



Item Code: 957

Participant Code: 427

## Shadows of The Past

The crimson hues that the masterful creator adorned the sky with,  
Casted infinite shadows across the land;

Shadows of towering trees, meek birds and insects;

Without discrimination, it painted all black.

There she was, traversing the desolate banks,

Of a river flowing west-ward.

And roughly so it flowed.

No human dared to travel this far,

Far into the dense heart of the mystical woods.

O, was it untainted with humanly deception and betrayal!

Hence she trudged, those untrodden paths,

With a thought, a single thought in mind:

'Don't these shadows appear more real?

Do my own shadow not appear more real, more life-like,

Than my own body?'

Item Code:

957

Participant Code:

427

Was it the death-like chills, some torturous memories,

From the past, or future uncertainties?

'Which one prompted these thoughts?', she questioned herself,

Ethereal, did she appear,

As the golden rays penetrated the dense foliage,

And cascaded, down onto her lissom figure.

Memories of the bygone time flooded the chaotic courtyard  
of her tumultuous mind.

And so, she stumbled upon the rough edges of her merciless past.

And so she tumbled down the steep cliffs of loneliness,

As the facades of happiness unfastened.

"Am I but a mere apparition?", enquired she.

"Am I but a ghastly nightmare?", enquired she.

Silence was her answer, nothing but deafening silence.

Indignated and mortified, she stood,

Amidst the desolate bank of the turbulent river,

And then she felt it, an apparent epiphany,



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957

Participant Code:

427

As the dulcet chirps of the birds emerged,  
Together with the notes of that glorious forest,  
In an eclectic symphony, a masterful craft,  
A carefully curated orchestra, with lively musicians,  
Which rose to a crescendo with every movement, every palpitation,  
Of the forest and its dwellers.

Her heart soared with a sudden ecstasy.

The mellifluous notes of nature lifted her spirit.

The clouds stilled as the sky darkened,

Announcing an upcoming downpour.

And there she stood, on the desolate bank, awaiting anxiously,

As the vile shadows of her past, now less obvious,

circled her, like a weakened predator, waiting patiently,

To ambush and tear down their unsuspecting prey.

One by one, the raindrops fell,

soaking the soil and the girl alike.

The raindrops caressed her, as if they were but a doting mother.



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As she succumbed into the comforting embrace,  
The opulent petrichor wafted into her keen senses.  
Her soul rejoiced, as if the rain quenched some long-forgotten  
Thirst...

And there, on the desolate bank, she stood,  
As a thought, a single thought remained in her mind:  
"Oh, my mortal body! Raindrops penetrated me not,  
Awaken did I, with every chirp, every song,  
Rejoice did I, with my fellow beings!  
Hath thou not contain my soul? Regardless of my misery  
And the burden of bygone periods, my ugly shadow!"  
Struck with realisation, whispered she:

"Aren't I a being too? As real as the day's light  
And the stars of the night sky?  
Then why shall I lament?"

In moments of weakness, do our shadows not appear real?  
More daunting, haunting us with its vile formations.  
But the body, our body withstands it,



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Like a warrior, a knight in battlefield.

There she remained, on the desolate banks,

As a silent oath left her quivering lips:

“ My body, mortal still, is as real, as alive

As its shadows, both the visible and invisible

And no forces, earthly or not, shall taint,

Or disrupt its harmony.”