

Patron opened a drawer beneath the case and drew out two pairs of thin gloves. She gave one pair to Father Griffith and donned the other before opening the case and lifting the book out carefully.

“Put the gloves on, and keep them on while you handle the book. Understood?”

Father Griffith nodded and put on the gloves.

Father Griffith waited for her to place the book gently on the desk before him. “Read this,” she said softly.

Patron glanced once at the empty case and left the room, closing the door gently behind her. He was alone with the story of Pera.

Slowly, he opened the cover...

Later, Patron and I introduce them to the *Book of Shadow*.

“The Book of Shadow? What’s that?” Cat asked.

“Have you read Evening Song? All of you? I know Roland has.” Patron gave them each a searching look.

“Yes...” Cat said in a faraway tone, “A sad story about a girl who drowned. Roland drew my attention to the alligator on the cover. It reminded me of our alligators back home,” she added wistfully. “What has a ’gator go to do with Pera?”

“It’s not an alligator,” Patron corrected her indignantly, “Shadow is the Crocodile.”

Confused silence reigned in the library.

“Sorry?” Cat ventured. “*Shadow*? The Crocodile? You appear to be stringing familiar words together without any apparent meaning.”

Father Griffith raised his eyebrows.

Bruce looked at Patron expectantly. “I am accustomed to making sense of the often unfocused and rambling minds of some of my clients, but I confess I find myself baffled by your statement. So? As you were saying, the Crocodile what? And what on earth is the *Book of Shadow*?”

Cat smiled serenely. “Yes, we are all rather at sea, as it were. Pardon the pun.”

“Perhaps I can explain,” Orion interjected. “Patron has a hard time since she’s from Pera, and the Book of Shadow is something she knows in *her bones*. I came to it later in life, like you. Do you mind, Patron?” He looked apologetically at the pirate. Patron told him to get on with it.

“The Book of Shadow is a collection of stories,” Orion continued, raising a hand to quell Patron’s burgeoning protest. “That is what it is. There is no actual *book*. There are stories, poems, songs, sayings... that are all attributed to Shadow. And these are all, including the story of Evening Song – collectively referred to as the Book of Shadow.

“Perans have a hard time explaining it as succinctly as me of course!” He smiled roguishly at Patron, who snorted in response.

“And we have *several* stories from the Book of Shadow in our library.” Patron announced, indicating the rows of books nestling safely behind glass on shelves.

“A pirate who likes to read,” Father Griffith smiled at her.

On the journey Roland develops an especial interest in Patron’s books, so when he reaches Pera he is keen to visit the city’s library. He is soon delighted to be offered a tour by my great friend, and sleet partner, Markiza.

“This way. We will take the stairs.” She led him to a winding marble staircase to the left of the entrance. They climbed one flight to reach the second floor gallery.

“The gallery on this floor is the library,” Markiza explained. “It wraps around the entire floor. You can enter to my left or right,” she continued, pointing to two arches through which Father Griffith caught a glimpse of books... He quickly moved towards the closest arch. The library consisted of what appeared to be an endless row of books stretching from here to eternity. They were lined against the wall and before them were placed several rectangular reading tables.

“There is an index of sorts,” Markiza explained apologetically, pointing to a portion of the wall nearest the archway. “Since many of the books here are part of the Book of Shadow, you may find the index less than satisfactory, I am afraid. Our guests from beyond the Veil seem to find our approach to the Book of Shadow a little, how shall I say? Undisciplined, perhaps?” she said playfully.

“I don’t mind.”

Markiza gave him a roguish smile. “You will find it might try even your patience, my dear, but I will try to make it a little easier for you. For instance, the books from here to the end of this corridor relate to the Three Rivers that comprise the Book of Shadow.”

“Pardon?” Father Griffith asked, at a loss.

“Our whole world is part of the River Traditions, you see. That is just the name given to the loosely interwoven customs, traditions and stories of the lands surrounding the Mighty Rivers, as they are known. Three of those – the Red River, the River of the Sun and Moon, and the Tiger River – comprise the territory covered by the Book of Shadow. It is generally accepted by historians that *Evening Song* originated on the banks of one of the minor tributaries of the Sun and Moon.

“They are descriptive names,” Markiza continued. “The earth along much of the banks of the Red River, which is the shortest of the three and to the east of Pera, is of a reddish hue; hence the name. The Tiger River, even further east, roars like a wild creature. It is an untamed, untamable thing that will destroy any dam or bridge that tries to leash it.

“And the River of the Sun and Moon – the furthest east – is the largest of the three. It is also known as Lifegiver, because it irrigates all the lands it flows through. It is not wild like the Tiger; it is willing to cooperate with the population. They all coexist: the people, animals, the land, and the Sun and Moon. Its name refers to the self-contained universe of Day and Night. Without the River of the Sun and Moon, the land would die, so the River *is* the universe of the people who live there.”

Father Griffith nodded thoughtfully. “I think I have a lot of reading to do.”

“Take your time. I will leave you now. Is that alright?”

“Yes. Thank you.” He walked slowly to the shelves and pulled out a book at random. It was thick and bound in dark leather, and the cover was embossed with the likeness of a white crocodile...

In these shorts extracts from *the **Dark shall do what Light cannot***, I have hopefully given you some insight into the great body of work that makes up the Book of Shadow, as well as a taster of *the **Dark shall do what Light cannot*** itself, which is a cracking read (especially the parts that are about me!).

What follows below is a sample of some of the best-loved and most representative poems, stories and songs from the *Book of Shadow*, carefully selected by Roland.

Orion (Imm.)

EXTRACTS FROM THE *BOOK OF SHADOW*

One cannot start with anything other than *Evening Song* which is so much a part of life in Pera. More than just a song it is the story of Pera itself, but it is also a warning.

EVENING SONG

Now, the Sun grew tired. She grew so sleepy, my brothers and sisters, that keeping her eyes open took enormous effort. She grew so sleepy that she could no longer stand up in the blue sky and she lost her footing. And into the River she fell. Into our River, winding slow, flowing fast. Into our River below. Our River, both Judge and Forgiver, which we guard below.

We remember, they said. We remember how she fell.

Do you remember what happened then, my sisters? My brothers, what about you?

Tell us, they said. We do not remember. Tell us. What happened after the Sun, all shining and gold, fell into our River that we guard below?

As the Sun fell, so the Land was dark. All of a sudden, brothers, all around was black: blacker than the starling's wing, blacker than the Dark One sleeping. The earth, the mountains, the trees, the animals. All was within this darkness complete.

The dark was all, they said, all as one, swirling in the River below. It was all dark. Yes, we remember.

So you should remember; so should you never forget. It is important.

It is important, they murmured, in the swirls of the River.

What of the Land? It is a foolish thing, this Land. It is all rocks and pebbles, and dry mud. It is a foolish thing, an unthinking thing, but it is powerful. It can create landslides and earthquakes, windstorms and hail. It is a panicking thing at times.

When the yellow Sun fell, the Land thought it was blind, my brothers, my sisters. And the black Land cried out in agony and rent his bosom and cried his tears into the River in tides of fear. His cries were the howls of a gale, and his tears fell heavy with the points of a thousand bright blades.

He could not see, they murmured; he could not see his cousins, the mountains and valleys.

No. He could not see the trees; he could not see the birds.

Let us hear my brothers, let us listen sisters, to what the Land declaimed:

Come, O Sun, come forth, golden one.

Yellow Sun – look to my bloody eyes.

I cannot see.

Yellow Sun, feel my tangled hair in the River.

I cannot see.

Where are my cousins, the mountains?

*Where are my sons and daughters?
Where have you taken them, O Sun?
O bloody mistress!
Lady Light.*

*See my dark eyes, golden one,
They have searched for you.
Taste my tears, fickle one,
They have been shed for you.*

*Hear my cries-
They are the howl of the gale and the whisper in the trees.
Hear me, O Sun, give me your white hand; give me your warmth.
Yellow Sun, my golden one-
What would you have of mine?
What have I done?*

*What did he do? They asked. What did the Land do?
You do not remember, my kin?
Tell us, they said all as one. Tell us, we do not remember.
This is what the Land declaimed. Listen brothers, my sisters, listen. It is important.*

*I will give you my beloved daughter, my Cypress.
My brown haired daughter, my rose.
I will give her to you.
Let me see.*

*The Land raised his arms and found his beloved daughter, Cypress, and took her, her long tresses dragging, to the River. She clung to her father and cried.
This, my sisters, is what she said:
O father, light in my eyes, my warmth, my blood-
My father, my tangle-haired father,
Why? What have I done?
I was your rose, your brightness,
It was all lightness.
O father, what have I done?
I cling to you, but I am torn and bloody where your tears have ripped me.
I cling to you while your cries, like a howling gale, seek to fling me.
O father, my tangle-haired father, tell me dearest father,
What have I done?*

*O Cypress, they murmured sadly, swirling in the wild River. Cypress, we remember.
Do not forget, sisters. Remember dear Cypress, brothers. It is important.
Yes, they murmured from the deep, it is important, then as now.
The Land could not hear, or would not hear, my kin, the cries of his beloved daughter. He cast her, our dear Cypress, into the black water as he screamed in rage and agony. His agony was a cyclone and his rage sent a tidal wave across the valleys far and wide. What could Cypress do? She was a small*

EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK OF SHADOW

thing, white and forlorn, dashed from side to side; flung to the depths of the River.

Both Judge and Forgiver, they interrupted.

Yes brothers, the River. And we are its guardians, then as now.

Cypress fought as much as she could, my sisters, but what could she do?

She was a small thing, flung this way and that; her white flesh was torn and rent by her father's fear.

Her breath was snatched by waves and she grew weary. All the while, what was it, do you know, that made her tears flow?

Her father's ire, they said, all as one. Dear Cypress, she did not know.

Cypress sank to the bottom of the River where it was calm and warm, my brothers; you were there.

We were there.

What happened then?

Tell us, they murmured. Where was the Sun?

Oh the Sun, our golden one, weary mother, lay in a cave at the bottom of the River, sleeping.

Did she hear? Did she know? Did she see Cypress, our dear Cypress?

You were there.

Yes. We were there. We awakened her.

What did she say?

We do not remember. Tell us, what did she say?

My forgetful brothers, this is what the Sun declaimed:

You who have called me, what do you want?

I am not ready; I am weary.

I am not ready to join the blue sky.

I am simply not ready.

But you would not leave.

For our Cypress, they said, we could not leave.

And we brought her Cypress, broken and torn, so she would see.

When the Sun saw her, my kin, she felt pity. What did she do? What did she say?

My brothers, this is what she declaimed:

What is this?

This broken thing before me: lost and limp.

Lying in stillness now, floating before me.

She is a sorry thing.

What is this?

What has done this?

The Land, you told her, swirling through the dark waters lit by strands of gold.

The Land cast her in the River in his rage and fear, you explained.

The Land is a panicky thing, but strong.

The Land is a foolish thing.

He fears you are gone.

But I was asleep, she replied, in surprise.

I was asleep; it is a normal thing.

*It is a regular thing that I sleep.
So the Sun thought, brothers, long and deep. In the dark cavern lit by gold,
she contemplated. It was not her time, so she could not go, but knew the other
who would. This, my kin, is what she declaimed from within the cavern of
gold:*

*O brother, my brother, wake up!
My black haired brother, awaken now!
It is your time; awaken now.
I have fallen in the River and the Land is afraid.
My brother, the Land is afraid for he cannot see.
Come, my brother, over land and sea,
Come forth, brother, open your eyes and see.
Little Cypress drowns brother; make haste.
Before the Land, in his blind fear and fury, creates more waste.*

*What do you think, my sisters? Do you think her brother heard her call, my
sisters? Asleep under the stars, he heard his sister. He yawned and stretched
and rubbed his eyes all black.
He rose and listened to his sister far and deep.
He ran, over mountains and hills, through the empty desert, over a black
ocean he flew.*

*When he came, he saw the world in darkness, and heard the groaning agony.
As he walked towards the River and his sister, the Land looked and saw bright
lights overhead flickering into existence. The Land ceased his bloody tears
for he could see the trees and valleys, the mountains and the River by the
muted light of the bright points overhead. When he saw this, the Land spoke,
and this, my brothers, is what he declaimed:*

*What is this above?
What are these points of light?
A thousand pieces of the yellow Sun
Scattered above my children.
Who has broken the Sun in a thousand pieces?
Now I can see my children,
Now I can see.
But my lovely daughter,
Where is she?
And the Land felt remorse, now that he could see a little, for the beloved
daughter he had cast in the River. He called to the dark one who approached,
and this is what he said:
Dark thing, coming forth-
Dark thing, have you seen my daughter?
I cast her in the black waters when I could not see.
She was my little one, my rose, my hazel-eyed daughter, my last-born.
Have you seen my daughter? My Cypress.
The yellow Sun sank into the River and I was blind.
Now you have broken the yellow Sun in a thousand pieces.
Now I can see.*

EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK OF SHADOW

Show me my daughter, Dark One.

Show me my rose, my Cypress.

The Dark One, my brothers, approached the Land, and there was anger in his black eyes, and his dark hair tangled in the wind, remnants of the Land's rage. He spoke thus, my sisters, to the shameful Land with a voice that came from the stars:

You cast your daughter in the River when you could not see.

She is below; she is gone.

You want her back now that you can see.

You are wrong:

I did not break the Sun in a thousand pieces,

She sleeps in the River.

The Dark One knelt by the River and washed his face in the black water and reached below into the darkness. From the depths of the water he pulled fast and strong. As she emerged from the water, limp and pale, he pulled her to the edge of the River. The Land saw his daughter lying without breath, and was filled with shame and despair. The Dark One touched the dead one gently on her forehead and this is what he said:

Rise Cypress, rise from your cold rest.

Rise. You are the River's guest.

As he spoke, Cypress rose slowly from the earth, her legs and feet reaching into the river. She rose and lifted her arms above her head as if to touch the stars, her fingers uncurled and elongated. Her white skin turned dark and smooth. When he saw her, thus changed, the Dark One spoke to her softly:

This is where you will remain, Cypress.

You will not be harmed by the River,

And you will not be harmed by your father, the Land.

Here you will touch the stars and reach deep into the River.

Here you will be safe, little Cypress.

In the arms of the River: both Judge and Forgiver.

By the River she remains my teeming kin, our Cypress, strong and tall. She is our friend, the River's guest.

She is with us now, they murmured. She is safe. What of the Land?

The Dark One turned to the Land, sitting cowed, gazing into the River.

O Land, you have wronged your kin,

You are a foolish thing.

The Land hung his head lower in shame. He could not speak.

O Land, do you have anything to say?

And still the Land could not speak. So the Dark One continued:

I have washed my face in the black waters of the River, O Land,

There is blood in the water.

I have looked deep into the black waters, O Land,

There is blood in the water.

And I took from the water your daughter's tears,

And I took from the water your daughter's fears.

There is black blood in the water

*To remind you of this wrong.
There is blood in my black eyes, Land,
To remind you of this wrong.
I will come every day, Land, when the Sun drops into the River.
Every day:
From the Sun's last light to the black of night.
That is when I will come, O Land,
With blood in my eyes and the night at my back.
I will sing so that you will be warned.
I will sing so your children will know,
And your children's children will know,
That the Sun is not gone; that she sleeps.
And you will call me
Twilight.
Every day, brothers, the Dark One comes with a song and the night at his
back. Every day, sisters, Cypress hears his call and she is never afraid.
And every day, the Land is cowed and afraid at twilight. It is important.
It is important, they murmured. As it was then, it is now.*

Evening Song isn't the only poem that mentions Twilight of course:

*To the east lies Daylight's land:
The domain of the Sun, our Golden One
Where we lay our heads,
Where we make our toil.
Across the bridge, across the Altin bridge,
Lies the western land.
And into the west we go, when our work is done,
We go after Evening Song.
In the west roams the other,
The one they call Daylight's brother.
The one they call Twilight.*

Nor is it the only one to mention Cypress:

*And the Land was glad, my brothers,
My sisters, the Land decorated the world with flowers.
What was it, do you remember, my kin?
My brothers, why was it that the Land, formerly so cold and grave,
Could not keep from smiling?
We remember, they said, in the River below
We remember the days before...
The days before the day...
When the Dark One and his sister
Held equal sway...
For the first time, my sisters
The Sun met her brother
Half way.
What happened then, my brothers,
When Night and Day
Held equal sway?
It was a time of rejoicing, they said,
A time to put aside grudges,
It was a time to pull asunder
Crusted chains and rusted forges.
It was a time of freedom, they said
Swirling in the River below.
And on that day, my sisters, when Night and Day held equal sway,
When the world was awash in flowers
And the Land was laughing all the hours...
Who was it, my brothers,
Who came in the time
When the Sun began her descent,
But before the Dark One's footfall could be felt?
Our Dear One, they murmured,*

*Dearest One...
She stole in
Ever so softly
like the breeze before dawn
She smiled
Oh so sweetly
Like honeysuckle and jasmine, all in one...
What did the Land do, my kin,
When he saw this being,
This gentle thing,
That had arrived
In between?
We remember, they said, in the River below...
We remember how the Land called to her
Saying,
You are my rose, my brightness,
It is all lightness.
My hazel-eyed daughter, my dearest Cypress...*

There is also a heartfelt dialogue with Cypress herself:

THE LAST DAWN THE FIRST DAWN

*I cannot see the Sun
Our golden one!
No, Dear One, you will not see her,
Not today.
She is hidden by clouds
Grey and dark.
I hear the thunder of waves
And the roaring wind
But I do not see the Sun
Our golden one.
Dear One, you will not see her,
Not today.
I weep with fear
I cry in pain
But the Sun?
She is not here; she is gone.
You will not see her,
Dear One.
Today, you will not see the Sun,
But the dark clouds may be your friends
And the towering waves your refuge.
The swirling winds can carry you
And the wild sea can conceal.
But the Sun,
Our golden one?
You do not want to see her.
Not today.
She could not help you.
Not today.
She could neither carry nor conceal
But in her golden glory reveal
And forge for you
A certain grave.
No, you will not see her.
Not today.
The waves are not against you,
Dear One.
The wind does not fight you,
Dear One.
Forget the Sun
Our golden one.
And be grateful
She is gone.*

The interplay between Light and Dark, Day and Night, Daylight and Twilight is a major theme throughout the *Book of Shadow*.

BLACK IS NIGHT
RED IS BLOOD

*When the Sun sleeps in our River
And her golden light is nothing but a glimmer
In a dream.
Then, the Land is wrapped in fear
For her golden embrace grows ever dimmer
As in a dream...*

*Then...
In the black of Night*

He walks.

*From the Sun's last light
All through the Night,*

He walks.

*And his dark eyes see the fear in our hearts
For fear is truth.
Truth.*

*Then...
Red as Night
And black as blood
He knows
He knows that the warmth of the Sun is a comforting mask,
And that her golden light is a beautiful illusion.
He knows
That the truth of fear
Is the truth in our hearts,
And he is not afraid.*

*In the black of Night
In the dead of Night
When blood runs red
He is not afraid.*

*It is important.
It is important, for he is the one
Who is not afraid;*

Who does not fear the Sun's retreat.

*Where he walks
Dare you?*

*In the black of Night
When the Land cowers with fright*

Do you?

It's not all Dark though, the Light features elsewhere:

*There is no comfort in the dark.
There is no forgiveness at the edge of a knife...
There is never recompense for blood.
But the House of Light is a layered place.
It is a space
Of many wrongs and rights.
It is a place
Of all shades of light.
All in the House of Day and Night.
Dwell not too long in the uneasy dark
For you will miss the breaking dawn.
Handle with care the sharpened knife:
It will cut.
Seek not forgiveness for a thing irretrievably lost
You will never find it, and in seeking you will lose your way.
This is the way of things.
It is the way of things
In the House of Light and Dark.*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the delightful light birds, so essential to Pera's existence, put in an appearance:

*To the left and to the right
At the entrance of the Night.
From the light birds flying high
To the guardians in a row...*

*Bright Night
Fire bright*

Night lights blue and white

*And the light birds are swooping low:
A sparkling, dancing glow.
And the light trees are dressed in black
Like the jacket on His back.*

*But the House of Light
Is bright*

*Bright Night
Fire bright*

*And the House of Dark
Is bright*

*Bright Night
Fire bright*

*Hear the singing,
Watch the dance
All Night
Ever bright.*

*You must sing now!
You must dance!
This Night
Ever bright.*

Similarly the rivers at the heart of the land of the *Book of Shadow* are strong and recurring images in the poems. Sometimes as actual rivers and sometimes as allegorical devices.

THE RIVER EBBS; IT FLOWS

*River's ebb
River's flow*

*Is a debt.
First there was toil
In black soil.
As black as the Dark One sleeping,
As black as his dark eyes weeping
Tears of blood.
Tears that felled trees,
Tall, weeping trees
That were rooted in soil black.
Roots that drank blood
And shriveled in pain.
Dry agony
Wept the land in long wails.
Shrill and in vain.
Blisters and boils
Transformed verdant plains
Rooted in soil black.
Black soil
Cracked with hunger,
Wracked with thirst.
And the sun dripped blood,
Hot and searing,
Blistered and boiled
In our hands.
By our hands.*

*River's ebb
River's flow*

*Is a confession.
Of dead soil.
Soil white with toil.
Our toil.
Our soil beneath the soles of our feet
Blistered and burnt
With our toil.*

*River's ebb
River's flow*

*Is a journey.
Heavy with death,
Laden with hunger,*

*And the knowing
Of our land groaning.
Land that was black and green,
With flowers red and blue,
With trees tall and bearing
Fruit.
No more.
A journey to the River:
Judge, but not Forgiver.*

*River's ebb
River's flow*

*Is a reckoning.
In the tides of time
Can there be forgiveness?
In the tides of the River
Can there be forgetting?
Is there recompense?
We ask.
Forever we wonder
Everywhere we wander.
But we are trapped
Within our heart.
Heart, as black and dry as the soil
We left.
A wailing tide of parched grief is our companion.
And our heart is blacker than his dark eyes weeping
Tears of blood.
And our heart is inconsolable
For it is unforgivable.*

*River's ebb
River's flow*

*Is justice.
Final, lasting judgment by the River:
Judge, but not Forgiver.
Justice for the debt
That cannot be paid.
The only debt that can never be repaid.
So we wander,
Forever we wander.
Among rocks and stones
Can be our only home.
The cold stars are our shelter,
And in lifeless clay must we toil.*

Forever.

*River's ebb
River's flow*

Is our penance.

In another poem, this dual purpose is perhaps even clearer.

*My kin, my teeming kin,
Countless as grains of sand.
My brothers and sisters, touched by the Sun's bright hand.
My kin, my teeming kin, know you how you came to be?
No, they said. Tell us how we came to be
It is simple, my brothers,
Sisters, listen to my tale...
One day, our Sun grew sad, my brothers.
Just as she readied to dip into the River, she grew despondent.
And she called out to her brother:
O brother, my dark brother-
I am unhappy, brother,
My black-haired brother, come to me-
And did the Dark One hear her, my sisters?
Yes, he did, he heard his sister.
And he called out to her-
O sister, my golden sister,
What is it, dear sister?
What is it that darkens the smile of the Sun?
This, my kin, is what the Sun declaimed, from her place in the blue sky:
My brother, I am sad, I fear I cannot find my way to the sky.
It is dark when I begin my ascent from the River to the sky, brother.
I fear I will be lost as I climb out of the River, brother.
O sister, dear sister, he smiled.
I have an idea that may help.
The Dark One reached out and gathered a handful of pebbles from the shores
of the Marble Sea
Come, sister, he beckoned
Take my hand; here is a game you should see.
Do you remember the time before you took your seat in the blue sky
How we used to play?
Before you took your place as golden Day,
And I assumed this dark mantle
We used to play.
Yes, I remember, smiled the Sun
I remember how we used to play.
Then let's play,
Said the Dark One, catching her hand as she slipped out of the sky*

*And they flew together across the River
 And they leapt over mountains
 And they danced past windswept plains
 Until they reached a fountain.
 O brother, my dear brother!
 Laughed the Sun, clapping her hands with joy
 You remembered!
 You remembered our favorite place,
 Our favorite toy.
 Dear sister, he said, of course I remember.
 How could I forget?
 The countless times you tricked me by this fountain and got me wet!
 O brother, she shook her head sadly, with regret.
 I am sorry, brother, forgive me, brother,
 To cause you pain was not my intent.
 The Dark One laughed,
 And deep in his black eyes played a mischievous fire.
 Sister dear, he cried,
 Do not fret, do not cry.
 How about we give games another try?
 One that will help you find your way in the sky,
 One that may help me get even yet...
 What is this game? She laughed.
 I am not afraid of you, brother,
 I give you leave to try
 To get even yet...
 So the Dark One took the pebbles he had taken from the beach by the Marble
 Sea
 And he showed them to his sister.
 Sister mine, these pebbles will help you see
 Your way to the sky.
 Now watch me-
 And saying this, the Dark One scattered the pebbles upon a flat rock by the
 fountain.
 Out of these pebbles he fashioned shapes.
 Sister mine, try to copy me-
 How, brother, dear? She asked.
 With your hands, my sister,
 With your hands golden with the light of the Sun.
 But if you cannot-
 If you cannot replicate the shape I made...
 What then, my brother?
 My brother with the red fire in your eyes,
 What will you do?
 Be patient, sister, watch and follow me.
 For once, sister
 Follow me...*

EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK OF SHADOW

*And she tried, my brothers,
My sisters, our Golden One did her best to follow the lead of her dark brother.
O brother, I cannot!
You are too fast, brother! She cried in despair.
Then throw those stones behind you, my sister!
It is easy to repair.
Just throw those shapes behind you.
Just so ...
And she did.
The Sun threw the pebbles she had touched over her shoulder
Into the darkened sky.
And what did she see, my sisters?
What do you think, my brothers?
The Dark One laughed.
His laughter was the song of the Moon as it danced across the black sky...
And what did the Sun see, my brothers?
What did the Golden One see in the black sky?
O brother, my dark-eyed brother,
What are these lights?
What are these points of light in the black sky? She marveled.
They are stars, dear one, he replied.
They will light your way from the River to the sky.
Let us play a little more, he urged...
I am much improved! She cried with delight,
I can follow your nimble fingers in the dark of night.
Yes, sister, you must throw those stones into the River,
For you need them not.
You already know that way.
Throw the stones in the River...
And she did.
So they fell...
Like rain they fell,
Hard and fast, into the River below.
The stones that had been touched by the light of the Sun,
Flickered in the River.
My kin, my teeming kin:
My brothers who are lit by the light of the Sun,
My sisters, who glow like the Golden One,
Now do you know now how you came to be?
Yes, they replied, swirling in the River below.
But the story is not ended, my sparkling brothers.
My sisters, listen...
The Dark One laughed,
And this laugh was the echo of waves that crashed upon a placid shore.
The points above are fixed, sister mine.
For every moment in time, there will be stars that will light your way
From the River to the sky in a direct line...*

*But in the River, he continued,
There are no lines; there are no points...
There are no stars fixed in time...
These points will flicker, and they will shine
But never will they stay still in line.
You must be careful, dear sister:
For your way is lit
From the River to the sky
But the reverse...
Will surely test your wit.
He laughed.*

The Dark One has featured in a number of these poems, with an ambiguous presence. Elsewhere it is much more direct:

*Dark One: the one who is seen,
Dark Thing, wearing your crown of diamonds
Dark Thing, silver and bright
Brighter than Golden Light
Dark One, our savior
Saver of the embattled,
I know one who needs you...
Dark Thing, come forth
Dark One, come forth.*

Other ambiguous characters feature too:

*I am Jaluban
I am the Messenger
I come from Nowhere
But my path is Everywhere
I am the knowing
And in knowing is growing
For I am Jaluban
I am the Nameless One
I am
Everyone*

At times there are stories written in a familiar parable-form:

*I am looking for a map,
Said the Traveller.
Have you one?
I fear I may lose my way
Without a map.
I fear I may have mislaid it already
For I have no map...*

*Listen to that, my brothers!
My sisters, did you ever hear such a thing?*

*The road is a snake, Traveller
It glides past
when you are not looking.
The road is a toad, Traveller
It bounds
From rock
To hill
And back to rock...
If you try to catch it.*

*The road is long, Traveller
It is as long as you make it.*

*But that is no answer,
Cried the Traveller.
That does not answer my question.
I asked you once
And I shall ask again:
Have you a map?
I do not wish to lose my way
Be it snake, or toad or any other play...*

*Your road is hard, Traveller,
It is as you made it*

*Listen: can you find the snake on a map, Traveller?
And the toad, does he hop on your map?*

*I am weary, sighed the Traveller.
There are no toads or snakes on this path,
So, I ask one last time:
A map! A map!
Or you will feel my wrath!*

Your wrath, Traveller, will not help you find your path.

*If you had a thousand maps, Traveller,
Would you see the snake?*

Could you follow the toad?

*This is your map, Traveller:
It takes a snake to know a snake's path,
And a toad to follow another toad...*

*Seek not the snake's path by hopping like a toad, Traveller
And lighten your load to spring with the toad.*

*Leave your doubt and your wrath by the roadside, Traveller,
They will not help you find your path...*

At other times there are hymn-like poems:

HARVEST

All of this, I give to you...
Said the Sun, our golden one.
And we thanked her for her generosity
For her capacity
For her rapacity...

And this I take from you...
Said the Sun, our golden one.
And we bemoaned her callous ways
Her hardest days
Her mildest rays...

But this is yours to keep...
Said the Sun, our golden one.
And we were surprised by her honesty,
By her constant modesty,
By her limitless falsity...

This is yours to keep.
Said the Sun, our golden one.
And we thanked her
And we thanked her...
And we thanked her.

Yet other poems are almost the exact opposite of a hymn:

A DISTANT RIOT:

1. DRUMS

Quiet!
Be still...
Keep time
Take your time

Be still.
In silence
Quiescent, luminescent
Silent.

Be quiet.
Be still.
Listen...

Drums,
My brother.
Those are drums that you hear
Within the silence

Quiescent, luminescent
Silent.

Drums.

Catch your breath,
My brother.
Your heart,
My brother,
Beats.
Beats.
Beats...

Drums.

Be still.
Be quiet.

Listen.

Luminescent, futurescent...
Silent.

In time,
My brother.
Take your time.
There is time...

No!
No?

These drums, sister,
Are closer than you think...
These drums, my sister,
Are louder
And faster
And closer
Than you think...
My sister.

Be still,
Sister.
Listen!

To the drums?
Those drums

Are the drums of war.
Sister.

2. SONG

*It is but a whisper in the leaves
Nothing but a whistling
Circling amongst the lonely reeds...*

Listen...

*To the silence
Of the trees*

Listen...

*To the lingering notes
And twilight tones
These,
These may be the dying throes...*

*Be still.
Be silent. So very silent, and so completely quiet*

*Still...
It is still
Distant
But not so distant as the pale moon
Nor so far as the darkened sky...*

*Be still
While it is still
Possible*

3. POSSIBILITIES

There are choices before you
Perhaps two
Perhaps three.
Perhaps more...

These are called Possibilities,
My brothers and sisters.
These are your choices.

Be still
And listen...

It is important,
My brothers and sisters.
As important as it ever was
As important as it ever will be
It is important
Now.

Choices.

But the drums grow louder!

Yes.
What did you expect,
My brothers?
My sisters,
Surely you are not surprised!

But the drums...are ever closer

Yes.
And still...
Be still.

Still,
You have choices...

These are called Possibilities.

*Tell us.
Quickly, quickly!*

Quietly,
My brothers.

Quietly,
My sisters...

Breathe. Rest yourselves
Under the darkened sky.

It is still
Under the darkened sky.

*There is no time! No time for rest
It is best
For us to fly!*

Flight is one of your choices,
My kin...
But think before you take the leap:
Where will you fly? How high? How far?
Can you outfly the roll of the drums?
Can you?

*What then? We implore you:
Tell us!
What are our choices?
If we are not to fly, must we fight?*

You can fight,
My kin.
It is one of the Possibilities.
If you wish, you can stay and face the roll of drums
But think before you take a stand:
How long will you last? How many of you will be left... at last?

EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK OF SHADOW

And the drums grow ever louder...

Yes.

It is inevitable. As it was then, it is now.

*But why? If it is inevitable, there can be no choices.
Is it then... that you lie?*

Why?

My kin, the present is as inevitable as the darkened sky.

Be still.

Breathe.

Be quiet.

Sleep, if you wish.

Sing, if you want.

But listen...

Do you hear?

In the heart of the quiet

Those drums are but a distant riot.

Not one of us can flee the present,

My kin. It is inevitable.

But the future is ever nascent

Those drums,

My kin,

Those drums of war: Loud and sharp

And full woe.

Those drums that are the harbingers of pain

Like a cold, hard, ceaseless rain.

But my kin, is it only the drums

That can shatter the quiet

With their distant riot?

Their riot

Of ceaseless pain.

An unending rain.

Possibilities,

My kin.

There are choices.

What if...

Those words belong, not to the inevitable present,
But to a future that is evanescent,
Ever nascent

What if...
My brothers,
You were to fashion
A different riot
To shatter the quiet...

What if...
My sisters,
This distant riot
Was exuberant
And not excruciating.

And it was loud...
With song.
Not the gong
Of war.

Be still
Now.
Listen.
Take time. Take your time.
This is the time
To consider

A distant riot

The darkened sky mentioned above is the subject of another poem:

THE DARKENED SKY

Are you afraid, my brothers?

*Yes.
Under the darkened sky*

*You are right.
My sisters, I blame you not.*

*It seems there is no end
To the darkened sky
No end*

*No end
To the reign of Night.*

On this night

The longest night.

*My sisters, have you forgotten the Sun?
Our golden one.*

*Yes.
Under the darkened sky.*

*It is hard to remember...
Her golden eye.
Here, under the darkened sky.*

*But remember, my brothers
My sisters, surely you must recall...*

*Do you see?
Can you hear
The song of the other?
The one they call
the Sun's brother.*

*Yes.
He sings the Song of the Moon.
We hear him
And we rejoice.*

*Good.
Even under the darkened sky?*

*When he sings,
It is even
Under the darkened sky...*

*What does he sing, my sisters?
I would know
What it is that makes you rejoice so*

*Don't you know?
Can't you see
How he has made the stars glow?
And we are dazzled so!
Can't you see*

the trees in perfect black filigree?

*Is that enough, my brothers,
To allay your fears?*

*No.
And there is more...*

*More to fear?
More to fear.
Under the darkened sky
There is much to fear.*

*And there is more...
More?*

*Can you not hear
How the Song of the Moon
Has awakened the heartbeat
And quickened the pulse?*

*Can you not feel
The sudden
Infinitesimal rush?
Upon this, the longest night
Under the darkened sky*

*So?
So.
We rejoice
And we fear.*

*That is the truth
Of the longest night*

Under the darkened sky...

As well as poems there are songs, some intended to be sung unaccompanied:

THE AWAKENING

*It is a melody... at dawn.
It is a song from the Moon.
I know it before I awaken...
For I hear the melody in a dream.
It smells like the morning.
It smells like the dawn...
I hear it this morning.
For
the first time this morning. For the
first time
At dawn. It smells of the Sun. It sings like the Moon.
I gaze into the world
I gaze at your arms... delicate, gentle brown arms...
I know this at dawn...
I know this; I know. The world has awakened.
Smelling of dawn...
Singing like the Moon
Dressed like a star...
Your dress is made of lace
Pink, white and a hint of blue...
A melody of lace
And its song is true...
The world has awakened...
Smelling of dawn.
And your arms are no longer bare
They are
Dressed like a star
And you're singing like the Moon...*

Others traditionally accompanied by the violin and ney:

THE SONG OF FIRST AND LAST

*One morning, my brothers and sisters,
The Sun looked down from the sky.
Dear One, she sighed, from her seat in the blue sky
Dearest One, I can no longer watch you cry!
Day upon day
You weep.
Long after my brother awakens from his sleep.*

*In the dark hours of my brother's keep-
 You weep.
 What is it? Such sadness fades the blossom of a smile upon your cheek.
 I mourn the one who is no more, you replied.
 I mourn the lost voice, you said.
 I mourn the laughter we shared.
 Dear One, she sighed,
 Dearest One, I too have mourned.
 I, too, have shed tears that seemed without end.
 And I know a story that will help you mend.
 How? You asked through the tears.
 Nothing can mend what is broken without beginning or end.
 There is nothing to mend
 When all is broken.
 Dear One, she smiled,
 Dearest One, nothing can be broken without a beginning,
 And that which has a beginning must have an end.
 Listen a little to my tale
 Of the First and Last,
 And the confusion that kept them apart...
 So my brothers and sisters, the Sun began her tale.
 There once was a tree:
 Tall and strong, with branches that leapt heavenward
 And roots that clung fast and deep.
 It bore glossy leaves of emerald green, and berries ruby-red and honey-sweet.
 It was called the First Tree for it was the first tree upon the first hill that the
 Sun met
 When she began her climb from the River where she slept.
 But over time the land grew red.
 Red with the heat of the Sun.
 Dry heat, red heat.
 And the tree longed for water
 But even its roots, fast and deep, could not reach the water.
 Upon this tree flew a bird:
 It was a small bird with a tiny beak
 And by daylight it looked a little bedraggled, a little weak.
 The little bird picked the last of the berries: so juicy and sweet,
 And swallowed it, seed and all, without heed.
 All day long the bird flew,
 Ignored by all for its nondescript, unattractive hue.
 But when the Sun fell into the River,
 And the Dark One rose from his bier,
 So changed was the bird that all marveled to see
 That the sparkle of its wings was brighter than the stars,
 And icy flashes of blue were its tiny eyes.
 For this bird carried within it the seed of light
 That transformed its body, drab by day, to dazzle at night.*

*The little bird eventually grew tired, and flew
Back to the First Tree by morning dew.
Sitting upon the cracked bough of the tree,
The little bird dropped the seed
It had carried...
Dear One, she smiled.
Dearest One, do you know what happened?
What happened to the seed of the First Tree that the little bird had carried?
No, you replied. What happened to the seed
That the little bird carried?
Over time, it grew into a tree, replied the Sun.
A tree behind the one
That had succumbed to the red heat of the Sun.
This tree was short and stocky
And its leaves were not glossy.
Its branches did not reach for the sky,
But its roots dug deeper and firmer into soil that was rocky.
Its berries were not ruby-red, and they were not all that sweet...
And by the light of the Sun it looked a little ordinary.
It was called the Last Tree for it was the last tree that the Sun saw before she
fell into the River.
But wasn't it also the first one she saw? You asked, looking up at the Sun with
eyes red with weeping.
Tears that had dried in the telling.
For the First Tree was gone, you said,
To the red heat of the Sun-
The Last Tree now must be
The First Tree...
Dear One, she smiled.
Dearest One, try not to be impatient.
It is true, the Sun continued,
That the First Tree within had succumbed
To the red heat of the Sun.
But remember, Dear One,
That it still stood, in body, if not in spirit.
It stood before the other,
The one that was short and stocky,
With leaves that were distinctly not glossy.
So when she rose from the River,
The Sun saw the First Tree
But not the other,
And on her return trip, before she dipped back into the River
The Sun saw
The Last Tree and not the other.
And so the First and Last
Were ever apart, Dear One.
Dearest One, the tale is not finished...*

*She smiled.
For when Night held sway across the land,
When my dark brother sprayed stars upon the black mantle of the sky like sand-
The Last Tree dropped one of its berries
To be devoured by tiny creatures that nibbled through its flesh but left the seed-
The tiny seed
That shone as bright as the stars above,
That sparkled like a drop of ice...
For it had been transformed by the bird that carried the seed of light,
Dear One.
Dearest One, it is the way of things.
This is the way of things.
Do not mourn too long,
Try not to weep too deep,
Lest you miss the sparkle of a seed
That grew out of the berry
Of a dying tree.
Dearest One, dry your eyes,
And look to the Last Tree before you sleep.*

Patron told us that she personally heard the following song from Shadow when she was chosen as the Guardian:

THE SONG OF THE GUARDIAN

*You are only one
But you are the Guarding One
You are the only one
The one and only sailing one
We who have chosen you
We who believe in you
We have put our trust in you
So you are the chosen one
The one and only crossing one...*

My final choice, rather apposite as I'm sitting here at my desk on New Year's Day choosing the passages for this selection, is a curious poem with an intriguing title.

2040

*Upon this, the first day of the New Year
When the Sun and her dark brother
Are in perfect, fleeting harmony...*

This day when the world begins anew is known as the True New Year.

*Upon this day,
When Light and Dark
Are in equal play...
A tree has flowered.
Her flowers are white and gold,
Her spear-like leaves silvery-green and bold*

We know her as the olive tree.

*In time, the tree will release her fruit
To fall softly upon the black earth ...*

And in truth,

The seed of the olive is tough. Tooth-cracking tough. So tough, in fact, that it cannot germinate unaided.

*...So, upon the tree will fly a bird.
A little bird: brown and speckled grey, perhaps
With drab wings and an uncertain song... perhaps*

In order to germinate, the seed of the olive needs to be soaked in acidic brine, or...

*When the tiny bird spies the fruit...
So sumptuous, so bittersweet!
It will swoop upon it to feed
And swallow it, complete with seed!*

Pass through the digestive tract of a bird... This is sufficient to crack the hard outer covering of the seed and allow it sprout. But the olive tree that grows from a seed reverts to its wild form. As a result commercial trees are grown, not from seed, but from grafts.

This is the way of things...

So it was then, perhaps thousands of years ago when the olive tree first flourished upon the banks of a river.
And so it is now...

*It is the way of things
My brothers and sisters
So, with all of your manipulations and stratagems
For all your careful planning
And your calculations...
What have you done?
What have you achieved?
The olive tree is still wild at heart
And a small bird is all she needs to grow.*

*My brothers and sisters...
Do you see?
Can you hear
The song of the first blossom of the New Year?*

Worry not. Not anymore.
We have seen into the heart of the olive tree. We saw it with our calculations, you see, for we could not see with the eyes of a small bird. We had to plan and strategize, you see, for we cannot swoop gracefully like the speckled bird.

But we did see. We see, now.
That is why we celebrate the True New Year now.
We join in when we hear the song of the first blossom now
We smile in the knowledge that the olive tree is our sister, for we too, are wild at heart,

Now

I hope you have enjoyed this selection from the *Book of Shadow*. We have barely scratched the surface, but it has hopefully given you a flavour of the breadth and depth of Peran culture. Perhaps you can also understand why many of LiGa's immortals choose to live here.

Roland Griffith, S.J. (Imm.)

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LiGa™

Sanem Ozdural

Welcome.

You are hereby invited to compete in a tournament of LifeGame™ Bridge (“LiGa™ Bridge”). LiGa™ Bridge is a tournament of duplicate individual bridge in which eight players gamble with, and for, a portion of their lives.

Yes, it is possible to gamble with life! We have the technology.

You will be gambling with a portion of your remaining life to win a portion of the other players’ lives. Each player will wager one third of his/her remaining life per game, as measured by Life Points, to win one quarter of the total Life Points deposited by the losing four players. The losers’ remaining lives will be shortened by one third.

The tournament ends when one – or more – of the players reaches 100 Life Points, the point at which the age-related degeneration of the human body ceases completely, irreversibly, and indefinitely. This does not mean you cannot be killed, only that you will not age.

If you wish to enter the tournament you must submit a non-refundable entrance fee of \$10,000,000.00.

Xavier Redd (Imm.)

Have YOU had your invitation yet?

Literary science fiction, LiGa™ tells of a game in which the players are, literally, gambling with their lives. Sanem Ozdural’s debut novel is set in a near-future where a secretive organisation has developed technology to transfer the regenerative power of a body’s cells from one person to another, conferring extended or even indefinite life expectancy. As a means of controlling who benefits from the technology, access is obtained by winning a tournament of chess or bridge to which only a select few are invited. At its core, the game is a test of a person’s integrity, ability and resilience.

The fantastic nature of the game’s technology is made credible by the familiarity of the contemporary setting, giving the story a definite slipstream feel. Sanem’s novel provides a fascinating insight into the motivation both of those characters who win and thus have the possibility of virtual immortality and of those who will effectively lose some of their life expectancy.

Book I in the LiGa series

ISBN: 9781908168160 (epub, kindle)

ISBN: 9781908168061 (400pp paperback)

Visit bit.ly/BookLiGa

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THE DARK SHALL DO WHAT LIGHT CANNOT SANEM OZDURAL

Six months after winning their LiGa Bridge tournament, the new immortals are invited back to LiGa's US headquarters outside Princeton. Meeting once again with Xavier, Peter and Blanca, they are introduced to LiGa's head of security, an enigmatic man called Orion (Imm.). Offered a trip to a mysterious place called Pera to help them develop and understand their new immortal status and certain abilities that go along with it, they meet Patron. A pirate, of sorts, she is the only one who can navigate a ship to Pera, a journey which requires passing beyond the Light Veil to the other side of reality.

As we journey with them we find out more about the organisation behind LiGa, some of the other immortals and, most surprising of all perhaps, we meet the being that is, and always has been, known as Shadow – best described as the Soul of Pera. Along the way they, and we, are told a little of the history, culture and mythology of Pera. There are light trees that eat sunlight and bear fruit that, in turn, lights up and energises (literally) the community of Pera. There are light birds that glitter in the night because they have eaten the seed of the lightberry. The House of Light and Dark, which is the domain of the Sun and her brother, Twilight, welcomes all creatures living in Pera. But in the midst of all the glitter, laughter and songs, it must be remembered that the lightberry is poisonous to the non-Pera born, and the Land is afraid when the Sun retreats, for it is then that Twilight walks the streets...

Book II in the LiGa series

ISBN: 9781908168740 (epub, kindle)

ISBN: 9781908168641 (480pp paperback)

Visit bit.ly/Darkshalldo

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sanem Ozdural was born in Ankara, Turkey in the 70s, and spent her childhood from age seven onwards in England. Happy days at a quintessentially British boarding school in Surrey helped forge her character and tastes, not to mention lasting friendships. Making her way to the U.S. she studied economics at Princeton University. After graduating from Boston University School of Law, she moved to New Orleans where she practiced as a prosecutor and civil litigator, and spent seven wonderful years living in the French Quarter.

In 2004 she migrated from New Orleans via Washington, D.C., reaching New York City in 2006, where she lived and practiced law until 2013. She is now teaching business law at Koç University in Istanbul. Sanem was an avid bridge player until the tenth round of revisions to her debut novel *LiGa*TM. She is now thoroughly enjoying an indefinite bridge sabbatical, and imagining all sorts of stories that feature absolutely no bridge or chess.

LiGa™

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