

Shadows of the Rocky Mountains



THE YOKAIPEDIA
BOOK III

SUMMER 2026

Shadows of the Rocky Mountains

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BOOK III

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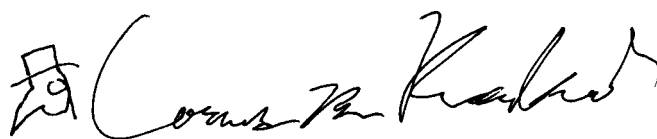
How exciting, our third issue! First issues have their own joy in breaking ground and second issues bring an excitement in trying to see if you can repeat the magic of the first. Now, a third means we've got our legs under us! Now we know this is sustainable and reproducible. It's all gravy from here.

In the future, you might start to notice more tweaks and expansions to the format of this periodical. The core so far has been about collecting and documenting the yokai of this world. However, our world is so much bigger than that and it would be a disservice to you, dear reader, to keep your view of it so limited.

To that end, I would first like to welcome our new Creative Editor, A Cursed Mug, onto the staff. I'm excited to see them bring their own voice to this fine publication. I will also be loaning my own voice to some other devilish rogues in order to capture the full breadth of possibility in this world.

In short, thanks for joining us so far. Make sure you stick around, things are only going to get better from here.

In solidarity,
Corvus van Roodland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Corvus van Roodland', with a small, stylized drawing of a face or mask to the left of the first name.

EXCERPT FROM "A HISTORY OF THE COMMONWEALTHS"

BY: ARTHUR P. BEAUREGARD III

ADJUNCT PROF. OF HISTORY AT QUEEN CITY COLLEGE

*"LOOK BACK OVER THE PAST, WITH ITS CHANGING EMPIRES
THAT ROSE AND FELL, AND YOU CAN FORESEE THE FUTURE TOO."*

- MARCUS AURELIUS

"When were the seeds of the Commonwealths planted?" is a question that will keep us academics employed in debate for centuries. One may as well ask which snowflake starts an avalanche or which straw breaks a camel's back. Still, we do know that it is not a matter of a single slight or crisis that results in such rending of nations, but rather the collective stress of decades of tension. Still, all stories must start somewhere, and for the purposes of this book I choose the year 2012.

This year is notable for two reasons. First, it marked the end of a cycle on the Mesoamerican Long Count calendar and brought with it the energy of ends and thus beginnings. Second, this was also the year the first state in the Union went into open rebellion regarding

legal recreational marijuana use and thus in my mind marks the beginning of the Great Breakup.

No one talked about it as such at the time. There were no banners raised or shots fired, but the authority of the Federal Government of the United States of America was flaunted when the people of the country voted to "just legalize it".

Around the same time a study (and accompanying map) was published in the Manhattan Times about an ethno-cultural analysis of the populace of the United States of America. It revealed that instead of a single, monocultural people, there was in fact something closer to 8 "Americas", all bundled together in one trench coat.



Figure 1: The 8 Cultural "Americas" & their cultural neighbors

So, Part One of this book will start from that moment in 2012, then move through the following 30 years of the country's seams wearing thin. The COVID-19 lockdown and George Floyd protests, the ICE crack downs on domestic citizens in the decades after, the Maritime Ghosts & Ghouls Association shutting down sea shipping through the Pacific in the mid 2030s, the U.S. Army being deployed domestically to retake Manhattan from the Zuccati Coven in 2041, all set against a backdrop of recurring Beef Riots tearing up the suburbs throughout the decades.



*Figure 2: Lydia Cartham-Martinez;
America's Last Elected President*

Then, in Part Two, it all finally comes to a head with the Last October Surprise in late 2044. The seemingly coordinated attacks on banking data centers in the LA Basin, Chicagoland, and a recently "liberated" NYC providing the "perfect" excuse for then President Lydia Cartham-Martinez to suspend elections under the pretext of martial law and take a 3rd term with no opposition.

The committees and covens that had been dealing with a country coming apart at the seams, sprang into response. With the Mayday Declarations the following year (also known as the Year of Three Presidents), where there once had been a single United States there were now 8 Commonwealths and a fractured Federation trying to put the lid back on the pot.

From there we will zoom in on the efforts of one particular Commonwealth, the Rocky Mountain Commonwealth (RMC). From its particular Mayday Declaration all the way up to the RMC securing its sovereignty with Chief Druid Harpy's final land and air campaign of The Great Breakup in 2050, the March to the Mississippi, pushing the last of the Federal forces over the big river and out of the RMC.

While studying this time in history, one theme in particular has stuck with me. This was a time of a small, entrenched, minority of elites who saw the walls and guns of the Federal government as a fortress that would keep them safe. At the same time, the vast majority of citizens found themselves either pushed outside those very same

walls, left to fend for themselves, or found themselves inside something that quickly began to feel like a prison.

Thus the majority of Americans began to ask themselves; what kind of future could exist outside the walls?

Writing from here at the end of the 21st century, we have some form of an answer to that question. However, for those living through the events of the middle of the century, going through the Great Breakup, the Federal Retreat, and the conflicts that drove and secured the formation of the various Commonwealths, they did not have that advantage. This tome is an attempt to describe their stories, capture that sense of uncertainty and contingency, and hopefully present some conclusion we can use to guide us here in the present.



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- SEEING THEM DRIVEN BEFORE YOU
- HEARING THE LAMENTATIONS OF THEIR KITTENS



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BASEMENT OF
THE PABST BLUE RIBBON CASINO
AT THE 1933 CHICAGO'S WORLD FAIR

ENTRY FEE: 7 ELF STONES

PURPLE NURL ANTS - ALPINE

ART AND ENTRY BY: 蒲松齡 (PU SONGLING)

Enriched uranium lichen
tell stories on their stones
that smatter across mountainsides
like colossal decaying bones

The messages are hidden
to the city folk who say
"What a funny colored lichen!"
before they hike away

But in the shamans' wisdom
the transmission is made clear
for the radioactive lichen
hold a magick to be feared

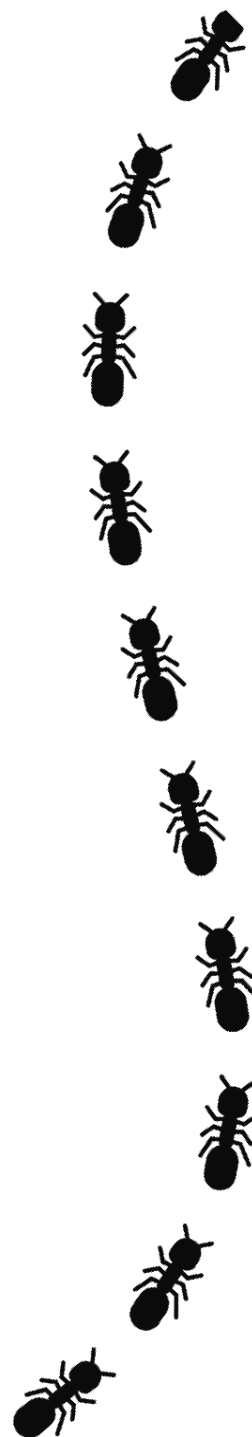
Mutations of the foulest kind
arise from the grounds they hold
turning birds into liver bats
and squirrels into hairless moles

Some would say the land is cursed
but shamans know better still
they study purple nurl ants
and learn of their secret will

Nurl ants are never irradiated
despite their green glowing world
for they feed the dangerous lichen
bits of food that they've nurlled

In exchange for their tribute
nurl ants thrive on the land
and when the shamans do the same
their power grows in hand

So when you find some lichen
that glows with a lime green light
feed it some food you've nurlled
and you just might survive the night



WATER WIGHTS - URBAN/PLAINS/ALPINE/DESERT



As the Anglo colonizers of the new world moved west across the continent, many Yokai from the old world followed in their wake. One type that resonated particularly well west of the Mississippi were water wights.

Creatures whose entire purpose is arbitrating access to the most precious and limited resource in the West, the wights take it upon themselves to enforce a sort of first in, last out system upon humans.

Having to deal with water means having to deal with the wights and any attempts to change their minds or banish them will require long, intricate, byzantine rituals in one of the specialized water temples scattered across the land.

The oldest tradition of humans contending with water wights is the "Tribunal de las Aigues" in Valencia, Spain. The wizards there coined the motto of the entire profession of watermancers. Which loosely translates to "Whiskey is for drinkin'. Water wights is for fightin'."

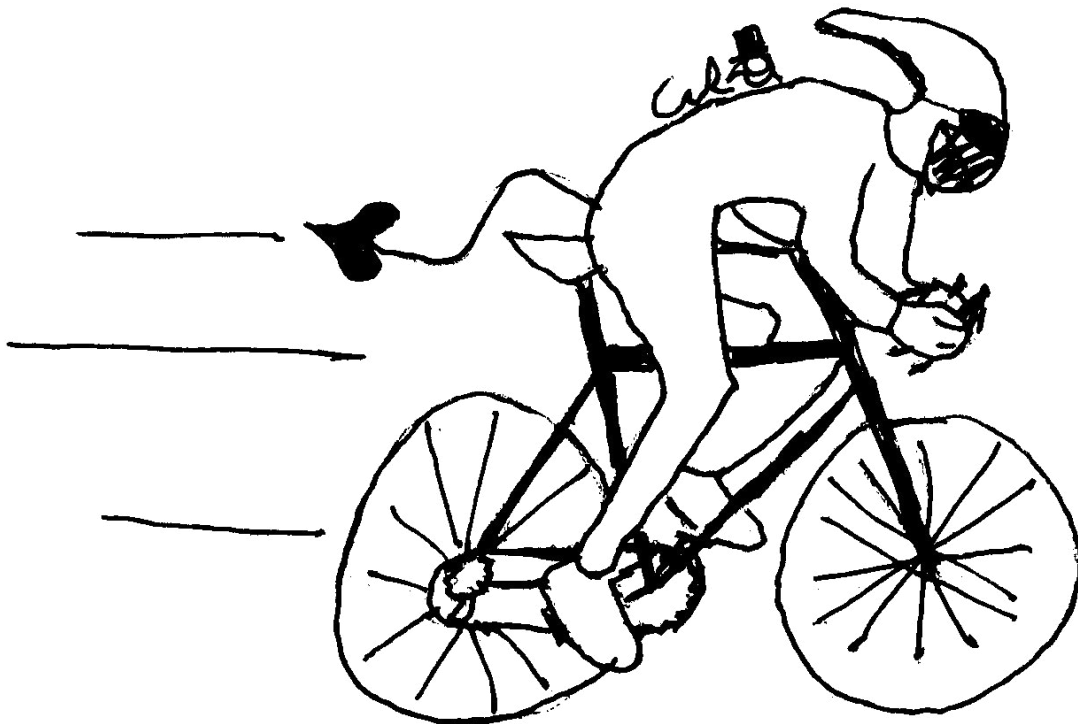
SPANDEXTRIXES - URBAN

When the hindsight infested leave their cars
The lust for chaos stays in their hearts
So they don spandex and grab handlebars
Carbon fiber frames stripped down to bare parts.

For Spandextrixes, speed is their purpose
If it slows them down they toss it aside.
Spares, bells, lights gone; their frame a smooth surface.
No pleasantries, they can't abide

Wasted oxygen for other trail peers.
If you're slow, you're an obstacle to pass
Their mouths silent, all they'll give you is sneers.
They must take first or they'll feel they're in last.

So unless you're a demon, do be nice
When passing on the trail, always ring twice.



BARBELBESH - ALPINE

ENTRY BY: 蒲松齡 (PU SONGLING)

Slash a sigil on an aspen's flesh
Until it weeps a black blooded goo
Not from the mark that you threshed
But the knobbed eyes that face the moon

The tears that flow call Barbelbesh
Satyr of high mountain doom
Who makes his home on Galbergesh
Stone fortress and forbidden tomb

Wait for him then give up hope
For you're hardly worth his boon
The Satyr doesn't care for dopes
Or crystal worshiping loons

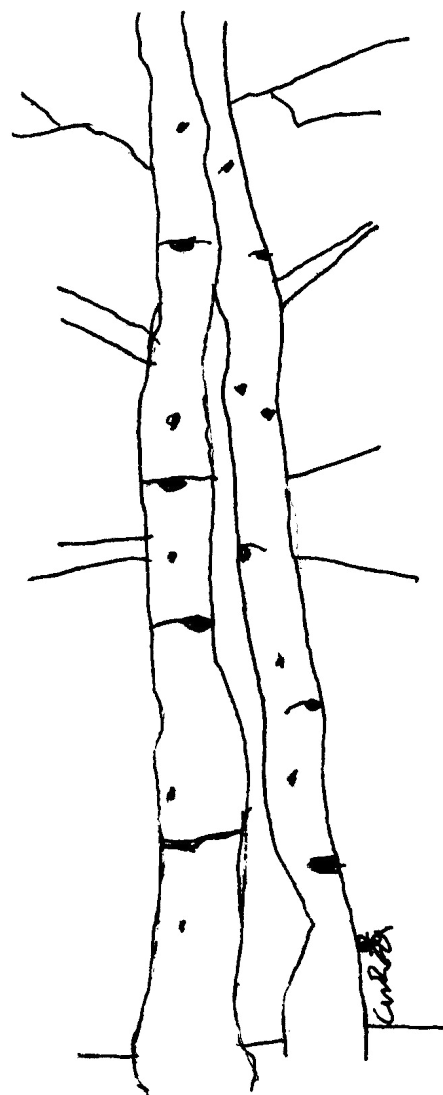
But if he comes - you'll taste the rope
As he drags you up a flume
Lucky to get air down your throat
If luck means dying in gloom

Lucky still if he hears your plea
Before your soul is consumed
For a wish is why you cut the tree
And called him to your doom

A wish not blacker than a sea
Of dead whales rotting from harpoons
Will do nothing for the long-horned king
Who favors the sickest of goons

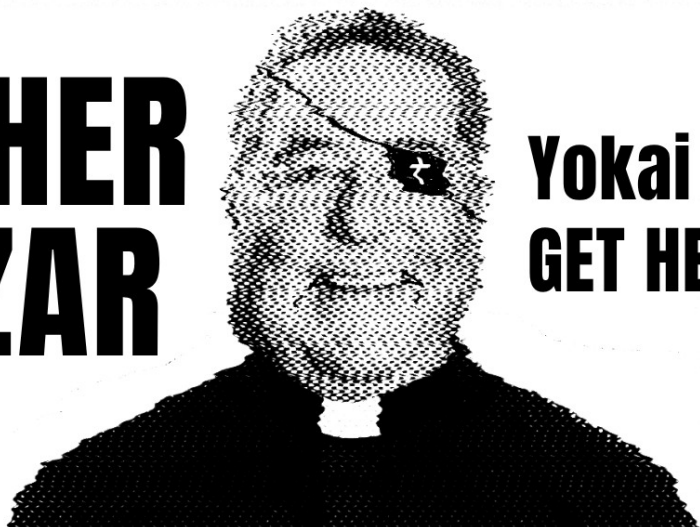
And if he finds your wish quite fresh
- Don't dream of escaping soon
For once you're locked in Galbergesh
You'll never flee its tombs

But trust, yes trust, that Barbelbesh
May find your wish opportune
Then you can die without distress
Believing your enemies are doomed



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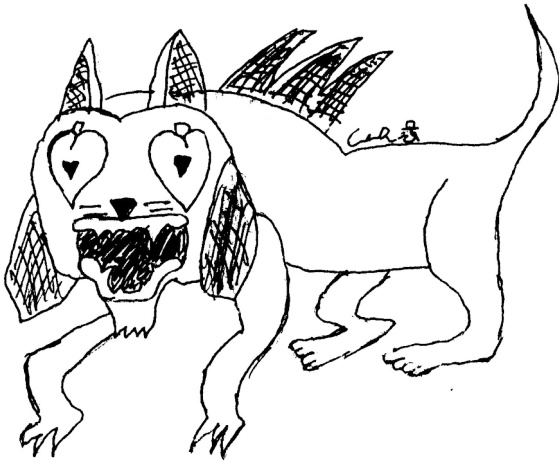
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THE MOMOLOCO - DESERT



Is it the chill that brings the Momoloco or the Momoloco who brings the chill? Regardless, the beast stalks the fruit orchards of the West every spring.

A pidgin name coined by the Japanese & Spanish farmhands

("桃 (momo)" is Japanese for peach & "loco" is Spanish for crazy) the name literally translates as "peach crazy".

As the name suggests the creature is crazy for peaches (as well as all other stone fruit). It comes down from its alpine hibernation every spring completely ravenous and stalks the fruit orchards, bringing an unnatural frost with it. Many a farmer has had a season ruined when caught flatfooted by the beast.

Being prepared with hotpots (barrel shaped heaters stationed under large fans) can blunt the chill and deter the beast, but others say the best remedy is to jar up peaches and other fruit at the end of the season and set aside a few of the best jars for a sacrifice in the spring.

This beast is not to be confused with the other type of momolocos, crazy out of towners that come seeking fresh fruit & "authentic" rural experiences every late August/early September.

LA NIÑA - CELESTIAL



La Niña is one half of a brother-sister pair of trickster spirits who both love to mess with the weather of the western hemisphere. More calm and collected than her brother, La Niña is proof that just because you aren't working at the extremes doesn't mean you can't be a troublemaker.

Slow and steady, an attack of 1000 papercuts is her M.O. Assuming her reckless brother hasn't already messed with the Pacific after another ill-attempted pepper bet, La Niña is content to merely sit by the large pot of the Pacific and stir.

These gyrations mean that instead of big dramatic storms, lots of little storms are formed and sent out instead, putting the continents into a sort of prolonged monsoon season. After days of sustained rain, basements begin to flood, sink holes appear in roads, and dusty washes become screaming torrents of water.

Of course, this also means the western deserts spring into bloom, so you're just as likely to find a local who sings her praises as one who curses her relentless rain.

EL NIÑO - CELESTIAL

El Niño is one of the trickster spirits of weather for the western hemisphere. Literally "the little boy", El Niño is hot tempered and chaotic compared to his older sister. Filled with bravado and machismo, he often partakes in hot pepper eating contests.

He claims to have a "god-like" tolerance for spice, but every time he participates he gets in over his head and brags that he can eat the hottest pepper grown in the world that year.

And every time the same thing happens.

First his face gets glowing red, then sweat comes off his forehead like bullets, and eventually fire shoots out of his nostrils. At that point he has to plunge his face into the Pacific Ocean to cool off. The hotter temp in the ocean means more evaporation, more clouds, and ultimately more intense storms like grapefruit sized hail over the Commonwealth or category 6 hurricanes sweeping down across the Gulfactory.

Some say El Niño's pepper eating habits are why humans started to make hot sauces, in an attempt to hide the season's hottest pepper from the Boy. So far it hasn't worked...



SPHERICAL TRASH PANDAS - URBAN



At the intersection of civilization and wilderness, in the heart of urbanity, float the gentle yokais known as spherical trash pandas.

They serve as guardian spirits for all animals that eek out existences in the concrete jungle. Most often observed near overflowing trash cans, they act as guides to free bounty in a landscape that can seem hostile and barren. The cyclical nature of one creature's refuse being another's sustenance is fully ensconced in their orbital frame.

Although they sometimes are seen scampering across parking lots or chain link fences, they usually prefer to roll through the sewers. In areas of high ecological synergy or in moments of extreme persistence in the face of adversity, they have even been observed floating nearby in benediction.

The best time of day to spot these benevolent spirits of the city is around dusk. They have been known to occasionally "jokerfy" in times of stress and become more like trickster sprits. An aluminum barrier & iron padlock are usually enough to keep the wily ones in check.

Submissions are open for the next issue!

FALL 2026

THE COMMONWEALTH: PEOPLE & PLACES

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
October 2nd 2026 11:59PM MDT

Accepting submissions of:
Yokai entries, world building prose,
short stories, & serialized fiction:

Pay Rate: \$0.03 per word

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Questions, comments, concerns or submissions

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WINTER 2026 – THE YOKAIPEDIA BOOK I

SPRING 2026 – THE YOKAIPEDIA BOOK II

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