

# Easy Streets

an anthology supplement



*for i'm sorry did you say street magic*

by caro asercion

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# How to use these city decks

## *A quick overview*

Each of the quickstart decks included in this anthology contains some rich flavor text, a collection of cards, and a few inspirational prompts to quickstart your *street magic* session.

Everything contained within these pages is mutable. If your table wants to rewrite anything, go right ahead. Ask each other questions about the city *beyond* what is written on the cards, and build on each other's answers together!

To get started, read the flavor text of your chosen deck aloud. Then cut out the city cards and take turns placing them on the table as you would during the Laying Foundation round. Use as many or as few as you wish.

### KVZ-Loggerhead Radio Tower and Karaoke Bar Landmark

The heart of Lightningrod, KVZ-Log is the tallest structure for miles around. With its secure connection, anyone can tune in for live or prerecorded broadcasts. Thursday is singles night.

*Cathode cocktails, infinite musical catalog, less infinite number of comfy chairs*

**Title and category:** Each card included in these decks is either a Neighborhood or Landmark.

**Flavor text:** A bit of description. Don't feel pressured to write this much on your own cards: what you say is more important than what you write.

**True name:** The most essential aspects of a place. What makes it wholly unique?

## Questions to explore during play

Each deck includes some questions that emphasize the core themes of the city to help set the mood and tone. Read them aloud at the start of the session, along with the flavor text. You might answer them in play, but don't feel like you have to; they might just be mysteries lingering in the background.

◇ If it's ever your turn and you're unsure where to go next, consider revisiting one of the questions here. How do they brush against the current Compass for the round? Where do they align? Where do they contradict each other?

## Sample Compasses

This section includes a short list of some potential Compasses for you to examine. If it's your turn to pick a Compass and you're not sure where to begin, consider selecting one of these! Pick and choose from the list, or roll a six-sided die.

If you don't like any of these Compasses, you can always feel free to make up your own. Pull from the text written on the cards, or invent something new whole cloth.

These city decks are scaffolding, but you should never let them confine you!

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## **Atteru, Sparkler City, the Eye**

**by Takuma Okada**

The center of Atteru is an enormous spaceport, the largest in the system. The city that has sprouted up around it is spotless and full of greenery, but it all comes with a cost.

## **Cephalophor, City of Birch and Honey**

**by Sasha Reneau**

You don't end up here if you've got your head screwed onto your shoulders right. Our roadmaps are a tangled in-joke, our architecture a love letter to petty feuds and cut corners, and our trees are always dripping with sap. The city sparkles like the fermentation in an overripe fruit; here, all sorts of beautiful mistakes stretch their limbs wide and impossible.

## **Raj Regalia, Crown Jewel of the Oceanway**

**by Viditya Voleti**

A giant train city built on wealth and industry, an egregious monument to the upper echelon of society, running around a flooded world. Miracle Science and a disregard for anything other than class and prestige primes Raj Regalia for spectacular collapse.

## **Varas, better known as Liar's Leap**

**by Quinn Vega**

A surreal seaside city with an honesty problem. Whenever someone tells a lie in Varas an illusion appears to make it real.

## **58 Deep**

**by Samantha Day**

58 Deep is an illegal space station built around a strange deep-space anomaly, cobbled together out of ships that have docked on it and never undocked, populated by academics, artists, criminals, and dreamers.

## **Elegy, City of Saints**

**by Pam Punzalan**

This city of scintillating glass and black stone floats through the sky, and sprawls over interconnected chunks of land. Its Saints are citizens who sacrificed themselves to become Hearts of Elegy, powering the entire place with the unrealized potential of their lives.

## **Islah, Heart of the Crescent**

**by Amr Ammourazz**

People say that the limestone streets and golden minarets of Islah are alive with knowledge; that science, religion, and the supernatural growth all breathe life to the city. Perhaps it is more literal than some will ever understand...

## **The City Dreamt in Alabaster**

**by Geostatonary**

Before the waters of dream, beyond the veil of sleep, there lies a city conceived in alabaster white. Here any dream may be found, and Dreamer and Dreamt live as one people.

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## **Vector, Your Digital Haven**

**by Caro Asercion**

Though it was once regarded as the pinnacle of technological community, the neon sun is setting on this online hub. Vector's slowly-crumbling infrastructure still houses the comforts of those determined enough to call it their home.

## **Estralia, where the sun never sets**

**by Nell Raban**

Travelers and tourists from far and wide make annual pilgrimages to the coastal resort town where the sun never sets. How this came to be is a mystery to most, but those who dare to look beyond the place's sunny veneer may glimpse the truth of it.

## **The Conformal Metroplane**

**by Natalie the Knife**

Imagine a city where every block is a patchwork of buildings, every face is masked and expressionless, and every corner holds a different simmering secret. Imagine that every door was a gate into that city, if you had the right key...

## **Luminous, City of Veiled Stars**

**by Rae Nedjadi**

In this city full of fallen stars, how do these celestial beings learn to become human?

## **Sunny Weather Broadcast, a City of Soft Lessons**

**by Rufus Roswell**

What once was a home for children's programming has, in the wake of The Great Unwinding and its endless storm, become a city all its own. An eclectic cast of puppets and teachers, relics of bygone childhoods, all still living and laughing together. The streets are stitched from felt and soundstage floors, and everywhere there is a smile and refuge from the world.

## **Haven Aves**

**by Manu S.**

The birds are tourists in our world — when they fly home, who welcomes them back with open wings, and from their tales conjures dreams of our distant lands?

## **Treefalls**

**by Eaves Mendes**

Deep in the forest that holds up the mountains, resting against a fallen tree, a giant mechanical lumberjack sits rusted in place. In the centuries since it last moved, a city has sprung up around its bones.

# Atteru, Sparkler City, the Eye

*thrumming • idyllic • durable* by Takuma Okada

The oblong silhouette of the spaceport pierces the sky. Around it is a vast field of green, full of clover and wildflowers and rolling hills. From space it looks like a bright green eye. The sprawling city surrounding it can only be described as beautiful; it was built that way using countless focus tests, from denizens planetside to those living all the way at the ends of the known universe.

The spaceport is always buzzing with activity. The ships landing and launching emit streaks of light that look like an eternal firework, while the stars they're destined for haven't been visible overhead in centuries. The city is just as busy, consumed night and day by frantic energy. It's no wonder that people escape to the Spiralling Green as often as possible. Many find it hard to imagine their hectic lives without the breath of fresh air that the green provides. But as space in the city becomes scarcer, the most powerful of Atteru see few options left but to build on the grass.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◇ What would a citizen of Atteru say is the most important part of a happy life?
- ◇ What cultural aspects of Atteru survived its transformation into an intergalactic hub? What didn't?
- ◇ There are few who remember that Atteru was founded by three witches. How is their influence still felt regardless?

## Sample Compasses

1. A meteor shower festival
2. Invasive species
3. Cheap street food
4. A small daycare on the edge of the green
5. A strike at the spaceport
6. DIY personal transportation devices

<p><b>Spiralling Green</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>A massive park around the spaceport, with rolling hills and strange circular patterns in the grass caused by old tunnels underneath.</p> <p><i>A lazy summer picnic, the roar of engines</i></p>	<p><b>Ancient Ruins</b> Landmark</p> <p>A large cavern below the spaceport, open to the public. Tunnels elsewhere, which are not. Researchers here swear they're on the verge of a breakthrough.</p> <p><i>Bedrock and bone, gravity's pull</i></p>	<p><b>Silverline Wharf</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>A new docks district built with funds raised by a loose association of wealthy traders. Newcomers are drawn to its stunning design and cleanliness, but old hands still prefer the old docks, which have fallen on hard times due to the new wharf.</p> <p><i>Air that should stink of life, but does not</i></p>	<p><b>Atteru, Sparkler City, the Eye</b> <small>thrumming • idyllic • durable</small></p>
<p><b>Seedling Village</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>One of Atteru's oldest districts is a collection of massive family-oriented public housing units known as Seedling Village. Lovingly cared for by many generations and located near the Green, the Village is paradise for a kid growing up.</p> <p><i>Soft glass and iron, bonds of a lifetime</i></p>	<p><b>Kenta's garage</b> Landmark</p> <p>Public transportation is green, sparkling clean, and <i>boring</i>. Many use personal transportation from time to time. Teenagers favor heavily modified repulsion boots that let them run on air. They were invented by a teenager, Kenta, who helps newcomers with repairs and advice out of his mom's garage.</p> <p><i>Oil-stained fingers that have grabbed the sky</i></p>	<p><b>The Silver Anchor Heritage Center</b> Landmark</p> <p>A nautical and space history museum with an obnoxiously large anchor on the front. The building it replaced was one of the best cheap bars in Atteru. A trader on the planning committee proposed it as a welcoming center, but every true Atteruite hates it.</p> <p><i>Empty words and a hollow smile, artificial seawater mist</i></p>	

# Cephalophor, City of Birch and Honey

*stubborn • hand-worn • sun-bleached* by Sasha Reneau

Cephalophor was, by all accounts, an accident: a mis-categorization that puffed itself city-sized out of spite. Its founders were con artists who stopped to fleece a small music festival, built a small but robust bureaucracy to automate the graft, and expanded the boundaries of their great little joke over the next forty years. If the stonework seems older than that, that's because it is; most of these bricks were moved inland six miles from the old fortress beneath the levee that's been promising to break for as long as any grandparent can remember. Any day now, the ice freezing in the cracks will snap it in half — if the jittery faultline running underfoot doesn't get to it first.

It's an odd city, but you find all sorts of workarounds, living here. By this time next year they'll be old hat to you. And don't worry; despite our more infamous expats, folks here really aren't any more vindictive or fool-headed or ambitious than the folks where you're from. We just tend to wear it on our sleeve a little louder.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ How wide is the window between a temporary workaround and the way it's always been done?
- ◊ What do you do with a vendetta that's lost its steam?
- ◊ How much infrastructure is too much infrastructure for the sake of a pun?
- ◊ What marvels can only survive in the overlap of unsupervised confidence and reckless creativity?

## Sample Compasses

1. Election won by literal landslide
2. A lecturer returns to Winterskills
3. The worst festival yet
4. Albacor, the new ticket-taker
5. Tailor turf wars
6. A correction: Pilstrip St does not actually exist, apologies

<p><b>Winterskills</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Expert advice, poorly taught</p> <p><i>Does this math check out? Did it ever?</i></p>	<p><b>The Thawed Cemetery</b> Landmark</p> <p>Bones of bones in the Winterskills; what worked and what could've</p> <p><i>Black dirt stubborn under fingernails, good soil for strawberries</i></p>	<p><b>Mt. St. Senior Market</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Chilly year-round in the shade of long spires</p> <p><i>All roads lead to Market, which is great when you're out of coffee beans, which most tourists aren't</i></p>	<p><b>Cephalophor,</b> City of Birch and Honey stubborn • hand-worm • sun-bleached</p>
<p><b>The Thumb</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Scaffolding-turned- boardwalk, rotting kitestrings like cobwebs</p> <p><i>Most stones better left unturned, statistically speaking</i></p>	<p><b>Josephine</b> Landmark</p> <p>Debatably alive, undeniably grouchy, stubbornly barnacled to the Thumb</p> <p><i>Rare, glimmering tattoos sing out from every long leathery limb</i></p>	<p><b>Vandrun Station</b> Landmark</p> <p>The pride of Mt. St. Senior Market; state-of-the-art security with a broken turnstile</p> <p><i>The trains run on comedic timing, as far as anyone can tell</i></p>	

# Raj Regalia, Crown Jewel of the Oceanway

*opulent • innovative • explosive* by Viditya Voleti

Raj Regalia, the greatest accomplishment of all the Railcities, houses the affluent, the brilliant, and society's best, along with those that maintain its facade. With train cars the size of several city blocks and a roaring engine hotter than the sun, this city travels the Oceanway in pursuit of perfection and progress, no matter the cost. Its citizens pride themselves on their prestige and status, vying for power over industry, art, and leisure.

Most sections of society and the city are owned by Clubs, membership-driven communities dedicated to a specific craft, and those on the board hold immense power over the goings-on in Regalia. Those employed by Clubs live on borrowed luxury, grasping for positions of power and status that will never be theirs. A substance named Ambrosia, a strange byproduct of the Perfect Bees kept aboard, pushed the limits of what was once thought possible, and fueled the momentum of Clubs and enterprising citizens towards power and prestige.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ The elite break themselves for high fashion. How else do they signal their unreachable status to those beneath them?
- ◊ Ambrosia infused products are hitting the public — how is daily life never going to be the same again?
- ◊ What is in wait at the Bicentennial New Year Gala?

## Sample Compasses

1. Ambrosia Technology
2. Recreational Sport and Games
3. Megacrustaceans and the Lobster God
4. Perfect Beekeepers
5. Hauntings, echoes of the past
6. Shallow Graves, Crime Syndicate

<p><b>Museum of the Drowned World Neighborhood</b></p> <p>The museum houses artifacts dredged up from The Drowned World. The interior is mazelike and the central room has a large golden oculus dome that looks down on a small lake. Aesthetic over education is the unsaid motto. Golden plaques scream the donor's name instead of information.</p> <p><i>Prestige on a plaque</i></p>	<p><b>Solis Engine, Church of the Roaring Sun Neighborhood</b></p> <p>A grand cathedral built into the engine car for those who worship Solis, the New Sun Engine. The working class fervently believe their doctrine of industry and progress. The priests, while publicly pious, live lavish lives.</p> <p><i>Truly blessed to be sunkissed. Coal before diamonds. Bishop Saelz translates the flames.</i></p>	<p><b>The Great Monument To Continuity and Space Landmark</b></p> <p>A twisting steel statue several stories tall by the elite-funded artist collective DEVOTION. Its abstract form claims to represent rising flames and shrapnel, but captured in cold steel bent by working hands. The public sees it as a proud visage of the people and their power.</p> <p><i>Flints gaze upon the steel.</i></p>	<p><b>Raj Regalia, Crown Jewel of the Oceanway</b></p> <p><i>opulent • innovative • explosive</i></p>
<p><b>New Eden Apiary Landmark</b></p> <p>The Apiculture Club takes care of the Perfect Bees here, where Ambrosia is collected and distributed to Raj Regalia. A true garden of paradise, music is played live from elsewhere and piped in for the Bees to make variant batches. A place of mystery, everyone eyes its gates like a bank vault.</p> <p><i>Biblical, radiant, cacophonous.</i></p>	<p><b>Coroners' Arena Landmark</b></p> <p>A morgue for the Ambrosia-infused corpses. The Morticians Club prepares the bodies for the funeral while also fighting off the murderous Ambrosia Ghost that manifests. The elite refused to acknowledge it, seeing it as a destructive faux pas, but the workers turned it into a spectacle sport.</p> <p><i>Cheering crowds, crunching bones, money changing hands.</i></p>	<p><b>Dredge District Neighborhood</b></p> <p>Considered a "Worker's District," housing lines the upper levels while the bottom opens up to the ocean below. Workers sort through Club-owned nets for artifacts, materials, or megacrustaceans.</p> <p><i>Chittering and skittering, lamenting wails, nets drag along the ocean floor.</i></p>	

# Varas, better known as Liar's Leap

*vibrant • weighty • haunted* by Quinn Vega

Ran right up against the edge of a towering sea cliff, Liar's Leap clings to the dirt like a grifter without an ace up their sleeve. It's an old city with streets laid out by whim, not plan. It's resisted function for so long and yet everyday it changes.

What changes it? The ghosts — illusions that materialize to make every lie and excuse told within the city walls true. The ghosts are real, you can touch them. But you'll feel that shiver up your spine, and it's not gonna leave you soon.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ If the city is haunted, why do people stay here?
- ◊ Are the ghosts a punishment or a gift?
- ◊ Goods aren't the only things that move through the port. What else slips through?
- ◊ Everyone has their own explanations for this place, but what is actually true?

## Sample Compasses

1. Illusory Megafauna
2. Famous lies
3. What even are ghosts, anyway?
4. Festival of the Half-lit Eye
5. Philter Blaive, con-artist extraordinaire
6. Best place to eat on a Tuesday

<p><b>Wakeford</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Nobody Dreams here. All the streets radiate out from a single point, running out until the remnants of the old wall that closed Wakeford out of the city. The wall was torn down 12 years ago, but its shadow still defines the place. The orchards here grow the best pears you've ever tasted.</p> <p><i>Navy blue shingles, golden stars, the nothing between midnight and morning.</i></p>	<p><b>Sapphire Spires</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Downtown Liar's Leap is just seven blocks. Landscaper crews weave through the crowds and plant-choked statuaries to burn away the moss and vine that seem to grow back bigger each night. The only flora that goes untouched are the rooftop gardens, billowing with blue flowers (as is customary).</p> <p><i>Ember and pollen on the air.</i></p>	<p><b>Peregrine Steppe</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The perfect place to find a special gift or to taste food unlike anything you've had before. Now, nobody remembers when it appeared, but some remember that it did appear. It's been around long enough it's just part of the city and it's easy to ignore the possibility that everyone who lives here might be ghosts too.</p> <p><i>Terraced streets, colorful stalls, a face you swear you've seen before.</i></p>	<p><b>Varas,</b> better known as <b>Liar's Leap</b> vibrant • weighty • haunted</p>
<p><b>Dreamer's Dial</b> Landmark</p> <p>In Wakeford at the point where all the streets converge a gnomon, monolithic, towers high. It sits in the middle of a cobblestone roundabout. Punks like to have picnics in its shadow. The Inscription circling it reads, "I count the hours while I sleep. I dream the hours that I wake."</p> <p><i>Won "most likely to be cursed" three years in a row.</i></p>	<p><b>The Menagerie</b> Landmark</p> <p>32 Bridgeview Ln. It's the funky old house on the cliff's edge with the dock crane out back, can't miss it. Someone told a story about how there was a huge ferret named Percival living in the basement there and now there is.</p> <p><i>Tattered rainbows above bulk bins, hands quickly signing speech, house shows spill out into the street.</i></p>	<p><b>The Giant Bee</b> Landmark</p> <p>Right around that time of afternoon when you just start to think you might like a snack—look up and you'll see it. Talk at the trolley club says a tourist on her way out of the city joked that the bees here were as big as a house.</p> <p><i>Wings don't rustle the leaves, fur soft as a snow bank and dyed like a sunset.</i></p>	

# 58 Deep

*grimy • bright • crowded* by Samantha Day

58 Deep started life as an independent refueling outpost and rest stop for ships bound for deep space. When an Anomaly manifested in the station's central ring, rather than report it to the Hegemony government and lose their independence, station leadership invited scientists to come to the station to establish a research and monitoring station, study it, and contain it.

By the time the government learned of the Anomaly and threatened to annex 58 Deep, it was too late. 58 Deep's scientists had sufficient control over the Anomaly to threaten to unleash it. The Hegemony withdrew. 58 Deep became symbol of resistance to the regime.

Outcasts, criminals, engineers, and academics flocked to its safety. To accommodate its growing population, station leadership broadcast an offer to passing ships: permanently join your ship to 58 Deep; agree to abide by its laws; enjoy a free and peaceful life. Hundreds gladly joined, and today the station is the size of a small moon. Unbound by gravity, she grows in all directions.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ What is the Anomaly at the heart of 58 Deep?
- ◊ What regular visitor to the station does everyone dread?
- ◊ Why don't we talk about Sector 357 "QUATRE-MAINS"?
- ◊ How is 58 Deep, an assemblage of hundreds of ships, powered?

## Sample Compasses

1. The grand tour
2. Infrastructural difficulties
3. Welcoming newcomers
4. Vows made under the blue light
5. Laila, Queen of Queens
6. "No questions asked!"

<p><b>Sector 002 "CORE"</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The original space station 58 Deep was built on. Several of the restaurants on the main promenade are still intact, as well as the original equipment brought onboard when the Anomaly manifested. Not currently authorized for residential dwellings.</p> <p><i>Empty deep fryers, the weight of history</i></p>	<p><b>Sector 083 "SECOND EULOGY"</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Home of the station's largest and most versatile waste treatment facility, responsible for handling organic, nuclear, chemical, ontological, and existential waste. The rest of the sector is a docking bay and cargo storage facility made from the remains of a galactic supercarrier, the HS <i>Second Eulogy</i>.</p> <p><i>Bacterial vats, endless pallets</i></p>	<p><b>Sector 749 "EQUATION OF STATE"</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Academic enclave that works on the problems of air recycling, fuel management, and energy flow throughout the station. All are welcome, so long as they're willing to work and learn. Members also produce small engine fittings and pottery for the wider station.</p> <p><i>Frustration, efficiencies, clay</i></p>	<p><b>Little Nebulas Childcare Center</b> Landmark</p> <p>Station-funded creches for children under five, recognizable in every station sector by the murals around their main doors. Responsible for the high-quality care of hundreds of children daily. Free to all guardians.</p> <p><i>"Hmm, try doing it yourself one more time, and if you can't do it, then I'll help!"</i></p>
<p><b>Boat Bridge</b> Landmark</p> <p>Notably narrow connection between the remains of the decommissioned battle cruiser HS <i>Decoherence</i> and the heavy freighter 3581 <i>Hesperidium</i>. Despised by the entire sector. It is only wide enough for one body, and is the only way between the two ships. If two people meet in the middle, one of them must backtrack.</p> <p><i>Hesitation, vertebrae</i></p>	<p><b>Two Blackbirds</b> Landmark</p> <p>Famous sculpture of two stylized blackbirds thought lost by the wider galactic art community. About twenty feet tall. A public nuisance.</p> <p><i>Eyesore, entwined</i></p>	<p><b>The Shallow Groves</b> Landmark</p> <p>Public hydroponic garden. Station-wide tourist attraction, as well as the main food producer for Sectors 051-109 and 732-772. Housed in the converted science vessel AG-9202 Parts and Labor. Its pleasant microclimate makes it a popular work placement for young people.</p> <p><i>Metastasis, deluge, adoration</i></p>	<p><b>58 Deep</b> grimy • bright • crowded</p>

# Elegy, the City of Saints

*melancholy • musical • unforgiving* by Pam Punzalan

On the Hour of Flame, Elegy hums with music. It seems like one song, beautiful and strange. It is not one song, but several. All that bear the touch of Elegy has their own music: a few notes, a bridge, a chorus, a line, an entire song in itself. These are remnants of Saints, Pilgrims who give themselves up so that Elegy may survive.

To be a citizen of Elegy is to be a life won by the life of another. To walk Elegy's streets is to walk upon the bones and dreams of heroes. Remember, though: not all Pilgrims complete their journey. Not all Leaps of Faith are perfect.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ What stands between "a tragic waste" and "a noble sacrifice"?
- ◊ Is a saint born, or made?
- ◊ Are there truly ever two sides to a story?
- ◊ What lies beneath the foundations of a City?

## Sample Compasses

1. A Saint is preparing for their Pilgrimage
2. New Year's Cleansing of Saint's Rest
3. A procession to the Nameless Neighborhood
4. The Skyray Races
5. The Hooded One beckons
6. Visiting Hearts of the City

<p><b>The Garden</b> Landmark</p> <p>Every citizen maintains Elegy's Garden, whose delicate-smelling flowers bloom all day and all season. Home to the ancient Hooded One. Come to Them when there's a part of Elegy's Song that you can't seem to escape. Where Pilgrimages begin.</p> <p><i>A heartbeat before realizing your destiny</i></p>	<p><b>The Precipice</b> Landmark</p> <p>A dark spire that juts out from the middle of Saint's Rest. It is the highest point in Elegy, with one narrow stairway leading all the way up to the edge. Where Pilgrims seeking Sainthood ascend to take the Leap of Faith.</p> <p><i>The spot at the foot of the Precipice is dark and heavy with rejected intentions</i></p>	<p><b>Nameless</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Elegy's slums. They do not sing; they have no flowers. Their residents are here by choice, and few others speak of them. These inhabitants all have songs of discord against Elegy; they are tired of Eating their Saints.</p> <p><i>Mold and rust and quiet dissent</i></p>
<p><b>Sky Touch</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Where the sky-riding families of Dancers live. They raise skyrays, the gentle creatures that are Elegy's prime source of transportation. Skyrays of all sizes, colors and spotting can be found roosting everywhere. It is said that if you wander in here and a Skyray offers you a ride, a Dancer will insist on adopting you.</p> <p><i>The dizzying high of flying close to the sun</i></p>	<p><b>Saint's Rest</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>White, grand, stately, and smelling of sandalwood and lilies. Where citizens come to remember their Saints, and Pilgrims come for inspiration. Nobody lives here; its Keepers live in the Neighborhoods around it. For Pilgrims, this is the last step before the Leap: resting at a Memorial of their choice or building their own.</p> <p><i>Gentle and unyielding as tombstones</i></p>	<p><b>Elegy,</b> the City of Saints <i>melancholy • musical • unforgiving</i></p>

# Islah, Heart of the Crescent

*inviting • jasmine • hungry* by Amr Ammourazz

Rising out amidst the sands of the desert is the beautiful city known as the Heart of the Crescent. This living city, feeding off the curiosity of its denizens and eagerly growing to meet demand, rises around a central oasis, sprawling ever-outwards, making dunes and valleys alike bend to its path. Every building is a mixture of wood, limestone, and whatever else was on hand as it responded to those within its ever-yearning boundaries, reforming itself to meet their needs.

Those within come seeking a light; whether for religious knowledge, scientific pilgrimage, or simply to experience the wonder and folklore that thrives within Islah. And each will find what they came for. Dotted through the landscape, the religious can find mosques ranging from elegant simplicity to elaborate exquisiteness, libraries with histories and theologies and writings unlike any other, and Imams willing to welcome all with open arms. The scientifically-inclined can enjoy cutting-edge wonders like early planes attempting to make a place in the sky, elaborate clocks and architecture that tell time with unparalleled precision, and the best in world medicine. And for those in search of something even more fantastical, one simply needs to step inside to see how the city itself breathes magic.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◇ Folklore is reality in Islah — how does this echo out into the mundane aspects of day to day life?
- ◇ How does reality reinforce faith? How do miracles drive science?
- ◇ What draws the curious to this city?

## Sample Compasses

1. Religious Traditions
2. The Crescent Fair, the yearly celebration of science
3. Magitech
4. The Festival of Fish
5. The Research of Imam Aleem
6. The Intertwining of Neighborhoods

<p><b>Shihab Observatory</b> Landmark</p> <p>This beautiful mosque is an architectural feat made of simple stone and understated patterns, with minarets spiraling out for the Adhan. To top it all off, the central antechamber leads to a cutting-edge planetarium and telescope that all astronomers clamor at the chance to use.</p> <p><i>Shooting Star, Hamsa, Night-Light</i></p>	<p><b>Al Zahra University</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>This public institution provides accessible learning to Islah, welcoming all from full-time students to those simply seeking to expand their horizons. Its open campus features a mix of scientific facilities, religious buildings, and housing that intermingles with the city.</p> <p><i>Mind of the Crescent, The Garden, Lantern-Lit</i></p>	<p><b>The Magic Lamp</b> Landmark</p> <p>A Djinn Run Hookah Joint and Tea Room, this hip hangout is named as a joke on the common belief about Djinn, though its a well known faux pas to mention it. As most buildings in the city, it contains a prayer room in the back, but adjacent is an offering shrine to the Djinn.</p> <p><i>The Hidden Wish, Smog Cloud, A New Leaf</i></p>	<p><b>Islah, Heart of the Crescent</b> inviting • jasmine • hungry</p>
<p><b>Heart Oasis</b> Landmark</p> <p>This natural oasis lies at the center of the city, and citizens and tourists alike visit it for the beautiful sights, a breath of fresh air, or simply a break from the hustle and bustle of Islah. Rumors say the city was built around it, and considerable effort goes into its preservation.</p> <p><i>Breath of The Desert, The Soul's Shower, Respite</i></p>	<p><b>"The Loud Library"</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>While most think of books as the preservers of knowledge, experts know that history can be found in the Bazaar. This Library sprawls out through alleys, under bridges, and into buildings, selling everything one could possibly imagine and more. With each purchase comes a priceless story for the eager mind.</p> <p><i>Soul of the Crescent, Constant Heckling</i></p>	<p><b>Rookha Docks</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Home to warehouses and caravans, Rookha Docks are the start and end of every journey that makes its way through Islah. New visitors, the latest imported goods, and bedouins willing to exchange stories are mainstays of this neighborhood.</p> <p><i>Rocketship, Home, Camel-Slime</i></p>	

# The City Dreamt in Alabaster

*bright • many-faced • intimate* by Geostationary

In the gulf between dream and waking there lies a city, resplendent along the cliffs. It has had many names, yet one is always returned to. It is a bright place, the air full of sea breezes and the calls of birds, the buildings whitewashed in alabaster lightness, pennants and flags snapping in the winds. Storms come and go, but the weather returns to Mediterranean heat. The City shifts from day to day, yet remains no less navigable.

Its people, dreamers and dreamt and curioser things besides live as one people, veiled and masked as is the fashion of the City. Things here often wear two names — official and unofficial, public and private, dreamt and waking. This is a place where strange and wonderful and terrible dreams flow from distant depths and from crystal truths; a place whose people seek to make a living and a future from waking memory and brilliant imaginings.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ What does it mean that things and people here wear two names, two faces, two selves?
- ◊ In a city where any dream may be acquired for the right price, what is hunger? What is contentment?
- ◊ Every citizen has another life outside the City; how does that weigh on and free them?
- ◊ Think always of light and color and the sensation you hold onto upon waking...

## Sample Compasses

1. Someone is lost; how do they find themselves?
2. Something dangerous is being brought to market
3. How do the people get their masks and veils?
4. In a city of dreams, what is it to die?
5. The people of the City are as one — speak of their legacies
6. A storm breaks from the Dreaming Sea

<p><b>The Market of Dreams</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The locals call it by the first dream sold there. The beating heart of commerce in the City, all manner of dream may be bought here along with more mundane goods</p> <p><i>The colored banners; every stall a new wonder The roar of crowds and spices and memories half-forgotten</i></p>	<p><b>The Staircase</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>A place between places, a dream between dreams. A straight ascent for the inattentive, a step or ramp to everywhere for the thoughtful. Tourism names it more grandly than those who use it.</p> <p><i>Steps painted in light; shaded waystations The uncurling of a hand, a map, a thought</i></p>	<p><b>The Harbor</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Ships float in starry waters and sailors go to and fro, unloading their wares and recovering from their voyages beyond horizons. The real name is heard in the longing of those waiting for a ship's return.</p> <p><i>The lapping of waves; sunsets over starry waters They screamed with joy when they saw the sailor again</i></p>	<p><b>The Shrine to Lost Things</b> Landmark</p> <p>Not a memorial to the lost, but a promise that you will be found, tucked away on a side road. Those who tend it still search for its name.</p> <p><i>Green ivy and old stone; burbling water Finally, some respite from the noise and crowds</i></p>
<p><b>The Cafe of Missed Connections</b> Landmark</p> <p>Named for a partner, lost to the sea; two stories over well traveled streets. Diners lift their veils to each other as they make real the things that could have been.</p> <p><i>Clinking teacups; fear in anticipation They are close, showing tenderness behind a veil</i></p>	<p><b>The Stall with the Crystal Chimes</b> Landmark</p> <p>A street cart to the side of the road, busy and ringing with the song of chimes, named a clever pun</p> <p><i>The drifting smell of street food; the coolness of the breeze The mewing of... well, it's like a cat.</i></p>	<p><b>The Square All Strung Up With Lights</b> Landmark</p> <p>At the base of the lighthouse there are lights of every color and the view of the sea and setting sun are among the best; the name is formless yet known to anyone who's visited.</p> <p><i>The resident's songs; color painting every surface Two lovers, bridging their loneliness</i></p>	<p><b>The City Dream in Alabaster</b></p> <p><i>bright • many-faced • intimate</i></p>

# Vector, Your Digital Haven

*fractal • nostalgic • unraveled* by Caro Asercion

When the city of Vector first opened in the bygone year 2000, it was touted as a technological marvel: a twenty-first century solution to twenty-first century problems. The finest source for news, work, entertainment, and leisure, all packaged into one tidy, virtual bundle.

It isn't nearly so crowded these days as it was back then. It's no ghost town, certainly; there are still thriving pockets of activity if you know where to look. But you're just as likely to stumble across a conversation as you are an impenetrable and broken block of code. The city's wide slate of applications and utilities, once unparalleled, have now become mundane — even obsolete — as rival software companies evolve and eclipse Vector's former heights.

The forum is starting to deteriorate, but it'll be decades still before the data unravels for good. Nowadays, Vector is something of a pastel purgatory: littered with empty pixels and electric daydreams from a long-forgotten utopia.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◇ In what ways have other social media platforms replaced Vector? In what areas is Vector still unmatched?
- ◇ Why do people seek to leave their mark in a city that is perpetually dwindling?
- ◇ How do we forge true connections in an artificial space?
- ◇ What ever happened to the moderators?

## Sample Compasses

1. How news travels
2. Reed Park: the Founder, memorialized
3. Data Scrounger disputations
4. The first new user in weeks
5. Night market postponed due to glitch rain
6. The Trapezoid unlocks

<p><b>Main Drag</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Though not as bustling as it was in its heyday, Main Drag is by no means less beloved. Shopkeepers display their wares in wireframe storefronts as passers-by chat idly about whatever musings catch their fancy.</p> <p><i>Technicolor palm trees, patio gossip next to server banks, a veneer of normalcy</i></p>	<p><b>Lightningrod</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The entertainment district never sleeps: videos and images glow on diffused billboards that pepper all buildings. Within these walls, artists toil, desperate to go viral overnight.</p> <p><i>Barren backlots, pixel-thin scaffolding, familiar faces everywhere</i></p>	<p><b>The Office Wastes</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Skyscrapers stretch upward into vivid, miasmic fog; mostly abandoned, but with some straggler corporations housed inside. Data Scroungers trawl the ruins alongside pencil-pushers just trying to submit their paperwork. Everyone has to make a living somehow.</p> <p><i>Spreadsheet graffiti, post-apocalyptic business casual</i></p>
<p><b>The Trapezoid</b> Landmark</p> <p>No one agrees on this massive polygon's origin or purpose: Is it a monument? A portal? A graveyard? An old user, corrupted in a botched file save? Two things are certain, though: She's Never Where It Should Be, and she's Probably Right Behind You.</p> <p><i>Burnished mirror sheen, static screech, 13:10:13:20</i></p>	<p><b>KVZ-Loggerhead Radio Tower and Karaoke Bar</b> Landmark</p> <p>The heart of Lightningrod, KVZ-Log is the tallest structure for miles around. With its secure connection, anyone can tune in for live or prerecorded broadcasts. Thursday is singles night.</p> <p><i>Cathode cocktails, infinite musical catalog, less infinite number of comfy chairs</i></p>	<p><b>Vector, Your Digital Haven</b> <i>fractal • nostalgic • haunted</i></p>

# Estralia, where the sun never sets

*sun-drenched • lugubrious • charmed* by Nell Raban

Visitors to Estralia will find their every whim, desire and complaint catered to. Want to just relax unmolested on a beach by gentle waves? Done. A day of educational but superficial craft workshops? You got it. Something off the menu perhaps? So long as you know whom to ask, it's yours.

It's not all sunshine and rainbows for everyone, though. In a place where the sun never sets, it's hard to find the shadows, but they're there if you look closely enough. All this didn't just wink suddenly into existence, after all. Where you find these places, that's where you'll find the real, whole and true Estralia.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ What are hidden costs of leisure?
- ◊ Who can afford to vacation here?
- ◊ Where does the sun shine, but shouldn't?
- ◊ What role do law and order play in a place where indulgence rules?
- ◊ What do the locals say about living here?

## Sample Compasses

1. Where the Sun don't shine
2. The Gallery of Shadows
3. Sunbreeze Excursions, Good Times and Romps Company
4. The Agora, where everything is on sale and still overpriced
5. Estralia Historical Tours for the Cultivated Intellect
6. Fenwick Hargitay, Estralia's Favorite Sun

<p><b>The Quarters</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Living quarters for the service class. After wandering there, one tourist who happened to carry great influence complained to the city's leaders about what they saw, and measures were taken to make The Quarters appear "less offensive." This was not received well.</p> <p><i>Beddown, Sanctuary. It smells different here</i></p>	<p><b>The Beachfronts</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Rental bungalows line the water of a serene bay in this neighborhood complete with a boardwalk and star system amusement feature. (Don't go on it if you've eaten recently.)</p> <p><i>The Outlook, Lazytown, Let's never leave</i></p>	<p><b>Estralia Estates</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Luxury permanent residences of the elite. The estates form a gentle curve on a ridge from which one can view the entire resort and ocean beyond. Coming here can be an excursion unto itself, each estate reflecting the unique personality of its owner.</p> <p><i>Look at that view, What's beyond this fence, Hot Property, Rich Row</i></p>	<p><b>Estralia,</b> where the sun never sets sun-drenched • lugubrious • charmed</p>
<p><b>Hidden Grotto</b> Landmark</p> <p>A complex of waterfalls and whirlpools heated by huge mirrors and magnifying glasses. You'd think it'd be open to the public, but lately the water's been far too hot for comfort. Many have dared cross the velvet ropes nevertheless, to their great regret.</p> <p><i>Bathtub, Lovers' Lounge, The Trap, Blinding, Scalding</i></p>	<p><b>The Circlet</b> Landmark</p> <p>Visitors get their first glimpse as they approach town — a low thick wall ringing the entire resort and its surroundings. Its purpose is not obvious. But press your ear against the wall and you can detect a faint, low hum that rattles your chest.</p> <p><i>The Magnet, Nice but why, Get down from there</i></p>	<p><b>The Sundial</b> Landmark</p> <p>Not what you'd expect, but a massive and inscrutable timekeeping system composed of water basins, scales and pressure gauges. The Sundial is maintained by the timekeepers, who use it as the standard for all public clocks.</p> <p><i>God, Look how it shimmers, What does that part do?</i></p>	

# The Conformal Metroplane

*dense • alien • vibrant* by Natalie the Knife

The Conformal Metroplane, or the Metro, is a place outside of space and time. People slip into the Metro through cracks and crevices: you find a painted over door in your house and decide to open it; you duck into a back alleyway; or you let your eyes succumb to exhaustion and close as you lean over a grimy table in the cafe near your apartment.

The next moment, the world has transformed. The first thing you notice is the sky: a deep, angry blue. Stars like acne scar it and seem to writhe in the still air. No moon, no sun, and no changing. The next thing you notice is the people: everyone is wearing a mask except you. Each mask is different, each face carefully made just so.

If you're lucky, you find your way home. You find a door with no walls and step through it; you slip into a field of alleyways; or you go back to that cafe, find that same table, and try to rest your head once more.

Even if you get home, the Metro comes with you. It'll stick to you like tar, and you won't stop thinking about it. Thinking about the wonders you've seen. Thinking about how you can next go back. Thinking about what your life there would be like. You go back. Everyone goes back.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ Who rules this place and why do they conceal their identity?
- ◊ How do people hold on to the cultures and identities they bring with them into the Metro?
- ◊ What do those who come here hope to find? How are their hopes dashed or fulfilled?
- ◊ What here looks ill-fitting or incongruous? What catches your eye as not fitting in?

## Sample Compasses

1. Wang Qi'er, eldritch businessman — who benefits from his death?
2. How do people celebrate festivals and holidays?
3. The Moon rages across the Metro
4. One brother works on Gunmetal Street, the other in the Pitch
5. The founder/s of the Metro
6. How are newcomers welcomed?

<p><b>The Mandelbrot Den</b> Landmark</p> <p>Hidden in your reflection, the Pitch</p> <p><i>Fractal wolves curl up around non-euclidean fires</i></p>	<p><b>Sing it Sweetly</b> Landmark</p> <p>The most prominent street corner, High Heaven</p> <p><i>Cups on lips on lips on cups</i></p>	<p><b>The Door Depot</b> Landmark</p> <p>Across from Cities Hall, Gunmetal Street</p> <p><i>Polished marble, high open windows, and an infinite array of doors</i></p>	<p><b>The Conformal Metroplane</b></p> <p><i>dense • alien • vibrant</i></p>
<p><b>High Heaven</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>People lose themselves looking for something to keep their heads up. You can't fill a stomach with hollow dreams.</p> <p><i>Empty faces erased by bright, bright lights</i></p>	<p><b>The Pitch</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Only the poorest fucks live here, where even geometry has become a lawless and broken shell of itself.</p> <p><i>Lucent shadows cling like oil to the ground to our feet</i></p>	<p><b>Gunmetal Street</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The deals conducted on Gunmetal Street are beyond mortal comprehension. It is as feared and distrusted as a business district can get.</p> <p><i>Silver and steel and gold and perfectly carved smiles</i></p>	

# Luminous, City of Veiled Stars

*lonely • dream-riddled • shifting* by Rae Nedjadi

Luminous wasn't a city at first, it was a graveyard. For every being who gave up on returning home, for every wish granted, for every spell burned, a star would fall from the sky. No matter how long it would take, each star would eventually crash down unto Luminous.

No one remembers which dead star first shed its skin. Lifting themselves up from the dust of the cosmos, their eyes filled with all they have seen in the Universe. The land was dark, cruel, and did not want to be tamed. But even here, on the edge of the very Universe, hope and love was planted as strange seeds.

The fallen stars take on forms they remember seeing, the people of the cosmos they glimpsed at in their dream-like state as they once danced in the sky. The fallen stars built their city in much the same way, half-remembered aspects that follow a strange and haunting dream-logic.

But the fallen stars are still learning. How to speak, connect, fall in love, how to hope. And hope again. How to dream their own dreams, to wish their own wishes.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◊ How do the starfolk communicate without words?
- ◊ How do starfolk embrace their transience?
- ◊ What does it mean to live a life made from unreliable memories?
- ◊ How have the starfolk rewritten their destiny?

## Sample Compasses

1. Half-dreams, half-wishes, half-moments
2. The black hole and its hunger
3. The evolution of starfolk
4. Myths and maps
5. Oracles and prophecies
6. A star is chosen

<p><b>The Garden District</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The nursery of star children that don't bear the same loneliness as their elders. They are cared for here, and as they sleep their small dreams creates cosmic flowers of rare quality. The star mothers have made this neighborhood their home as well.</p> <p><i>Cassiopeia's Children</i></p>	<p><b>The Pilgrim Station</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Many pilgrims come from all over the cosmos, seeking out a half-dream or almost-wish they witnessed falling from the sky. Many have spent their whole lives to reach Luminous. Pilgrims may choose to leave behind their former lives forever, choosing to merge with a lonely star.</p> <p><i>Pegasus's Followers</i></p>	<p><b>The Chained Bird</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>A bar made of the bars we enter in our dreams, the staff are Fallen Stars that have taken birdlike forms. Every drink reminds one of an open sky, a call to travel, an endless journey. Cages decorate the bar, each holding a wish: freedom, flight, escape of some kind. Birdsong and sighs echo against the wall.</p> <p><i>Cygnus's Cage</i></p>
<p><b>The Weaponsmith</b> Landmark</p> <p>When all eight moons are dark in the night sky, this mysterious forge appears. Rumors say that if one can offer the right wish for barter, Sagittarius themselves will appear and create the star weapon bearing your true name. What a true name is for, no one will say.</p> <p><i>Sagittarius's Reach</i></p>	<p><b>Starfall Beach</b> Landmark</p> <p>When stars fall here, they take longer to rise from the depths and take on even stranger forms than most. They are made of the dreams of every ocean in the cosmos, and an ocean's dream is always a difficult one to bear. Starfolk keep to themselves and rarely seek company.</p> <p><i>Pisces's Grasp</i></p>	<p><b>Luminous,</b> City of Veiled Stars <i>lonely • dream-riddled • shifting</i></p>

# Sunny Weather Broadcast, a City of Soft Lessons

*whimsical • bright • tenderhearted* by Rufus Roswell

The Sunny Weather Broadcast Company was formed before the slow change of the Great Unwinding. Its founders hoped to create a place where children's programming could truly thrive, but after its founding the economic and distribution arms of the company folded. There were fewer TVs to broadcast to and fewer children to watch what they made.

Yet, their cameras never stopped rolling. As they saw it there was more need than ever for light and laughter and lessons taught gently. They dropped "Company" from their name. The world washed away. They went on living.

The citizens of the city are those who once graced its stages; puppets large and small, living toys, shopkeepers, librarians, teachers, talking animals of all kinds. Year after year, they sing songs of joy into radio microphones with no confirmation that anybody is listening. They do this so that they may welcome all who wash up on the shores of the city, tossed their way by a turbulent world.

There is hunger in the city. Still the world unwinds further. But if you listen close enough, you can hear a little song telling you how to get to a place where the air is sweet and the clouds are swept away.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◇ What magic is there in childhood? What new perspective does adulthood bring? What can only be seen at one age or another?
- ◇ Who first taught us our lessons? Who teaches them now?
- ◇ When do we cry as well as laugh? When do we mourn as well as play? When do the storm clouds weigh us down and how do we get up again?

## Sample Compasses

1. Lisa Lioness, who guards the gate
2. Imaginary Residents
3. The Elevated Trolley Line
4. Salvage Teams
5. A new show comes to the airways
6. The Golden Rule

<p><b>Main Street Canyon</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The steep alley between the soundstages that make up Sunny Weather has long since been covered by a domed roof, and sun-lamps hung beneath the plastic sky. Here the music of the city is made; the drumming of rain, the choir of Children, the rhythm of trade and secondhand barter.</p> <p><i>When rain rains and sun shines, a good day for us every time</i></p>	<p><b>Last Sun</b> Landmark</p> <p>A child's drawing of the sun, modeled in bronze, smiling face and all, which once adorned the gate of the production lot, now hangs at one end of Main Street Canyon. Its acid-polished surface diffuses the harsh light of the sun-lamps and gives the open square below a brassy glow.</p> <p><i>A burnished beacon illuminates our play</i></p>	<p><b>The Community Rafters</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The roofs and support beams of the three largest soundstages boast new life; Inflated greenhouses, suspended plant beds, a winding snake of hydroponic nurseries. Here the community labours to rid soil of its acid contamination and grow most of Sunny Weather's food.</p> <p><i>Hands cup reborn earth, worms wriggle, small shoots grow without direction</i></p>	<p><b>Sunny Weather Broadcast,</b> a City of Soft Lessons whimsical • bright • tenderhearted</p>
<p><b>The Broadcast Tree</b> Landmark</p> <p>Saplings planted in the Community Rafters have grown around the old radio tower, but Mr. Fox and Mr. Owl don't mind. Night and day they labour to broadcast songs, advice, and educational content to whatever children might be out there in the storm; wood and bark protect their gear.</p> <p><i>A hopeful tune soars from branches, canopy life sings in tune</i></p>	<p><b>Living Library</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Every salvaged book is useful. Even if the pages are fused, a stiff cover will make a good home for a small citizen. A thriving community of mice families, bug roommates, and finger puppet clans live in bookish homes on shelf streets having found new purpose for the company library once again.</p> <p><i>Hard covers make good readers and stronger walls</i></p>	<p><b>Felt and Mirrors</b> Landmark</p> <p>Who repaints the cell shaded glass of the Projected Dragon when they chip? Who sews eyes back on to Puppet children who played a little rough? The engineers of Felt and Mirrors Effects solemnly took up these mantles, stepped up as doctors and turned their workshop into a hospital.</p> <p><i>Stitching and mending, light and magic, the city continues onward</i></p>	<p><b>Castle Trolley</b> Landmark</p> <p>Castle Trolley has long stood in one of the more empty warehouses; its walls multicolored stone and plastic hide slides and swings and tunnels of every shape and size — relics from its days as a children's playground. The trolleys of the city flow through it, shepherding Sunny Citizens from hall to garden.</p> <p><i>Whir of gears and a friendly whistle, commuters melody</i></p>

# Those folly-wood spires in the garden of the bird kings, **Haven Aves**

*sprawling • palatial • dreamlike* by Manu S.

The birds are tourists in our world. They behold our customs, witness our struggles, sample all the music sprung from the earth. They smell and taste and feel *change* in the air.

And in time, the birds fly home, to Haven Aves. *Their* city rises from thick mist, inorganic towers we might reconcile as skyscrapers, their provenance forgotten. Arranged in a derelict grid, the city seems to extend forever. If there are — were — streets below, the residents have never seen them, much less walked them.

Among these spires frolic the *bird kings*. Ascendant, ethereal, they are enthralled by the tales from their little messengers of distant lands. With powers of conjuration and spacetime mastery, they play in their city, making elaborate games of all the wonders their birds have spoken of. Age, shape, plumage, gender, philosophy, status, disposition, the bird kings adopt and discard as they please all these attributes and more in their revelry.

Their society is a mockery of ours, larger than life. They hold funerals and weddings, elections and governments, wars and uprisings, all with the flimsiest of grasps on what those things actually *mean*. They are strange, they are joyous, and for all their borrowed mannerisms they are utterly alien.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◇ The bird kings adore the stern physicality of the towers, use them as a launching point for their own creations. What within the towers' architecture guides them?
- ◇ In a world run by fickle rulers, what does it mean to classify something as mundane? As delightful? What actions are noble? What viewpoints are disreputable?
- ◇ Who in the city so boldly claims they've met the mortals from stories in the flesh?

## Sample Compasses

1. Souvenirs from the real world
2. Murmurs in the orchard
3. Winter, a novelty
4. When mortals scaled the Haven
5. The bird kings discover theatre
6. The bird kings learn of True Names

<p><b>Orchard of the Philosopher-Cranes Neighborhood</b></p> <p>A terraced mountain cloaked in forest, a lone organic shape rising from the mist. Flawless fruit trees arranged in calculated configuration. A lovely spot for a stroll.</p> <p><i>Sun-dappled solitude, Pontifications 'neath the hazelnut trees, Manicured undergrowth</i></p>	<p><b>Heaven's Rise Plateau Landmark</b></p> <p>The one spot in Haven Aves and the Orchard close to overgrown, kings flock here to watch the sun and moon creep over the horizon and philosophize upon the natural sciences.</p> <p><i>Wingbeats rippling silvergrass, Fevered debates of amateur astronomers</i></p>	<p><b>The Rookeries Neighborhood</b></p> <p>A cluster of raucous towers where The Aviarist toils, raising birds to send out into the world. Something real is happening here, an anomaly in a city of playacting. Kings curious about the living world study the birds, the closest first-hand approximation of a natural habitat offered by Haven Aves.</p> <p><i>Dropping-stucco cladding, Raptor-stocked halls, Idle chats under yellow bunting</i></p>	<p><b>Haven Aves</b> sprawling • palatial • dreamlike</p> <p><i>Those folly-wood spires in the garden of the bird kings,</i></p>
<p><b>Rooftop Meadows</b> Landmark</p> <p>Pocket-handkerchiefs of true-in-their-mutedness gold and green and blue, spread atop the highest floors of the towers in the Rookeries. A range of miniature ecosystems feature here as feeding grounds for the messenger-birds, but few quite explode in sound and motion like the grain-fields.</p> <p><i>Penthouse biomes, Murmuration lunch rush</i></p>	<p><b>The Streets Below</b> Landmark</p> <p>If it mattered to anyone the spires' origins before the bird kings came home to roost, it might be found in the mists down here. The bird kings prefer not to stray too low, where the fog soaks their plumes and necessitates an ignoble climb to back among the sunbeams.</p> <p><i>Thrillseekers' Venturi-ngs, Dewstruck pinions, Loners on the terraces</i></p>	<p><b>The Aviarist's Roost</b> Landmark</p> <p>Eerily clean and quiet for a nursery, the backstage and wings to the bird kings' theatics. The Aviarist, tireless stagehand, is a secretive sort, discouraging fly-bys of curious bird kings by threading their nursery-tower to the rest of the Rookeries with a web of cable perches.</p> <p><i>Eggshell mosaics, Trade secrets, Windstruck wail of gossamer moors</i></p>	

# Treefalls

*rusty • overgrown • askew* by Eaves Mendes, with sensitivity reading by Mahpiya

It came from above, so the stories go, from the bright and blue mountains that lie like a blanket over the highest branches of the forest. They say that it carried an axe as long as a river and exhaled a sticky black smoke. That when it passed, the earth shuddered, the trees groaned, and you could hear the roar of an engine from behind the iron bars of its stomach. In some stories it cut down hundreds of trees. In others, it was only the one. In the end, after felling a great oak, it sank to the ground, reclined against the stump, and fell still and silent. There was nobody inside, and soon the scars it left on the landscape and the stories that surrounded it would be the only evidence that it had ever moved at all.

Treefalls is a place of rusted metal and petrified wood beneath a gap in a cavernous canopy. The city is draped over a stump and built into what remains of the colossus seated against it. The silhouette of the mechanical lumberjack remains, but the details have faded over the years. By the time the letters stamped into the side of the axehead — BUNYAN LUMBER CO — began to wear smooth, the stories were starting to shift and branch. Today, variations of these stories have proliferated throughout the city and far into the woods beyond.

## Questions to explore during play

- ◇ Who do the most prevalent stories here serve, and who do they leave out?
- ◇ How does Treefalls continue to impact the surrounding forest, and vice versa?
- ◇ What of the fallen log? What of the hole in the sky? What of the sagging cavern ceiling?

## Sample Compasses

1. Seeds among cinders
2. Rainy day refuge
3. Sawdust season
4. Counting the rings
5. The tallest of tales
6. The Rust Collector and her foolish brother

<p><b>The Flume</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>A network of slides, chutes, rails, and gutters that crisscross the hollow colossus and extend beneath the stumtop, collecting all the city's rainfall and depositing the rushing water in the river at its base. The fastest, bumpiest route between any two places.</p> <p><i>Waterfalls in darkness, empty veins, a forest of rickety metal legs</i></p>	<p><b>Switchback Stacks</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>A place of ledges, alcoves, trickling sap, and huge bracket fungi. A sort of winding staircase up the side of the stump to the city. Every inch of wood here is covered in layers upon layers of the etched names of residents and passers-by.</p> <p><i>Footprints in the guestbook</i></p>	<p><b>Conker's All-Hours Theatre and Soup</b> Landmark</p> <p>On a knobby fungal outcropping, an eatery boasts a play which has continued without pause for fifteen years, performed by a rotating cast that is also the waitstaff. In the back, a metal pipe, once a giant's finger joint, draws sap from deep within the storied walls.</p> <p><i>The plot's incomprehensible, but the food...</i></p>	<p><b>Treefalls</b> rusty • overgrown • askew</p>
<p><b>High Headwell</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>The giant's skull is a basin of pooled water and gnarled trees that pierce the metal cranium and twist their way skyward, on which are mounted hundreds of shout-funnels and ear horns big and small, angled out at people and places way out among the trees.</p> <p><i>An echo only dies if you stop listening for it</i></p>	<p><b>The Old Charcoal Mine</b> Landmark</p> <p>An foolish endeavor long since abandoned.</p> <p><i>The gates may have been closed when the revenue dried up, but under the stones and coals and mulch and ash, an old fire still festers, eating away at the roots beneath the city and out into the forest</i></p>	<p><b>Makermark Tool Library</b> Landmark</p> <p>Carved into the side of a rusty axe head, an expansive archive of functional objects, freely available to borrow. Upon returning a tool to the library, you are encouraged to leave a sign of yourself or how you employed it behind on its shelf.</p> <p><i>No Such Thing As A Broken Hammer</i></p>	<p><b>Littleford</b> Neighborhood</p> <p>Littleford was here long before the Lumberjack arrived, and though the city now casts a shadow over the old town and floods its river with drainage, people here continue the work to keep the fish in the water and the buildings on the bank from washing away.</p> <p><i>Thunder through a spiderweb</i></p>

# About the Contributors

**Amr Ammourazz (they/she)** is a Queer Egyptian Muslim game designer, here to bring puns and math to everything they touch. As both a writer and a player, they seek to explore themes of identity, and the interconnection of game systems and theme in storytelling. You can find her on twitter [[@ammourazz](#)] or [itch.io](#).

**Caro Asercion (they/them)** is a multidisciplinary artist who works in tabletop games, visual art, and theatre. Their work explores themes of diaspora, displacement, and wondrous reverence for the places we inhabit. You can find them on twitter [[@SeaExcursion](#)], and support their work on [patreon](#) and [itch.io](#).

**Samantha Day (she/her)** is a writer from upstate New York. She is a threat to her environment and she refuses to go extinct. You will not perceive her. You can find her games and give her money for them on [itch.io](#).

**Geostatonary (they/them)** is a game designer who makes lyrical and indie games about intimacy and alienation, desire, and how we relate to and interact with space and bodies. You can find them on twitter [[@geostatonary](#)] and check out the games and resources they make at [itch.io](#).

**Mahpiya (they/she)** is a writer, consultant, and researcher. Their work is centered around Indigenous experiences on the prairies, colonialism, resistance, and diaspora. When not yelling about rivers or canoes, she can be found on twitter [[@sjwwall](#)], [kofi](#), or [itch](#).

**Eaves Mendes (they/them)** makes tactile little games crammed full of lively little images and crunchy little words. You can find them on twitter [[@leakyeweaves](#)] and support their games and game tools on [itch.io](#).

**Natalie the Knife (she/her)** is a trans game designer from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She designs and publishes roleplaying games with a focus on novel mechanics and player support. You can find her on twitter [[@rpgnatalie](#)] and support her work on [itch.io](#).

**Rae Nedjadi (they/he)**, also known as Sword Queen Games, is a tabletop designer and layout artist based out of the Philippines. Their games focus on high emotions, deep intuition, games as ritual, and the power of tarot as a tool for storytelling. You can support their work on twitter [[@temporalhiccup](#)], [patreon](#), and [itch.io](#).

# About the Contributors (continued)

**Takuma Okada (they/them)** is a musician, game designer, and pixel artist. Under the name No Road Home, their focuses are sense of place, loneliness, and self-reflection. They hope to create work that reminds us of both sublime and commonplace moments with fondness. You can find them on twitter [[@takuma\\_okada\\_](#)], [itch.io](#), [bandcamp](#), or [patreon](#).

**Pam Punzalan (she/they)** is a game designer, writer, editor, sensitivity reader, cultural consultant, and community organizer based in Manila. She's proud to be #RPGSEA, and has done projects big and small in the realms of PbtA, FitD, OSR, and traditional games. You can find her on twitter [[@TheDovetailor](#)], and support her via [patreon](#) or by purchasing her games on [itch.io](#).

**Nell Raban (she/her)** is a former theater artist who turned to creating interactive experiences. In addition to creating her own analog and digital games, she's an active freelance writer, having contributed to such works as *The Ultimate Micro-RPG Book*, *Sea of Legends* and others. For more, visit her website, [nellraban.com](#), or follow her on twitter [[@nell\\_do\\_well](#)].

**Sasha Reneau (they/them)** is a game designer and illustrator whose work focuses on interpretive generation, the beautiful and monstrous ordeal of operating a body, and looking up from the bottom of a well. You can find their art at [sashareneau.com](#), their games on [itch.io](#), and their twitter [[@sasha\\_reneau](#)].

**Rufus Roswell (he/him)** is a trans masculine poet and game dev working at the intersection of nuclear history, queer theory, and children's horror. He seeks to put the tools to write and rewrite history into the hands of his players. He also wants you to know that Big Bird wears nikes. You can find him on twitter [[@roswellwrites](#)] and support his games on [itch.io](#).

**Manu "Schazer" S. (they/them)** has a head full of birds, a fondness for bugs, and a job teaching high school science and biology in one of the most beautiful corners of the world. They like to meander outdoors, collecting glimpses of connections and shiny things, and take it all back to their nook to weave into stories, snippets of lore, experiences to be shared, and assorted handicrafts. You can find them on twitter [[@Hummingmoth](#)] and [itch.io](#).

**Quinn Vega (she/her)** is a queer game designer, graphic designer, and musician based out of Portland, OR. She makes games about being gay, making the world better, and fighting fascists. You can find her on twitter [[@Mx\\_quinn](#)] and her work at [mxquinn.itch.io](#).

**Viditya Voleti (he/him)** is an interactive artist and game designer! He specializes in worldbuilding, GMless, and tactile play that explores the facets of what games are and what play is in as many forms and mediums as he finds. You can say that he just likes to have fun! You can find him on twitter [[@vidityavoleti](#)], and support his work on [patreon](#) and [itch.io](#).