

Phantasmagoria

Austin P. Torney

PHANTASMAGORIA

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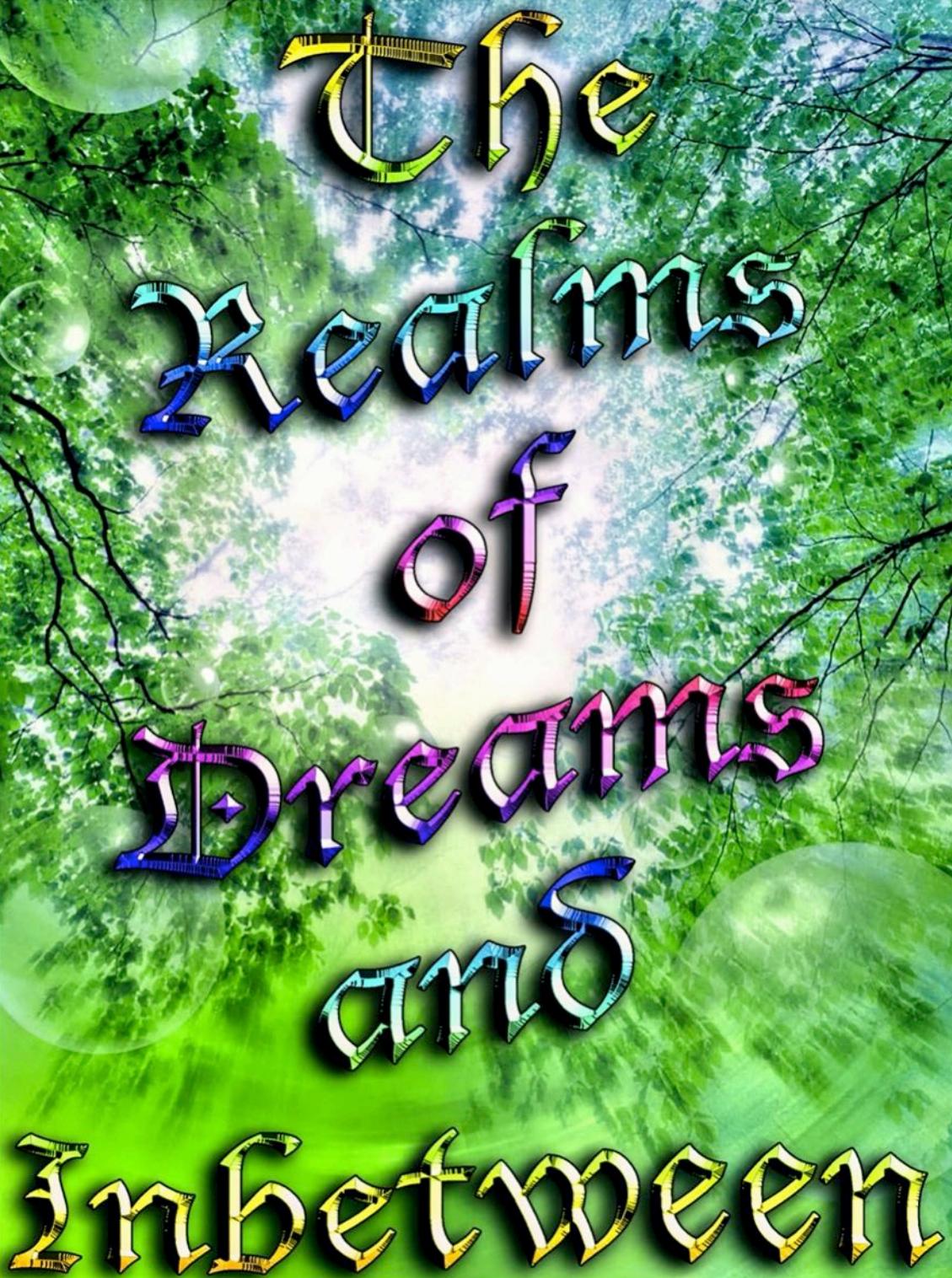
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Phantasmagoria





The
Realms
of
Dreams
and
Inbetween

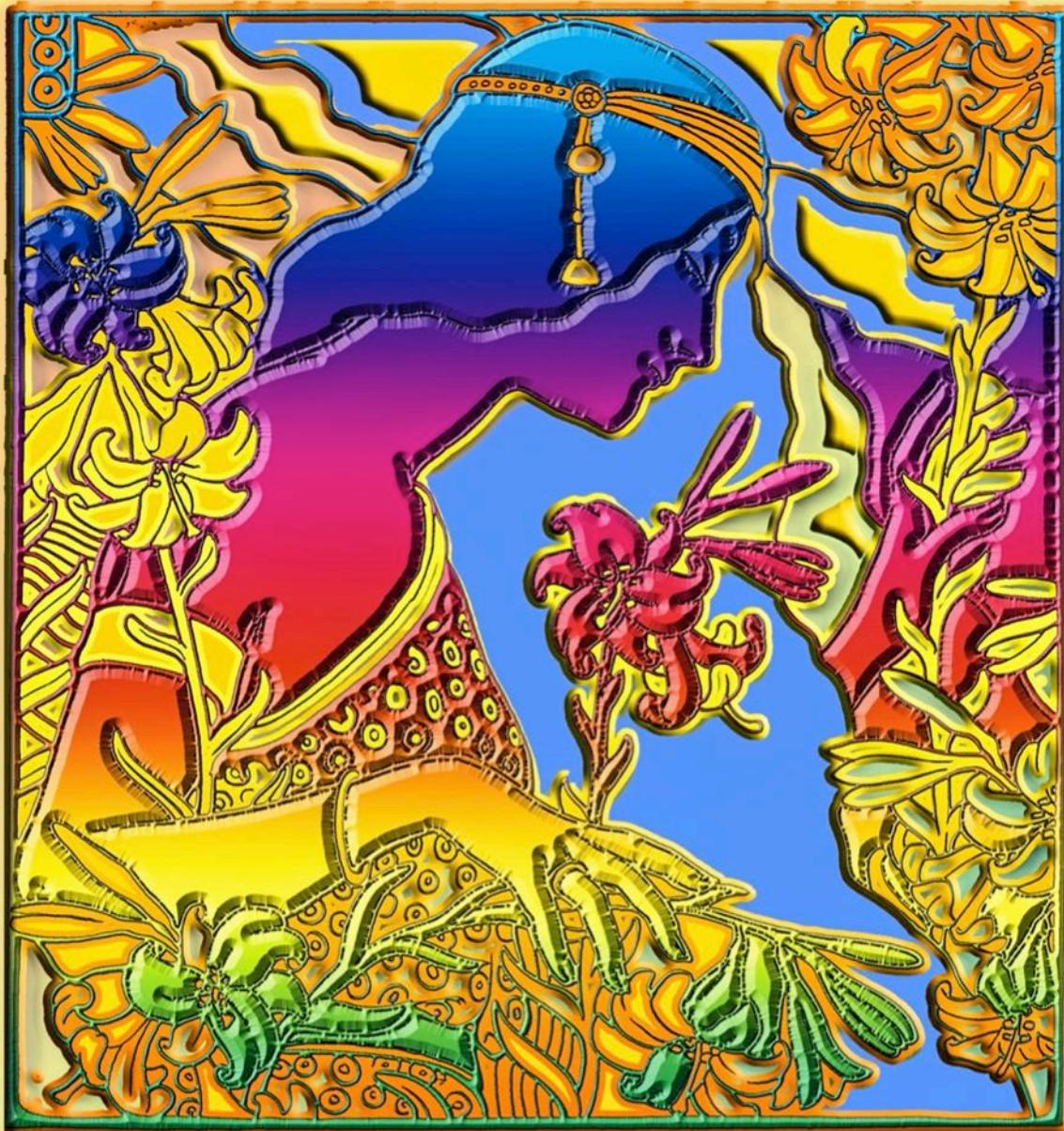








When sadness brooded over the morrow,
I visited the deep well of sorrow.
There enshrined, inseparate, Beauty said,
"It's from me that sadness you borrow."



— The Beauty of Truth —

Life's hardships can be softened by beauty,
Its weaknesses can be strengthened by truth.
When roses blossom, like realizations,
Beauty itself blooms from the well of truth.

Phantasmagoria

Each morning as I awake,
I can just barely remember her.

Even as I rub my eyes, in reflection,
She becomes but a shadowy recollection,
Although a most pleasant one,
As my day begins anew with the sun.

I don't even know her name;
All I know is that I love her dearly,
for how could I not?—clearly,
for, I've created her
In the most perfect, loving image
That I could imagine.

 She is a dream. 

As the morning wears on
She is still with me, in part,
Just a faint glimmer of being, in my heart,
A mere shadow, for love's sake,
Of the love I felt at daybreak.

As the day grows onto noon in its brightness
My remembrance of her dims into vagueness.



By late afternoon, I must confess,
She is but a wisp of near nothingness;
Yet, I still can feel the presence
Of her joyous fulfillment present—
As if she had somehow snuggled
Into my being and merged into me.
But, who is she?

Well, she seems to be every woman I've ever known,
Yet none in particular—plus one that I've grown.

Even now
I am having trouble rebuilding her image.
If only I had a clear picture—
It all seems so hazy now—
If only I could remember.

Somehow I must see her distinctly,
And, more importantly,
Remember the vision perfectly.
But how can I become alert, awake
And sober of thought in a dream state?

Alas, several nights flew by
And I did not dream of her;
But, then, finally, alight,
On one intoxicatingly drowsy night,
I saw her again—
And I lived and loved with her
As if tomorrow never was;



However, all too soon the morrow broke,
And she waned, lost to me again.

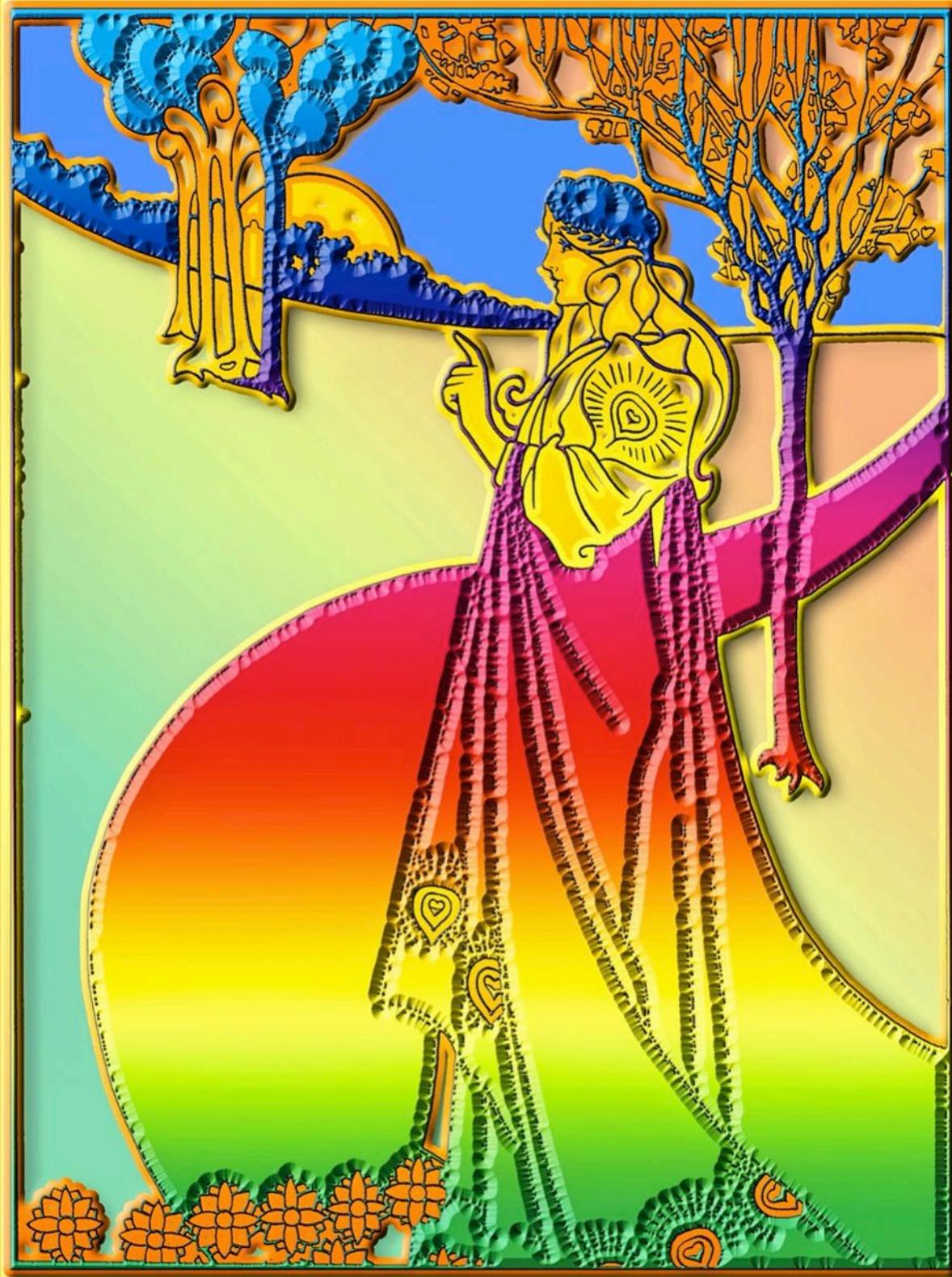
Although she was so vivid, at first,
She soon faded into evanescence,
But I managed to write down her description,
And by that evening her depiction
Was about all I had left.

Although her image had withered fast
I was now able to resurrect her, past,
Using my hasty description,
Even though it was made
In an all too sleepy shade.

for awhile I could capture her as such,
But again her image faded all too soon.

Many thoughts ran through my head the next night,
Turning into ghostly visions of fright
And nonsensical hallucinations
Of the most illogical character;
That is, I was dreaming dreams;
But, she was not in any of the scenes.

If only I could bring some order and sense
Into the noisy mosaic mess
Of my random and wandering thoughts.



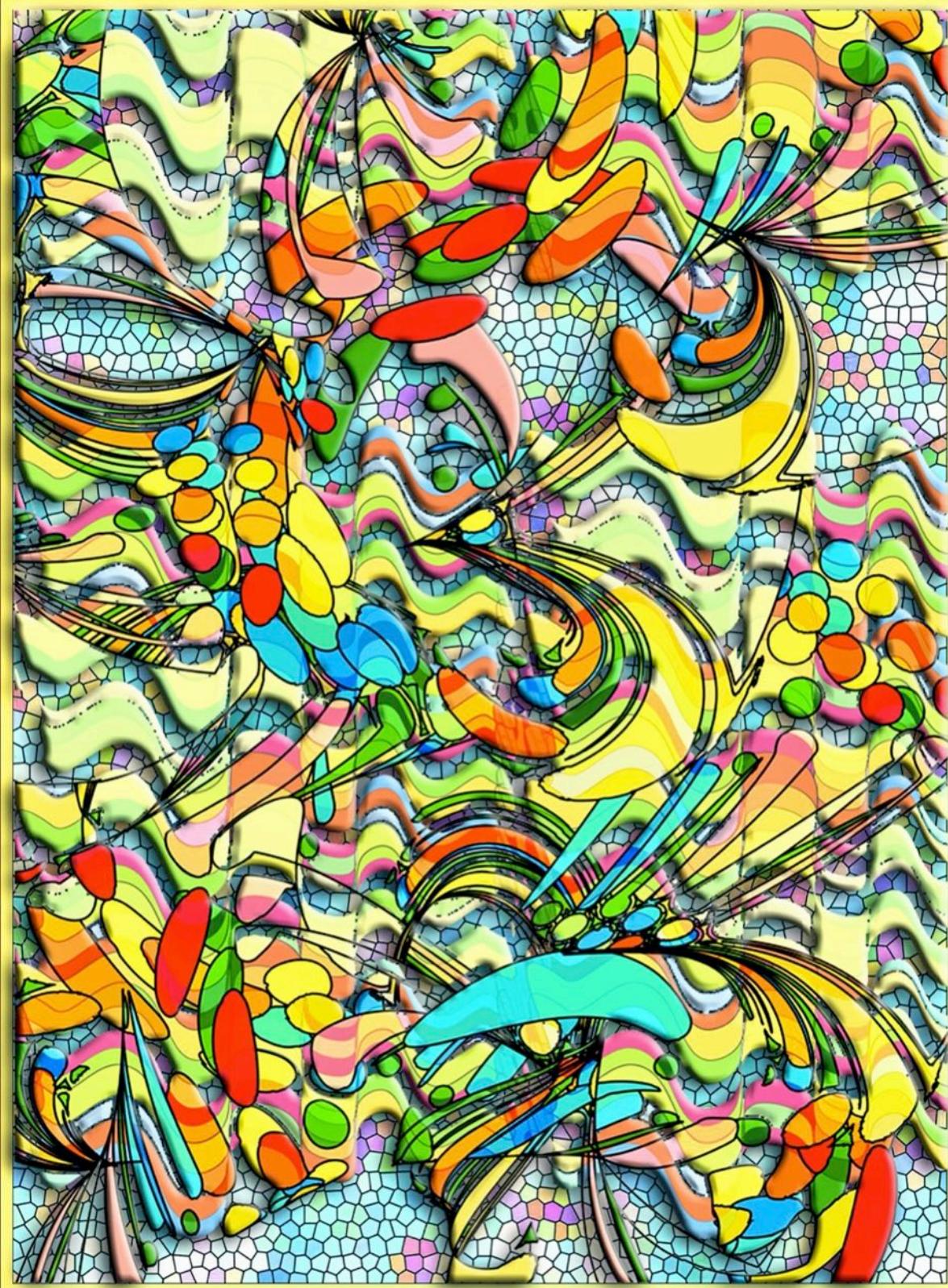
Several notions waited in the wings
for their appearance on the stage of the absurd,
And they soon tumbled and stumbled
 Across the scene,
 Had their moment,
Then passed on into oblivion,
 Apparently never to return.

Of course, I saw them all pass,
for I was only a paralyzed spectator,
And, since a good part of my mind was out of life,
 I noted nothing unusual in the chaotic strife,
And therefore had believed it all to be quite real.

The weeks crawled by,
And I don't believe I saw her,
 But if I did
Then I must have just as soon forgotten her;
However, somehow our love seemed to live on,
 But only as an idea painted in me fond.

Then I had a great inspiration:
If she wasn't going to show up,
Then why couldn't I just conjure her up!
Yes! I've been a fool all of these days—
Why didn't I think of this before today?

I prepared myself well,
And it took several days of practice:



I went to bed relaxed, after a warm bath,
And thus easily discarded the day's chaff.

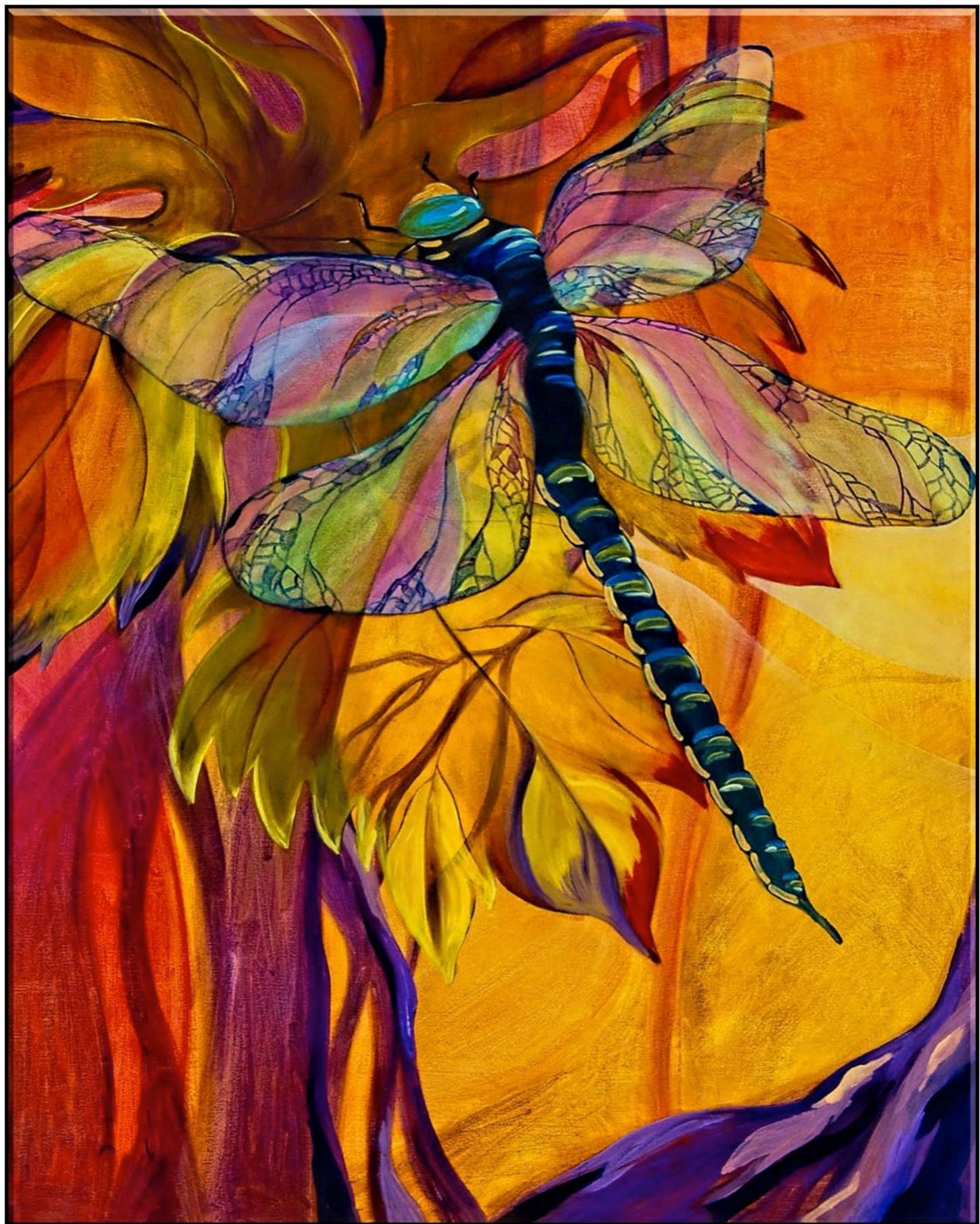
I then reviewed the script in my mind,
Going over it and over it many times.
I repeated to myself one thousand times:

“Control your dream.
The dream images are not real,
Although they seem to be.
You can do anything in your dream;
You can control it. It is only a dream.

Tell yourself therein that it is only a dream.
Grasp the idea and then become lucid.
You can do anything you wish—
You can go anywhere, see anyone, have anything—
If you can only realize that it is a dream
And then direct the dream accordingly.”

And so forth I said such things
Over and over and over and over.

I repeated the words while I tried to picture
The most utter and complete blackness...
And it was there
That I etched the words rehearsed above
So that they would remain there
As a message to me after I slept—



To be received
By my normally unbelieving dream self,
That drowsy mind
That seldom questions the illogical,
The mind that sees and interprets
Many dreams literally
Because they all do seem so real,
Which is because the model of reality used in dreams
Is the same model that's used when we are awake!

I looked forward to the night,
With much anticipation,
Wondering if dream images
Were really sharp and distinct,
Or if they were vague,
As they seem in remembrance.

Well, soon I would know.

“It is only a dream...”

These were the last words that I heard
Before drifting off into that fabricated nether world
In which I hoped to script, direct, produce,
And star in any narrative that I could dream up.

And there, in my dream,
The etched thought
“That I was dreaming”
Did indeed occur to me.



What a revelation it was!
What a realization!
Still, it seemed to be so far-fetched
And so amazing that I hesitated
To believe it at the time.
Damn! I was so close.

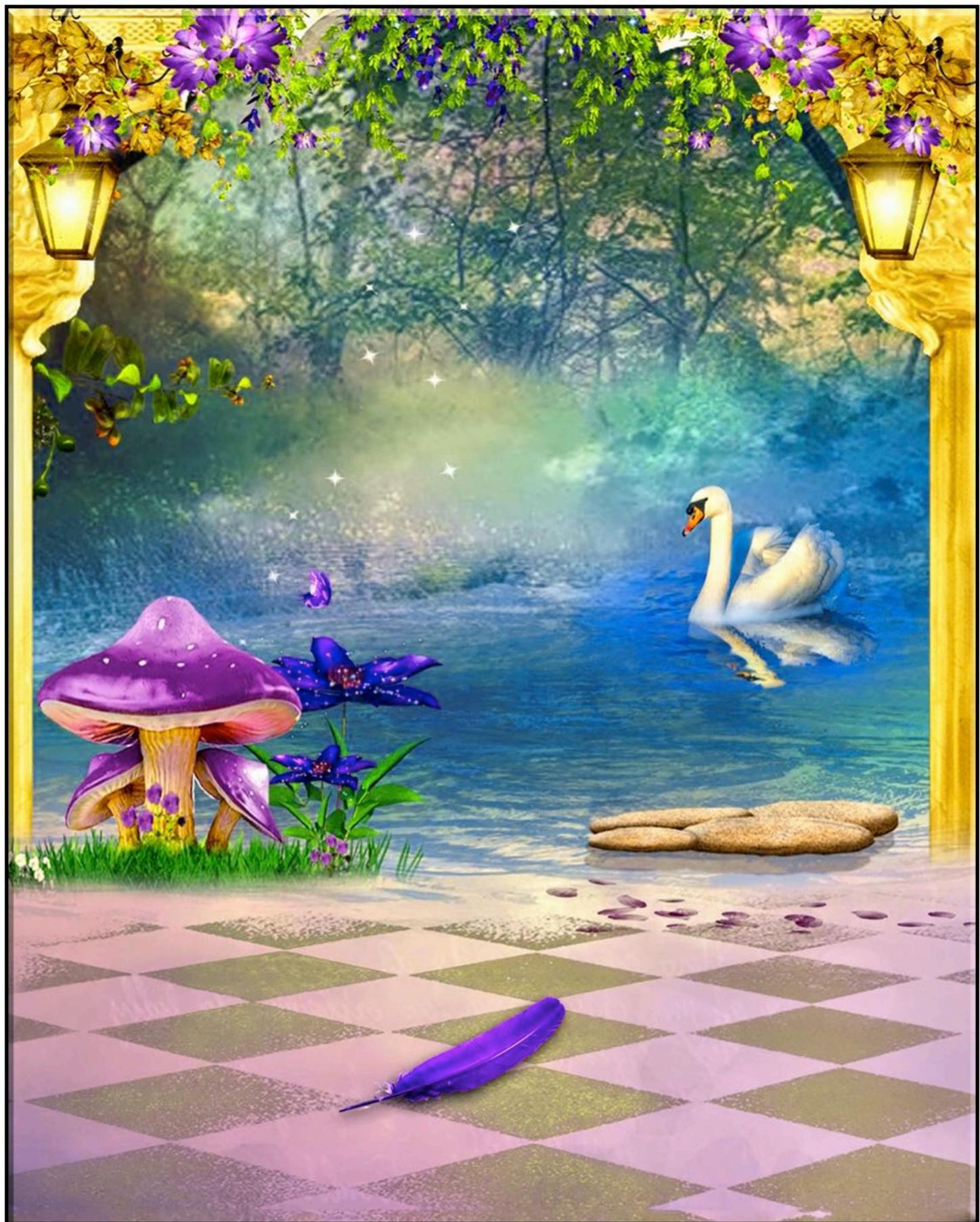
Why didn't I fully believe it?
Because everything in my dream
Was clear, sharp and colorful
Like a perfect image
Of reality itself in three dimensions—
An exact match to actuality itself,
A genuine reconstruction—
A true virtual reality!

The next night I was again haunted
By the echoing thought that
"I was dreaming".

I still wasn't convinced,
But I took some cautious control, anyway,
So that I could try an experiment.

I went down to the kitchen in my dream
And poured some milk on the floor,
Much as it pained me to do so.

As soon as I awoke the next morning
I rushed down to the kitchen



And saw that the floor was clean!
This gave me confidence.

I was finally making some progress
In dream awareness and control.
I was learning to detect the dream state.

The following night I dreamt again,
Realizing that it was a dream,
And again took control.

This time I rearranged all of the wonderful items
That were on my bedside table,
But, of course, when I woke up,
They were still untouched,
Having remained in their original positions.

I was getting close,
for I was really starting to believe.

I had to be careful though,
Before I did crazy things in my dreams,
for one must be absolutely convinced,
Beyond certainty,
That a dream is indeed a dream—
Lest one fall into harm or become inhibited
Out of fear of breaking the law or passing away.

The next night in my dream I wondered again
“If I was dreaming”



While I was flying down the street,
About twenty feet in the air—a big clue.

At last the logical portion of my brain
Fully "awoke"
And said to me,

"You are flying down the street
Twenty feet off the ground;
This is impossible and ridiculous;
Therefore this must be a dream!"

So, for the first time
I was thoroughly and utterly convinced
To the core of my being that I was dreaming.
Now I could begin some serious research.

I was fully there in my next dream, too,
Living it and observing it all at the same time.

Instead of flying straight to some tropical paradise,
I first wanted to inspect my surroundings—
To minutely analyze the dream model's images.

So, I made a conscious and definite effort
To look directly at everything in the scene.

As I flew through my neighborhood,
I looked closely at each house,
And I saw that every part was perfectly in place:
Every shingle and nail,



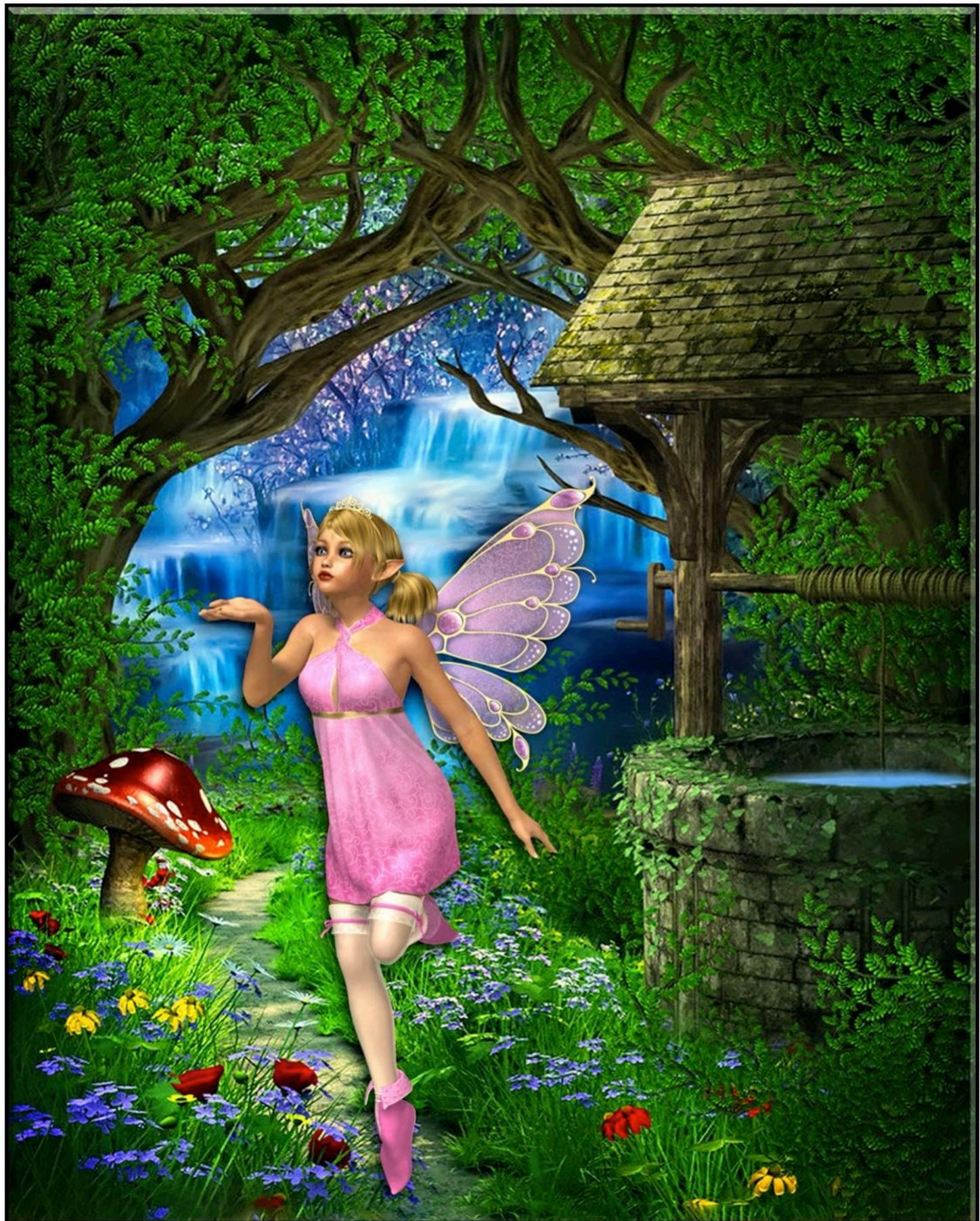
Every blade of grass distinct,
Every leaf and branch vivid;
In fact, every single detail, including color,
Was identical to that of real life
And was indistinguishable from it!
What a discovery this was!

I flew high and low.
The reconstruction of my street was perfect—
No wonder that dreams seem so real,
for they practically are.

Of course, dreams may seem hazy,
But that's only because the recollection itself
Grows hazy over time;
However, I've found that,
If you write your dreams down upon awakening,
You will find later, upon reading about them,
That they can be fully recalled, remaining vivid.

And so it was,
That after many weeks of such patience,
Discipline, and the use of dream notes,
I was able to do whatever I wished in my dreams:
I traveled; I ate delicious food
(and gained no calories from it);
I met wonderful people.

I even formed plays and movies
In which each player performed totally in character



(many were even unlike my own character;
Yet all their performances must have come
from my own creativity as a writer),
And scene after desired scene rolled by
In 3-D Cinemascope and Technicolor.

I could now do anything that a God could do;
for example, I invented and ran Universes;
However, now it was time to find her—
 The phantom woman
 Who had initiated my dream quest
 In the first place.

She came easily into my vision
And I saw her clearly for the first time.
She was the perfect woman—she was my dream girl!

I saw her plainly; somehow I knew her;
I loved her; for, she was made just for me.
She was perhaps a composite of all the women
 That I had known and loved,
Plus much my heart's ideal had molded into being.

Why should I ever wake?
 Why indeed.

Reality is often harsh,
And I had just stumbled onto Heaven on Earth.

Well, one must wake to live—



To make one's dreams come true for real,
And to gain input for further dreams,
Which, in turn,
Will give even more life upon awakening.

And so it was
That I found the perfect woman in real life,
PassionTears, when my dreams took wing,
But, that's another story.

Yes, we all have to sleep,
And we must do so every night;
So why waste it? It is paradise;
It is the perfect world—
One in which no debts are owed,
Where infinite power awaits,
Where you can have
All that the mythical afterlife has to offer.

Try it.









...

She awoke that morning from a dream,
fresh with that free and wondrous feeling
 Which lies at the heart
 Of life's exhilaration and glory;

But, soon, the returning waves of stifling reality
 Swept over her, like an approaching sickness,
Smothering her in the dread of another hopeless day
 Amidst the ruins of anxiety and depression.

She dragged herself out of bed.

She was like a doomed ship
Drifting in the storm's aftermath
 Under a moon pale and wan,
 Her sails tattered and torn
Before the relentless wind of existence.

Her dream had seemed so real,
But it, too, had wilted in the heat, like a flower
That had lost its precious gleam of morning dew.

But the hull must drive on, musn't it,
 She thought,
 Though the mast be broken...

No! No more! Tonight I will end it all.
 Tonight I will end my life!







She spent the whole day planning it.
Yes, she would scuttle her ship—her car,
And sink within it to the bottom of the sea,
A river, really, and drown,
With a sigh and a groan,
Devoured by forces too large to fight against.

So, she drove her car
Towards the cliff near the bridge.

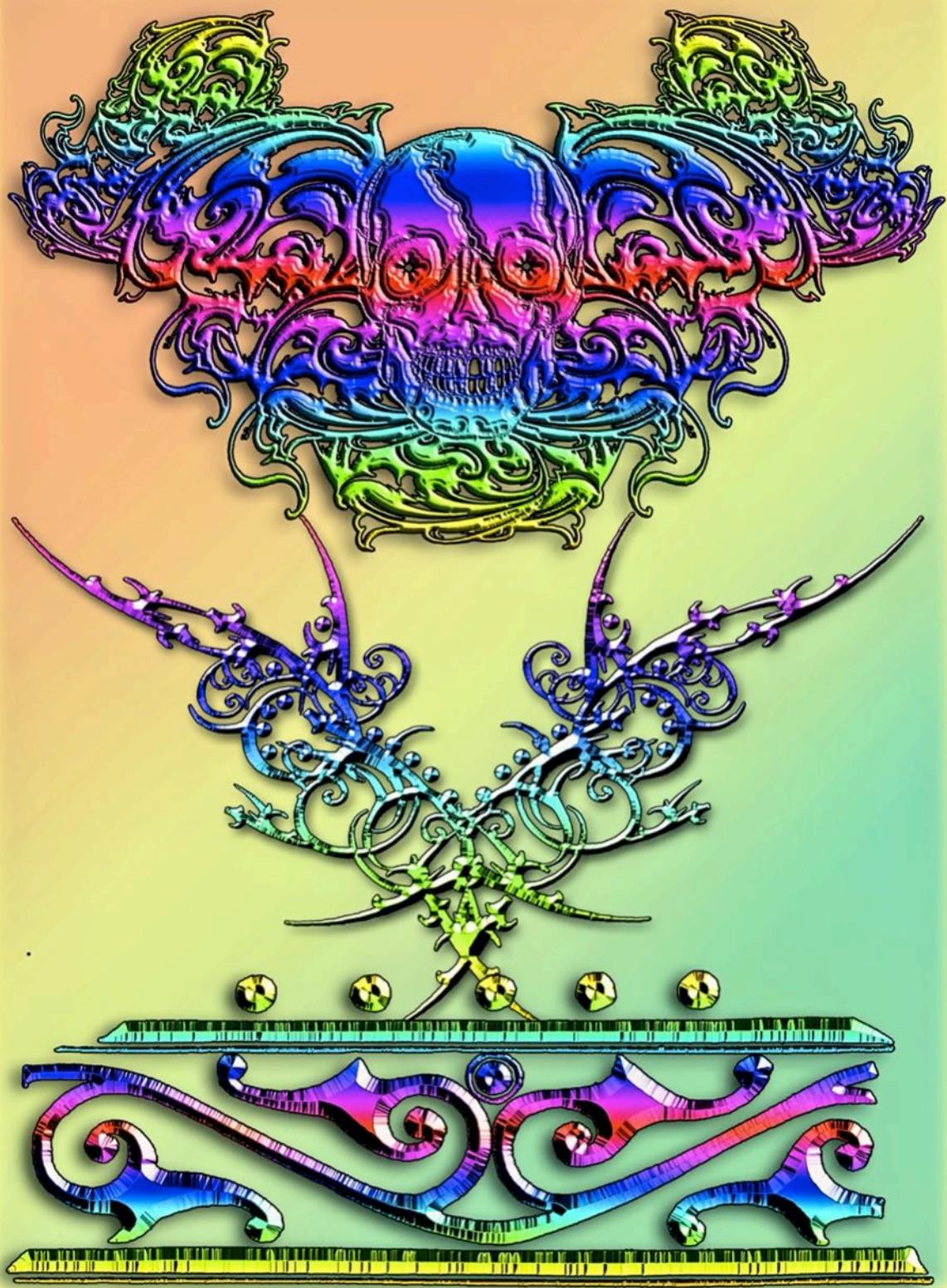
She drove faster and faster.
The waters called to her—
Their cool and refreshing depths
Invited her in.

“Come to me,”
Some deathly voice whispered in her ear,
“Come to me and find everlasting peace.
Come and sleep with me in the endless night;
Let me cover you with my ebon wings
In darkness, for it is eternal and complete.”

“No, no, not thee!”
She cried aloud.
“I cannot go with thee,
Not with evil!”

She drove her car to the edge of the cliff,
Having stopped just short,
Her mind now drinking in and savoring







The blue and green world
That was reflected on the river surface.

This sort of sparkling day
Was not the kind of day
On which she could end it all.

As she looked deeper and deeper into the water,
She drifted into a dream-world
Of her own making—
A fantasy fairy world
In which her ideals could live on,
Untainted by the reality of this mediocre world.

A voice called to her.

Visions of Camelot danced in her head;
Mythical fantasy worlds and legends
Beckoned to her
Seemingly from all directions.

An inner voice called to her,
The sweet voice of someone who she could love.

She had often retreated to this storybook world,
But now she would take it much further:
She would plunge into it,
Live within its splendor,
Her being residing mostly therein—
Before all else.



Yes, this dreamsland would be her final refuge.

The fairyslande called to her daily;
It was and would be the realization
Of all of the imagined perfections
That she had always brought to mind
When the real world had so often failed
To meet her expectations.

So, she freed her mind
from many of its real life shackles
And began to daydream more freely.

"I'll breath life into you, my little voice,"
She said to herself.

As the noise of consciousness slowly faded away,
Her imaginary world came into focus.
She could now paint it
With the colors of her dreams,
Creating a life much closer to the heart's desire.

She felt like a Goddess,
Being able to create life at will in her dreams.

This is when she created him.
This is when she brought him to life
By giving him her own essence.



However, his existence was his own to have,
And so he knew nothing of her as his creator,
 But only that he was alive
 In a beautiful and perfect world.

She had built him in her soul's best image;
She had moulded him from her heart's wishes;
She fell in love with him, for she could do no other.

 "Come into my dreams,"
She would say to conjure him up;
 "Come into my dreams,
And then by day I shall be well again",
 for she was using lines
 from the romantic poets she'd read.

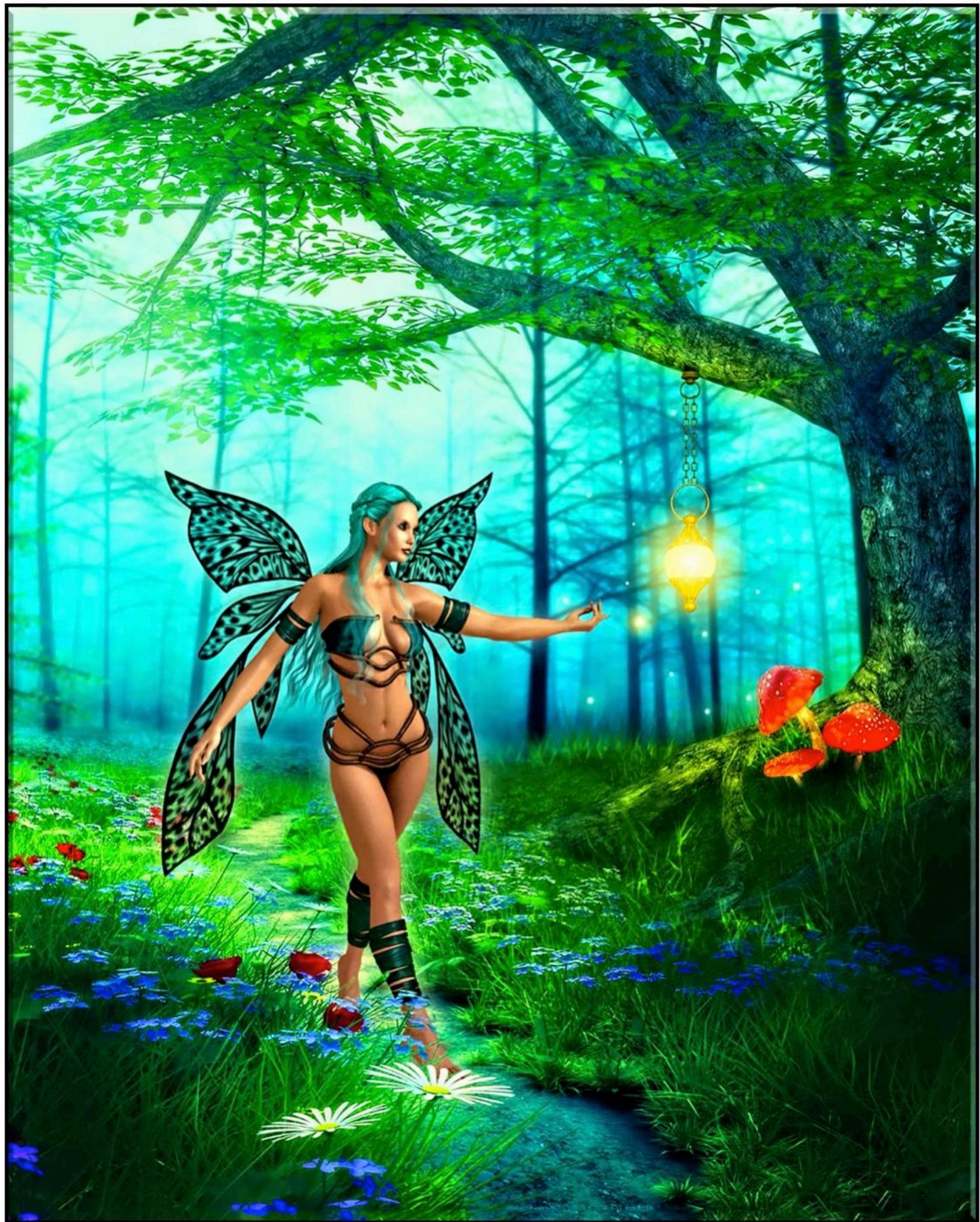
He was a good and decent human being,
 for how could he be otherwise
With her ideals brought to life in him.

He gave fully of himself in life and love,
Always placing his partner's happiness
 And fulfillment above his own.

Their relationship was driven by love alone,
And they celebrated it often in her dreams.

 She had, at last, found the love
That the real world had so often denied her,
for she had created a new and better reality.







He did feel a bit of sadness at times, too,
for she could not totally submerge
That part of herself,
But it was subdued in him
And so the sadness was only used as necessary
To enhance the beauty of their love
With its sheer contrast and brightness.

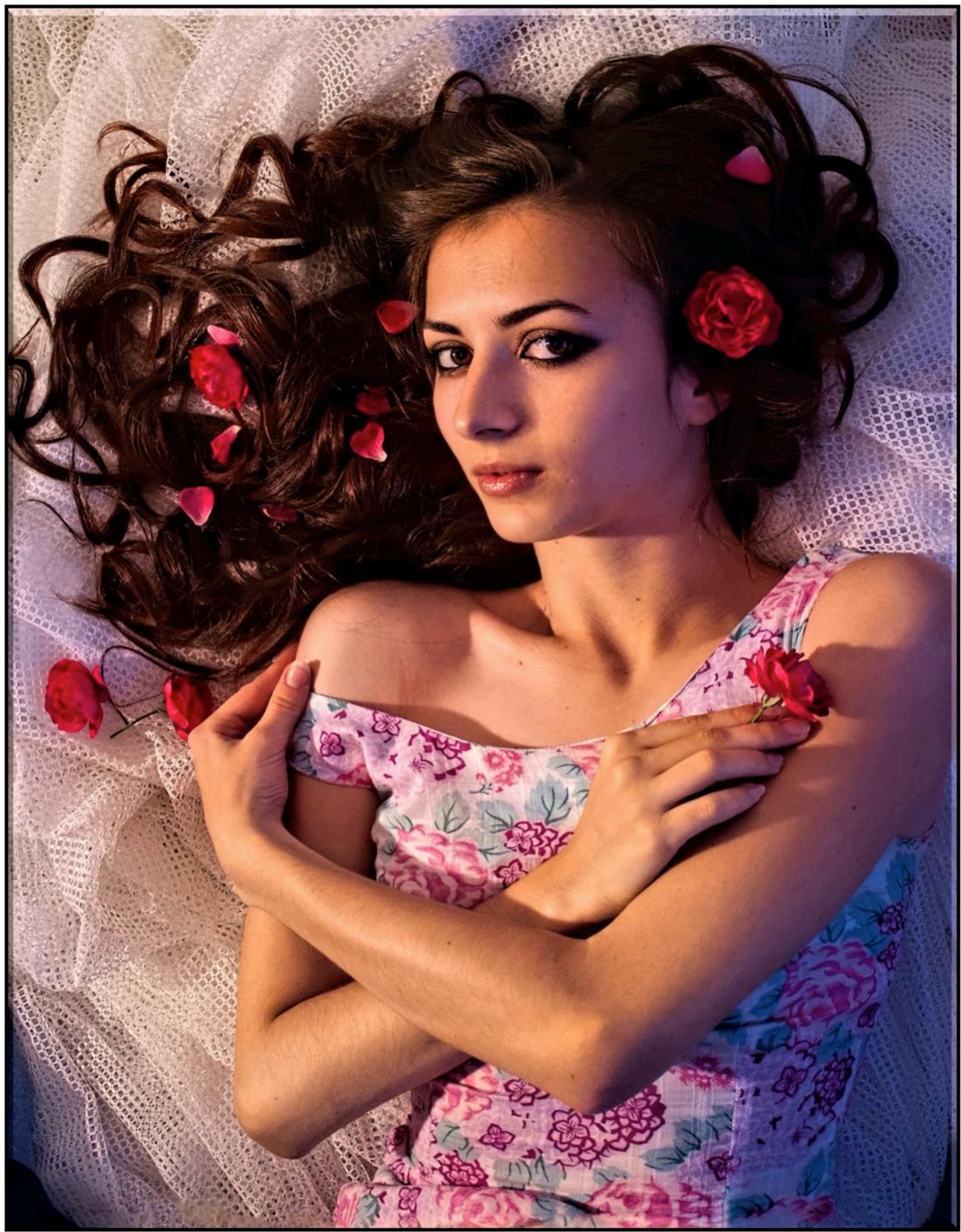
She, too, gave all that she had to him,
Watching over him and loving him deeply,
Utterly, and completely.

Nothing could hurt him in this special world.
He was impervious to pain,
Cold, fire, and sickness.

Once he was fatally shot in a war,
But he didn't die,
Because it was from her spirit
That he drew his life principle,
And of course she had willed him to live on.

Another time, he was hit by lightning,
But as we have seen,
A dream can never die,
And so it was that he arose alive and well
from the smoldering embers.

He never got sick and seldom had a headache.
"Everyone should have the best in life,"



She said to herself,
"And in my world there can be no suffering."

Each night he would come, saying,
"I arise from dreams of thee."

"Kiss me, my dearest phantasm,"
She'd whisper,
"And hold me ever dear;

Shelter me
from the evils and the melancholy
Of the torturous world;

Show me the true meaning of love
That the real world has forgotten!
Come into my dreams,
And then by day I shall be well again."

Knowing not that he was her dream image,
He never doubted his own existence and happiness.
When she didn't think of him or when she slept,
He disappeared temporarily
Until she awoke or thought of him again.

So, when she slept or daydreamed, he existed,
And when she was awake and not daydreaming,
Then he slipped into that oblivion
Which he only knew as sleep and quiet slumber—
The gift of Death's kinder brother.



He was the day to her night.

He arose from her dreams of him—
Much like the mountain rises
from the depths of the valley.

Without her, he could not be;
Without him, she could not be.
The circle was now complete;
The link was closed
They had become two locked boxes,
Each of which contained the other's key.

The fact that he only existed as a dream in her mind
Took nothing away from their relationship,
for their love was true
And the feelings were felt as deeply
As they would normally have been felt
In the tangible world—
As anyone who has dreamt can readily attest to,
for, ultimately,
It is what we feel that matters,
Not the source that causes the feeling—
for all feeling comes from within.

He did wonder, sometimes,
About just how good and lucky his life was,
About his having almost super powers at times;
But, he concluded only that he led a charmed life
That had stemmed from an inner happiness



That constantly poured forth visions
In positive creative images
That ever bred good fortune.

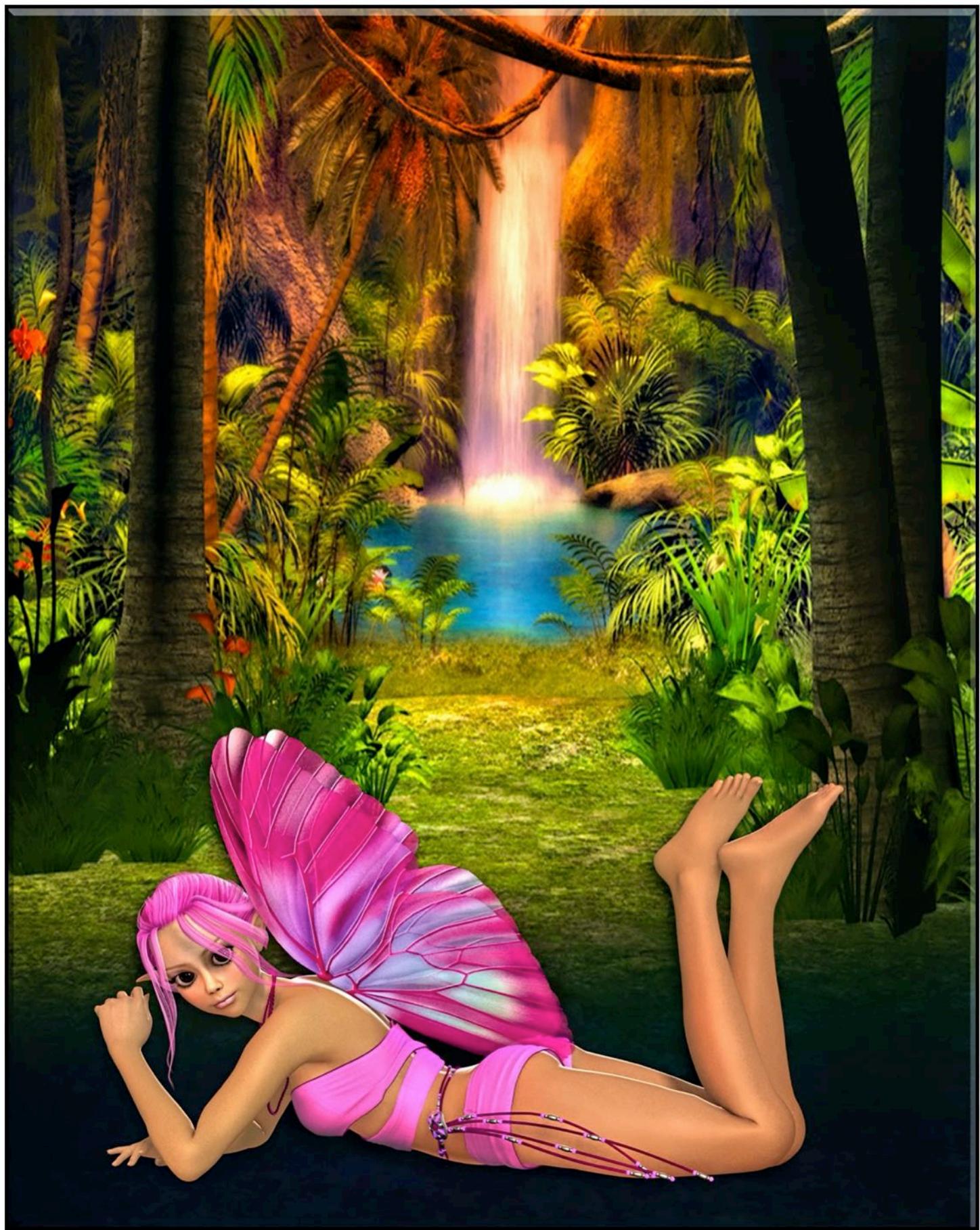
Indeed he had, for she had given him that power—
A power that had come from somewhere within her.

He was her twin, yet also her opposite,
for somehow she had given him
An enthusiasm for life
Which she didn't seem to fully have herself.

He was a reflection of her image,
In which his outward vision
Mirrored her inward hope.

Consequently, he blossomed with creativity
In art, music, and writing,
As she continued to maintain him
As both his protector and his inspiration,
Although, as we have seen,
He certainly did have free will,
for he knew not the source of his creation
Nor of the tendencies that were placed into him.

So they lived and loved together,
Allied and alloyed in the soft metallic night,
Blending into the golden oneness
That love had always promised,
But had never before delivered.



He was born with the inclination of goodness—
So she never had to possess him or demand from him.

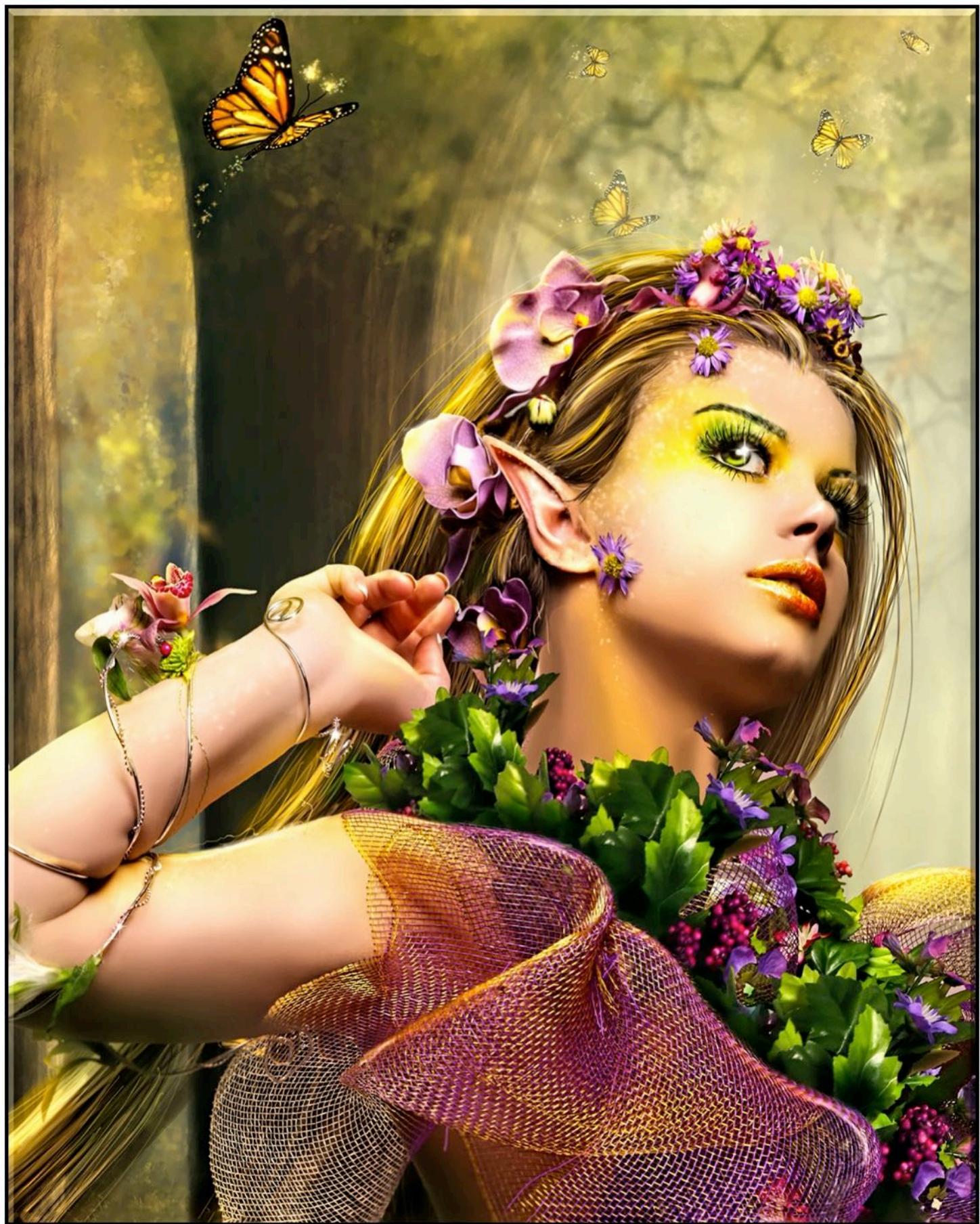
Life blossomed now,
And some of this exuberance did indeed surface
And show itself back in her real world,
But in the end she still found her waking life
To be the cold harsh reality that it had always been.

So, she called him back to her dreams,
Again and again.

Here they were free to love and live fully,
Their chemistry sending out invitations of love
Which were soft, sweet,
And smiling on the rising air,
A spray of liquid love, mystified,
filling the scene with a vaporous perfume
Of well-being everywhere:

They were up, warm,
And floating on the clouds of dreams;
Their passions smoldered like incense
And burned like the candle's flame;
They consumed each other often,
Yet continued to have endless love to give,
Their passions always seeming to reach new levels,
Then expanding even more, building, ever building.







She had to attend to events back in the true world,
But it really wasn't so bad there anymore
Because she knew that she had something
To look forward to in her dreams.

So, she went happily through the motions,
feeling better and better as the days went by,
But always looking forward to the chance
To dream him up again,
When she would say softly to herself:

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
for so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Come, as thou cam'st a thousand times,
A messenger from radiant climes,
And smile on thy new world, and be
As kind to others as to me!

Or, as thou never cam'st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth,
And part my hair, and kiss my brow,
And say, 'My love! Why sufferest thou?'

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
for so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.







(Matthew Arnold)

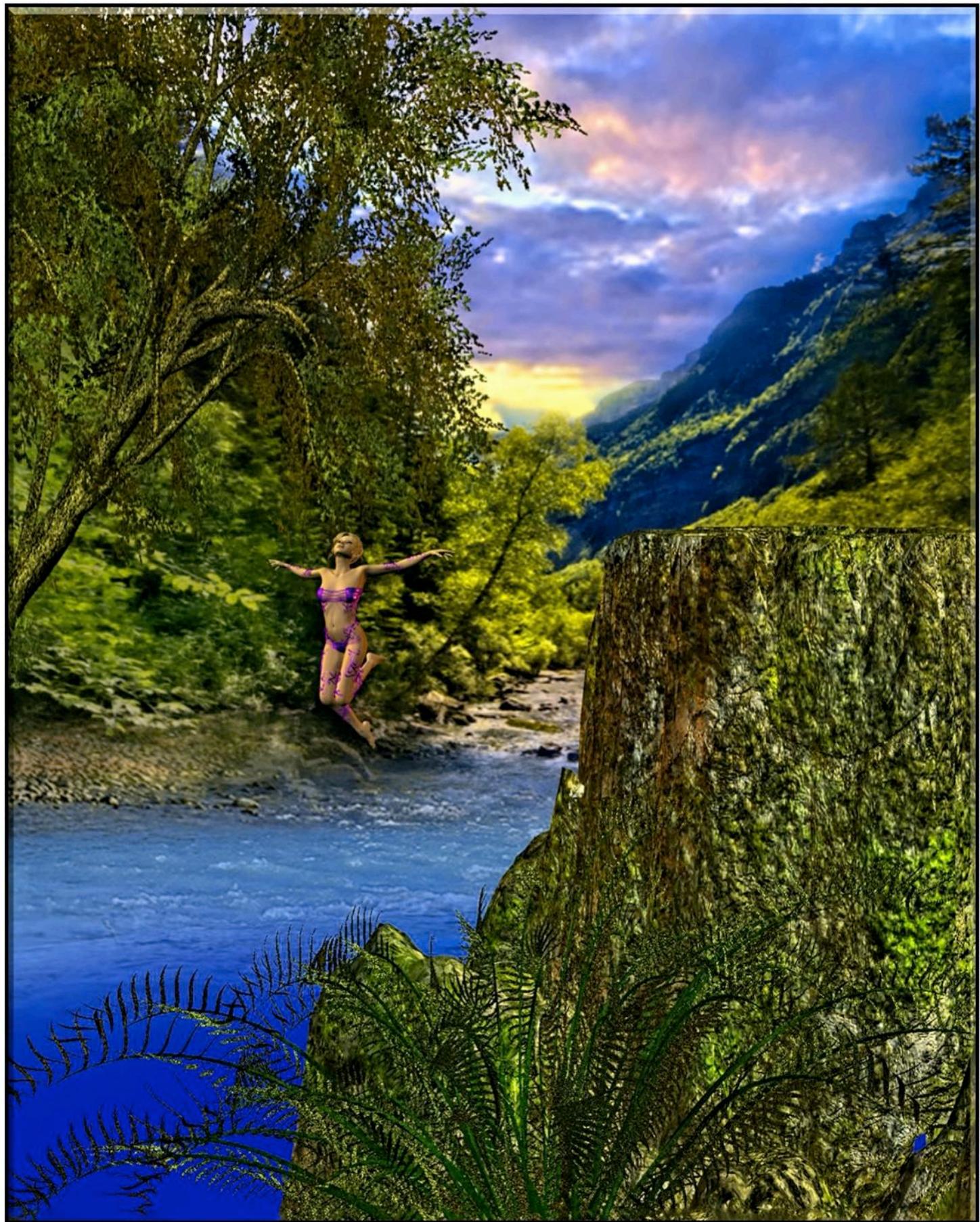
She again faded off into dreamland...
And there he was.

Just the sight of him
Would bring the world to a stop,
for she could only concentrate on him.

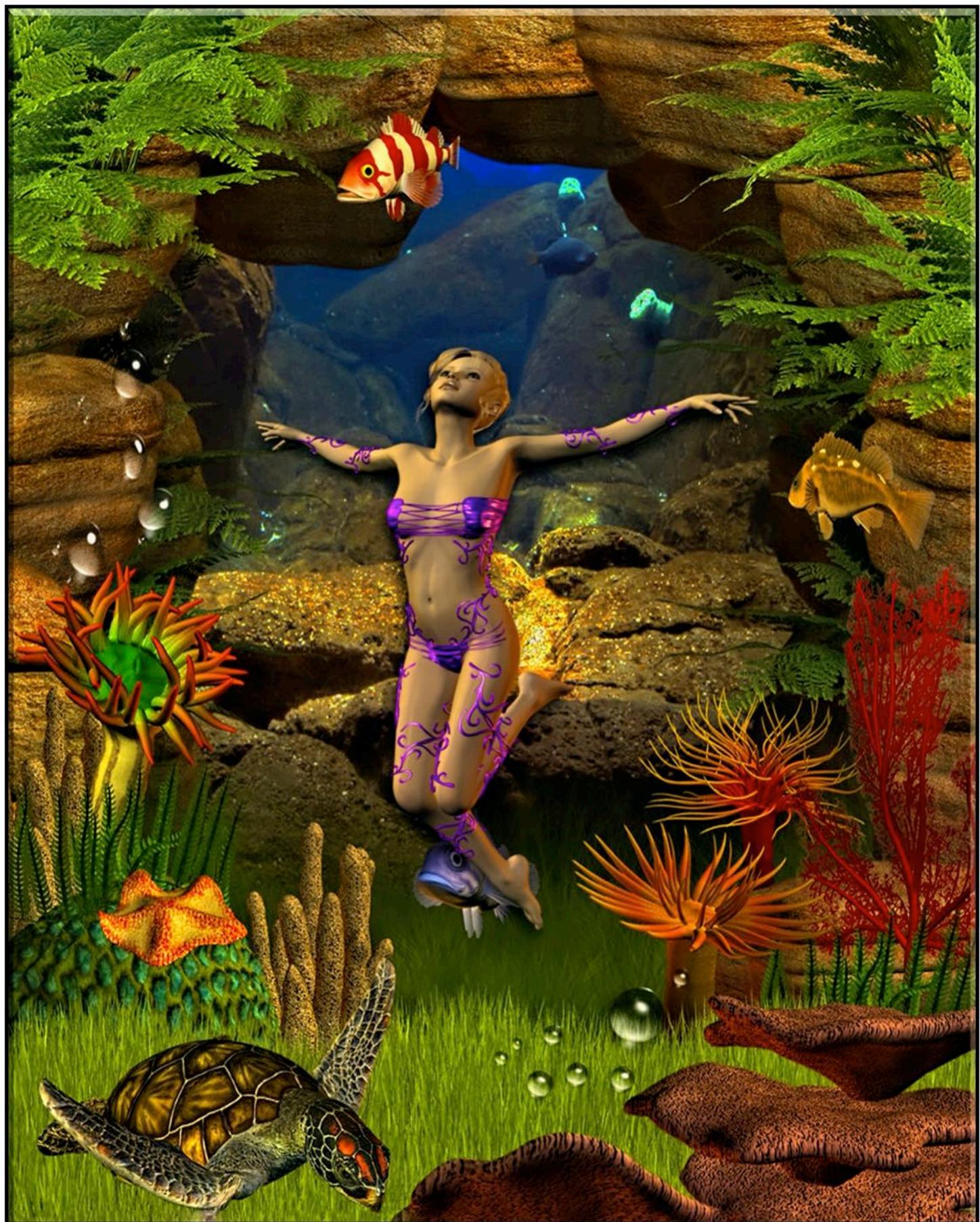
When she looked at him,
The birds' song fainted on the moving air,
The night breezes stopped their motion,
And the moon's radiance shone no more—
for her heart had welled up within
And had merged with his own.

She felt herself being drawn deeper
Into this dream of love
In which there was only one overwhelming
And all consuming feeling
Of glory, peace and unity.

But, then,
During one rainy night back in her real world,
When she was driving in a storm
Along the cliff road around a curve,
Where she had once contemplated suicide,
Her car skidded
And flew off the side of the water slicked road,
falling three thousand feet below,







And crashed hard and straight into the rock
And exploded in a fiery wreck.

The flames licked at her for hours,
But she felt no heat.

All her bones
Should have been crushed in the fall,
But they weren't.

She did not even bleed.
There was no pain.

She arose from the car's wreck unharmed,
And walked away.

It was then that she realized that she, too,
Was a character in someone's dream...

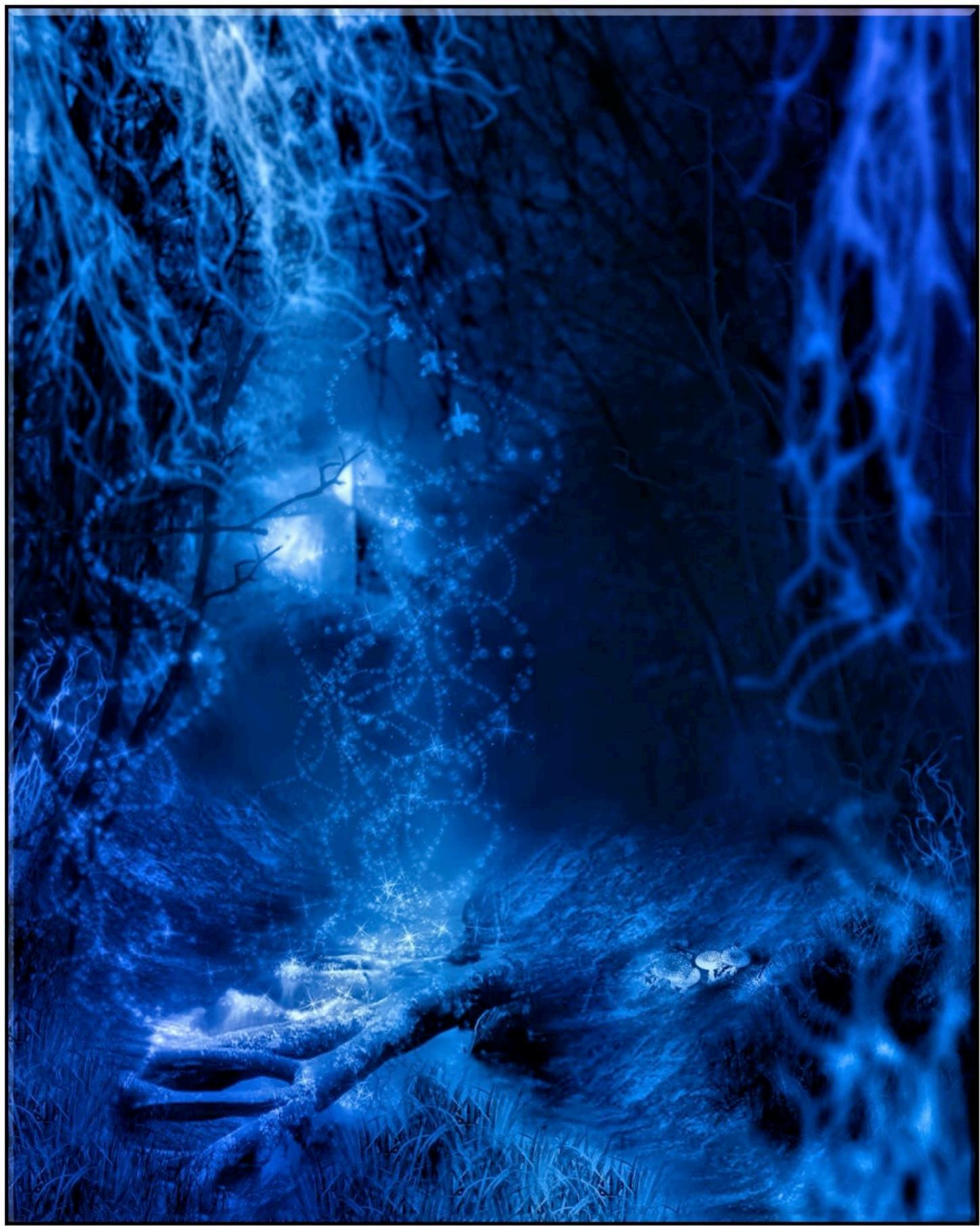
...

... She did not even bleed.
She was a figment
Of someone else's imagination.

“Who dreamest me?”
She cried to the sky.
“Reveal thyself! Who art thou?
Who art thou that won't even let me die!”







The heavens remained dumb,
So she climbed back up towards the road.

Back at the top she again cried,
"Who hast made me? Who?—
Thy image is tainted,
Thy DNA is corrupted!"

Visions of angels appeared in the sky.
"You have a question for us?" they asked.

"Yes, what sort of Being made me
To suffer and toil in this sad world?"

"It's a lovely and beautiful world,"
Said the angels in a chorus.

"OK," she said,
"I'll play your game.
Tell me now,
Who made this varied and sensual world
Of charm and grace and color?
Who gave me intellectual beauty
And those rare but beautiful waves of emotions
Which I have known and enjoyed
for their breathtaking meaning and depth?"

"A good and loving spirit," they said.
"That's our usual answer."



“And who gave me freedom
To love and live and grow,
flowering free and fragile,
Though beautiful, but then withering,
faded and forsorn in old age,
Like some evanescent dream?”

“It was the Creator of all life.”

“And who gave me sadness?”

“He did,” they answered.

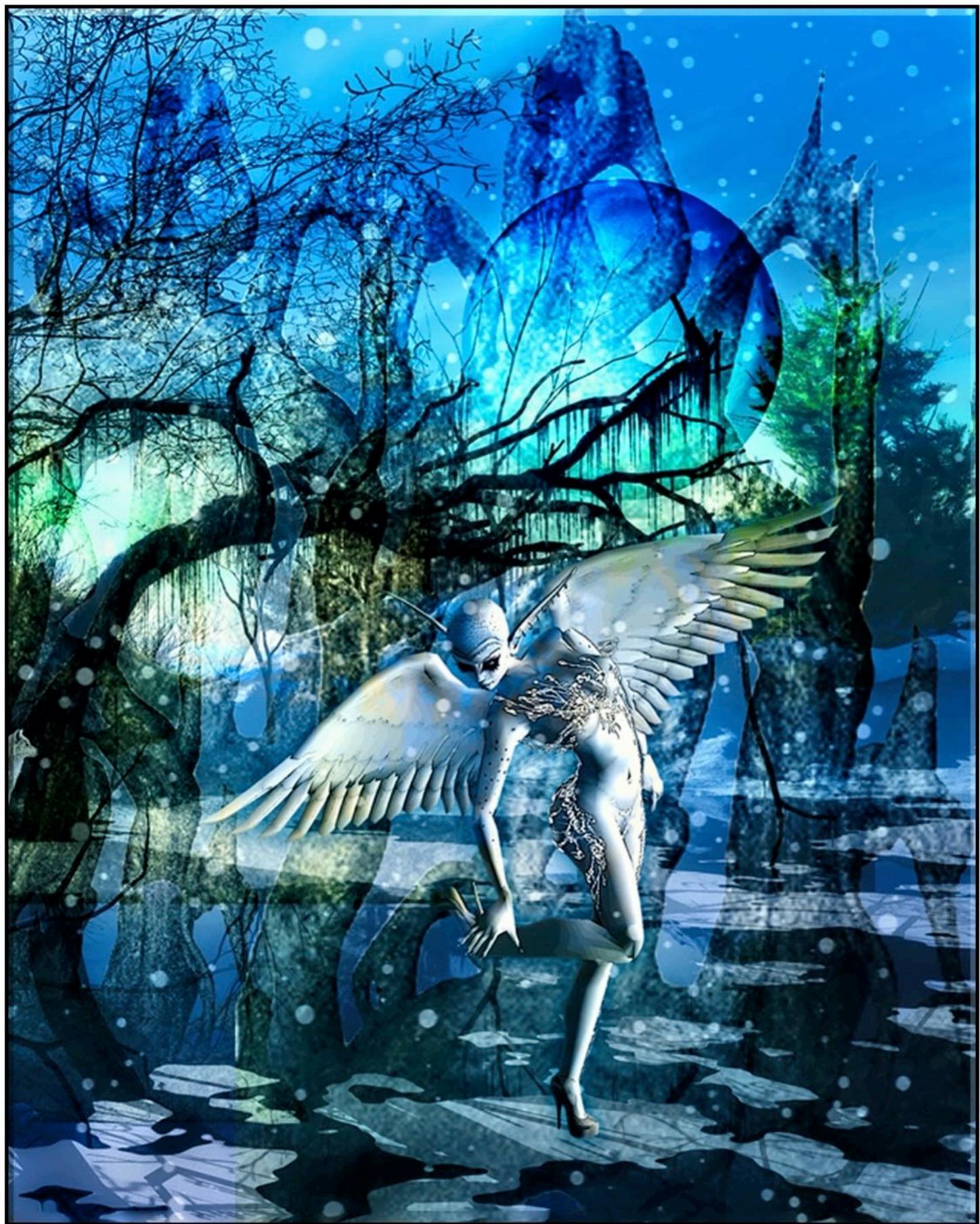
“And who gave the world hunger, pain, misfortune,
Sickness, death, worry, and unbearable calamity
Which drags us suffering to the grave?”

“He reigns,” they said.

“Give me his name!” she asked. “Who is he
That does not even grant me peace in the grave?—
for Hell awaits me there as a further torture?”

“He rules,” the angels replied.

“His name! I ask but his name—
The name of one so cruel!
Who is the one
That would create man as a precious vessel,
Quite imperfect,



Paradise Lost





And then destroy this lovely creation
By sickness and death, in rage?"

"He is the One," they said.

"Name him and let him be known
for his vengeful name—
for in my own fine dreams of a man
I allowed no sickness,
No pain—all was love and beauty!"

Who is he that is the source of my everlasting pain?"

"HE does not exist,"
The angels finally said,
"Nor does the Devil, nor do we—
All is simply virtually as it is
And so it ever shall be.

It's the way that the universe happens to work.

Therefore, all is right with the world.

We angels are simply manifestations
Of your own thoughts.

All that is truly real comes from within;

Nothing comes from without."

"There is no creative deity?" she asked.

"There is none;
There is only an unconscious spirit towards life
Which is part and parcel of the universe,
Co-eternal with it and embodied in it



As the principle of life in all things.
It is the connectedness of all things,
And exists far below the level of atoms."

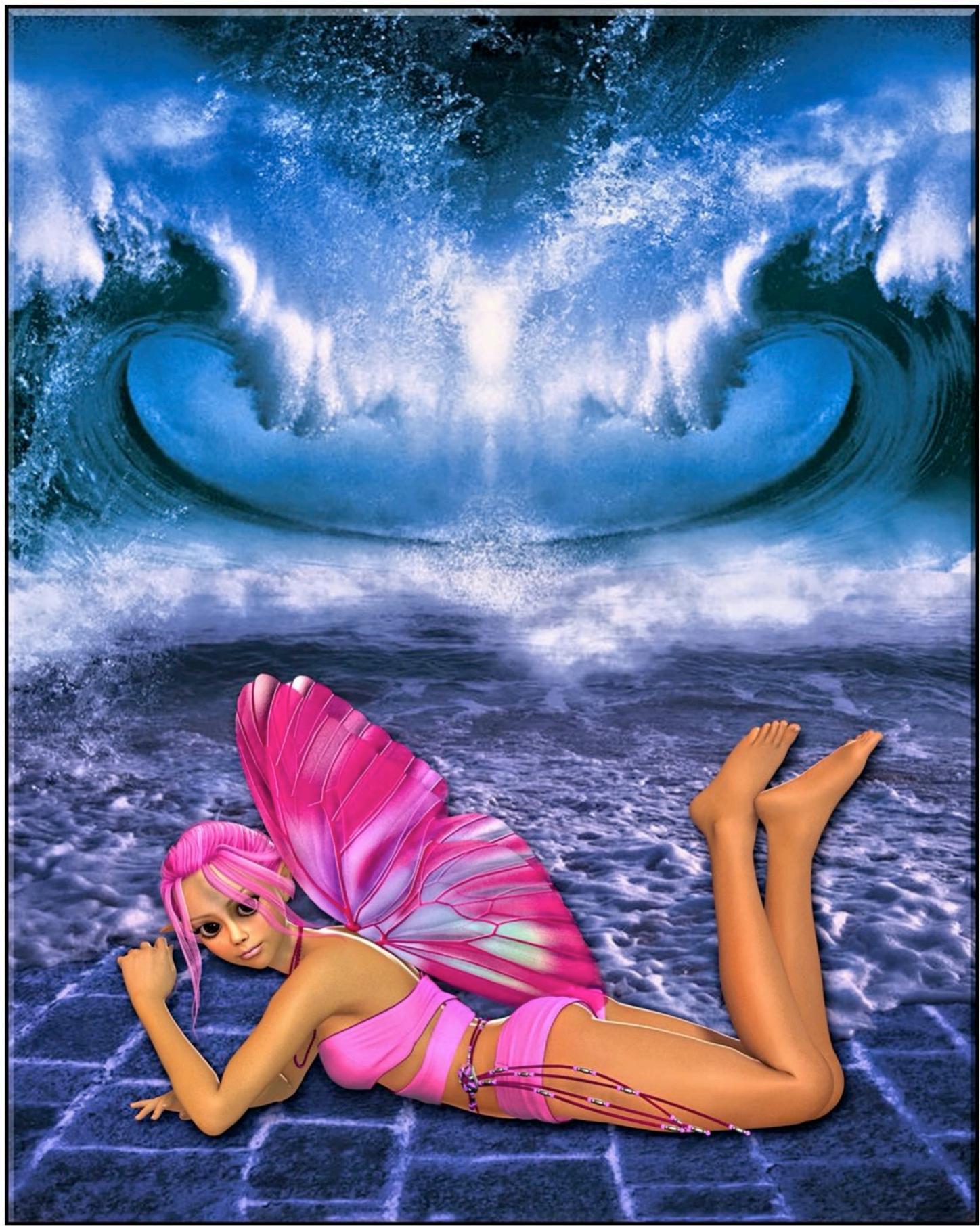
She didn't know whether she was relieved or angry,
Not having anyone to blame
for the state of the world.

"But whose dream am I,"
She wondered aloud.
"Who saved me from death?"

Another voice now replied—
The familiar voice of the man of her dreams.
"It is I who made thee, my beloved," he said.
"I dreamt of thee.
You are the dream of my dreams—
You are my ideal,
for your love is so innocent and free!"

"No," she said, "It cannot be,
for it was I who made thee in my dreams."

"Yes," he said,
"But my image was already in you, was it not?
Who put it there?
It was from that image
That you gave birth to mine—
But the real story is more like
That we have somehow made each other.







I may be the day to your night,
But you are the reverse to me when I dream of you.
I am your opposite twin.
Neither of us can exist without the other."

"I believe it," she said,
"Although there seems to be no initial cause.
Very strange though."

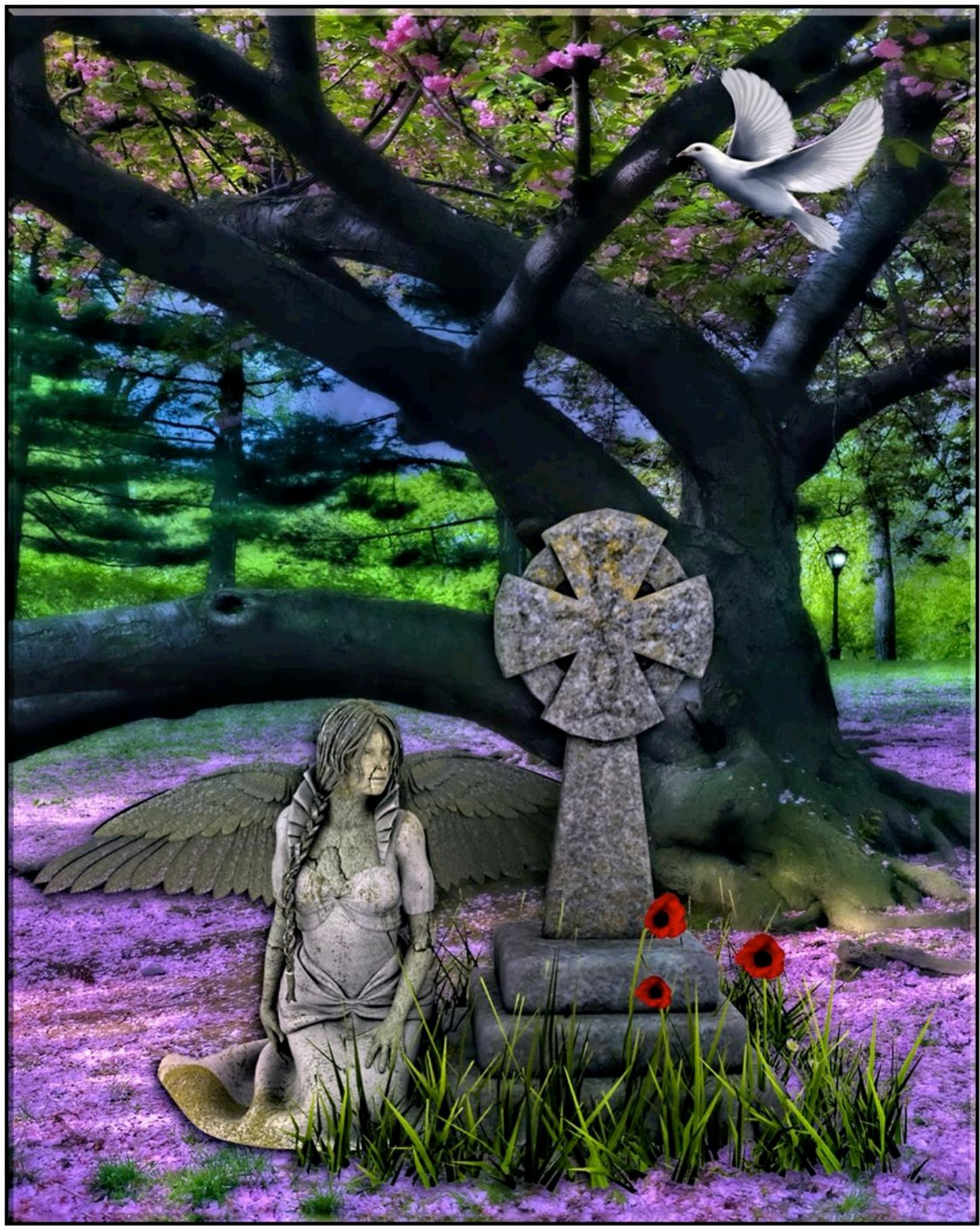
"I see and dream of you, my dream woman,
Each night," he whispered.

"We are indeed two souls,
Each of which opens the other,"
She replied.

"Yes, it is I who made you as you made me,
from all that was already inside us.
As your twin spirit I arose,
Given life only by your dreams.
Oh please, let me live, for now I sustain you—
I protect you and love you
As you do the same for me.
And now that I love you and want you,
I need you."

"If one of us dies," she said,
"Then the other would perish also?"







“The valley cannot exist without the mountain.
There can be no day without the night;
There can be no beauty without sadness,
No yin without the yang.

“We are twin-opposites—
As alike as dawn and dusk in our aspects;
Reflections, as it were of each other’s image—
Visions which truly exist in the mind,
for all is real in the mind.”

“Day gives birth to night
And then night gives birth to day.
That is us and that is the cycle which created us,
Within which scheme it was not necessary
for either part to come first,
As with the chicken and the egg.”

“But we live neither here nor there.
Does it matter?
Now that we know that we’re just dream images
How can we really live and love?”

“We can neither fully live
Nor completely die where we are.”

“What is deathless is also lifeless,
Although it is still a beautiful work of art,
Such as the ideals that we see in a painting.”



“I can be as real as you wish me to be,
As can you to me.”

“Some say it’s crazy to try and live a dream.”

“Some say it’s crazy not to!”

“Join my real world,” she said,
“And I will join yours as well.”

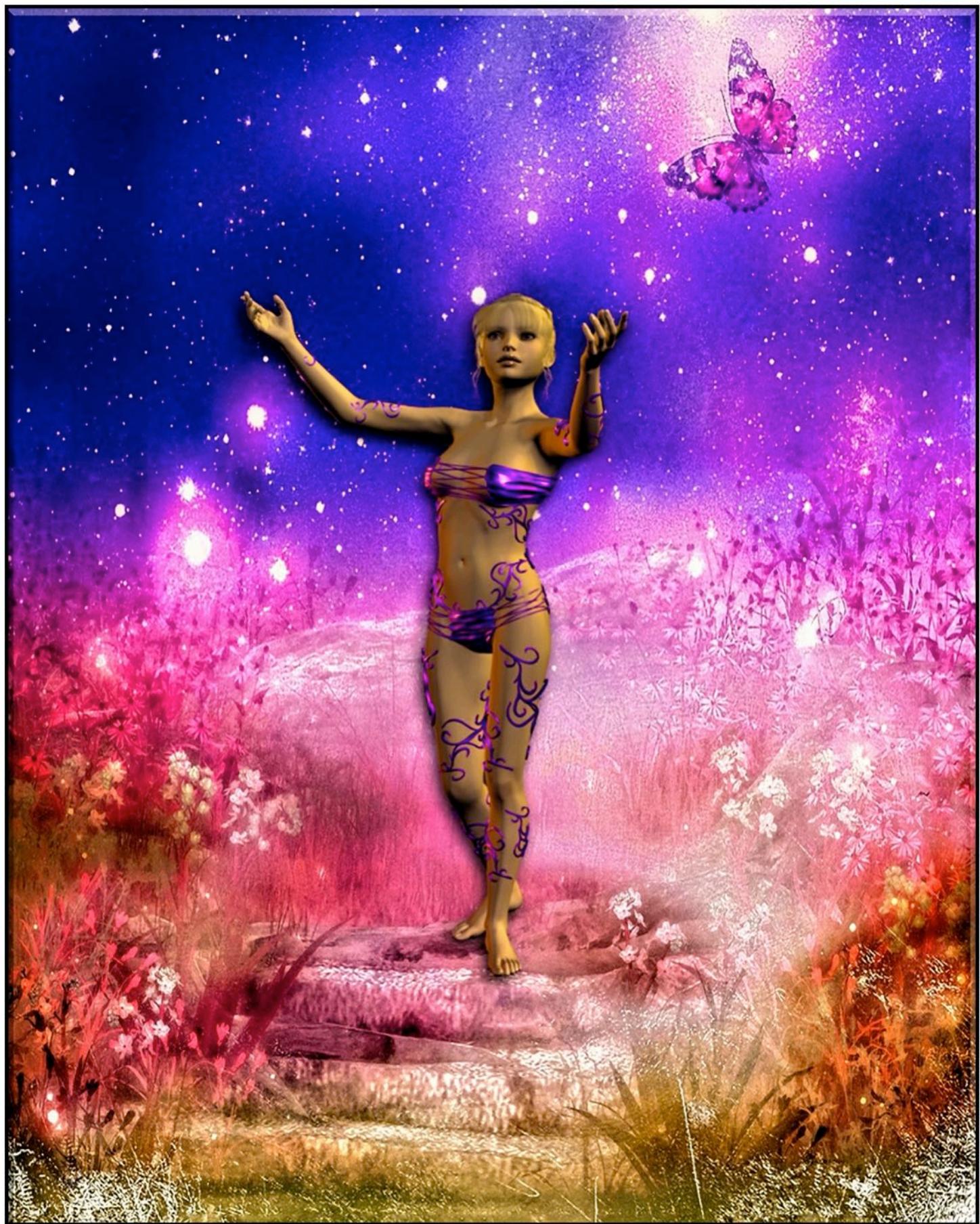
“But your day is my night and vice versa.
How can we meet?”

“We’ll meet at twilight dawn or dusk—
The only time that night and day can touch.”

“I shall come,” he said,
“Leaving his dreamland forever
And joining hers as her real life love.

She greeted the man of her ideals,
Saying to him,
“I have wished you into being.
My thoughts of you have colored my actions
And have led me to find you in the real world—
It was a self-fulfilling prophecy,
An example of positive creative imagery.”

“It was indeed,” he answered.
“Although here I shall at last know







True sadness and death.
But, also, I will experience higher levels of beauty."

She said, no longer anxious or depressed,
"When you're open to beauty,
Then you become vulnerable to sadness.
What I have finally learned, the hard way,
Is that they are inseparable in life."

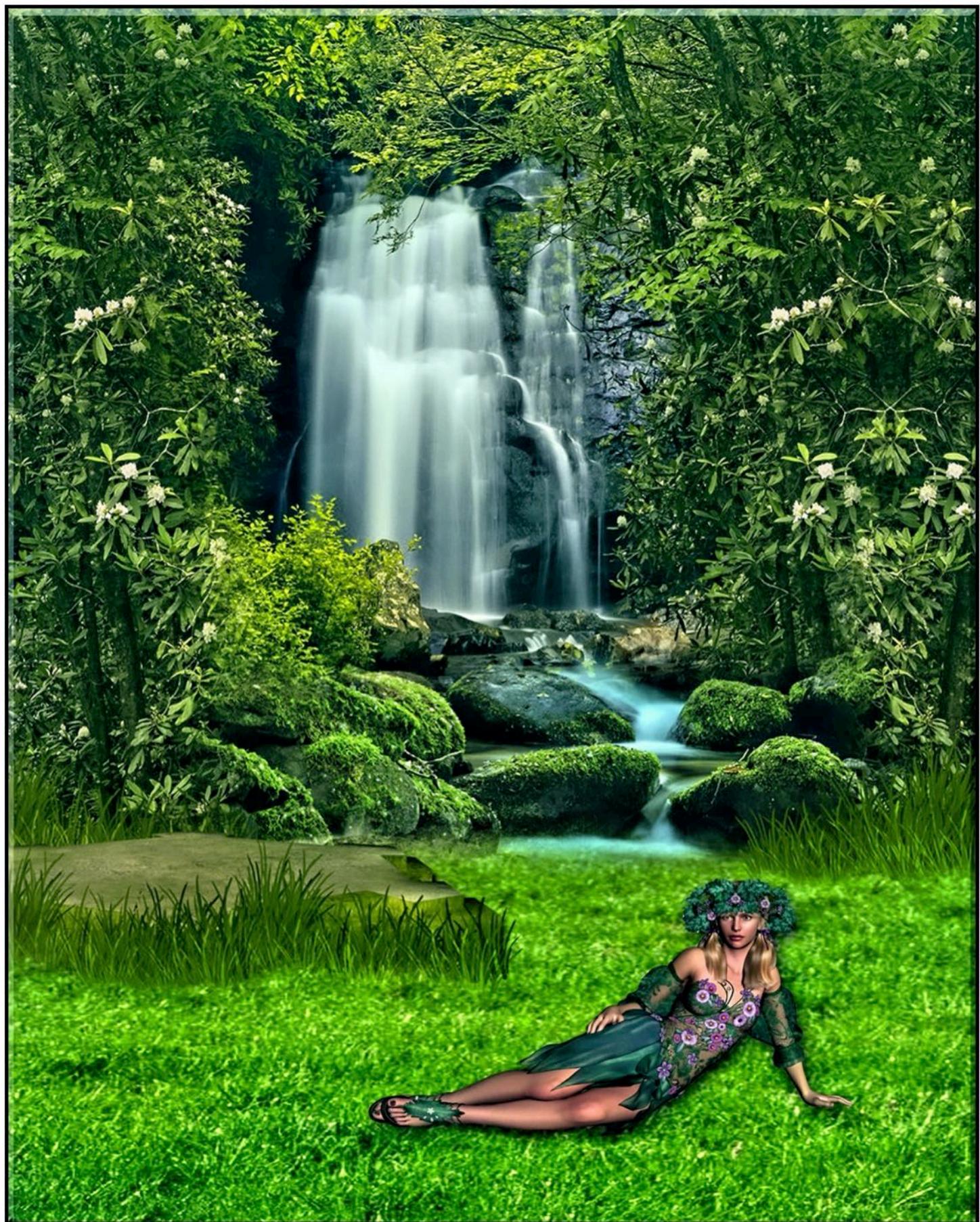
"Some people lead lives in which
They are fat, dumb, and fairly content."

"Yes, they don't live much, but then again,
They don't suffer much either.
They're immune to both beauty and sadness."

"It's like when you're not with me.
There is pain when I miss you,
But for me, if I had no one to miss,
Then the pain would be greater."

The new light of morning shone
In that blessed mood
That attends to the quiet intermingling
Of day and night
In the dawn's misty twilight.

She came to him during morning twilight;
He came to her at evening twilight.
In between, they dreamt of each other.



Each day forward was born in quiet innocence
As their human hearts tenderly touched—
Open, vulnerable, and exposed,
Yet fully alive and beating.

Days turned into weeks
As they grew close together in the soft glow
That was neither night nor day,
But was somewhere in-between,
In that nether world of half-light dawn or dusk.

The morning brimmed with the freshness of life,
Its beauty spreading far and wide
Into every root and tendril.

Life took wing from the cocoon—
An ugly caterpillar having magically transformed
Into a beautiful butterfly.

Weeks turned into months.
It was a dream within a dream within a dream.
faint images from dim shadows
flickered and grew brighter.
High noon came and showered its brightness
Into life's every chamber.

Now that they had felt the glory of reality,
They would seek it always.

from the months a life was made.



The afternoon sparkled
And spread its gold to every living thing.

Years of contentment rolled by.

The soft light of evening shone again,
As always, in that sacred mood
That attends the quiet intermingling
Of day and night in the twilight of dusk.

He came, as usual, saying:

*I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright.*

*I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?—
To thy chamber window sweet!*

*The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream,—
The champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream,*

*The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,*



As I must die on thine,
O, beloved as thou art!

O, lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.

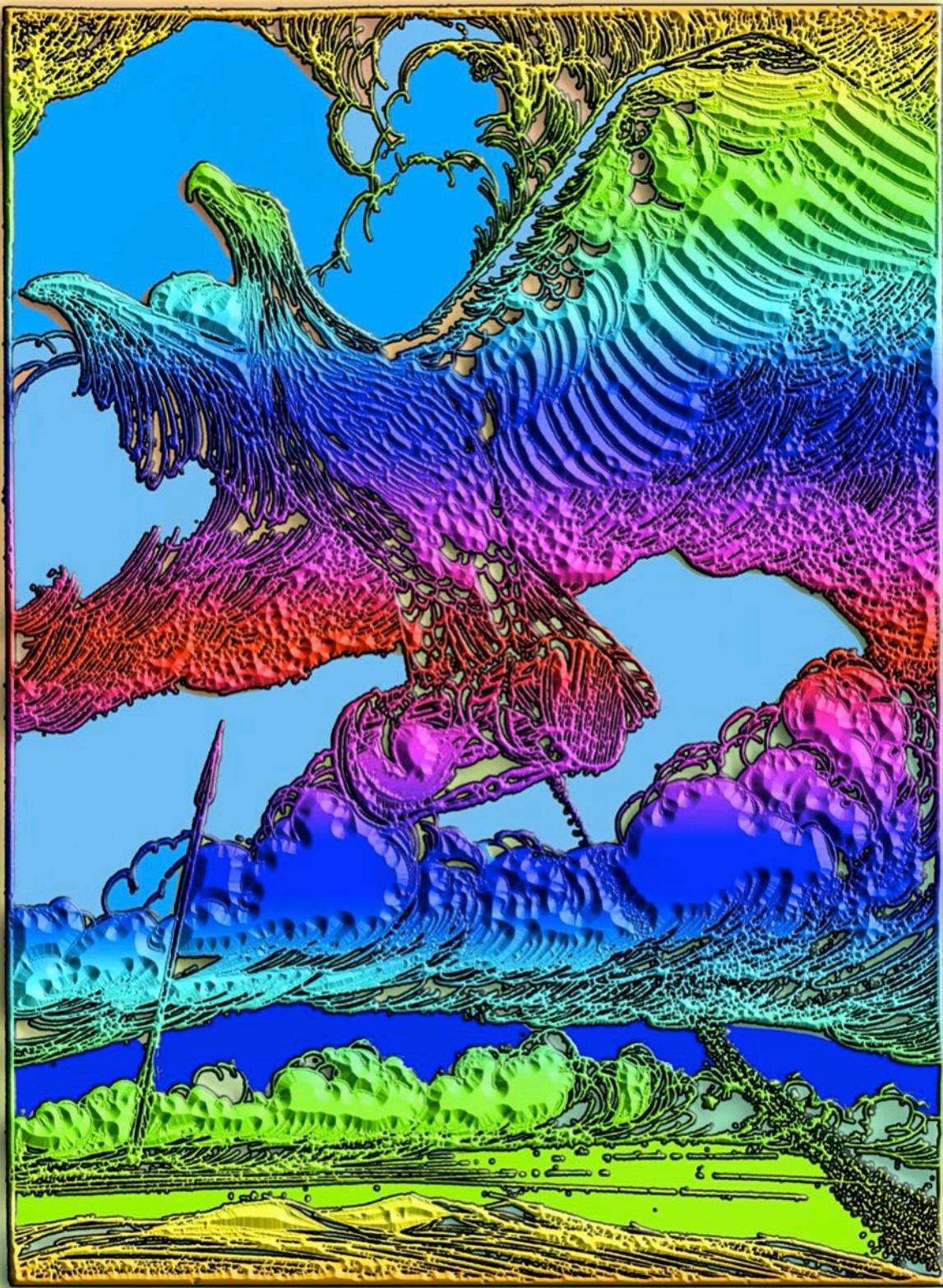
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats out loud and fast
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last!

(Shelley)

He awoke that morning from a dream,
Filled with dread, dripping with sweat,
Wondering whether he had gone
To Heaven or to Hell,
Not knowing if he was truly awake
Or still in the midst of a nightmare;
But, soon a calming wave of peace
And quiet swept over him,
As he turned and saw that his dream lady
Was lying there next to him.

“I’m alive?”

“You were sick,” she said,
“Something you’re not used to in my world,



But you are recovering now.
I suppose it's a sign of age,
for we've spent many years together."

"We're growing old together, aren't we,"
he continued.

"Indeed, but we still have many good years left.
Here, I'll read you something from Wordsworth
That he wrote in his later years:"

*What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.*

A shade passed from between them—
A door between their worlds had opened
To let their dreams pass through.
One shooting star after another
Signaled these wishful events.

They awoke that morning from another dream—
Or perhaps they dreamt that they awoke—
On the shore where they had once discovered
The Spirit of the Earth.



They rubbed the sand from their eyes
And opened their minds to the day,
Being careful not to clear from them
The shadows of dreamy visions.

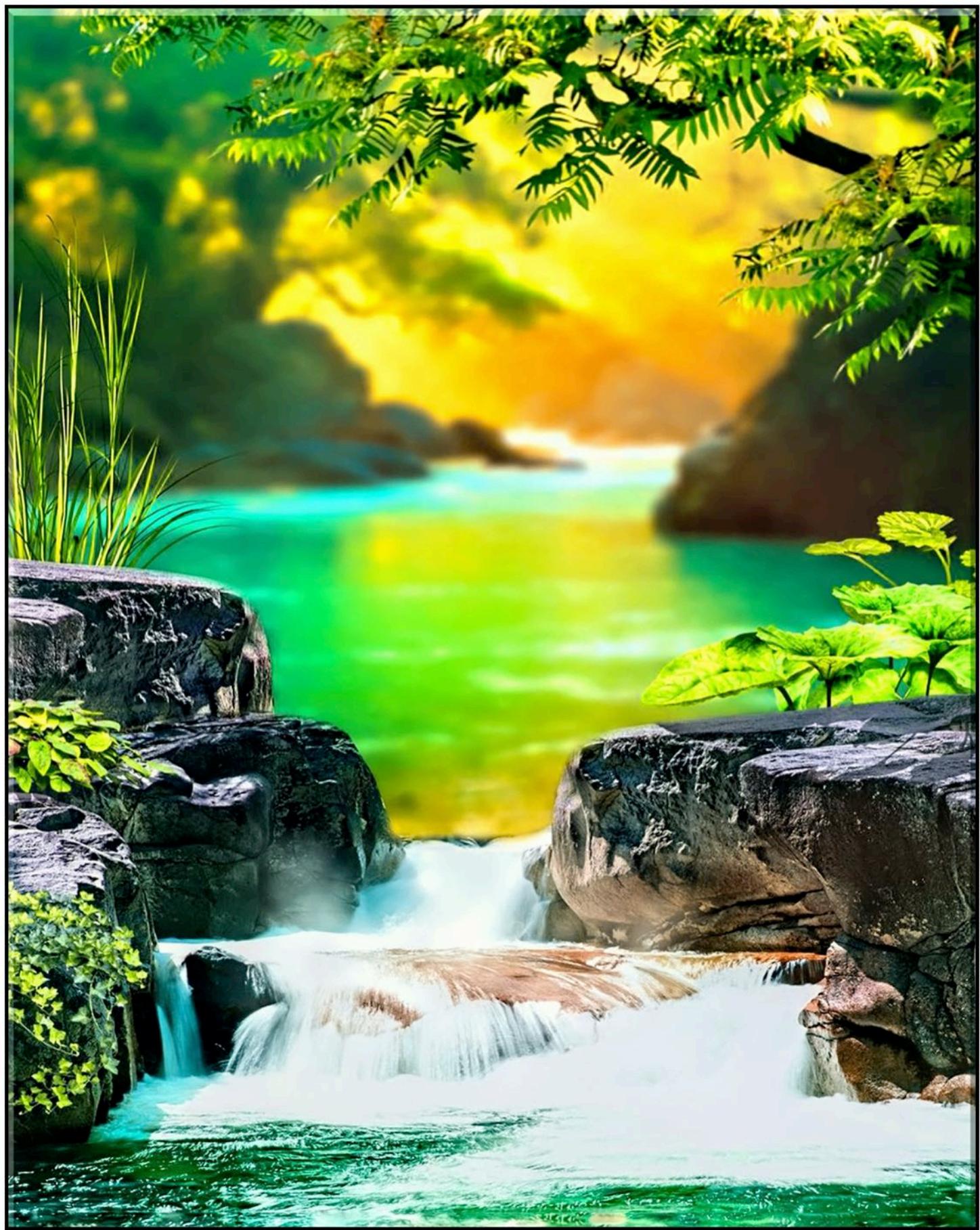
Their night-time apparitions
Were soothing, calming,
Relaxing, real, tranquil,
Refreshing, restful, and peaceful—
Just like the water of the lake
That still slept under the morning mist.

They had camped on the shore,
In a mossy nook between some rocks,
An overhang of trees protecting them.

They couldn't see the sky,
But they could see a reflection of the sky
And its clouds in the water when the mist lifted:

A reflected bird flew in a reflected sky.
Water lilies floated in the heavenly mirror.
Orange day-lilies nearby told them
That that deep summer was upon them.

Haunting visions poured forth
As they looked at the image of the sky in the water.
Soft winds rippled the water ever so slightly
And blew the branches of the reflected trees.



Dreamy visions held them still sleep-eyed.
Again their worlds had met at twilight.

A lark rose from the water
And flew into nothingness.
Gossamer threads ran from rock to rock,
Seemingly attaching them to their dream world.

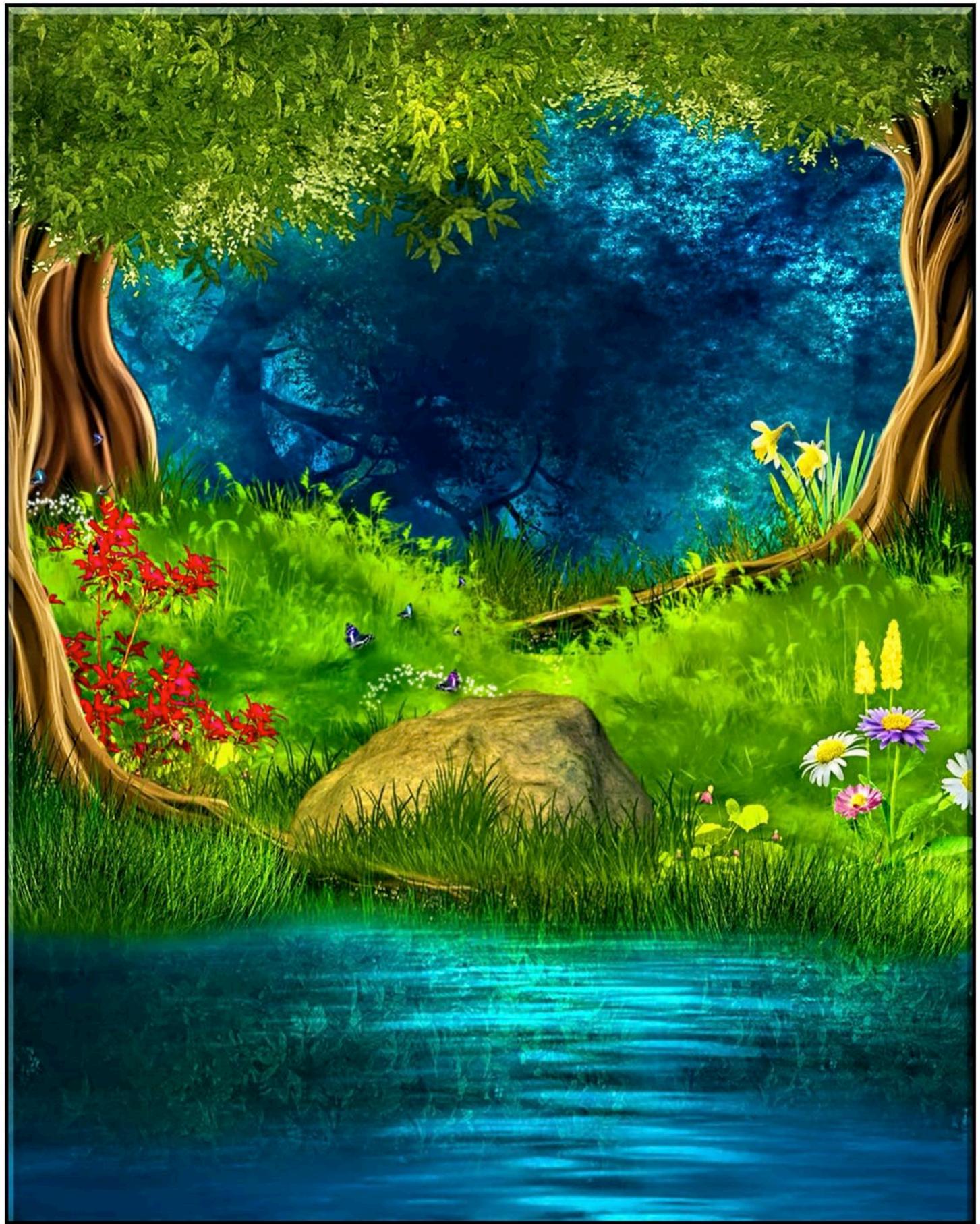
Was it dawn or dusk?
In the half light, it did not matter.
"Which is real and which is an illusion?"
She wondered.

"Do we sleep or do we dream?" he asked.

She answered with a poem:

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep, —that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live —
(Shelley)

Blossoms fell from the trees
And began to cover their feet.
When a cushion had been formed,
They sat down to prepare an imaginative breakfast
Of nuts and strawberries.



flowers gently cascaded onto them
As their dreams took wing.

They did eight impossible things like this
Before breakfast each and every day.

A unicorn wandered by,
Its existence fed
Only by the possibility of being.

A chimera came forth
And ate nuts and berries from their hands.

faeries danced between the flowers,
Caught only by a believing glance.

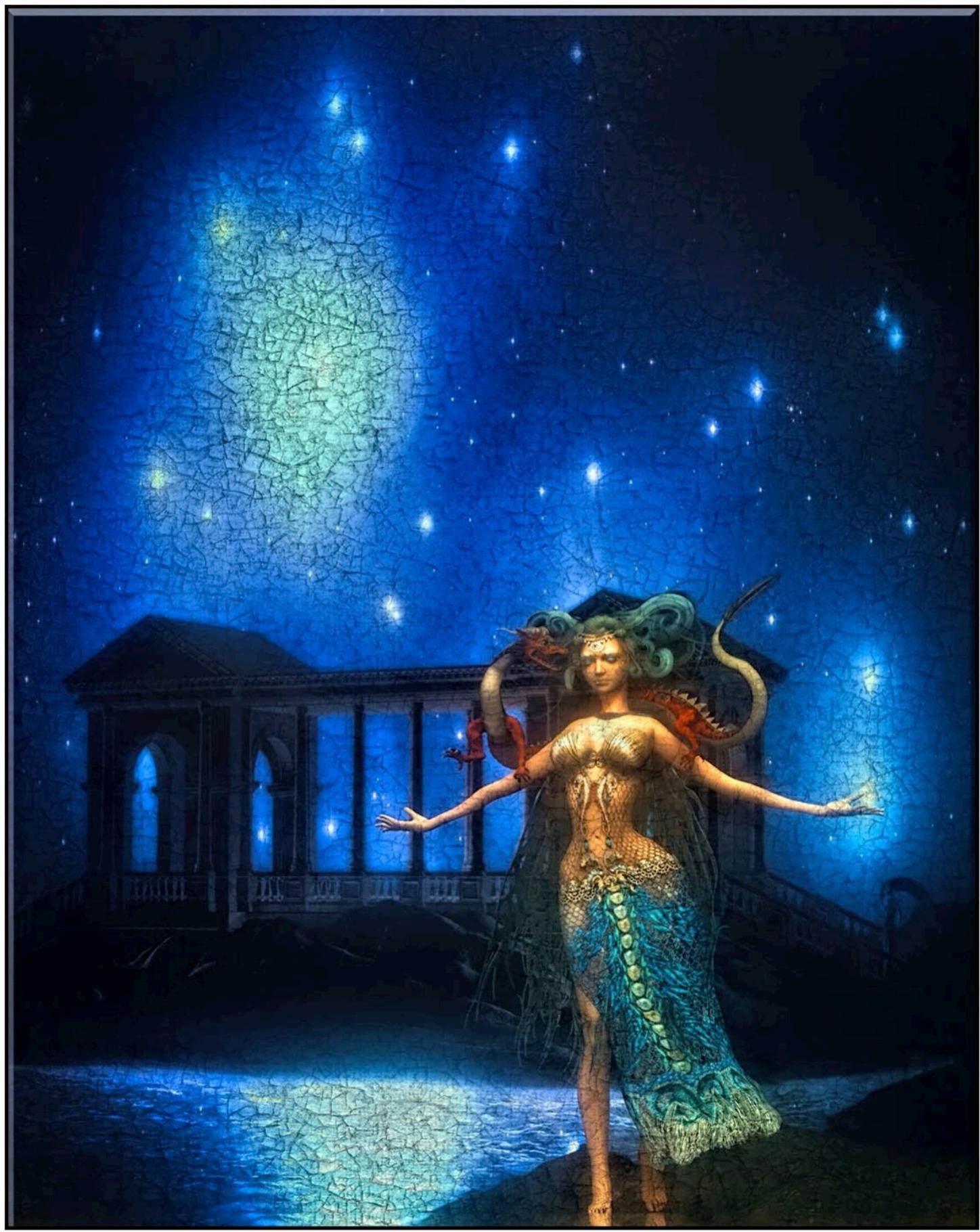
Elves rode flying horses,
And centaurs walked proudly
Down the path near them.

These were the creatures who never were,
All living in the land that never was.

They looked into each other's eyes,
Reflecting on their thoughts.

"I'm not sure what world we're in anymore,"
She noted.

"Nor does it matter very much
Which side of the looking glass we're on,
for we are here."



"It's as if some ethereal beauty
Has descended over our thoughts,
And sent a poetic vision to us,
A shadow of some divine perfection.
It is rapt, although a little vague,
But I can sense its presence. Hear:"

—I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessible its circles?
(Shelley)

The day soon came to life,
And they saw castle builders laying stones,
Dream merchants giving away various unrealities,
Idealists realizing their ambitions,
Visionaries watching plans taking shape,
Ghosts and wraiths playing joyfully on the air,
Vapors forming and rising
And then coalescing into forms,
Phantoms riding on the light hearted breezes,
Will-o'-the-wisps sparkling over the water,
And mirages becoming real at the slightest touch.

"I am so much enjoying our world," she said.
"Here, all things are possible—
It is an oasis untouched by oblivion and regret,



—Born Again—

All the roseate hearts were cleansed by dew,
And lucky are you if spring finds you new,
And every blossom on the bush blew full,
When these wonders the new morning bestrew.





free from contagion, debt, worry,
Care, strife, and woe."

And so they lived in the clouds,
Drifted into the Land of Nod,
Resided in Never-Land,
And made a home
In the world of make believe.

Twilight fell and brooded awhile at the shore.

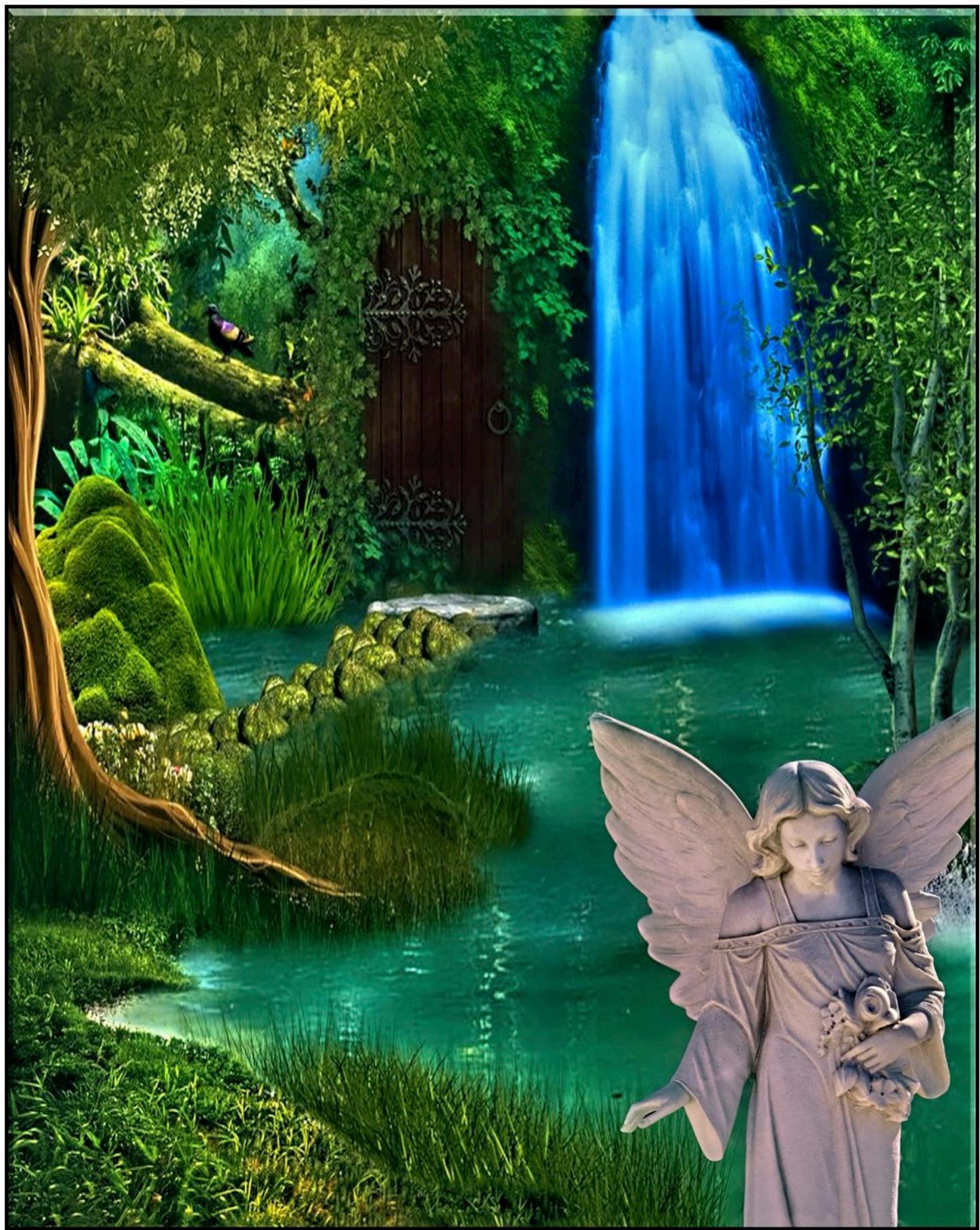
They looked at the water
And saw therein a reflection of the sunset.
Reflected fire burned through reflected clouds.
A fish swam through the reflected sky.

She walked to the water's edge
And looked into it,
Expecting to see her reflection there,
But she was surprised and pleased
To see his there instead.

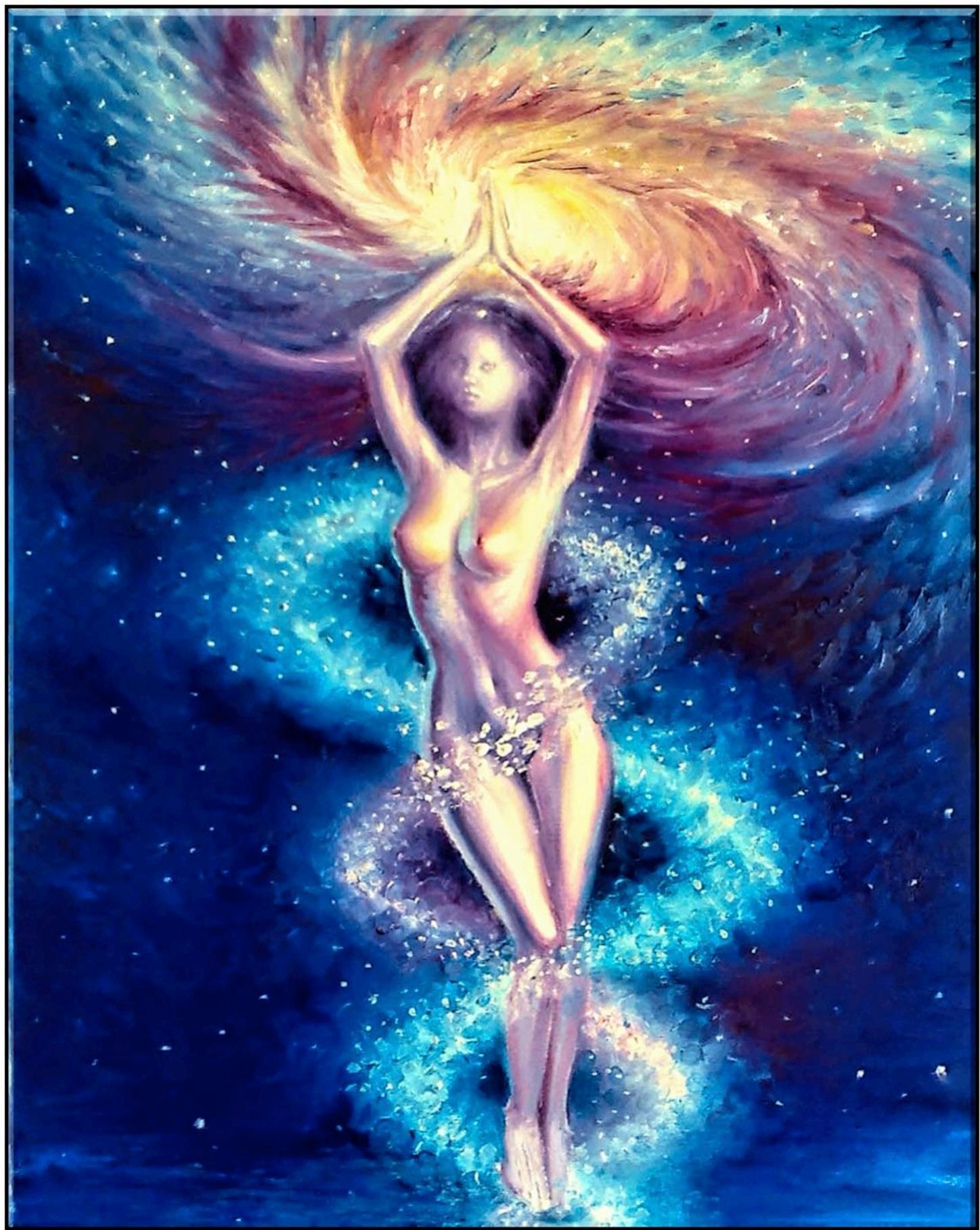
"Come," she said, "look!
Come here to the shore."

He walked down to the water and looked in,
Seeing not his own reflection,
But a reflection of her.

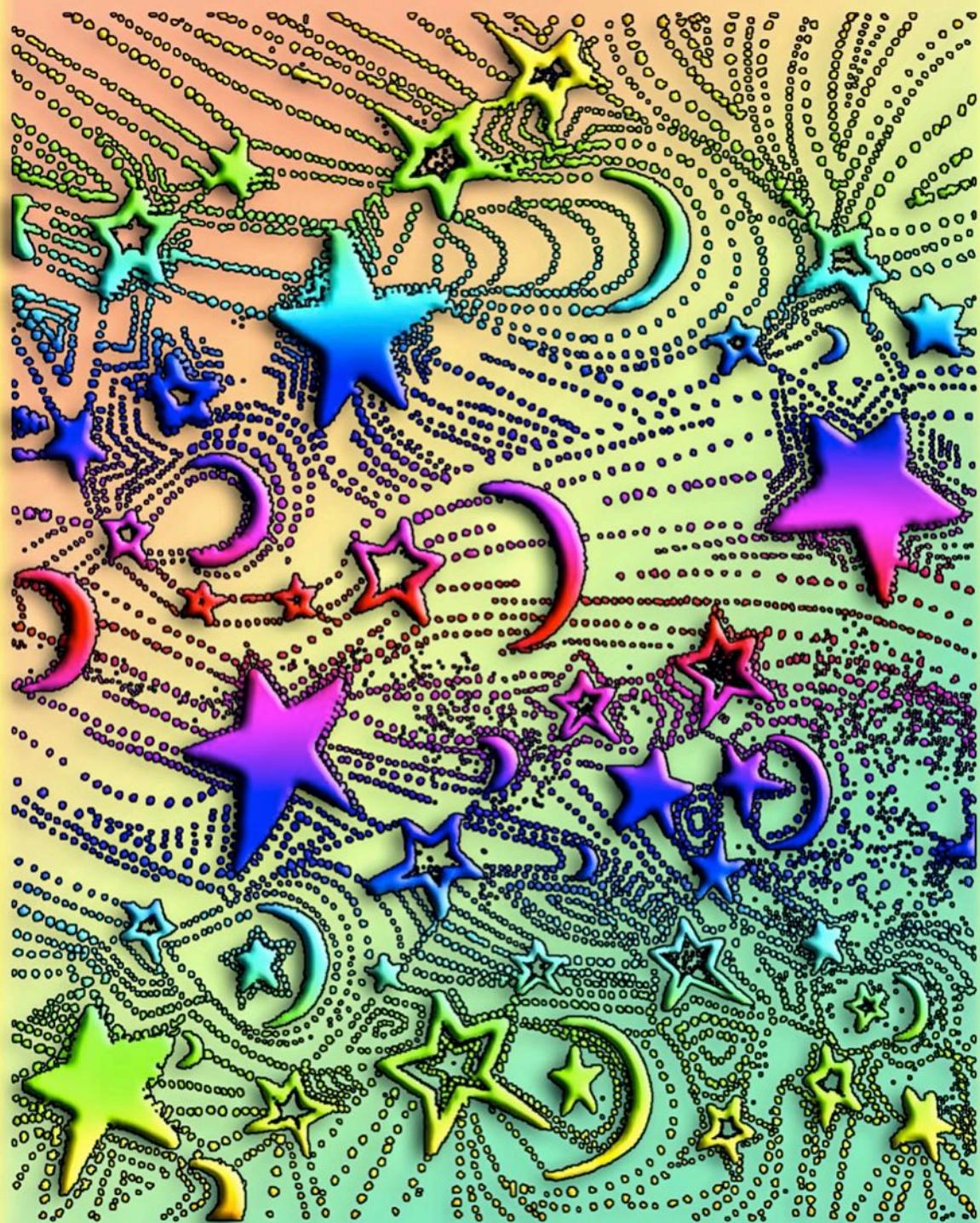
"We have merged," he said, "we are one.



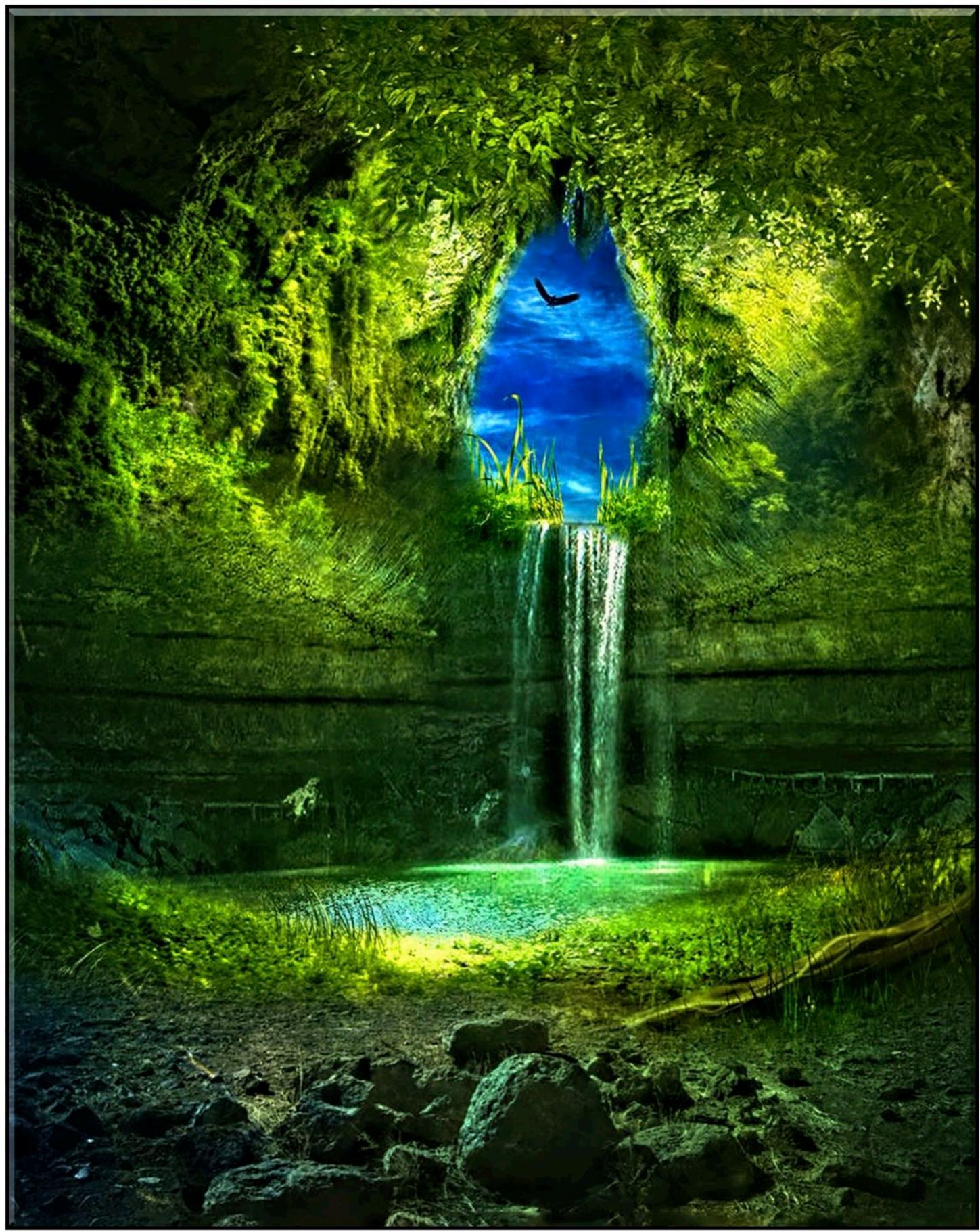


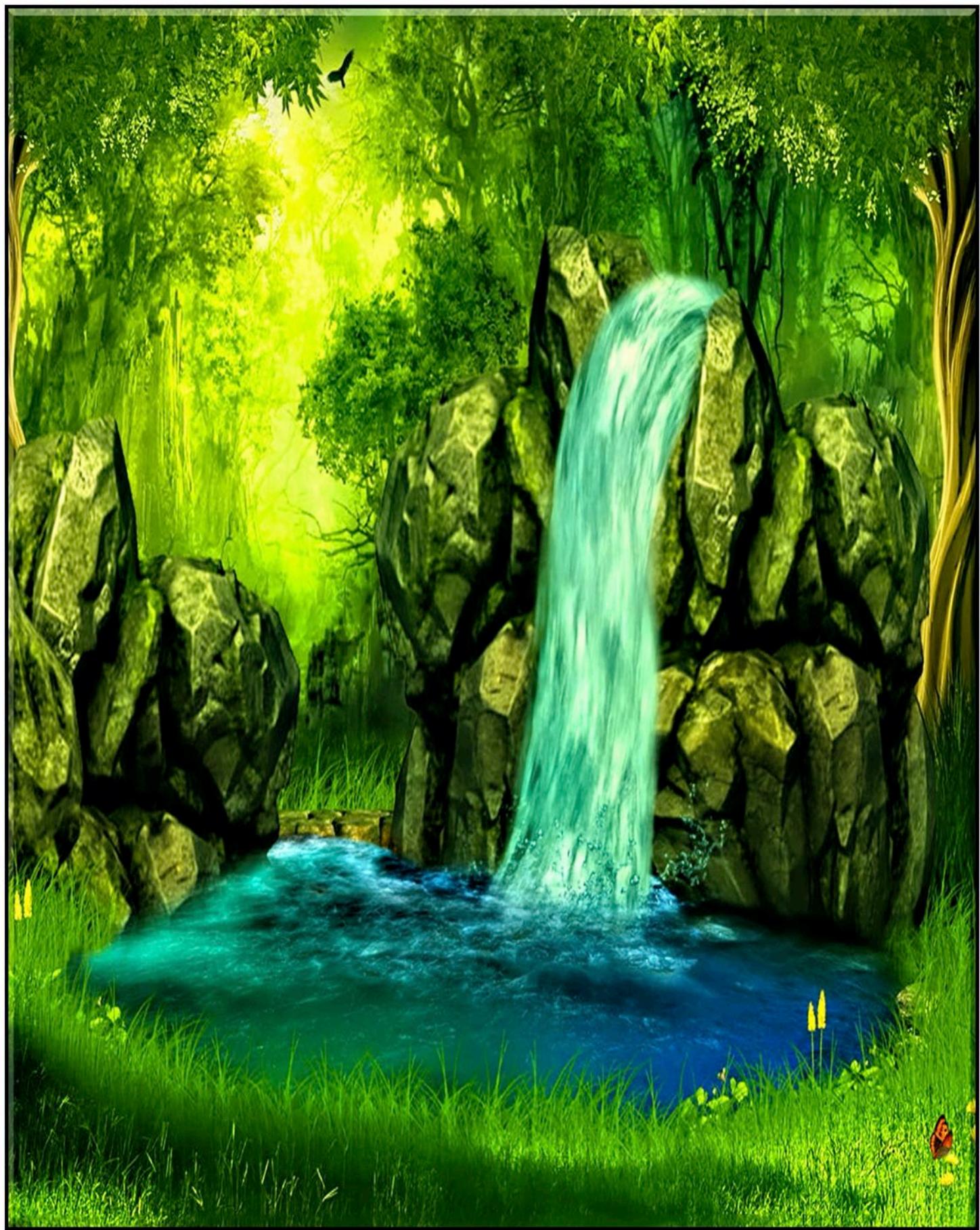


We will be strong now.
We will survive in either world."











When a deep truth is known so intensely
That all of its clothing falls away,
Then we have learned the beauty of truth, for
The reality of meaning is beauty.
Life, although anguishing, must be lived fully,
Since, if we're alive enough to feel its beauty,
Then we're exposed to the opposite twin—
Yes, Beauty's other side is Melancholy.





— Inseparable —

Soft breezes blow, caressing me and you,

As we kiss the roses and drink the dew.

Reason and passion soon merge into one,

As truth and beauty make their rendezvous.