

It is only one more day, the same as any other in this realm. It is a land afire, scorched by an unceasing torrent of sun. It is the home of grieving folk; I see them flock here to die by the thousands, arms open as they slobber and scream, pupils blown wide and eyes bloodshot. Mad men and women, coming home.

Near everything is burning here. Trees, shrubs, hearts. It is such utter chaos I can barely rein it in. But it is my new home. Even gods must bend to the will of the land.

I think of her often. She was my mother, it is true. I was her daughter, and I never fought that, even as I fought her.

I feel as though I should miss her more.

I don't.

I tip back my head to breathe the fresh air, perched regally atop my burning throne in Heliopolis. I think of how the old bards would sing. Hemera, the sole ruler of the hemisphere. Hemera, in blazing beauty. Hemera, with no shadows disgracing her palace.