



any lifetimes ago in a far-away city named 'Marracossa' there was a human. In this city they had no voice, could keep no property and their prosperity was taken by others - in this way they were a slave. Because of their status and because they lived so long ago their name has been forgotten - such is the cruelty of slavery that it seeks to steal the destiny of the enslaved..

But, even though the slavers of Marracossa hoped to extinguish the fire of this person's life, their actions have burned bright through the years. Their deeds have outlived those who wished to chain their very spirit and though their name is lost, their deeds will live on forever through those whose dignity they kept.

Today this person is known as 'La Parolante por la Mortinto' to those who remember them. In

Imperial this means 'The Speaker for the Dead', here they will be called simply 'The Speaker' - because that is what they did: they refused the silence demanded by those who wished them property..

The Speaker saw the snare that the slavers hung about the necks of those they kept: making them like cattle by everything from them. The Speaker asked: what epitaph is there for the ox

when it is too old to plough? What song is sung for the ewe when she can no longer give lambs? The Speaker believed that the only thing left to those like them was their spirit - which the poison of slavery sought to kill through hardship and hate - and so the Speaker chose to make their spirit a monument for others - to give their memory to those who would otherwise not be remembered.

Every day the Speaker did not cease their tongue from reciting the names and deeds of those like them who had fallen beneath the heels of the city that gave them nothing. Each

day this litany grew longer. But so strong was their love for their brothers and sisters, so deep their **Pride** in their shared struggle, that they remembered every name, face and kinship without fault..

It was then, as it is even today in Marracossa,

that on the longest night of the year, as the slavers celebrated the festivals of their false gods, that slaves were dismissed from sundown until after dawn. In the places these people lived - with high walls, small hearths and bare mats for beds - they held their own celebration of the year passed and allowed themselves to dream of freedom. It was on this night each year that the Speaker told the tale of every single name they had kept since the last



celebration: returning the dead to the hearts of their kin and giving them life once more.

One year, drawn by the sounds of humble celebration, the one who held the Speaker's life felt a cruel rage at those whom they wished to have nothing, having even a place in the Speaker's spirit. So too did the Speaker's litany strike fear in the slaver's heart as they felt the innumerable spirits, burning with defiance in the Speaker's words. In that moment that keeper of human lives glimpsed the majesty of true **Pride** and turned away in shame.

Unable to bear such shame, the cowardly slaver seized the Speaker and had them slaughtered upon the altar of their false god in the foolish belief that with this death they might kill the litany of names - and the **Pride** they represented.

But false gods hold no power over the human spirit and whenever the longest night approached once more, every slave could, at the edge of hearing, make out the faint rhythm of the Speaker's endless litany, reaching beyond the veil of death. These words would spill forth from the mouths of their kin - gathered to remember and celebrate the departed. In this way as lifetimes have passed the **Pride** of our

people has been sustained even as the name of the Speaker's master, and the false god they worship has been forgotten to all.

Today, we who remember the Speaker continue this tradition: each year we speak for the dead so they will not be forgotten. With them we share our Prosperity, however small - giving it to those who were denied it so they may find their way through the Labyrinth of Return. We remember too the Speaker themselves and strive to follow their example, keeping their story alive so that we may all never be forgotten.

