

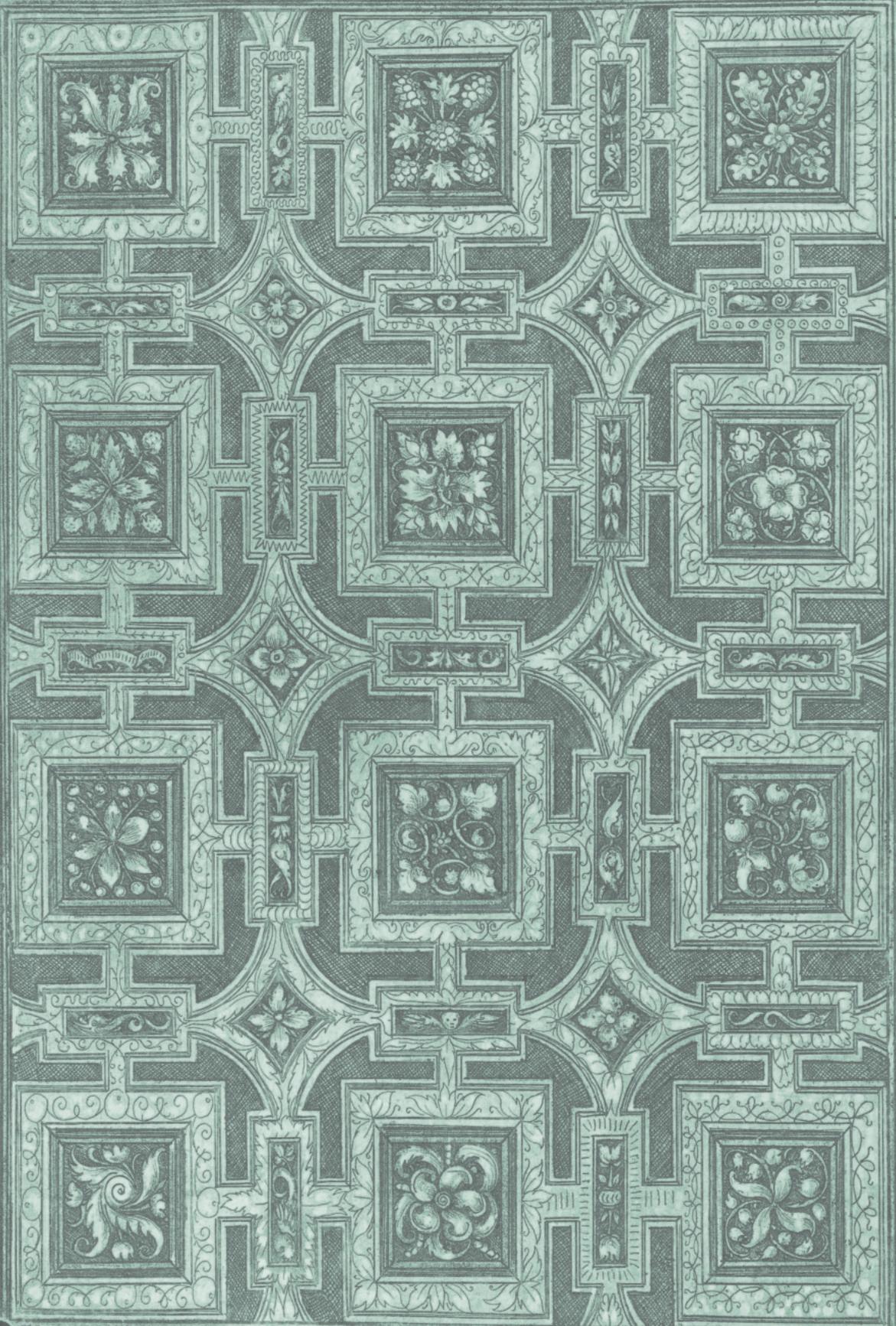
# ALCHEMY WORKBOOK

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JOURNEY INTO YOUR NEXT

PAULA GREEN

KELLY KIENZLE



# ALCHEMY WORKBOOK

## JOURNEY INTO YOUR NEXT

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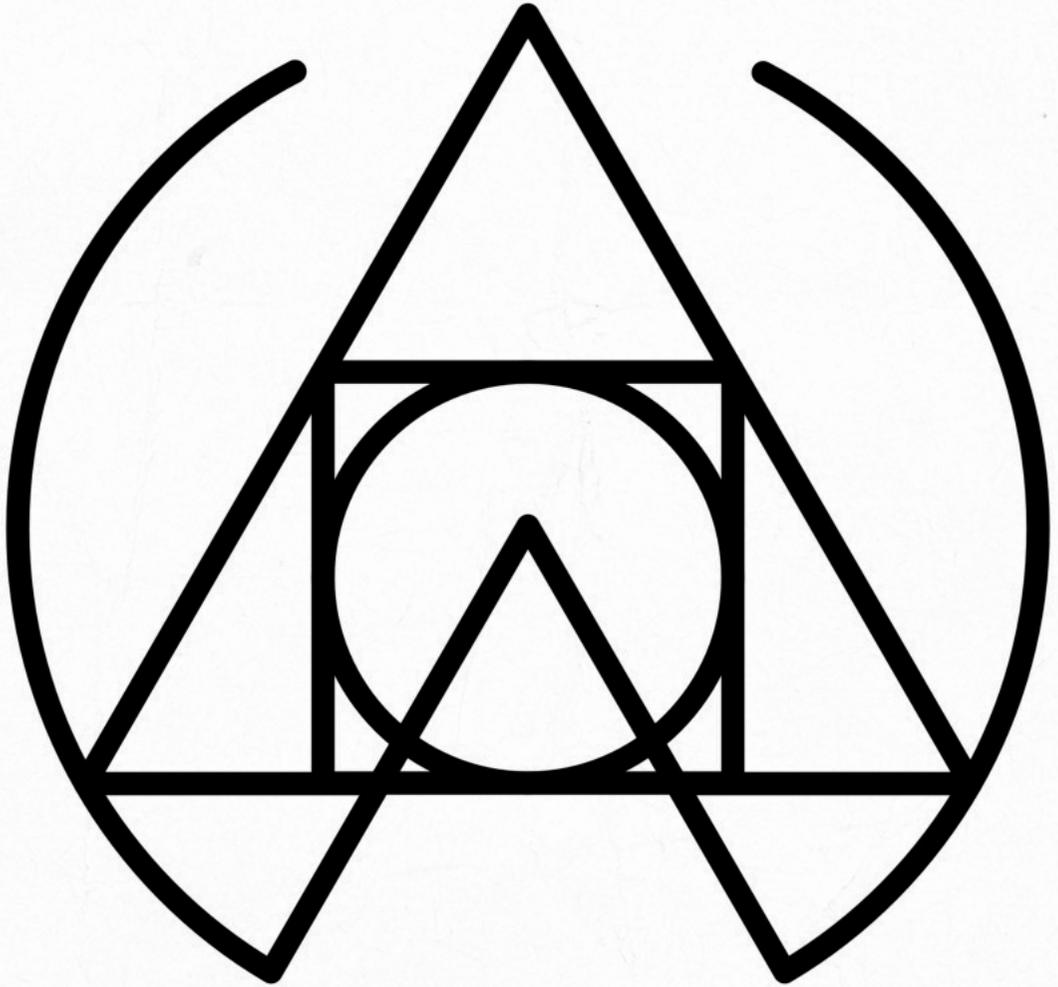
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## V. SUNRISE PEAK

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*This book has no  
answers ...*

*yet.*



# 0. ORIENTING

# WELCOME TO YOUR JOURNEY

You are holding this book for a reason. Maybe you seek adventure. Maybe you hear a distant calling, an inkling of somewhere new, or a clear vision without a clear path. Or maybe the symbol on the cover drew you in.

No matter what led you here, this book invites you on a journey to discover answers, in your own way and with your own wisdom. You already know this book has no answers, yet you turned the page. And so your journey has already begun.

## DEFINING YOUR X

This workbook will guide you on your journey to your next. Your next what? Whatever you want to learn or create next. The first Experience will guide you to setting this destination. For now, here are a few kinds of questions to consider:

- What do I want to make next?
- How could I design my next phase of life?
- What next role do I want to perform?
- What is my next life philosophy?
- What next era of creativity could I enter?

Your X will orient your alchemy journey, charting the course to that next. As you travel with this workbook, you may encounter new ways of thinking or side ventures that expand your initial vision. Feel free to change your destination as you go – your X can be as flexible as you want it to be.

## TAPPING INTO YOUR ALCHEMY

This workbook holds one central belief: you already carry all of the answers you seek. The Experiences herein will guide you to access and transmute your knowledge into a clearer understanding of your X and how to achieve it.

Medieval alchemists pursued the transmutation of base metals into gold, following a process of four stages – nigredo, albedo, cirtinitas, and rubedo. Perhaps they succeeded and kept the riches to themselves. Or maybe it was more about the journey, the attempt of the impossible. Either way, alchemists left a legacy of modern chemistry and spiritual alchemy, or the journey to spiritual deepening and awakening.

*Alchemy Workbook* picks up this inner adventure. This journey unfolds across five phases, shepherding you toward your X.

# THE 5 PHASES OF YOUR JOURNEY

*Alchemy Workbook* moves through five phases, each with a set of five interactive activities. You will begin with *Star Dreams*. In this first phase, the Experiences will help you define your X and get ready for the adventure. Then you will enter the *Forest of Shadows*, where you will look at the darkness between you and your X. Then you will cross the *Burning Desert*, where you will let go of that which weighs you down on the journey. The *Ocean of Treasures* then invites you to soak in the gifts that surround you. Finally, you will summit *Sunrise Peak*, where your journey will alchemize you toward your X.

## AN OVERVIEW OF EXPERIENCES

We recommend you do two or more Experiences from each phase, diving into the ones that call to you. Each phase includes a Capstone Experience at the end designed to crystallize what you learned in that phase by engaging your physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional sides. Because they will help you transition to the next phase, try to do each of the Capstone Experiences. Beyond those guidelines, do any or all of the Experiences. And maybe you save or repeat some for your next alchemy journey!

## SYMBOLS FOR YOUR JOURNEY

Each Experience includes symbols that indicate the elements infused in the activity. These symbols include:



Earth – Grounded in the body and physical world



Water – Floating in the emotional world of feeling



Fire – Alight in the mental realm of thought and perspective



Air – Aloft in the ethereal spiritual world

As you consider which Experiences to do in each phase, consider selecting a collection of Experiences with a variety of these symbols.

## AND AWAY WE GO

*Alchemy Workbook* is filled with the teachings, traditions, and wisdom of other artists, eras, and cultures. We wish to acknowledge their contributions and hope we have honored their voices.

Onward to your alchemy journey!

# THE MAP

## 0. Orienting

This part of the map represents the beginning of your journey.

## I. Star Dreams

This part of the map highlights the stars that guide your dreams. The outer arched lines of the map represent the vast possibilities within your reach, with one star ready to be pulled down into your realm as your X.

## II. Forest of Shadows

This triangular part of the map represents the trees in a dark woods where you will reframe your fears.

## III. Burning Desert

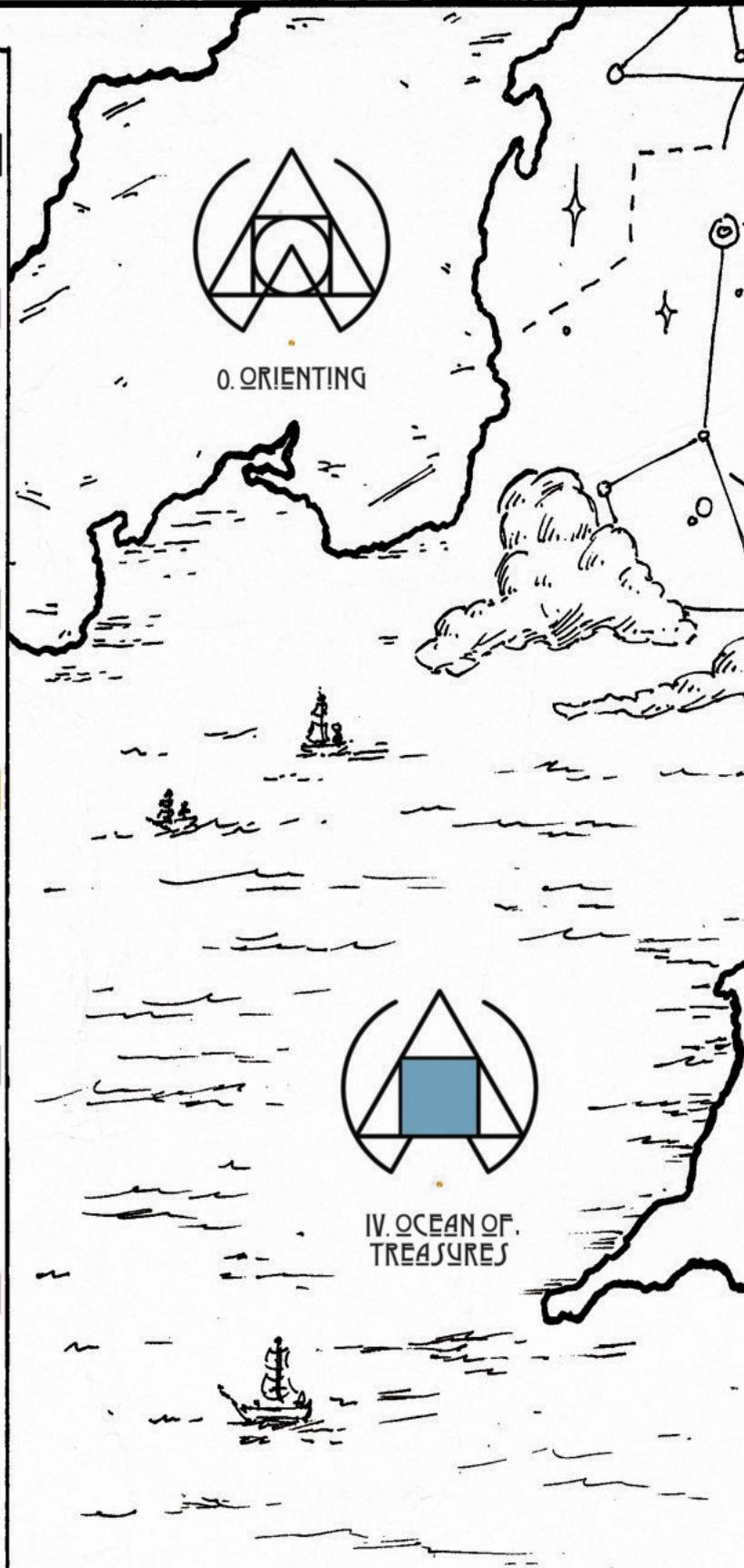
This part of the journey is represented by the circle, signifying the endlessness of the desert as you seek to find your way. And as you wander you will burn away anything you no longer need.

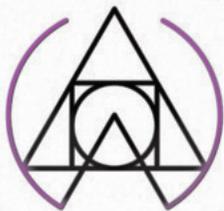
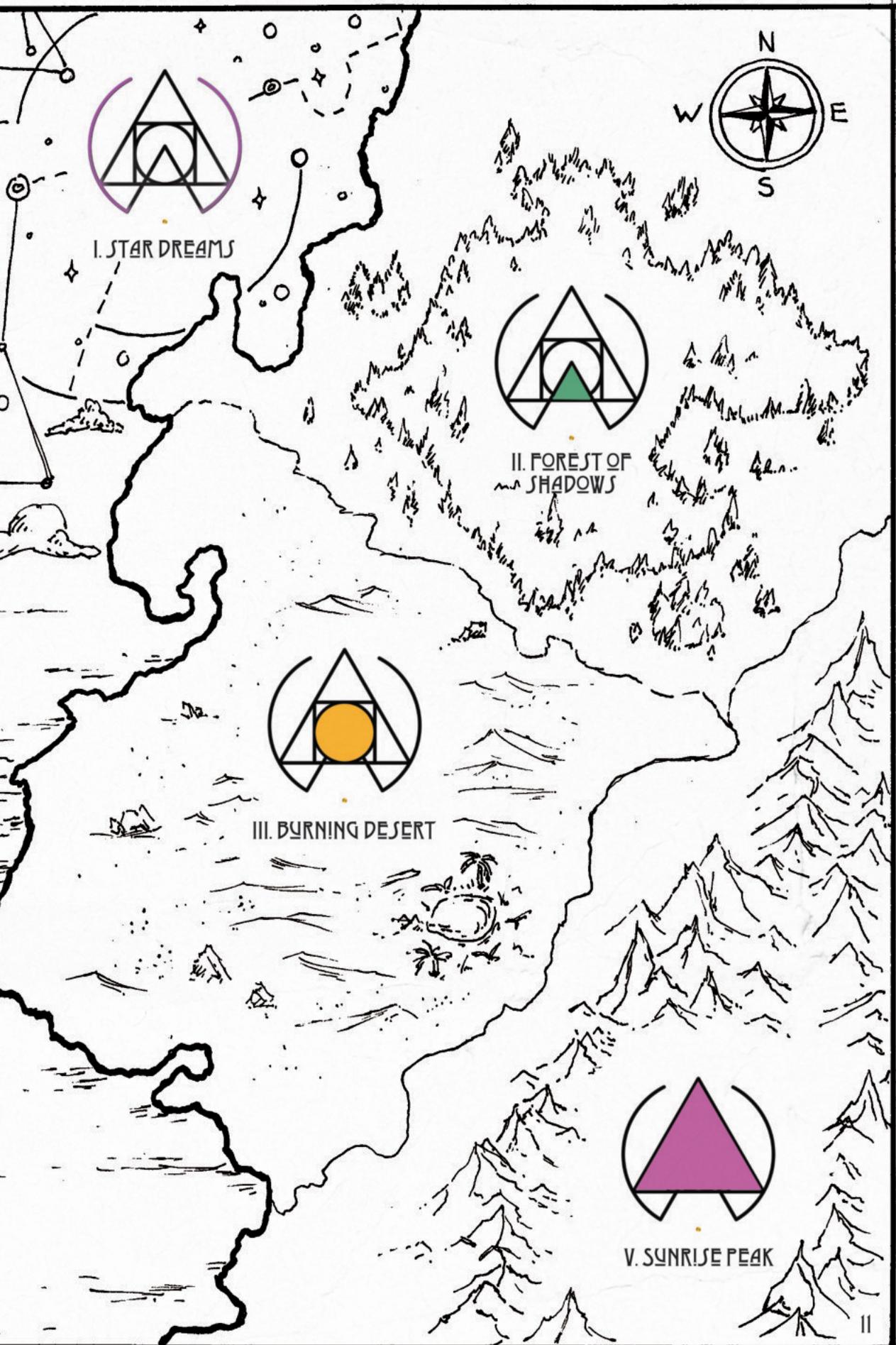
## IV. Ocean of Treasures

This phase is represented by the square, symbolizing the vastness and tangibility of the ocean, where you can be immersed in treasure.

## V. Sunrise Peak

This part of the journey is represented by the larger triangle, symbolizing growth and the ascent. The apex of this triangle reaches towards the outer arches, where you first began your journey. And you are now ready to pull down your next dream from the stars above you, as indicated once again by those outer arches.





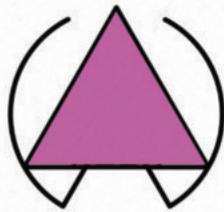
I. STAR DREAMS



II. FOREST OF SHADOWS



III. BURNING DESERT



V. SUNRISE PEAK

*A long, slow inhale. You tilt your head high to a sky so dark, it feels like it anchors in your bones. You blink, eyes closing slow and soft. You exhale as your eyes adjust to the night. Tiny lights of distant stars give way to swirling galaxies. Your heartbeat slows, letting the constellations sink through your skin, alighting with your innerverse.*

*The little lights within come alive, vibrating with the night sky so you are not sure where you end and the stardust begins. Anything feels possible. You close your eyes again, but the weaving of stars within and without continues. And so you relax into dreams. Which one will you pull from the sky?*



# I. STAR DREAMS

# PHASE ONE

# STAR DREAMS

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## PHASE OVERVIEW

This phase of your alchemy journey will guide you to gaze into the galaxies to catch your dream as if pulling a star from the sky. This dream will then direct your journey, the pages of this book helping you chart the path. Right now, your dream still hangs in the night, perhaps lost in dark matter or the haze of cosmic dust. So embarking on the trek may feel impossible. How, after all, do you start a metaphysical trip to a dream?

## QUESTIONS YOU WILL EXPLORE

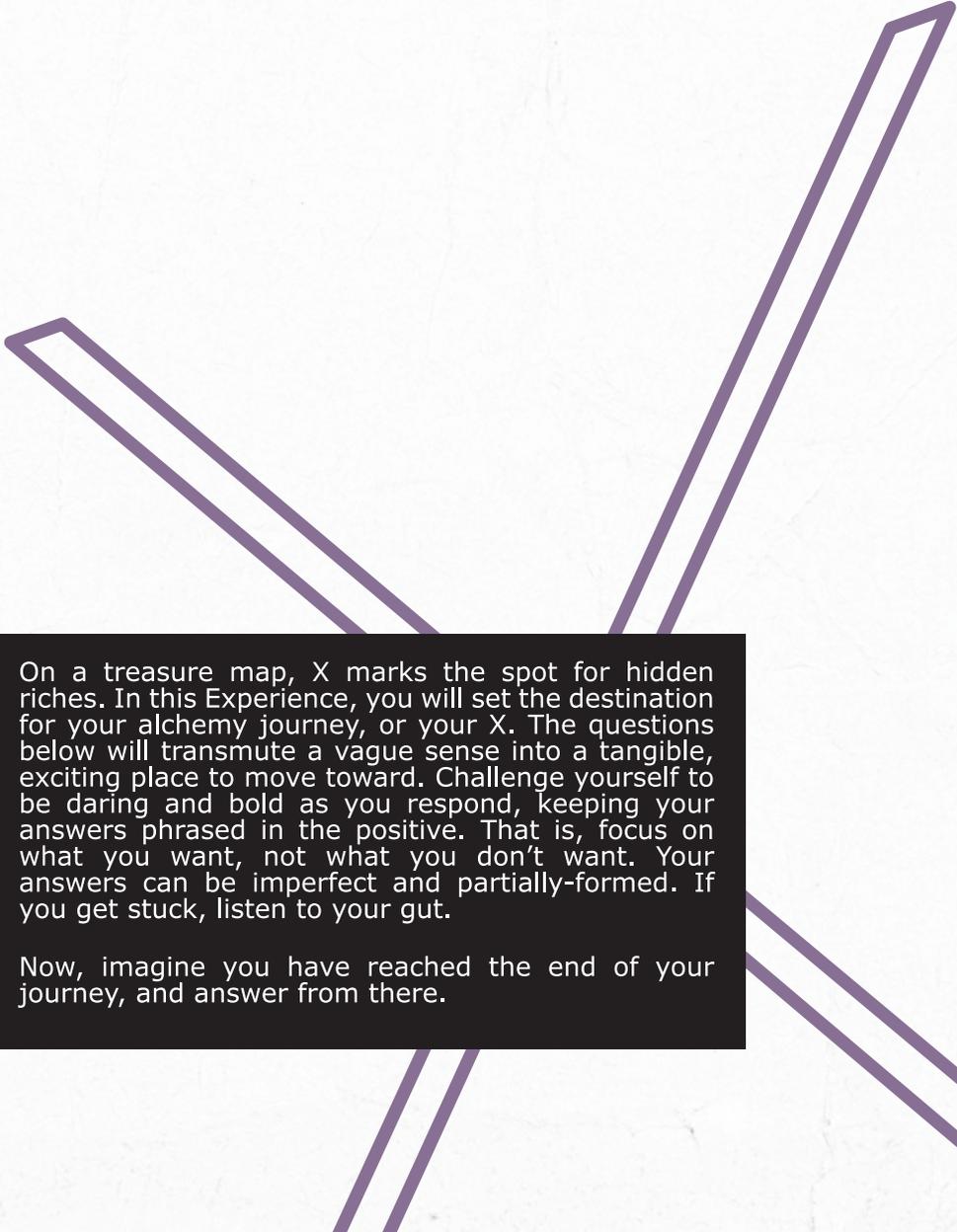
- Where will your journey lead?
- What do you bring to this adventure?
- What guiding forces will help you along the way?

## EXPERIENCES IN THIS PHASE

*Star Dreams* begins with *X Marks the Spot*, perhaps the most important Experience in the book, as doing it and doing it first will set the destination of your alchemy journey, also known as your X. Then *Art as Offering* will guide you to step back and consider the bigger purpose of your X. *3-2-1* will take you deeper into your inniverse to consider how your X is something you and only you can offer your world. *Make Your Blessings Count* will infuse your journey with the riches you bring with you. The *Star Dreams* phase culminates with *Compass of Meaning*, in which you will create a tool to orient you as you adventure.

Let's plot the coordinates of your dream.

# X MARKS THE SPOT



On a treasure map, X marks the spot for hidden riches. In this Experience, you will set the destination for your alchemy journey, or your X. The questions below will transmute a vague sense into a tangible, exciting place to move toward. Challenge yourself to be daring and bold as you respond, keeping your answers phrased in the positive. That is, focus on what you want, not what you don't want. Your answers can be imperfect and partially-formed. If you get stuck, listen to your gut.

Now, imagine you have reached the end of your journey, and answer from there.

## QUESTIONS

What parts of your life do you want to have questioned? What assumptions do you want to have examined? What old beliefs do you want to have interrogated?

## THOUGHTS

What do you want to have understood? What complexity do you want to have unraveled?

## SURROUNDINGS

What does this inner or outer place look like? What makes this place delightful?

## ACTIONS

What do you want to have achieved? What are the boldest steps you can imagine taking?

## DISTILLING

Look back across your answers and star what is most important to you. Capture your starred ideas in a few bullet points.

Now distill it down to a sentence:

And finally a few words:

This is your X.

Grab your phone and record yourself saying your X. Or write it down somewhere you will see it. As you hear or read it several times, notice the power it holds. Feel how it sits in you.

Your X may evolve as you go through the journey in the following pages. That's okay. Feel free to return to this Experience whenever you wish.



# ART AS OFFERING



In Bali, intricate bouquet offerings are made each morning and left out for the gods. Green petals face north for Vishnu, white petals east for Iswara, red to the south for Brahma, and yellow for Mahaveda in the west. Four flowers are placed on top for sincere love, with money or candy added to distract evil spirits. In addition to these arrangements, art and actions are also seen as offerings, so that everyday life is infused with creativity and grace.

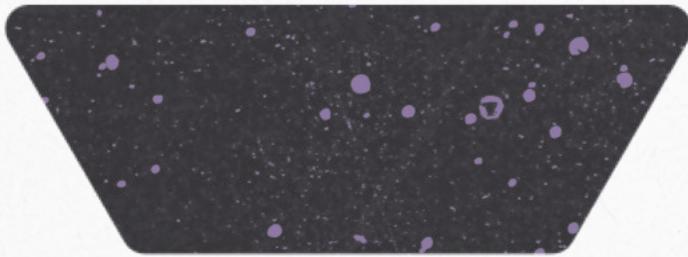
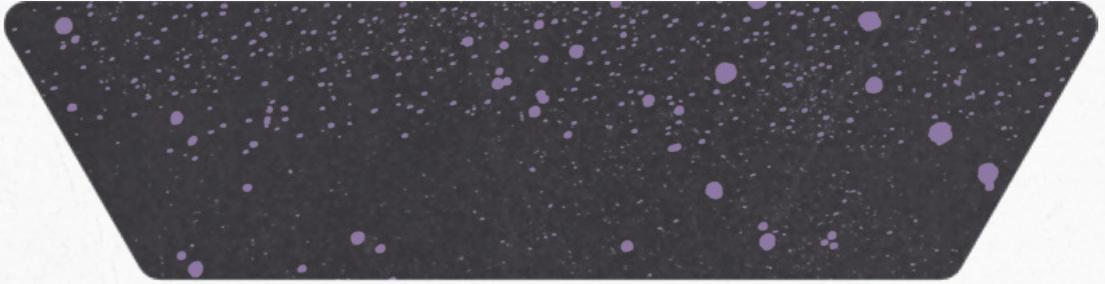
Consider your X. How is it an offering? To whom or to what?

Draw, paint, or write your reflections below. Or sculpt, collage, or take photos outside these pages. Your art will serve as a reminder for you. After completing this journey, you can put your art out into the world, perhaps in a place meaningful to you.





# 3-2-1 ▽△△



In the first two Experiences, you identified your X and your why. This Experience takes you within, tapping into who you are to help you travel.

### 3

Imagine you are set to enter life anew, restarting your current life or moving into another one. If you could keep any *three traits* about yourself in this next incarnation, which would you choose?

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### 2

Consider your agonies and ecstasies. What are the *two main lessons* you believe you are called to learn in this lifetime?

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### 1

On this *one alchemy journey*, how might these traits and lessons expand your X?

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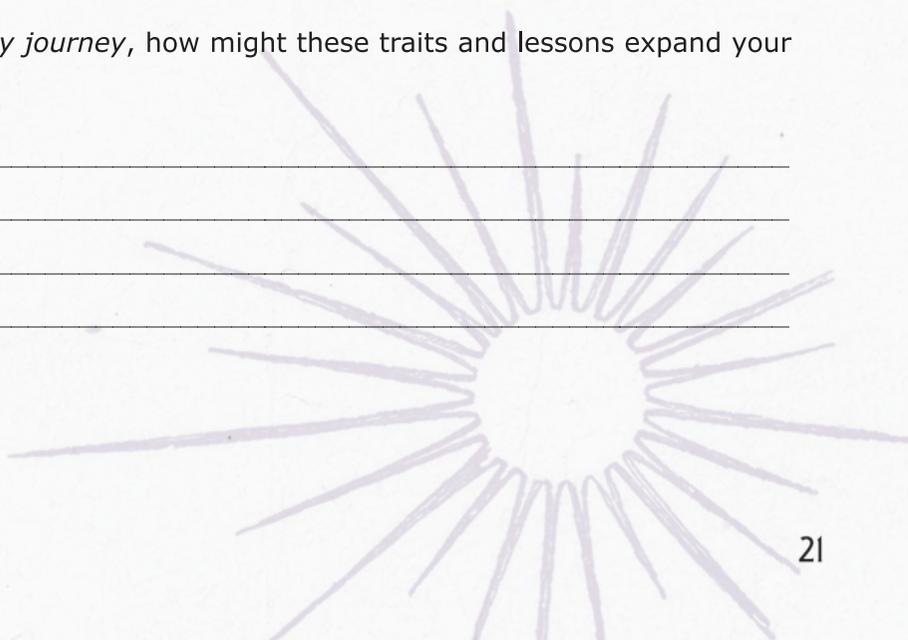
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# MAKE YOUR BLESSINGS COUNT



In the hustle of daily life and the tragedy of darker moments, sometimes blessings go unnoticed. This Experience will guide you to see previously ignored gifts in a new light.

Consider a recent time when you navigated a challenging situation. What helped you prevail?

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Are there other blessings, strengths, or resources in the same constellation as what helped you during that time?

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Which of these blessings have been under-appreciated? How could that blessing help you in this journey?

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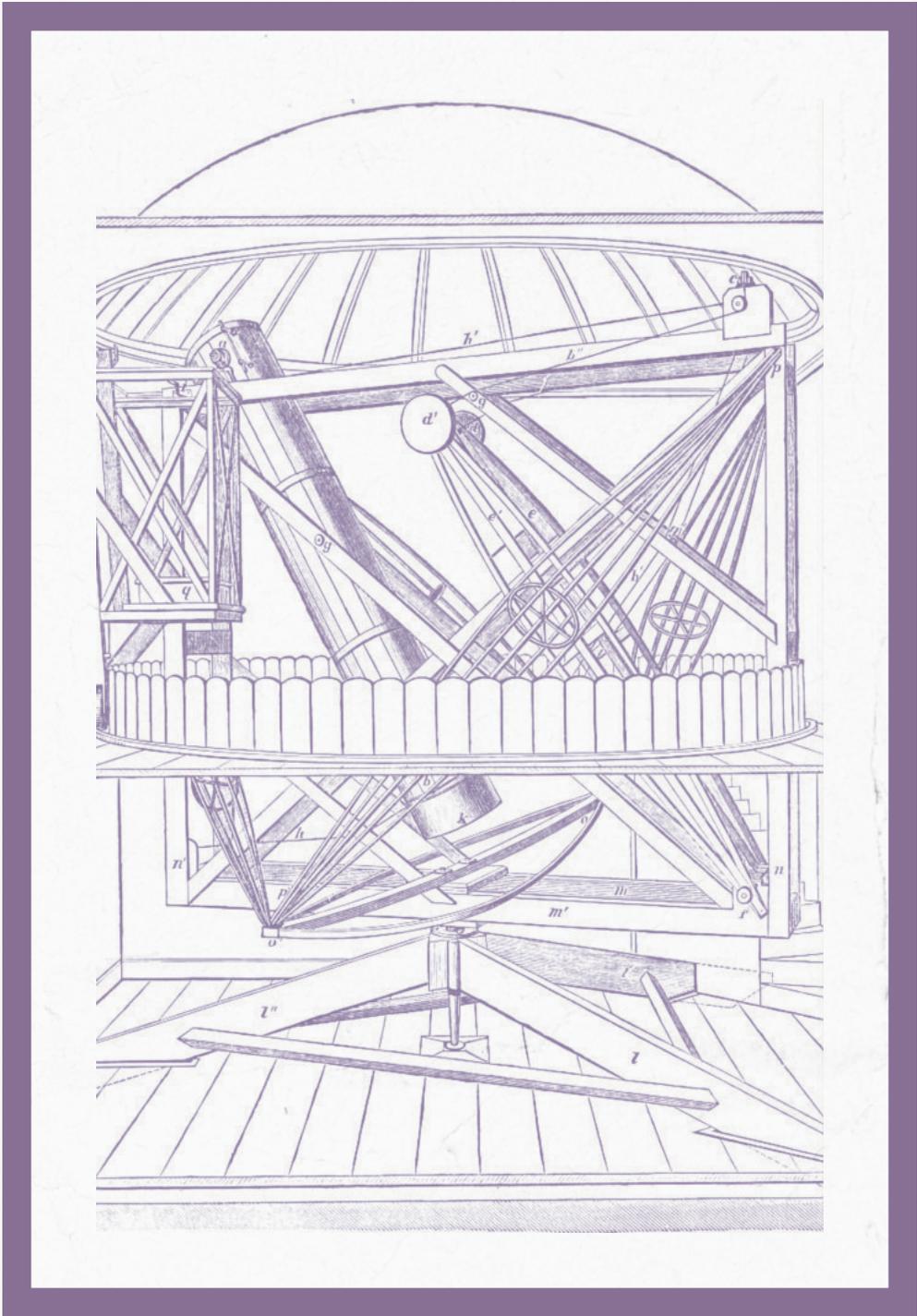
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Consider how not using this blessing could be a loss.

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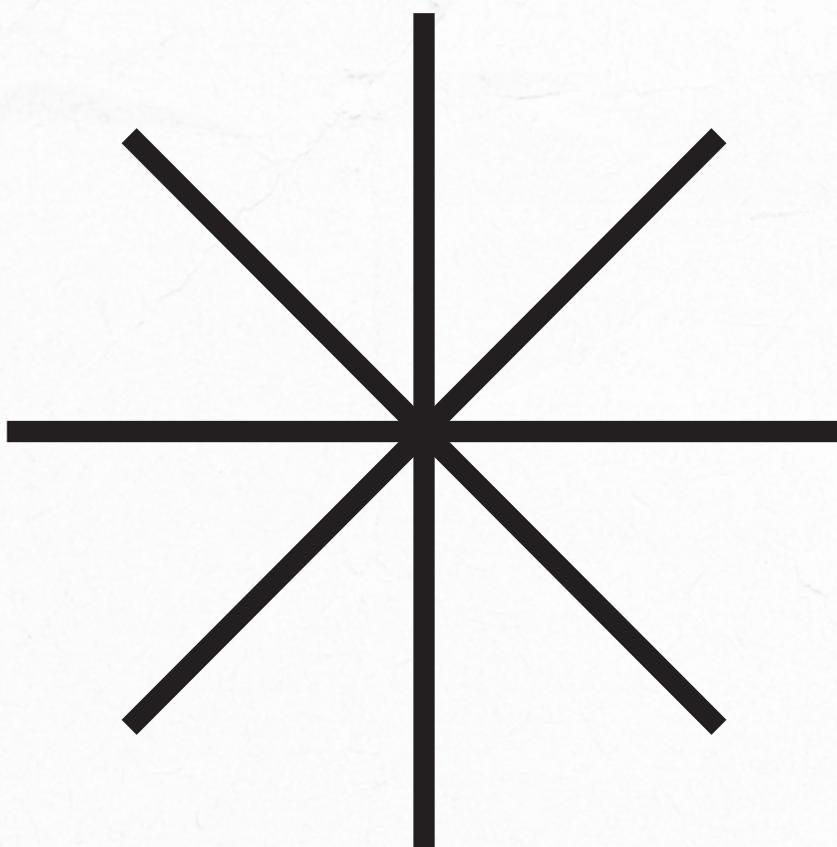
# CAPSTONE

## COMPASS OF MEANING





Finally, move these guideposts to your compass by writing the word or drawing a symbol for each below.



As you travel through your alchemy process, you may feel lost at times. When you do, return to your compass to reorient toward your X.

*X marks the spot and you are on your way. But your X is not just a destination, it is an offering.*

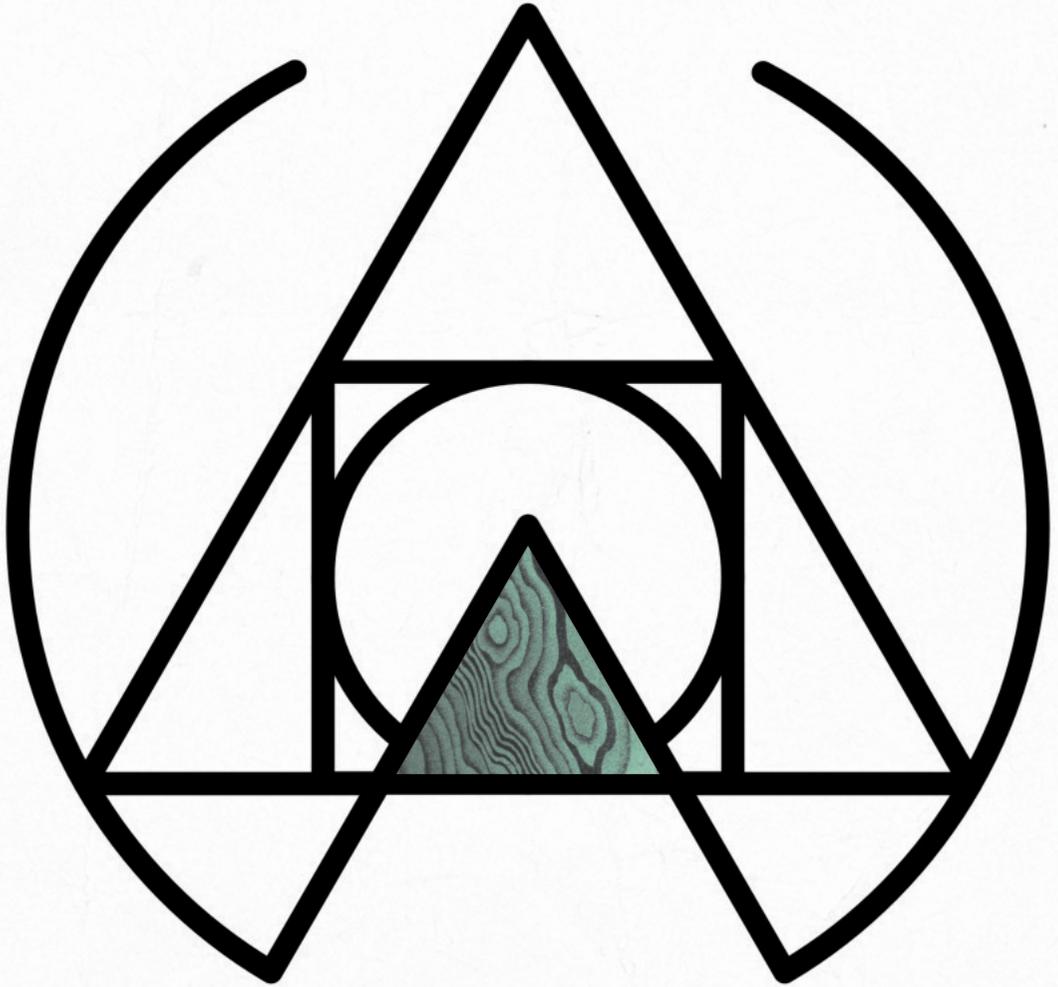
*And you are not a casual tourist, you are a wayfarer – aware of your strengths and lessons, dreams and blessings. In your hand is a Compass of Meaning, so you will never get lost, even as you stumble and fumble and fall. Because the journey ahead will be perilous in moments, breathtaking in others. And you will always find your way, dreamer.*

*A soft light, diffused through thick trees, beckons you from your dreams. Starry-eyed, you set off into the Forest of Shadows.*

*The stars in your eyes turn to stardust and then sleep. A sweet sleep that you do not want to end. You keep your eyes closed for a moment, worried it was all just a dream. But you feel your X in your heart and your compass in your hand. So you open your eyes to find yourself in front of a deep, secretive thicket. You peer inside but see only darkness, the trees creating a collective night in their realm. A rush of sound escapes from inside, so lush it feels like silence.*

*You take a slow breath in. The air is somehow both ancient and clean, as wise as the pines and redwoods, hickories and oaks, and as new as the soft falling rain. In that inhale, you know that inside this forbidden forest, you will find hidden parts of you.*

*A slow, trembling creak pulls your eyes up to see the trees beckon, their branches reaching toward you. Mist spills out from an opening, inviting you into this realm of mystery and darkness. Dare you enter the Forest of Shadows?*



## II. FOREST OF SHADOWS

# PHASE TWO

## FOREST OF SHADOWS

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As you explore the *Forest of Shadows*, you will encounter many mysteries. These puzzles will bring you both answers and more questions, helping you distill your dark stories into *prima materia*, the base ingredients of alchemy and of your journey.

### QUESTIONS YOU WILL EXPLORE

- Does your X have a dark side?
- What obstacles might you encounter on this journey?
- What beliefs hinder your trek?

### FOREST OF SHADOWS EXPERIENCES

To begin, you will curate a playlist for your alchemy journey, with *Soundtracking Your Trek*. *Fool's Gold* will guide you to consider and reclaim ulterior motivations for your X. You will then be led through a *Fear and Awe* meditation to transmute fear into awe. In *If a Tree Falls In the Woods*, you will consider the anxieties and hopes you have for how others might receive your X. Your journey through the forest ends with *Entering Your Story Cave*, where you will excavate the stories that no longer serve you.

And so we tread, with gentle footsteps and a strong call, into the *Forest of Shadows*.

*"Wander away into the  
unknown depths of the  
world and let your soul  
be your guide"*

*-Rumi*

# SOUNDTRACKING YOUR TREK



In the middle of 1977, the spaceship *Voyager* released a recording into the cosmos on a gold-plated copper record. Curated to represent civilizations of the world, “The Sounds of the Earth” includes a Navajo night chant, a Peruvian wedding song, a Beethoven string quartet composition, a Senegalese percussion performance, and a Chuck Berry track. The scientists sent the message as a way of describing who we are in a key universal language: music.

Every protagonist needs a playlist describing themselves. Curating this set of tracks will not only give you tunes for your journey, but it will also invite you to reflect on where you have been, where you are, where you are going, and what you need to get there.

Using the music app of your choice, create a playlist of 12 songs:

3 Songs for Your Past:

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3 Songs for You Now:

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3 Songs for Whom You Are Becoming:

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3 Songs that Bring Magic, Power, or Other Feelings You Want as You Voyage:

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Take your playlist out in the world by sitting outside, going for a walk, or moving around an indoor space. As you listen, consider how this music powers your journey toward your X.







# FOOL'S GOLD

In the *Star Dreams* phase, you explored your X as an offering. This Experience will help you sift the true gold from the fool's gold by looking at other motivations.

Are there any other reasons you are seeking your X that you would be more hesitant to acknowledge (e.g., money, fame, revenge, etc.)?

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If you consider these shadow reasons alongside your offering, is there enough space for both to exist? How might they exist side-by-side?

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When seen in the glow of your true intention, do your shadow reasons change?

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When seen from these shadows, how, if at all, does your X change?

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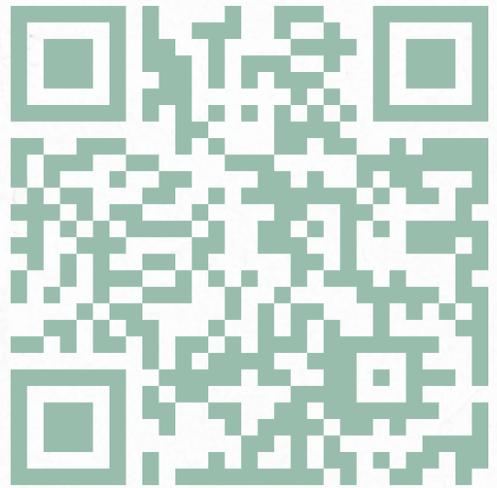
"The difference between fear and awe is a matter of our eyes adjusting."

- Dacher Keltner

# FEAR & AWE $\triangle$ MEDITATION $\triangle$

This Experience will guide you to reconsider some of your smaller fears, transmuting them into the potential for awe.

Find a quiet spot and comfortable position to meditate. Cue up the Fear & Awe Meditation by following the QR code here.



After the meditation, jot down a few words that describe how you experienced fear, awe, and your X.

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# IF A TREE FALLS IN



As you travel, you may wonder how your X will be received when you unveil it. Will it be accepted? Rejected? Or maybe worse, ignored or not heard at all?

Worrying about the outcome may divert or even halt your journey. In this Experience, you face possible outcomes now.

Imagine you have unveiled your X to your ultimate audience. How do you hope it will be received?

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How do you fear it will be received?

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How do these hopes and fears make you feel about your journey toward your X?

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With your *Compass of Meaning* to reorient you, how is your X powerful, regardless of the ultimate outcome?

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How does imagining these possible outcomes free you?

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# THE WOODS



# CAPSTONE

ENTERING YOUR  
STORY CAVE



Stories can support us and limit us. Stories also can be changed by us. This Experience will help you identify stories that no longer serve you. In the next phase, you will be invited to release them. But for now, we need only find two stories ready to be changed.

Imagine all of your stories piled up in a dark cave in your mind. Let's venture into that cave.

## STORY 1:

Take an inventory of what you see as lacking or embarrassing about yourself. Recognize these beliefs as simply stories. Pick one story to focus on. Describe this story in a sentence or two.

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When did you first believe this story about you was true?

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What caused you to believe it was true?

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When has that story *not* been true?

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Consider the elements on your Compass. Which of these elements could be helpful to you in reframing this story?

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## STORY 2:

Pick a second story to focus on. Describe this story in a sentence or two.

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When did you first believe this story about you was true?

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What caused you to believe it was true?

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When has that story *not* been true?

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Consider the elements on your Compass. Which of these elements could be helpful to you in reframing this story?

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You are invited to repeat this Experience with as many stories as you feel called to examine and reframe.

*The air turns thin and dry, catching in your throat.  
Your eyes squint, a headache at the brightness.  
You look down at your feet. Gone are the pine  
needles, fallen leaves, and heavy earth. Your toes  
now twist in soft, hot sand.*

*You glance back into the thick forest. The heavy  
smell of earth and fir sends an echo of gratitude  
through you. For the shadows of the forest, who  
once seemed so ominous, are now familiar friends.  
You nod to the darkness behind you, knowing the  
distilled essence, the prima materia from those  
shadows, will stay with you.*

*The wind pulls your gaze forward to the shifting  
sands ahead.*

*You squint into shifting, swerving dunes, the hot sun making your eyes heavy and the horizon hazy. Heat pulls sweat from deep within and you feel, down to your bones: this desert will be purifying.*

*Your eyes relax, the sun already becoming an ally. You look left and right, ahead and behind. Every which way looks the same – endless, daunting, open. But you know any direction is right.*

*And so you let your foot slide and sink, as you step into the Burning Desert.*



### III. BURNING DESERT

# PHASE THREE

## BURNING DESERT

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Welcome to the *Burning Desert*. In order to cross these sands, you will need to let go of that which does not serve you or your journey toward your X.

### QUESTIONS YOU WILL EXPLORE

- What do you want to let go of?
- What will you carry forward?
- What is there space for now?

### EXPERIENCES IN THIS PHASE

The *Burning Desert* begins with *Clearing Your Story Cave* in which you will move on from the stories you identified at the end of the last phase. Then, in *The Significance of Insignificant Things* you will find depth in ordinary things around you. The *Running Through Ruins* meditation will guide you to revisit old haunts with new eyes. Then you will be asked to distinguish between real and imagined obstacles in *Evaporating Mirages*. Finally, in your Capstone Experience, *Burning Away*, you will let go of all that does not help you move toward your X.

The shifting sands await.

# CLEARING YOUR STORY CAVE



As you left the *Forest of Shadows*, you identified old stories that no longer served you. In this Experience, you will move on from those stories, following one of three paths to a new story.

To begin, get ready to move out in the world with an intentional walk or hike. Before you leave, choose one of the two stories you identified in *Entering Your Story Cave*. Then decide which of the following three strategies you want to use to reframe your story. Or consider creating your own strategy.

Here are three options clearing out the story:

### **PATH 1:**

Is this a story that served you well once and for a while? Though it is no longer relevant or necessary, you are grateful that you once had this story. If so, place it down with care, as you would a delicate tea cup.

### **PATH 2:**

Is this a story that taught you something helpful or necessary, even if it taught you something valuable that you had already learned? If so, return it to its source for someone else's benefit, as you would return a borrowed book through a library slot.

### **PATH 3:**

Is this a story that is so dispiriting or false that you want to fully destroy it? If so, light it on fire, as if burning away a vampire.

Which of the stories from *Entering Your Story Cave* do you feel called to release?

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Which Path will you use?

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Now head out into the world for your intentional stroll. As you walk or run, imagine either laying your story down, passing it to the next person, or burning it down. Leave your story out there on the sidewalk, road, or trail. It is no longer part of you.

Once back from your walk, consider this question: How does clearing out this story free me to achieve my X?

Use the space provided to write, draw, or paint any reflections.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF

"Any given thing on the face of the earth could reveal the history of all things."

- Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

# INSIGNIFICANT THINGS



When immersed in a foreign place, the newness invites total presence. You can be awed by actions as simple as how to turn on a faucet or walk down a street.

But this novelty does not require a passport or even a change of scenery. Newness can exist in old haunts, from your neighborhood coffee shop or your own kitchen. The seemingly insignificant things in everyday places can create a window into who you are and who you might be.

Your journey toward your X invites this newness. Even if the physical surroundings are familiar, your inner world is changing as you move into your next.

This Experience will guide you to examine seemingly simple objects to see their mystery with fresh eyes. Finding the mystery around you will help open you up to the neverending potential within you, a powerful awareness as you move toward your X.

Look around the room or space where you are now. What is one familiar object you see?

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How is that object a representation of one facet of you or your alchemy journey?

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How is that object a microcosm of all things? How might this object "reveal the history of all things"?

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How can this awareness of the significance of insignificant things help you in your journey toward your X?

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*J. P. ...*

# ▽▽ RUNNING THROUGH RUINS

This Experience will guide you to imagine the stories and parts of you that you are leaving behind as ruins, overtaken by nature. You are touring the ruins of who you used to be, seeing those old ways of being as beautiful yet perhaps no longer useful relics.

Find a quiet spot and comfortable position to meditate. Cue up the *Running Through Ruins* Meditation by following the QR code.

After you have completed the meditation, write down a few words that describe what you learned from visiting those past versions of yourself.

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# EVAPORATING MIRAGES $\Delta$

In the sun-scorched desert, mirages may appear. These illusions may look like bodies of water in the distance, promising relief from hostile heat. But the oases evaporate as you approach, having never actually existed.

This illusion is caused by total internal reflection. That is, as light moves through hot then cold air, it bends and flips so that it seems to come from the ground.

This optical trick happens in our minds as well. We assume our fears to be real. Yet if we were to examine them more closely, we may find they are not grounded. Conversely, we hesitate to believe our hopes. Yet when we examine them, we see not only are they possible, they sometimes already exist, directly in front of us.

Look out toward your X. Which of your fears do you see? What hopes can you perceive?

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For any fears that you see, might any of them be mirages? How so?

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For any hopes that you perceive, what is their power?

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How does your *Compass of Meaning* help you navigate between these fears and hopes?

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CAPSTONE

BURNING RITUAL

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You can emerge from this desert cleansed of what had held you back to now being newly rebuilt for larger, greater beliefs about yourself and your capabilities. This Experience will take you through a burning ritual, leaving behind that which no longer serves you.

Looking back across the Experiences in this phase, which stories, fears, mirages, and misperceptions have you released in this desert?

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Is there anything else you are ready to let go of?

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Now draw or write these lingering fears on a piece of paper. Then, light it on fire. And watch the flames curl the paper away.

Alternatively, scribble your fears into the fire drawing here, imagining them being eaten by the blaze.

Once the paper has turned to ash, study the cinders. Then do something with them – draw below as if with charcoal, smudge them on your arm or a fresh sheet of paper, or run water over them, watching how the start of something new rises from the ashes.

*"All the art of living lies  
in a fine mingling of  
letting go and holding  
on."*

*-Havelock Ellis*

*The smoke from your fire smolders out. What remains are the ashes of what you burned away.*

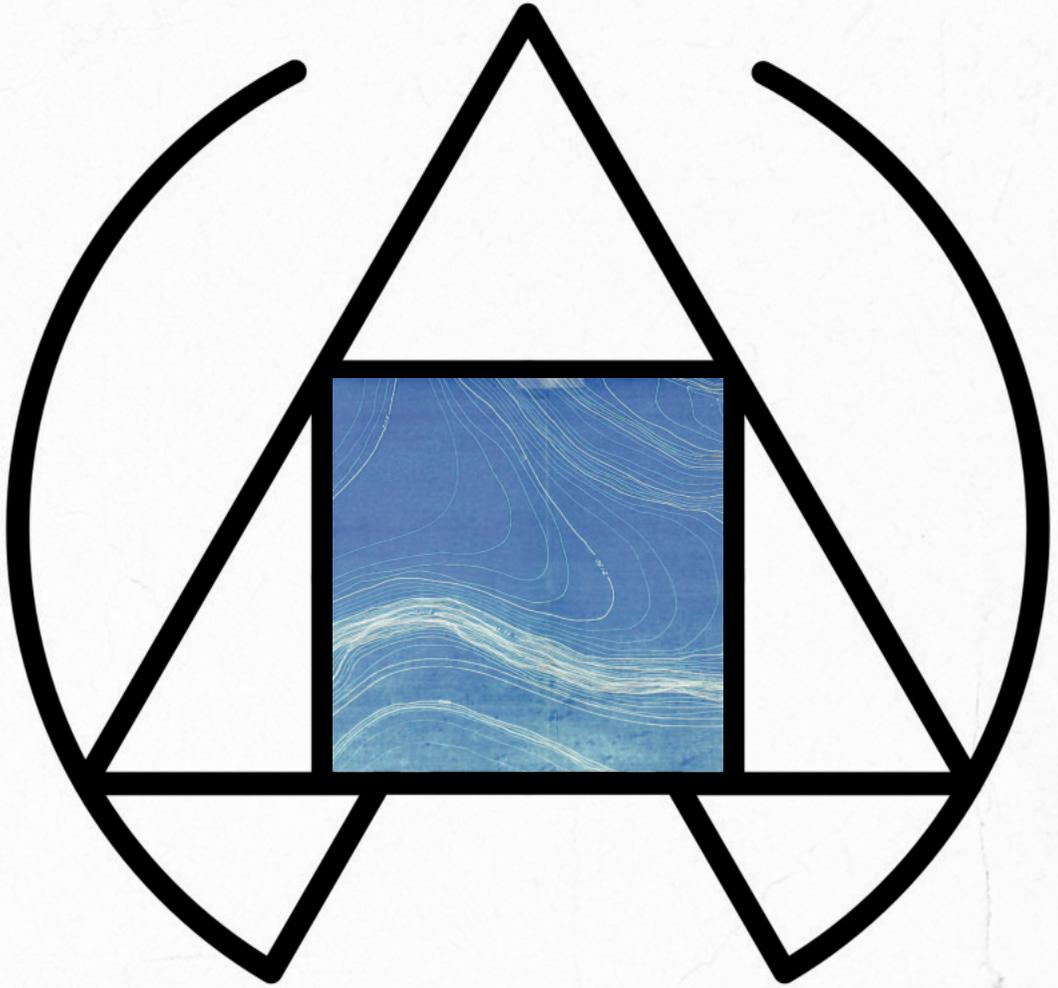
*You pick up the embers, creating a charcoal smudge across your palm. You rub your hands together, letting the ash seep into the loops and arches of your fingerprints and palm lines as you wonder, "Who can I become from this raw material?"*

*When you look back up, you see a vast sea before you. You blink, wondering if it's a mirage. But a warm wave froths across your feet. The water invites you in as it runs backwards again. You are ready to dive into the Ocean of Treasures.*

*The heat of the burning desert holds fast under your skin, like a fever dream anchored into your muscle. Fire runs in your veins and smoke smolders your bones. So hot, you do not yet know how free you are.*

*And yet you leap deep into the sea. For relief. And for mystery. A wave crashes through you, shocking you into ease. The fire extinguishes and the ash dissolves. And the water washes away all that was and need no longer be. Now, you are free. And now, you know how free you are.*

*The Ocean of Treasures holds you in all the wonder within and without, wonder at all that is and can be. And so you swim into the depths of the sea.*



## IV. OCEAN OF TREASURES

# PHASE FOUR

## OCEAN OF TREASURES

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*Ocean of Treasures* finds you swimming in deep possibilities. Here, you will take stock of all the beauty surrounding you. You will explore the depths of what you want to become and discover another world below the one you knew before.

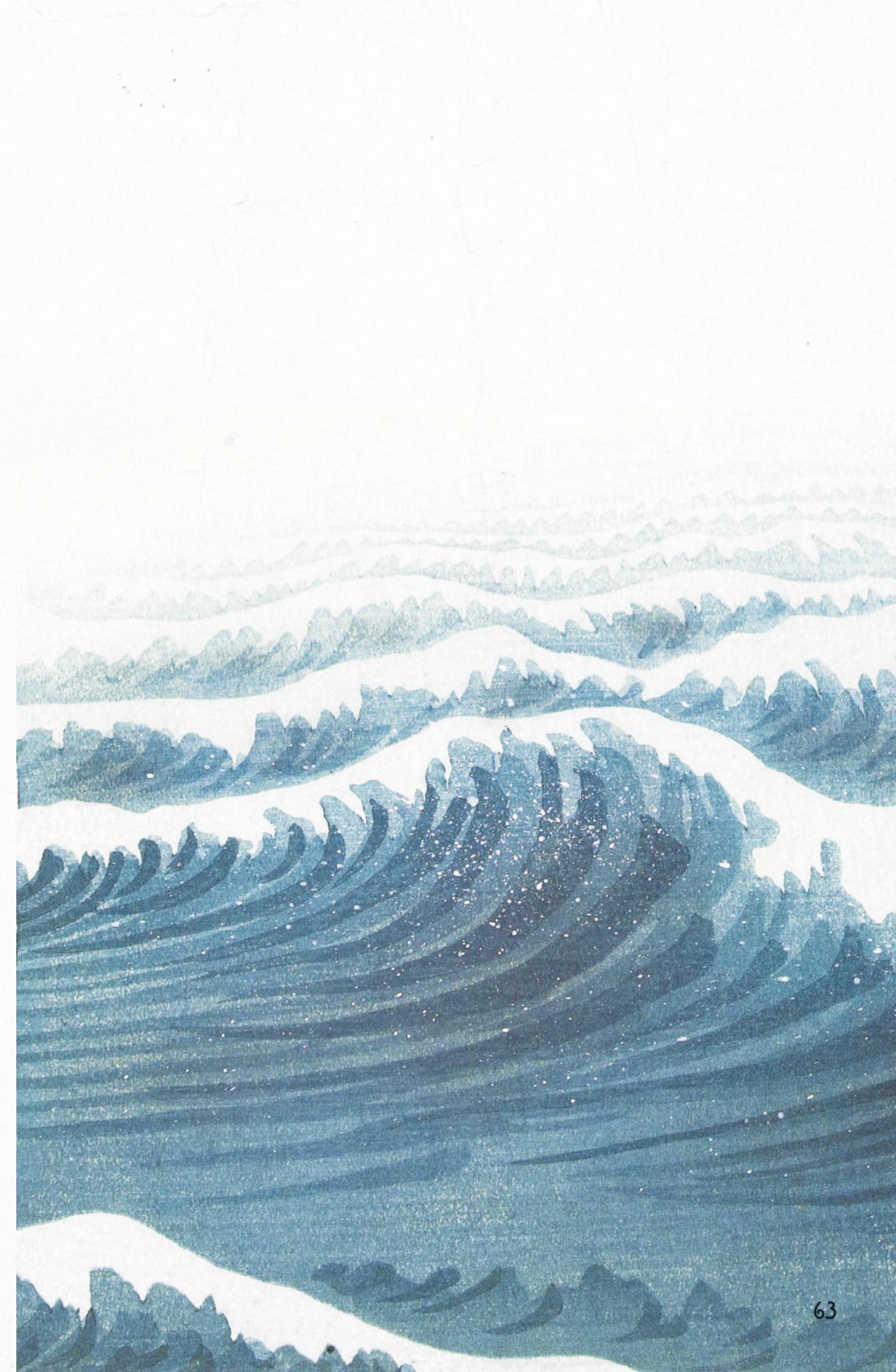
### QUESTIONS YOU WILL EXPLORE

- What gifts surround you now?
- What does your X look like from here?
- How has your journey evolved?

### EXPERIENCES IN THIS PHASE

*Ocean of Treasures* begins with *Top 5s*, where you will capture your little joys in lightning round lists. Then you will focus your appreciation on what you were lucky enough to just barely find in *Close Catches*. *Thin Places* will guide you to tap into a physical place that feels transcendent, before writing a new story for yourself in *New Story Spiral*. The phase ends with *6-Word Autobiography* where you will: capture you, embrace all, be pithy.

And so we dive into the warm waters of *Ocean of Treasures*.



# TOP 5'S ▽▽△

Little lights hide in the nooks of coral and behind sheaths of seaweed in the *Ocean of Treasures*. Take a moment to recognize your favorite little joys. Pick the categories that call to you and finish these lists in 10 minutes or less.

## Top 5 Songs

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 5 Movies or Shows

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 5 Fictional Characters

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 5 Places You've Been

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 5 Places in Your Daily Life

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 5 Books

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 5 Dream Jobs from Childhood

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 5 Places You Want To Go

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What common threads connect your answers?

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How do these threads relate to your X? How might you weave them in to make your journey even richer?

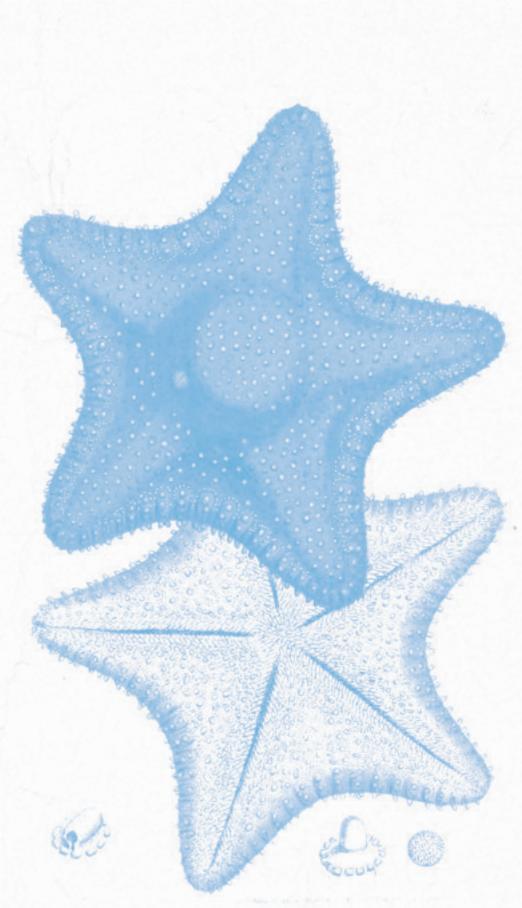
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# CLOSE CATCHES



You know about near misses - moments in which you narrowly escaped catastrophe. But what about "close catches," or the great fortunes you somehow received, despite incredibly low odds? As you move towards your X, take a moment to recognize those close catches that brought you to this point in your journey.

What windfalls did you almost miss - that person, that opportunity, that experience - that came into your life by the grace of a millisecond or millimeter or random chance? List as many as come to mind.

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What enabled you to make these close catches? How could this awareness help you as you move toward your X?

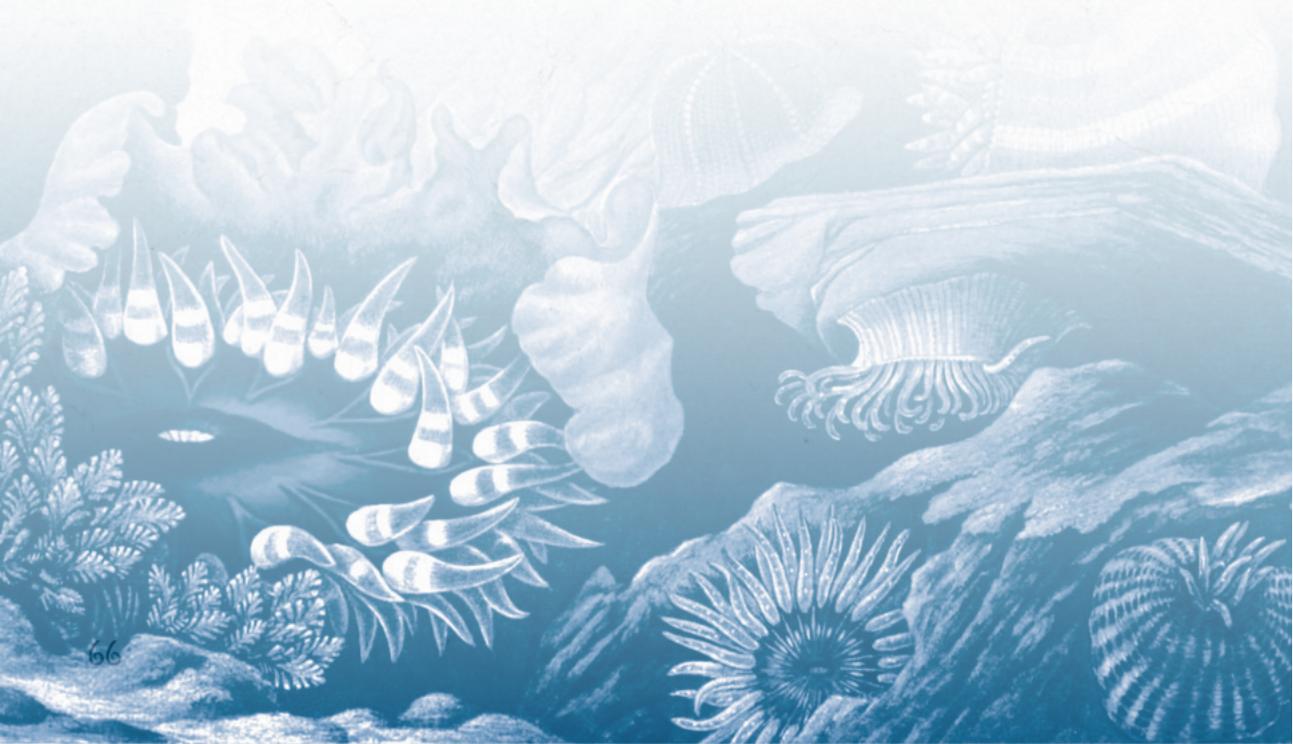
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*"Artists do not create  
art. They channel it or  
capture it from the world  
around them."*

*-Rick Rubin*

# ▽△ THIN PLACES

Thin places are where the ethereal and physical worlds merge. Timeless time pervades, along with a deep sense of awe and peace. The concept originates in Celtic spirituality to describe places where generations have found a sense of deep spirituality and meaning.

Remember a place where you felt that connection to what lies beyond your current, known world. Go to that place in your mind or out in the world.

What do you see? Hear? Feel? Smell? Taste?

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What is possible here, between the ethereal and the physical?

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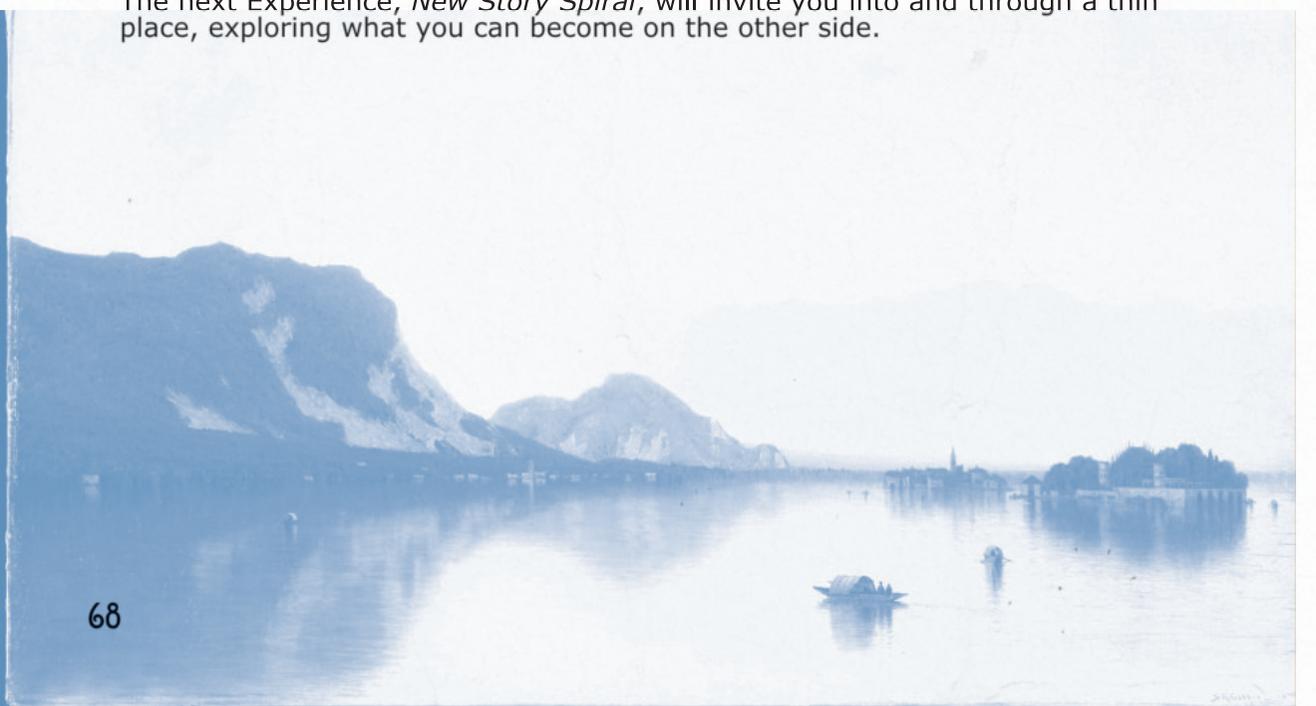
Let yourself bring your X into this space. How does your understanding of your X morph in this place?

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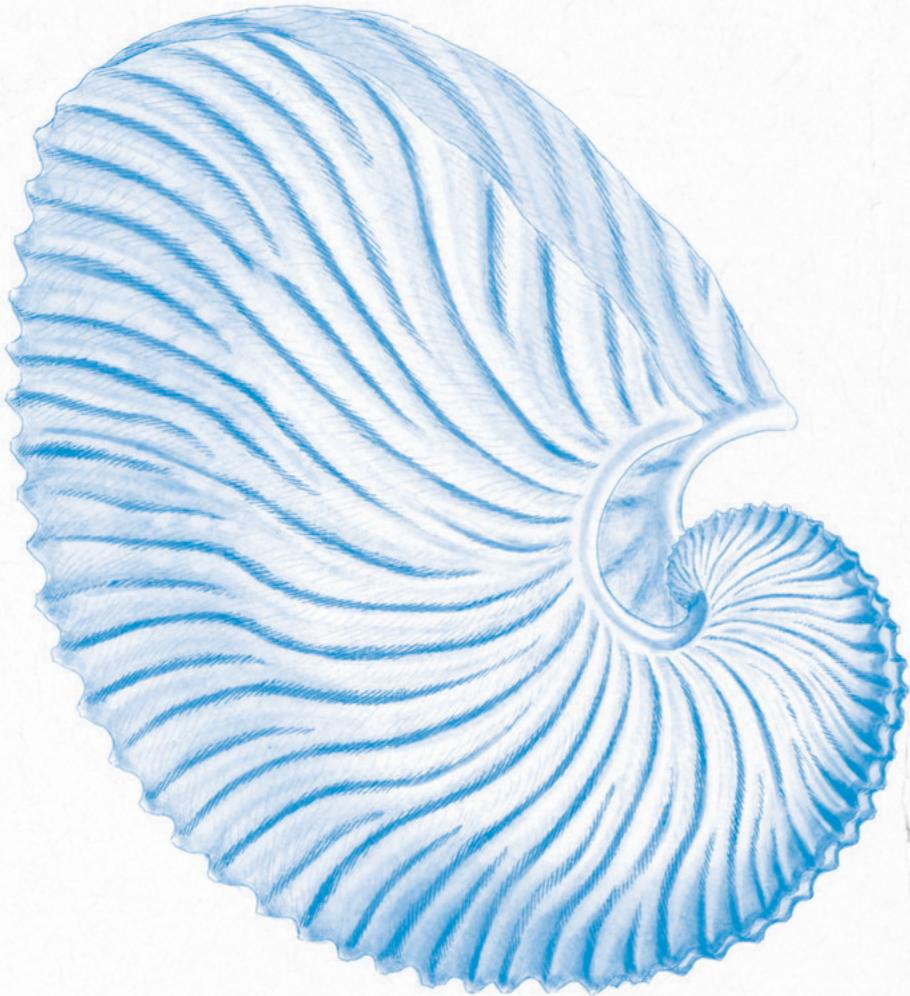
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The next Experience, *New Story Spiral*, will invite you into and through a thin place, exploring what you can become on the other side.



# NEW STORY SPIRAL



In the last Experience, you visited a thin place. Below is the opening of a grand adventure story in a thin place that opens into a new way of being. This story will invite you to consider: What if the storyline of your life – who you are, what you believe, what you do – were true only *up until now*? What if you could drop into a new realm and begin a fresh path forward?

When the story opening ends, pick up the thread and weave a new storyline in which you are living your X. Write a phrase, a paragraph, or a page. Don't worry about the beauty or mechanics of the prose. Instead, fall into this Experience and record only what feels right.

Your new story opens with...

Morning twilight. The recent rain lingers in the air with a chill that anchors just under your skin. The damp pavement reflects the empty sidewalks and emerald stoplight overhead, turned underfoot. You dip your toe in a puddle and watch this upside version of reality ripple. You like this time of day, a stolen moment of stillness that feels almost kinetic with the activity of daybreak to come. You watch the stoplight in the reflection turn to a ball of ruby light and glance up, almost surprised to see the actual stoplight turned red, too. But it doesn't matter anyway, the roads are empty and you're on foot.

You close your eyes for a moment and take in the solitude. But the quiet does not bring its usual calm. The night is too still, the day too far, and your self lost between the two. The little waves embedded in the silence gnaw at your eardrums, creating auditory mirages. The illusion of a rolling ocean roars so loud, you swear you taste salt on the tip of your tongue. Then a clear voice, haunting in its unplaceable familiarity, speaks from behind you:

"Run."

You freeze. Your heartbeat slows and echoes and aches as if it thumps in a block of ice lodged in your ribcage. Time freezes with you for that briefest of moments that lasts forever. Then it all racks into focus from a swirl of sound and night-reflected light. You hurtle down a side alley. Your limbs feel twice as big and half as attached as usual, propelling you so fast you wonder if your arms will fall off and your legs will give out and you will face plant onto the wet pavement.

Your inhale catches at the sight of a concrete staircase ahead. Refuge. You descend. Quick, short steps to start. Then you take the stairs two at a time, reckless and terrified. You grab the rails, rough with rust and coarse with sea salt. If you were to lick it, it would taste alive. You look up to see a sunrise ocean vista. The surfers in the distance seize your

gaze, their wetsuits like tiny blackholes in the turquoise and tangerine scene. Then the voice speaks again, close, raising a shudder from your shoulders and a distant annoyance at not being able to watch the surfers merge with liquid.

"Stop."

This time, you flip into fight mode, cornered between the sudden ocean seven steps down and the mystery chasing you. You swing around, expecting a hooded figure. Or nothing. But staring back at you, is you.

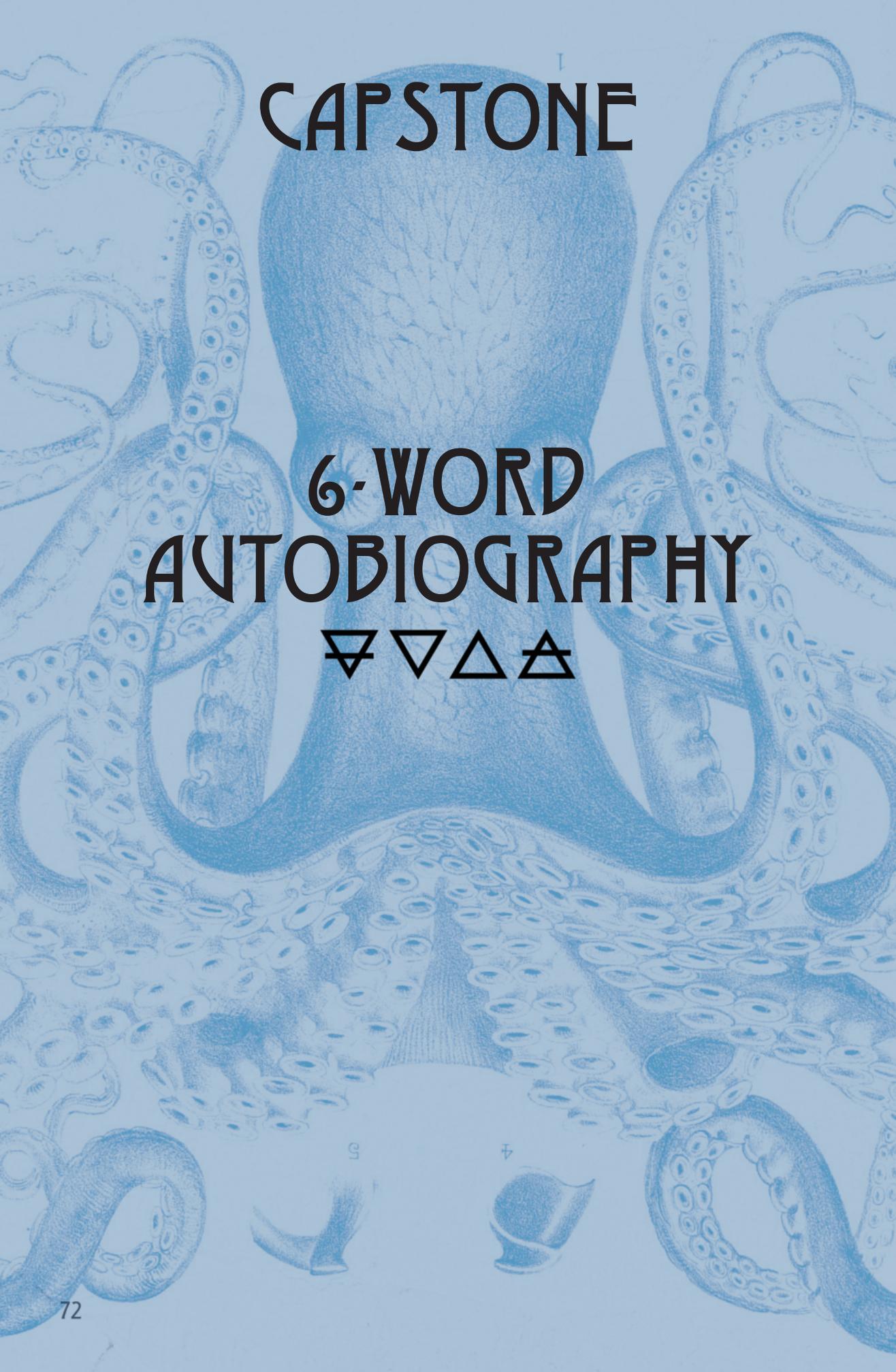
You look into your own eyes. Surreal and familiar. But there is no physical form behind the eyes. Instead, you see a constellation of all the experiences you've ever had and the things you craved that never came. The roller coaster loops and electric kisses and first sip sighs, the panicked near misses and ego bruises and the tears you never cried. The voice speaks again, from somewhere deep in the energy field, eyes soft but imploring.

"Step backwards to leap."

For some reason, you listen. It must be the eyes. The tip of your toes just touches the step behind you. You lean back, ready. This moment was inevitable, you think. And you leap forward into a swirl of the now lavender sunrise, warm salt water, and soft sand. Quicksand. You spiral around as if in an hourglass, the top dome the world as you knew it. You funnel into the spindle in the middle, a breathless passage where time is timeless and space is spaceless. Everything exists in nothing. And you are both everything and nothing.

You gasp as you fall into the other side. Your first breath in the realm of...





CAPSTONE

6-WORD  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

▽ ▽ △ ▴

“First we feel. Then we fall.”

- James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake*

Sometimes, the most meaningful descriptions are the briefest. Imagine the quote above as someone's autobiography.

If you were to write your own 6-word autobiography, what would it be?

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How does this autobiography help you move toward your X?

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*A chill on your skin as the warm ocean water evaporates into crisp air. A ring at your ankles pulls your gaze down to see your feet still submerged and sinking into stones – smoke, emerald, ruby, and cobalt. A shudder courses your spine and shakes your limbs awake.*

*Ahead: a rising giant of violet granite woven with lines of amethyst. You blink the last drops of sea from your eyes and know this is no ordinary mountain. The outline of amber tells you so. No, this mountain is the ascent of your alchemy journey, with your X etched in gold at the peak.*

*You glance behind you, the ocean now a glacier,  
frozen in the past. No turning back. You already  
have all the riches you need from its once warm  
waters. And your X calls from above.*

*So you turn back to the mountain and its granite  
cliffs and leaning firs. A flicker of gold just over  
the snow capped peak and a mirror image spark in  
your heart. This is it - the final phase of your  
journey. And so you plant your first cautious but  
confident step and lean into the ascending trail.*



# V. SUNRISE PEAK

# PHASE FIVE

## SUNRISE PEAK

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As you summit *Sunrise Peak*, you will alchemize all the *prima materia* you have distilled across your journey so far. As an alchemist, you are ready to transmute experience into gold.

### QUESTIONS YOU WILL EXPLORE

- What have you alchemized?
- What got you to your X?
- Where will you go next?

### EXPERIENCES IN THIS PHASE

As you ascend into the final phase, you will *Tap into Larger Intelligence* with a divination tool to find new wisdom. *Odyssey Guides* will invite you to identify seven allies on your journey. Then you will gaze at the stars to find your own constellation in the outdoor, nighttime activity, *Constellation Mapping*. All of your learnings will come together as you square the circle by combining elements in *Creating Your Alchemy Symbol*. Your journey ends with a twist in *The End is the Beginning is the End* as you move through a cascading series of journal prompts.

The rising sun beckons you onto the face of the mountain, the summit calling from above the clouds.

*"Life can only be  
understood backwards;  
but it must be lived  
forwards."*

*- Søren Kierkegaard*

# TAP INTO LARGER INTELLIGENCE



Tossing coins, drawing cards, and casting stones may seem like plays of chance. But according to the *I Ching*, tarot, and rune traditions, these seemingly random acts are anything but. Instead, the message you need finds you and invites you to tap into a larger intelligence.

Choose a divination practice and do a reading. Here are some options, but feel free to go a different direction: *I Ching*, tarot, runes, oracle cards, tea leaf reading, astrology, or geomancy. If you do not have any physical options, there are virtual versions of many of these available online.

After doing the practice, meditate, draw, or write for three minutes on the message you receive about your X.



*Turpinia P.*

*Lambert Sculp.*

# ODYSSEY GUIDES

On the journey to alchemize your X, you are the hero. In Joseph Campbell's classic, *The Hero's Journey*, the hero, who is you, meets seven different character archetypes. You have likely benefited from many of these guides. These guides may be people or non-human beings such as animals (e.g., pets), natural elements (e.g., trees), or places (e.g., your favorite coffee shop), and times (e.g., the future).

Consider who or what has played each of these roles in your life. Notice if any have appeared in your life in more than one role. Write their names on the line below each role.

**Mentor:**

Guides and supports you with wisdom and tools

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**Ally:**

Travels with you, offering companionship and maybe a special skill

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**Herald:**

Calls you into action with news or events

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**Trickster:**

Disrupts the status quo, making you respond creatively

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**Shapeshifter:**

Challenges you with ambiguous intentions

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**Guardian:**

Protects an important object or threshold that you seek

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**Shadow:**

Represents the darker sides of you, embodying your fears

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Which of these guides might strengthen your journey? In what way?

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How might all of these guides exist within you?

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Is there a guide within you who you want to use more often as you journey toward your X? How could these guide(s) be helpful to you?

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TURTLE-DOVE.

*Turtur communis, Selby.*

# CONSTELLATION MAPPING



Constellations connect stars to tell a story, provide direction, or mark a change in the seasons. While there are deep and rich astronomy and astrology traditions, you can map the stars, too.

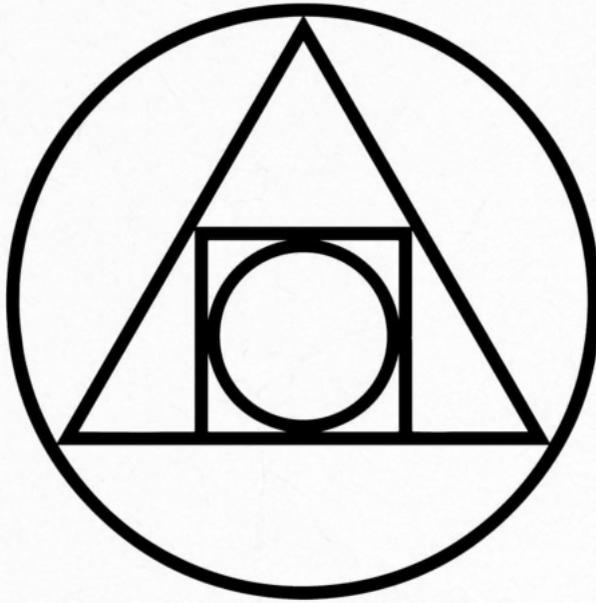
Go outside at night and gaze up at the sky, looking past the constellations you know. Let yourself enter a meditative state. Take a few deep breaths. Relax your eyes. Let go of time.

Eventually, let a shape or a pattern emerge from the stars. This is your alchemy journey constellation. Use the space provided to sketch, name, and write a 2-3 sentence legend for your constellation.





# CREATING YOUR OWN ALCHEMY SYMBOL



In alchemy, this symbol represents the philosopher's stone, the ultimate goal in alchemy, achieved through combining parts to create a new whole. In this Experience, you will create your own alchemy symbol, drawing together all you have gathered on this journey.

Travel back through the answers, lists, drawings, and discoveries you recorded across this workbook. What elements, shapes, or words do you want to incorporate? Sketch these below.

Now play with how these elements could work together to create something new. Draw it below.

What does your alchemy symbol represent? How does it relate to your alchemy journey?

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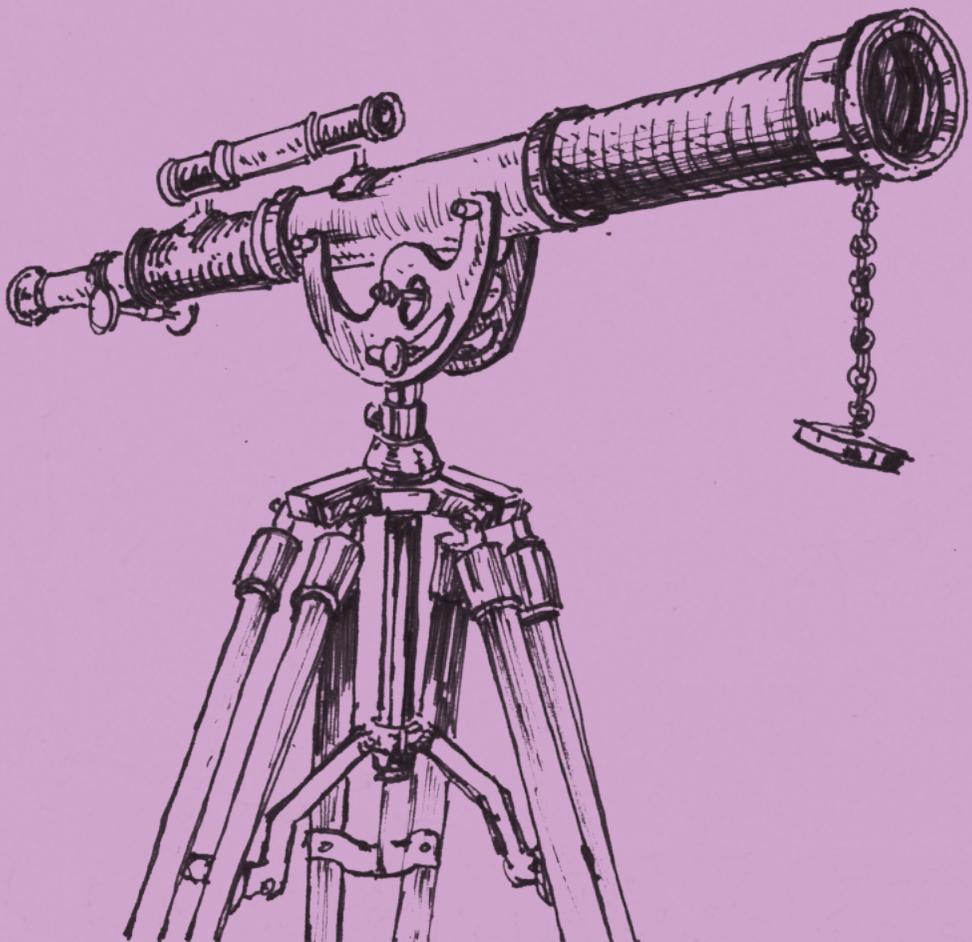
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# CAPSTONE

THE END IS THE  
BEGINNING IS THE END



As you round the final bend, you howl with the thrill of finding yourself at the summit. Your alchemy journey is complete! You have reached the place where you are ready to do your X and move into your next.

How do you feel? How are you empowered to do your X? How will you celebrate?

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You glance behind you, seeing the winding path that led you here with a nagging sadness that you already arrived. What do you want to remember from the path that led you here?

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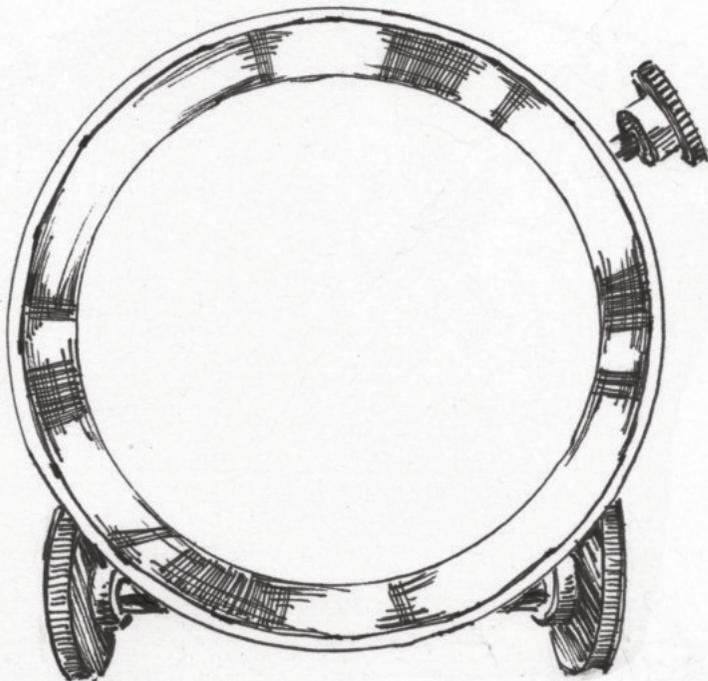
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You turn your gaze back to the path, surprised to see an ornate telescope two steps ahead. You feel pulled to it. As you bring the worn lens to your eye, your breath catches. There, through its magic, you see a new dream, a new X, a new adventure. This is not the end, you realize, but another beginning. Where will you go next? Draw or write what you see below.



*The air is crisp and the sky slides from crimson to violet to saffron. You exhale, a small cloud forming and dissipating just as fast in the cold, clean air.*

*You reach your hand up, wrapping calloused fingers made strong by the trek, around the edge of the last boulder. The sun crests into the horizon, sending golden shockwaves through the sky, as you hoist yourself up onto the summit.*

*You spin around, the sweeping vistas of all you can see and all that you saw blurring together in a golden wave that sinks into your soul. You are here.*











# THANK YOU

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We wish to give a big thank you to the many people who gave their talents, skills, knowledge, and love to this project. Through the alchemy of combining their gifts, *Alchemy Workbook* was created.

Thank you to our intrepid team of testers who completed the early drafts of the Experiences, helping us refine them with their generosity, curiosity, and candor:

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# APOLLO CITY COMICS



"We do not propose to write an ode to an opus, but instead cheer at the thought of arising to our work day after day with truth, vigor, love, and friendship."

[www.apollocitycomics.com](http://www.apollocitycomics.com)

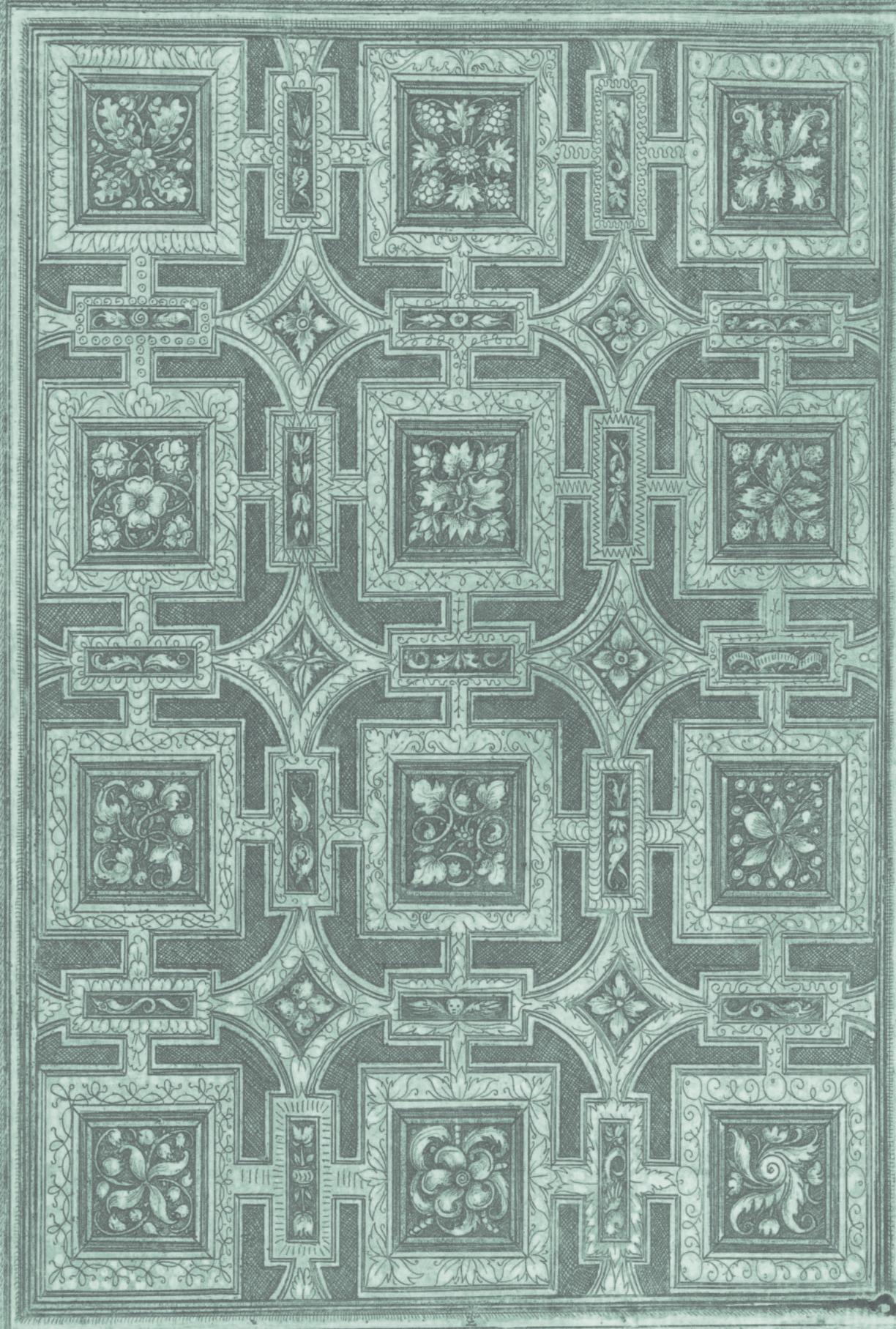
# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Paula Green is a filmmaker, writer, and researcher. Her best day would include playing with a camera, getting lost in nature, and hanging with her dog. She adores brevity and anonymity.

Kelly Kienzle is a leadership coach and team facilitator. She provides leadership coaching to new, expanding, and experienced leaders to tap into the positive core of their leadership and reflect that style to their teams. She is a people development specialist with over 30 years of experience, including thousands of hours coaching leaders to build deeper self-knowledge and professional achievements. She has always loved to listen to people's stories of how they perceive the world. Her best day would include a few one-on-one conversations, some trail walking, and a curl-up with her cat. Find her at [kelly@opencirclecoaching.com](mailto:kelly@opencirclecoaching.com).







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