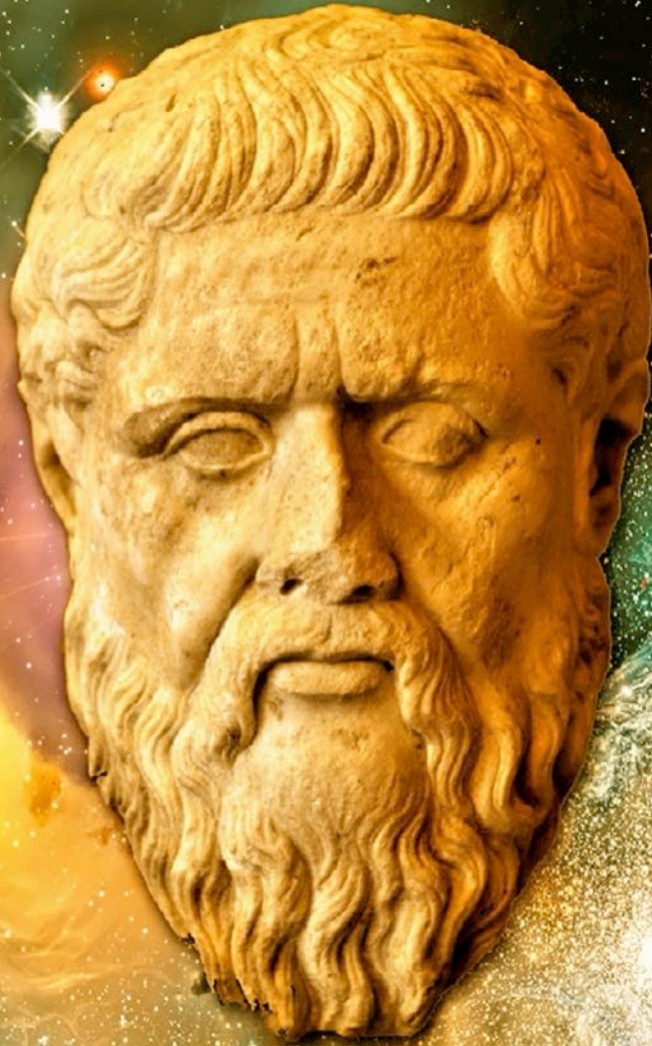




**Parmenides,
Unity in
Multiplicity**

**Illustrated by
Austin P. Torney**

Parmenides



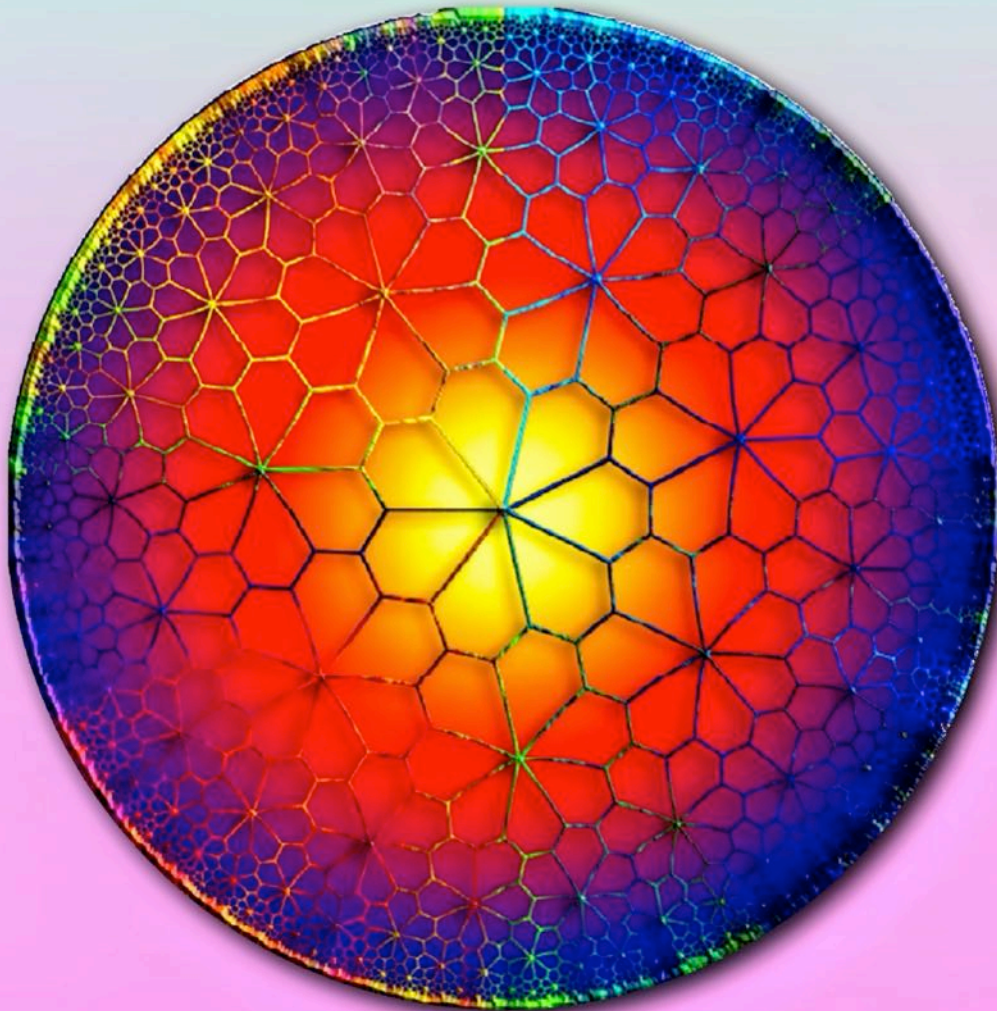
Of Elea



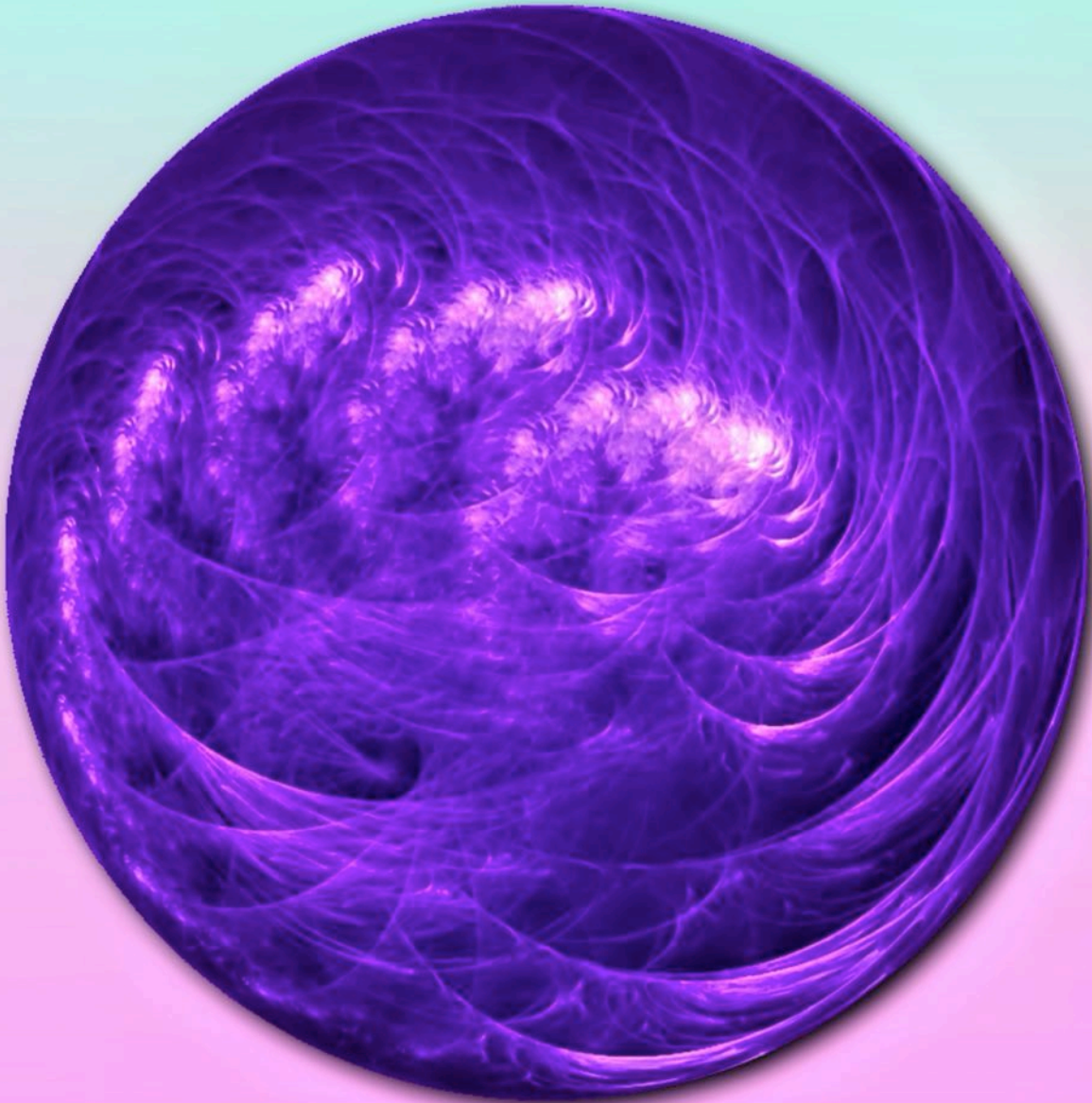
Preface

(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

What Is both must be (or exist), and it must be what it is, not only temporally but also spatially. For What Is to be (or exist) across times is for it to be ungenerated and deathless; and for it to be *what it is* across times is for it to be “still” or unchanging. For What Is to be (or exist) everywhere is for it to be whole. For it to be *what it is* at every place internally is for it to be uniform; and to be so everywhere at its extremity is for it to be “perfect” or “complete.”



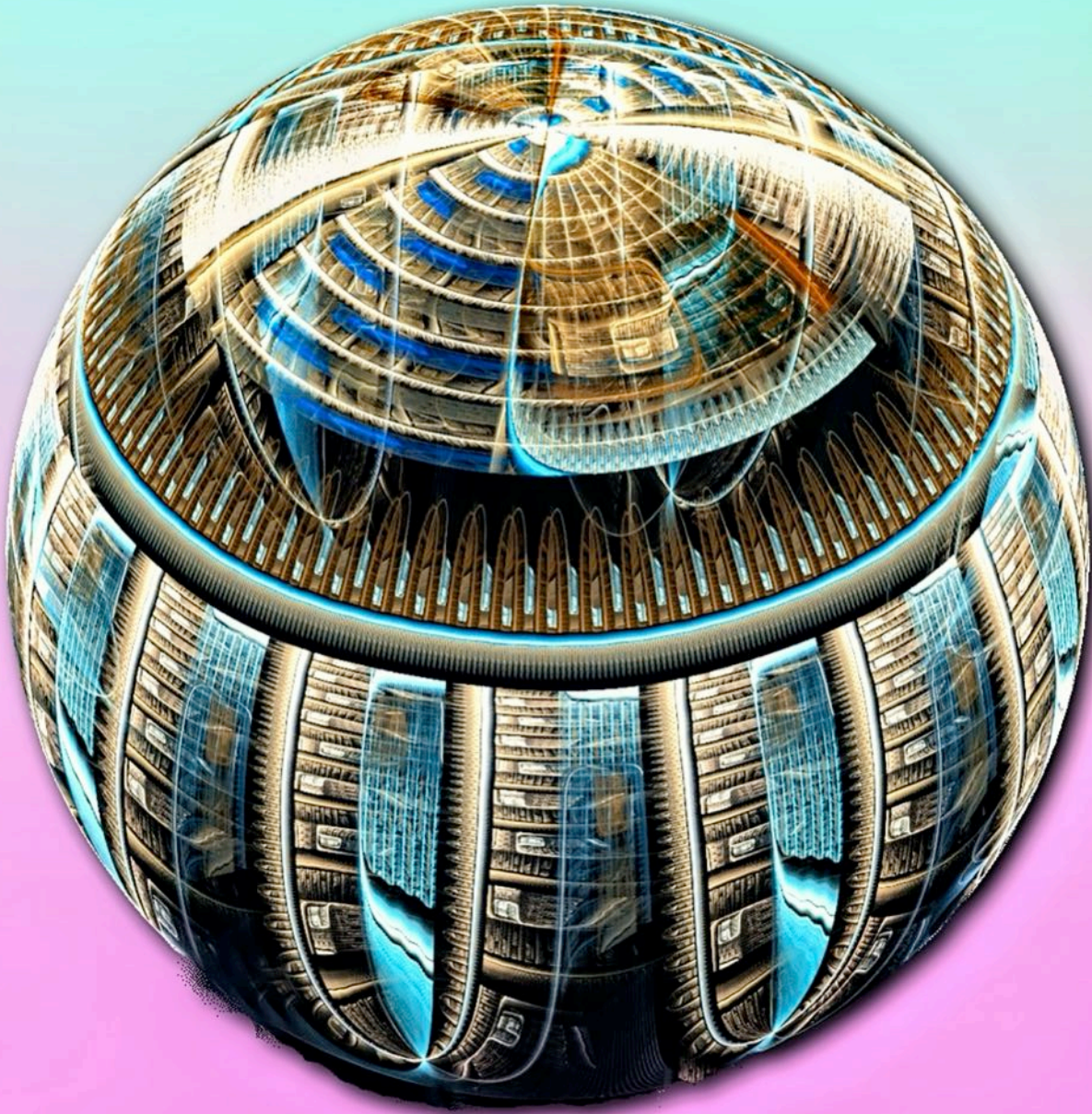
Taken together, the attributes shown to belong to what must be amount to a set of perfections: everlasting existence, immutability, the internal invariances of wholeness and uniformity, and the invariance at its extremity of being optimally shaped. What Is has thus proven to be not only a necessary but, in many ways, a perfect entity.



Parmenides may be counted a “generous” monist. While he reasons that there is only one entity that must be, he also sees that there are manifold entities that are but need not be (what they are). Parmenides was a “generous” monist because the existence of what must be does not preclude the existence of all the things that are but need not be.



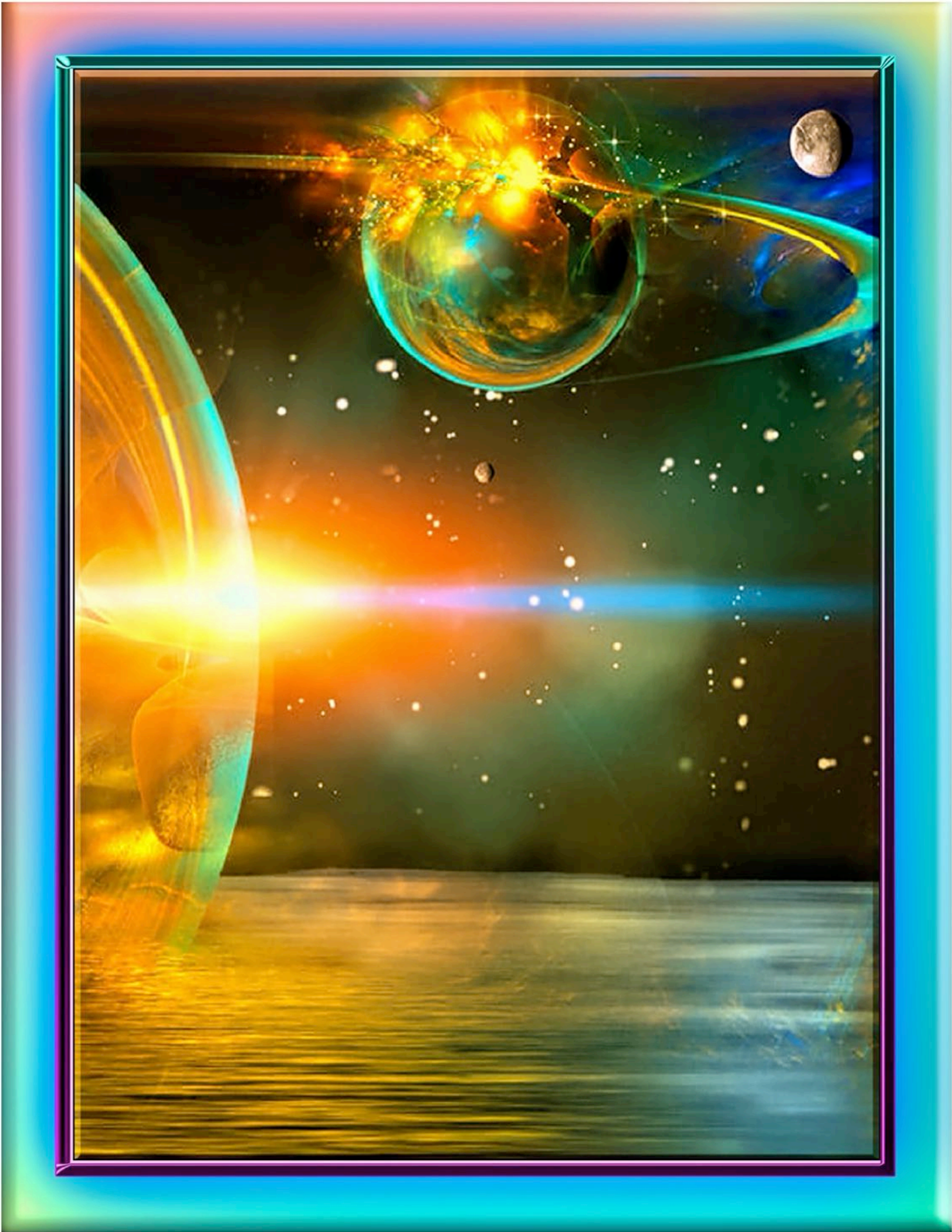
It seems preferable to understand What Is as coterminous but not consubstantial with the perceptible cosmos: it is in exactly the same place where the perceptible cosmos is, but is a separate and distinct “substance.” On this view, What Is imperceptibly interpenetrates or runs through all things while yet maintaining its own identity distinct from theirs.





'On Nature'







The mares that carry me
as far as my spirit might reach
were escorting me, when guiding they
placed me on the much-informing road
of the Goddess, who leads the man
who knows through all.

There I was being carried,
brought by wise mares who were
straining the chariot,
while maidens were leading the way.






The axle's nave shrilled like
the bright sound of a pipe,
sparkling, for it was pushed ahead
by two whirling wheels at either end,
while hastening to escort me.

The Daughters of the Sun—
having left the House of Night
for the Light—thrust back with their
hands the veils from their heads.





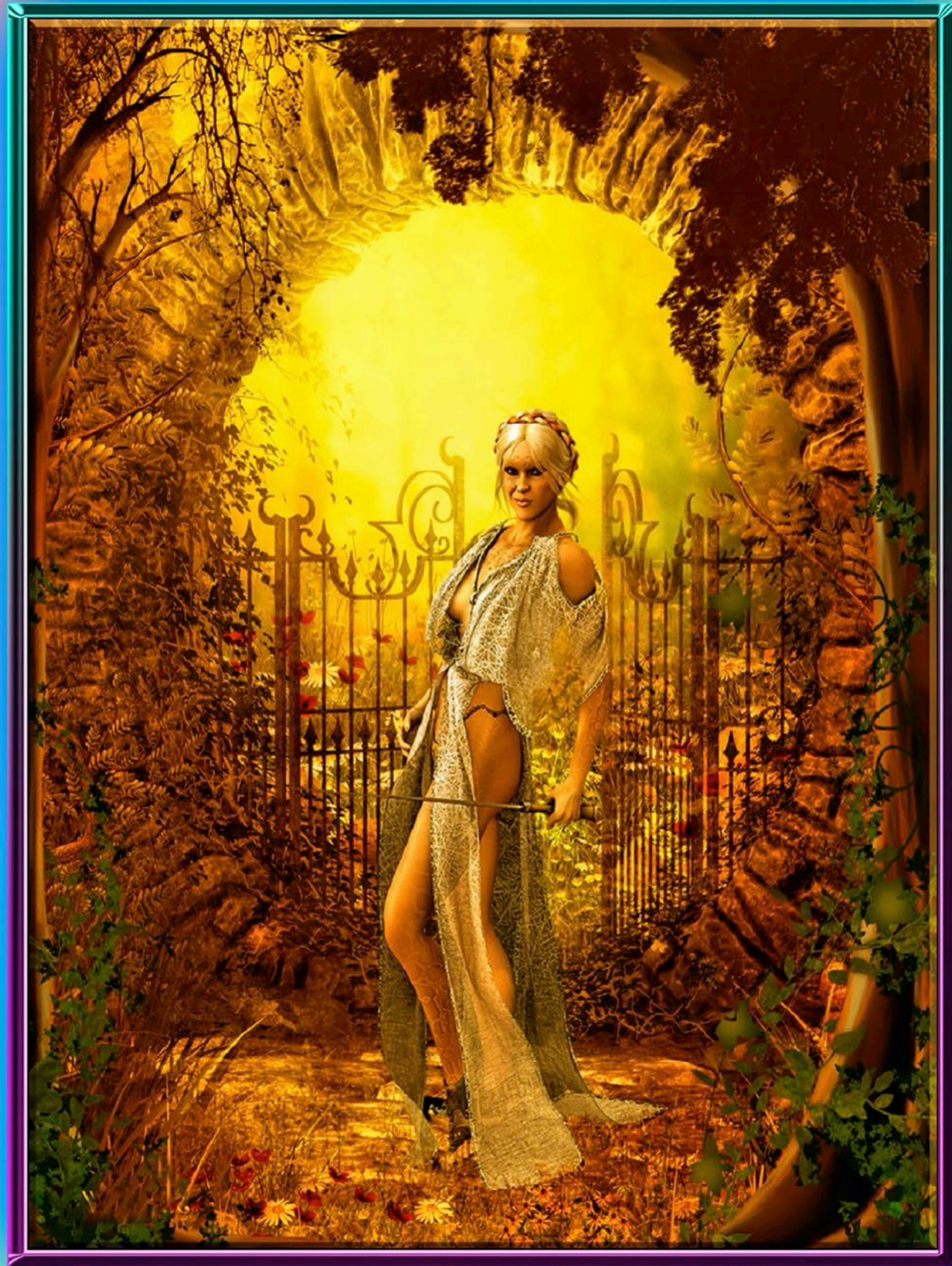
The image features a central scene framed by a dark, textured border. The scene is set in a dark, forest-like environment with glowing green foliage and a path leading to two ornate, arched gates. The gates are made of dark metal with intricate designs and are flanked by stone pillars. The ground is covered in tall grass and small, glowing lights. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and magical. The text is written in a golden, gothic-style font, centered over the scene.

Here are the Gates of
the Paths of Night and Day,
and they are bound together
by a lintel and a stone threshold.

They are high in the sky
blocked by mighty doors

to which avenging Justice
holds the alternating keys.

Her the maidens implored
with gentle words.









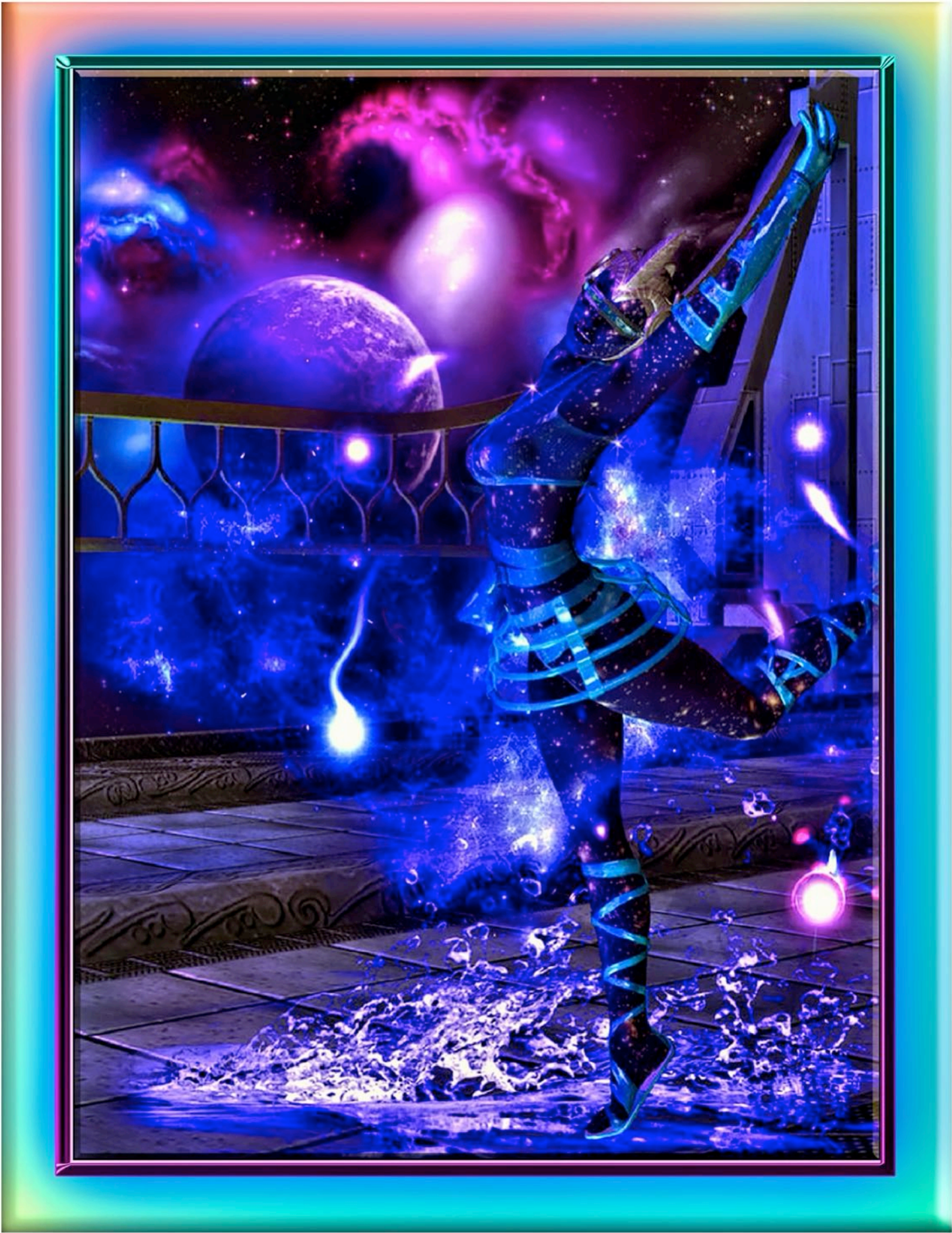
And knowingly persuaded her
to push back

Quickly from the gates
the bolted bar,

And a gaping chasm of the doors
was produced by the gates' opening
which had set revolving in the sockets
one after the other the brazen axes
fitted with bolts and pins.
Then, straight through them,





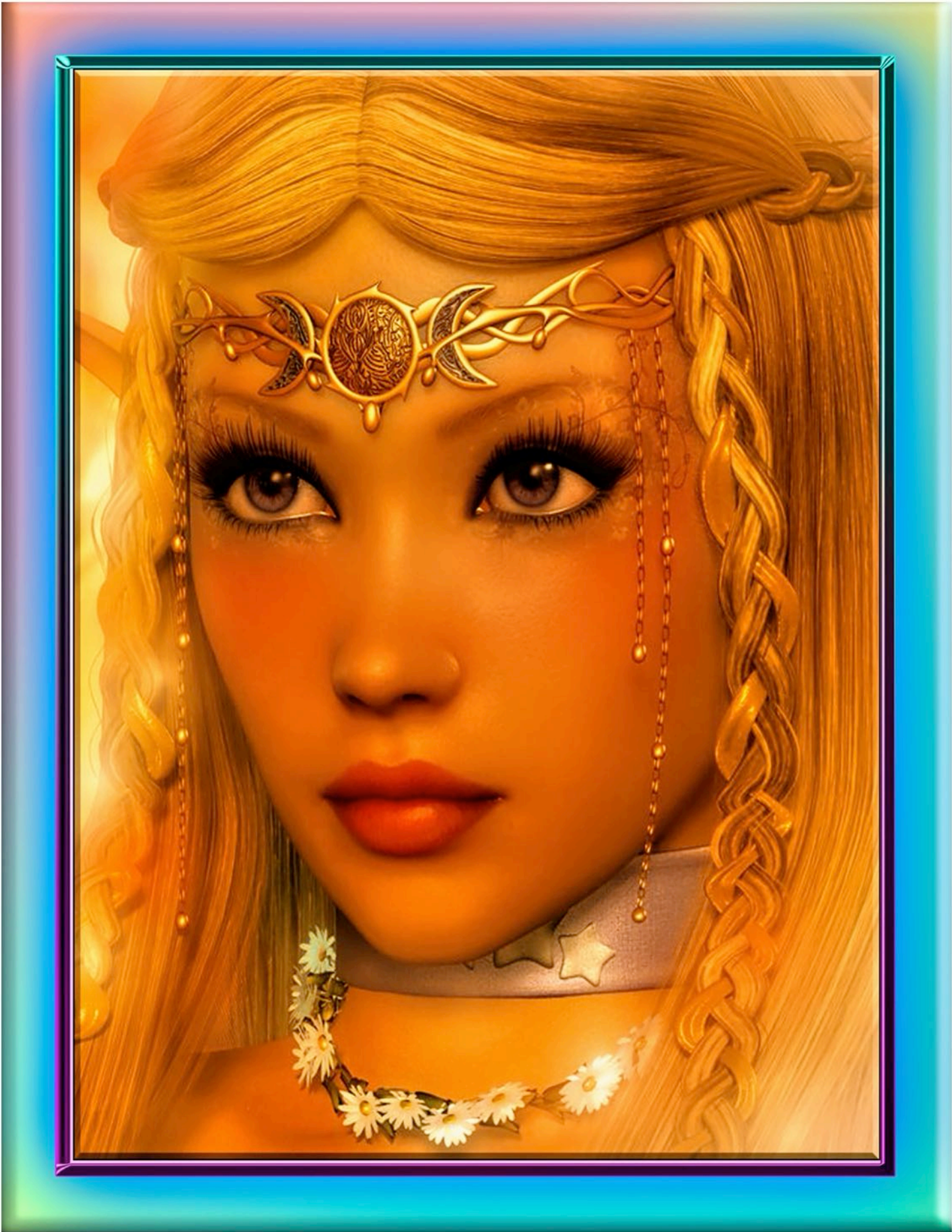




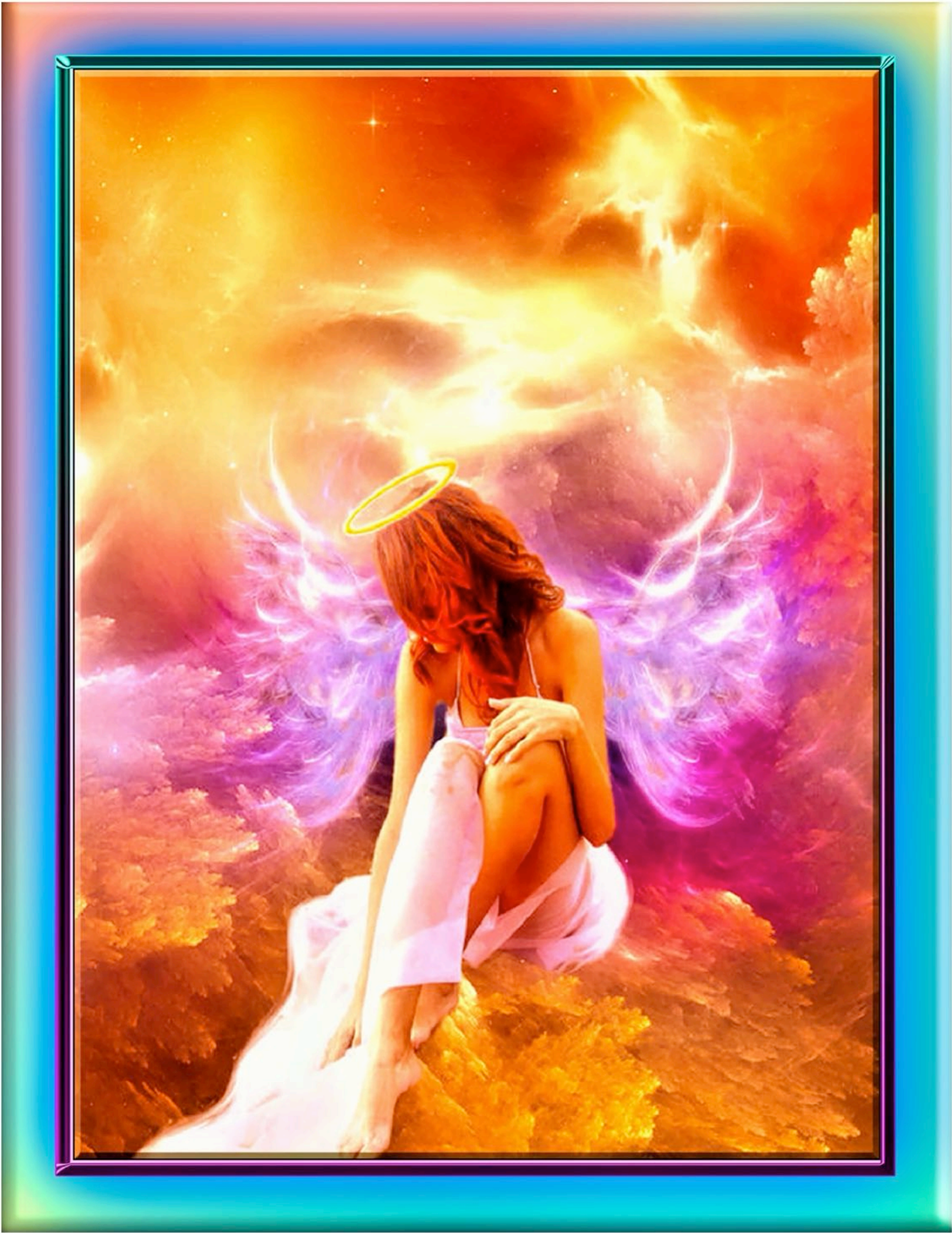
The maidens kept the chariot
and horses on the broad way.

the Goddess received me graciously,
taking my right hand in hers,
and addressed me with the
following words of counsel:

"Young man, accompanied
by immortal charioteers,
and the mares who carry you
to my abode, welcome."







"It is not an ill fate which has
sent you forth to travel



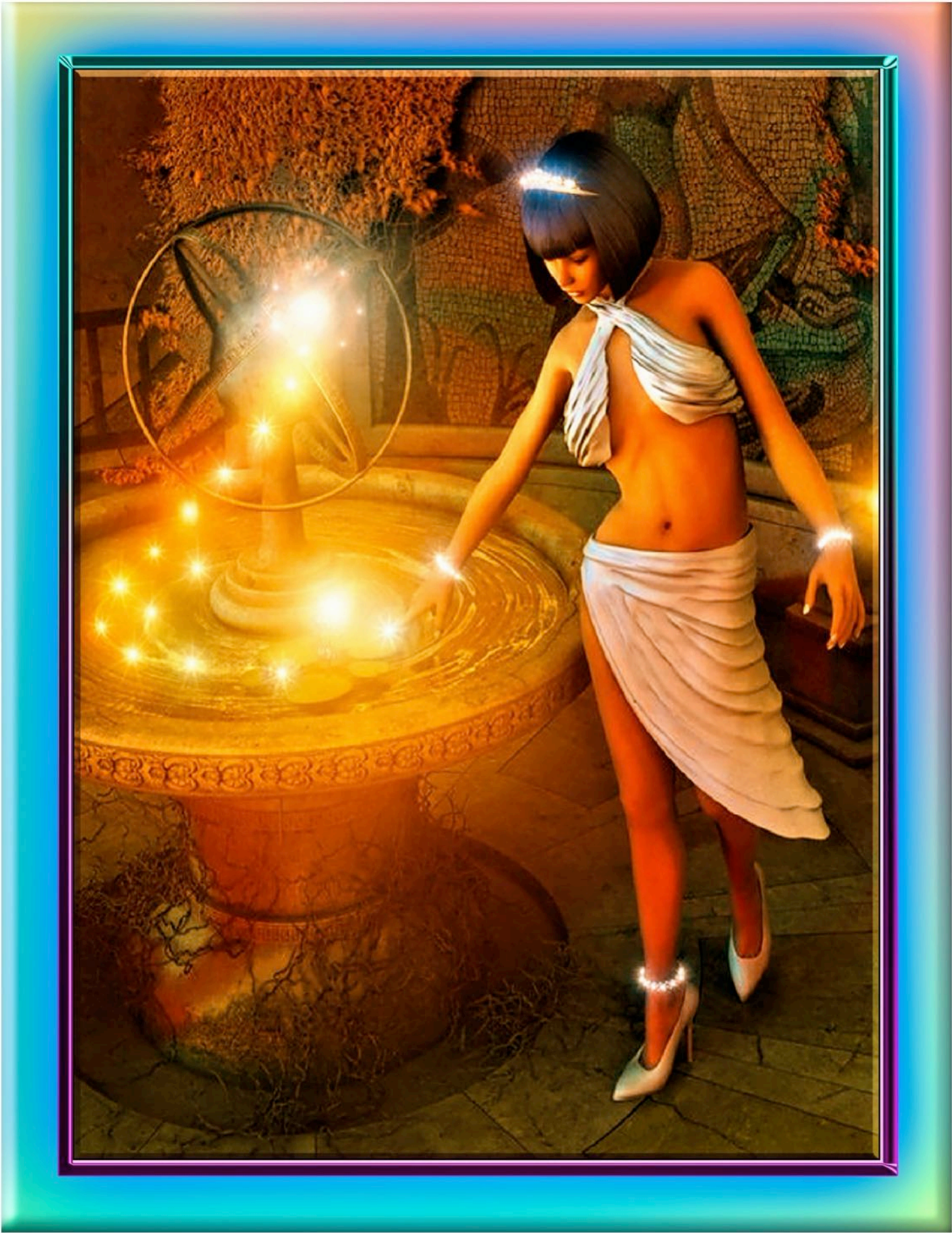
this road, though it is far
from the beaten path of man,
but Right and Justice.

It is necessary that you learn all things,
both the unshaking heart of
well-rounded, persuasive Truth
as well as the opinions of mortals,
for which there is no true evidence.





“But nevertheless these
you shall learn as well:
how it would be right for
the things of opinion,
to be proved by things that
are altogether throughout.”





"Come now, I will tell you—and
preserve my account as you heard it—

what are the only ways
of inquiry for reasoning:

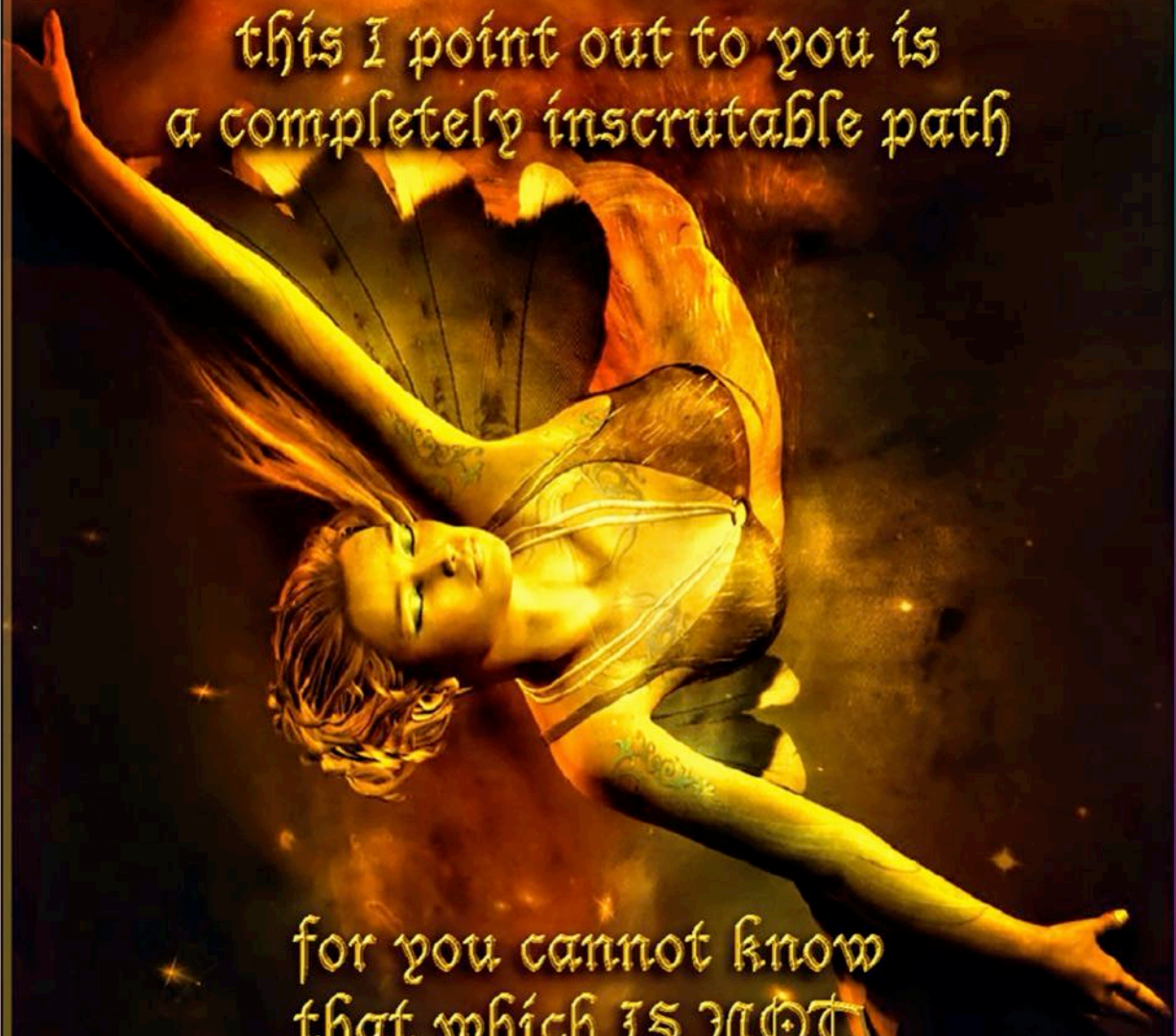
the one that IS,
and that it cannot NOT BE,

is the Way of Persuasion,
for it follows the Truth."









“The other IS NOT,
and that it is necessary
that it NOT BE,
this I point out to you is
a completely inscrutable path

for you cannot know
that which IS NOT,
for this cannot be done,
nor can you express it.”



“Behold things which, although absent,
are yet securely present to the mind;

for you cannot cut off What IS
from holding on to What IS;

neither by dispersing it in every way,
everywhere throughout the cosmos,

nor by gathering it together
or unifying it.”







"It is necessary to say and to think Being,
for there is Being, but nothing is not.

These things I order you to ponder.
For from this first way of inquiry
I hold you back."







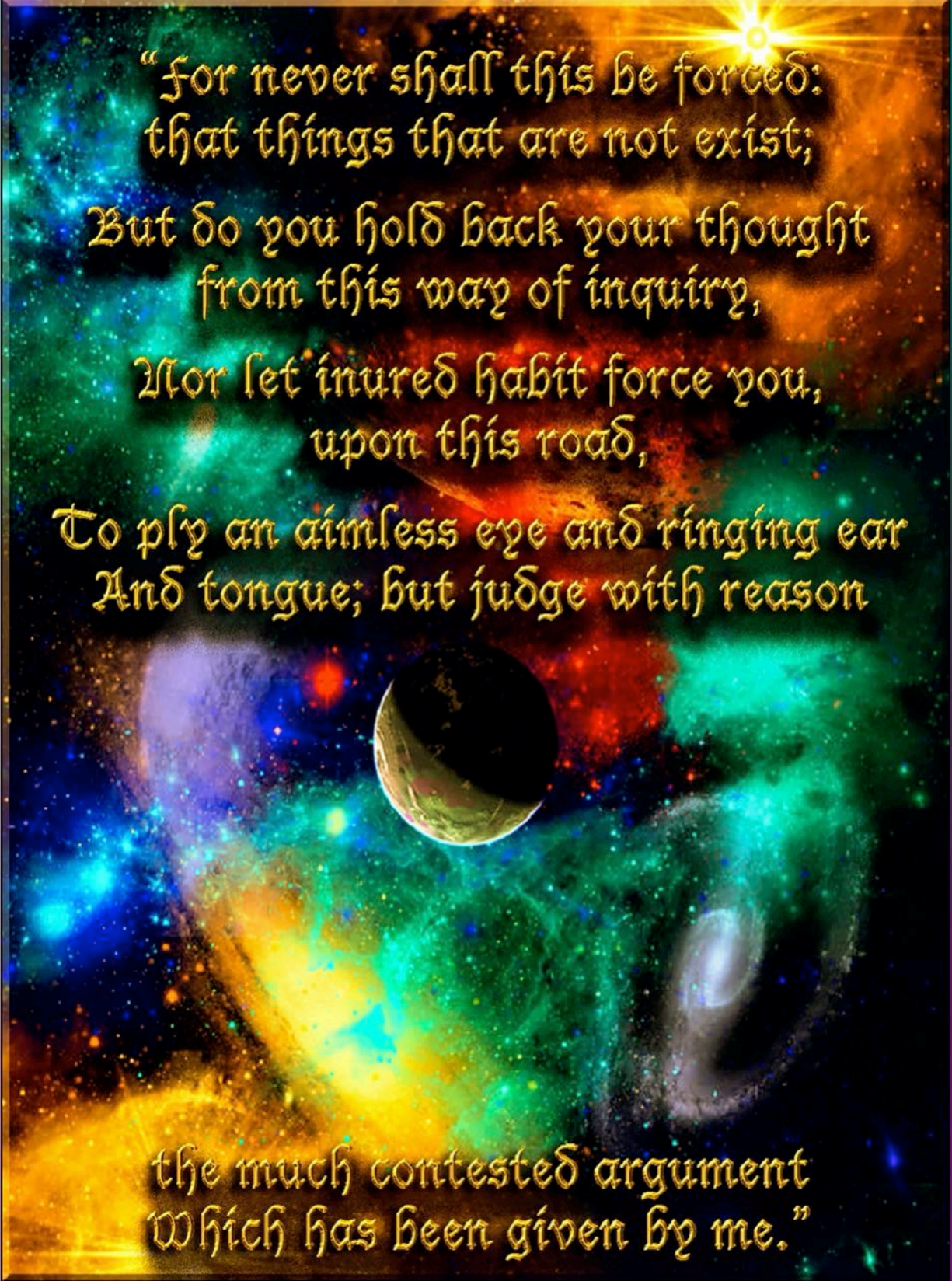




“But afterward from the one,
which mortals who know nothing
piece together two-headed;
for helplessness in their
breasts guides their unsteady mind.

They are borne along,
deaf as well as blind, stupefied,
hordes without judgment,
for whom to be and not to be
are deemed the same and
not the same; but the path of all
turns back to itself.”





“For never shall this be forced:
that things that are not exist;
But do you hold back your thought
from this way of inquiry,
Nor let inured habit force you,
upon this road,
To ply an aimless eye and ringing ear
And tongue; but judge with reason

the much contested argument
Which has been given by me.”



“There is still left a single story
of a way, that it is.

On this way there are signs
exceedingly many :

that being ungenerated
it is also imperishable,

whole and of a single kind
and unshaken and complete.

Nor was it ever nor will it be,
since it is now,
all together, one, continuous.”

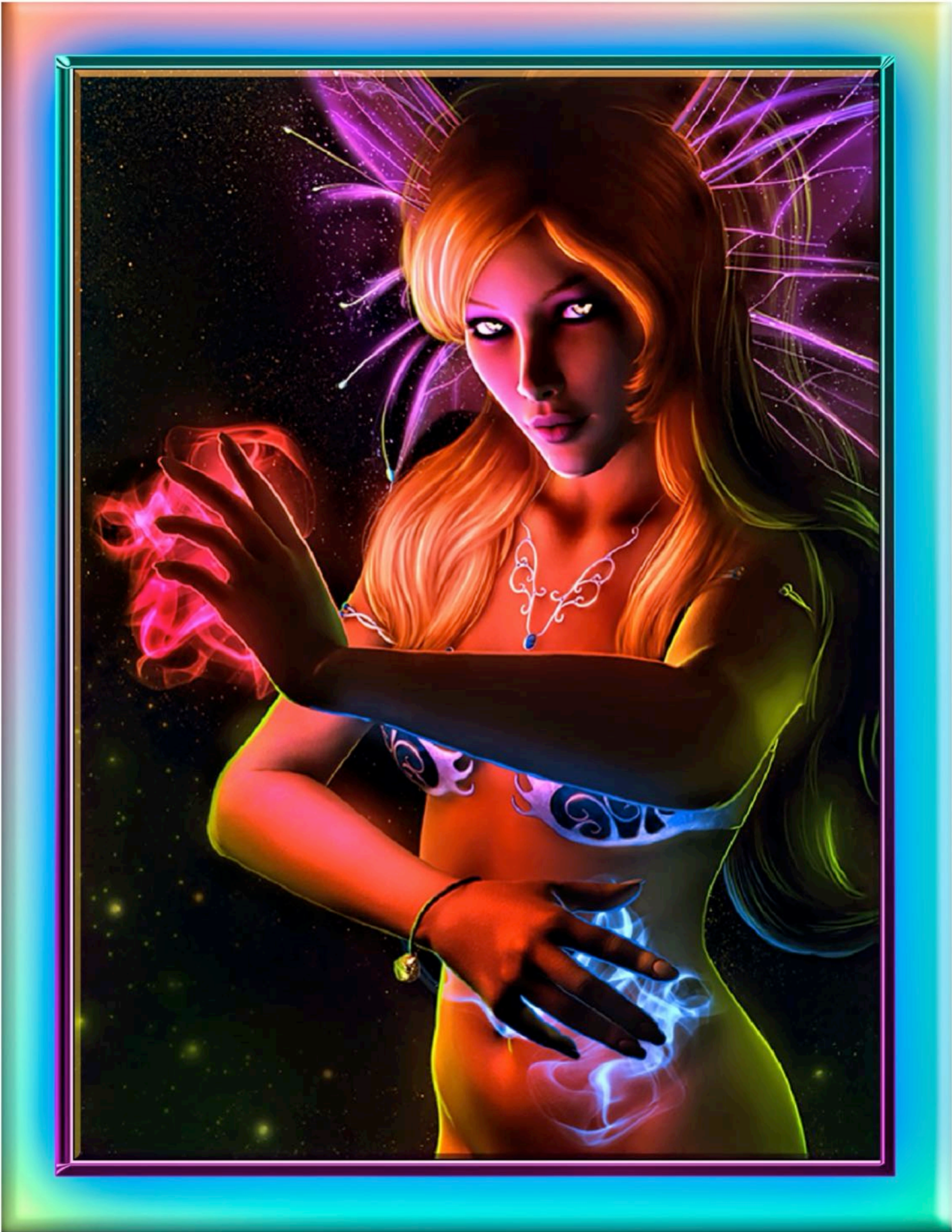


“For what birth will you seek for it?
How and from where did it grow?

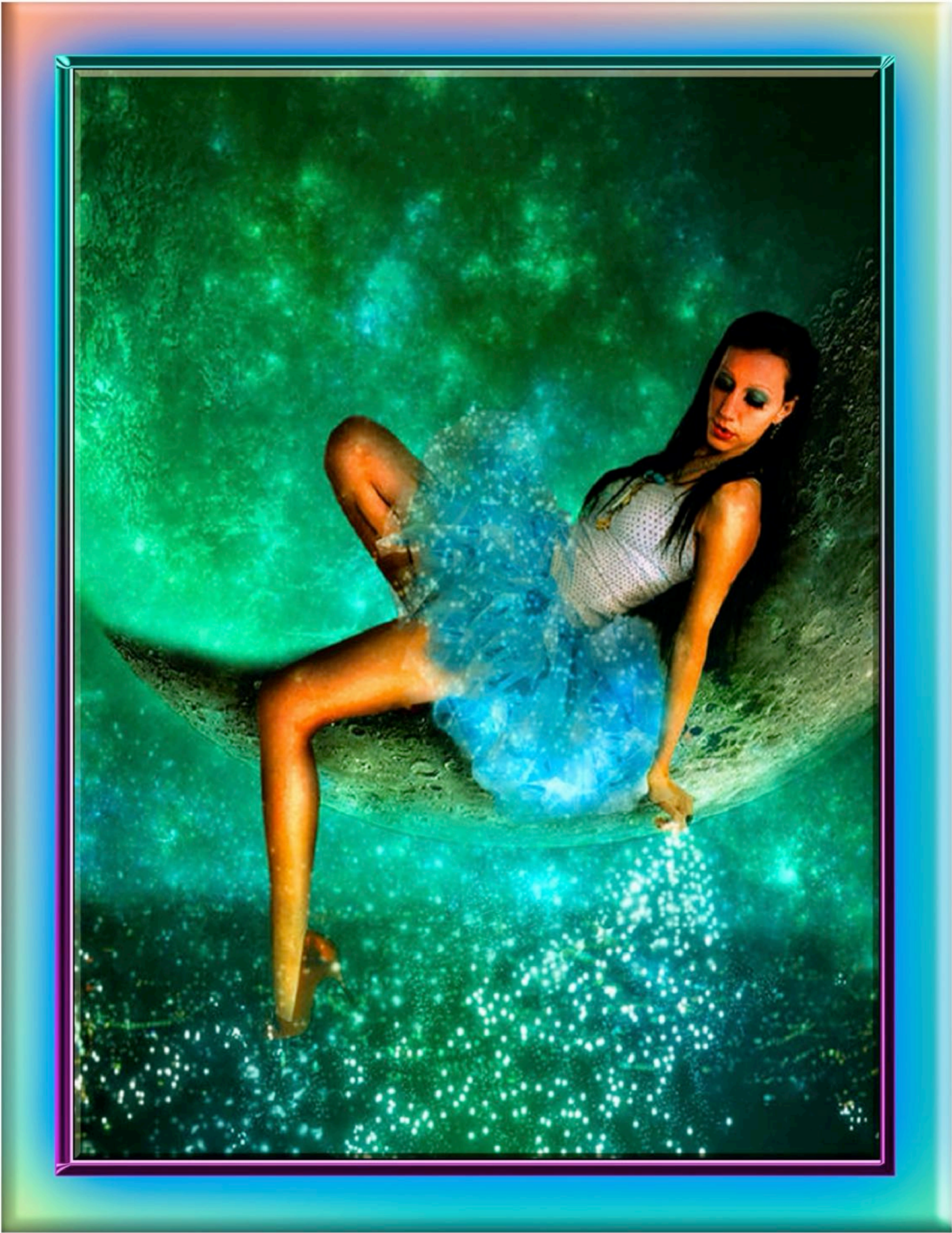
I will not permit you to say
or to think from what is not;

for it is not to be said or thought
that is not.

What necessity would have stirred up
to grow later than earlier,
beginning from nothing?”







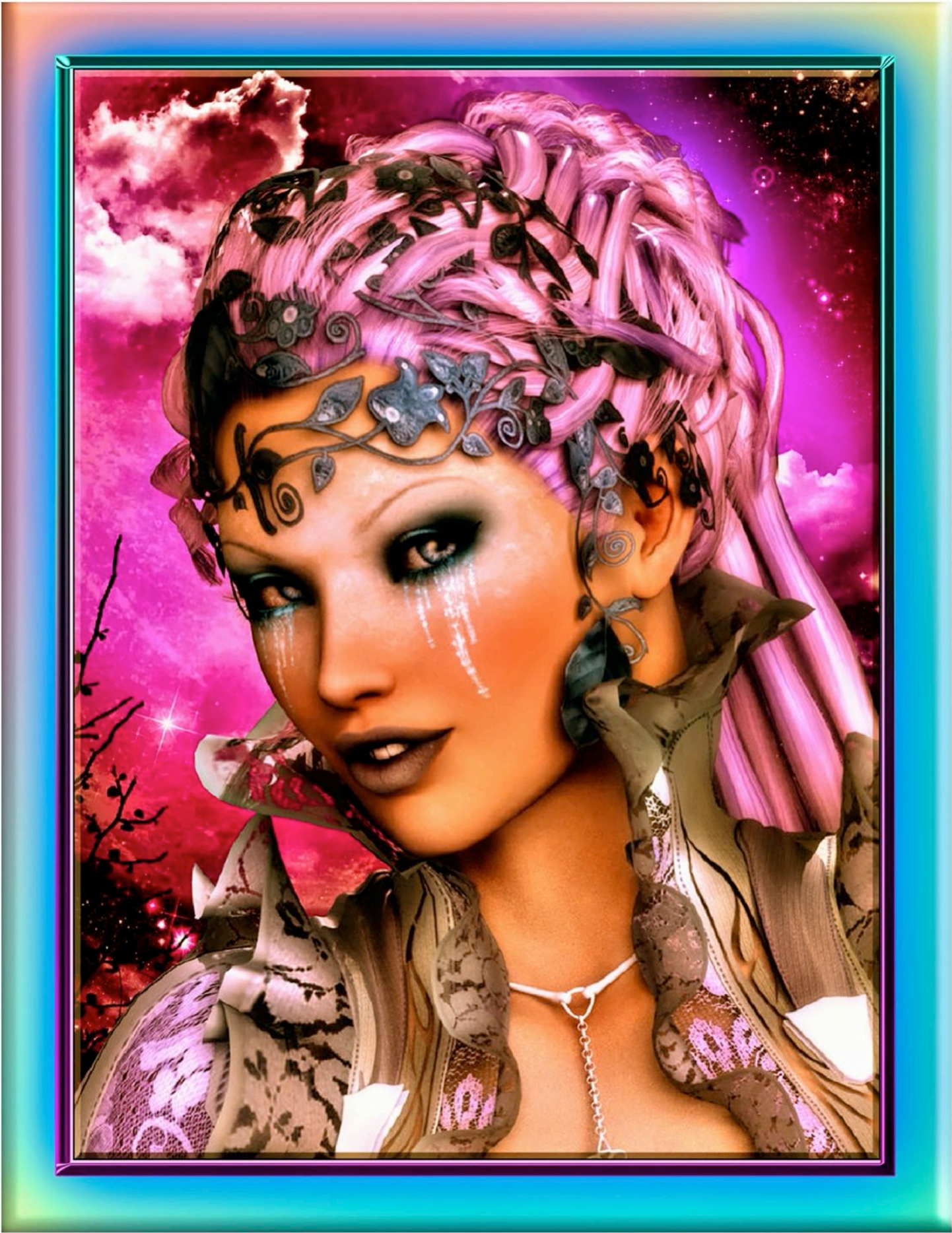


“Thus it must either fully be or not.

Nor will the force of conviction
ever permit anything to come to be
from what is not, besides it.

For this reason, Justice permitted it
neither to come to be nor to perish,
relaxing her shackles, but holds fast.

But the decision about these matters
lies in this: it is or it is not.”





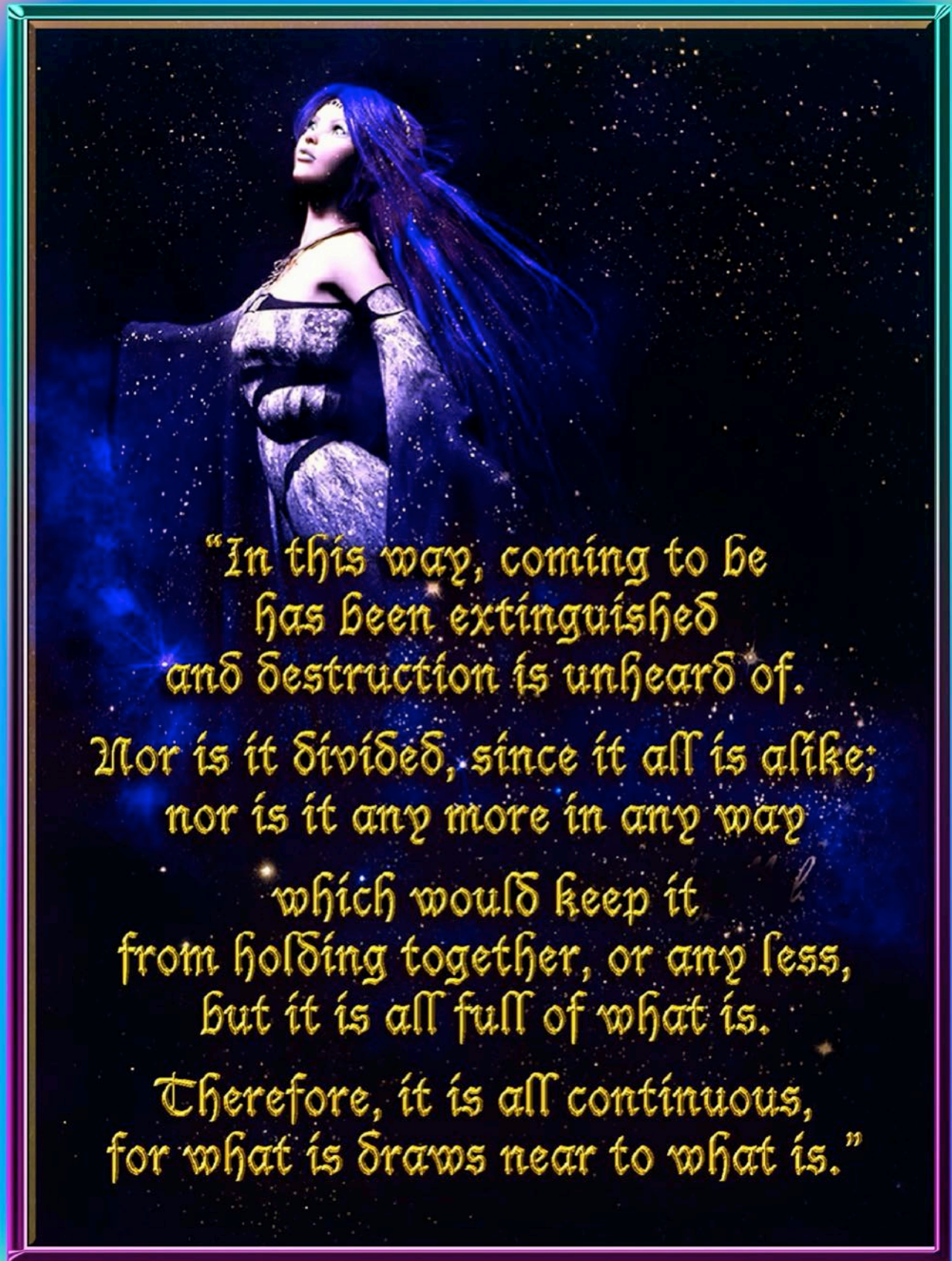
**“Therefore, as it is necessary,
the Decision has been taken**

**To leave one way
unthinkable and unnamable,
for it is not the true way,
and the other way to be and to be true.**

**How could Being be hereafter?
How could it have come into being?**

**If it was, it is not,
nor if it is going to be in the future.”**





“In this way, coming to be
has been extinguished
and destruction is unheard of.

Nor is it divided, since it all is alike;
nor is it any more in any way

which would keep it
from holding together, or any less,
but it is all full of what is.

Therefore, it is all continuous,
for what is draws near to what is.”







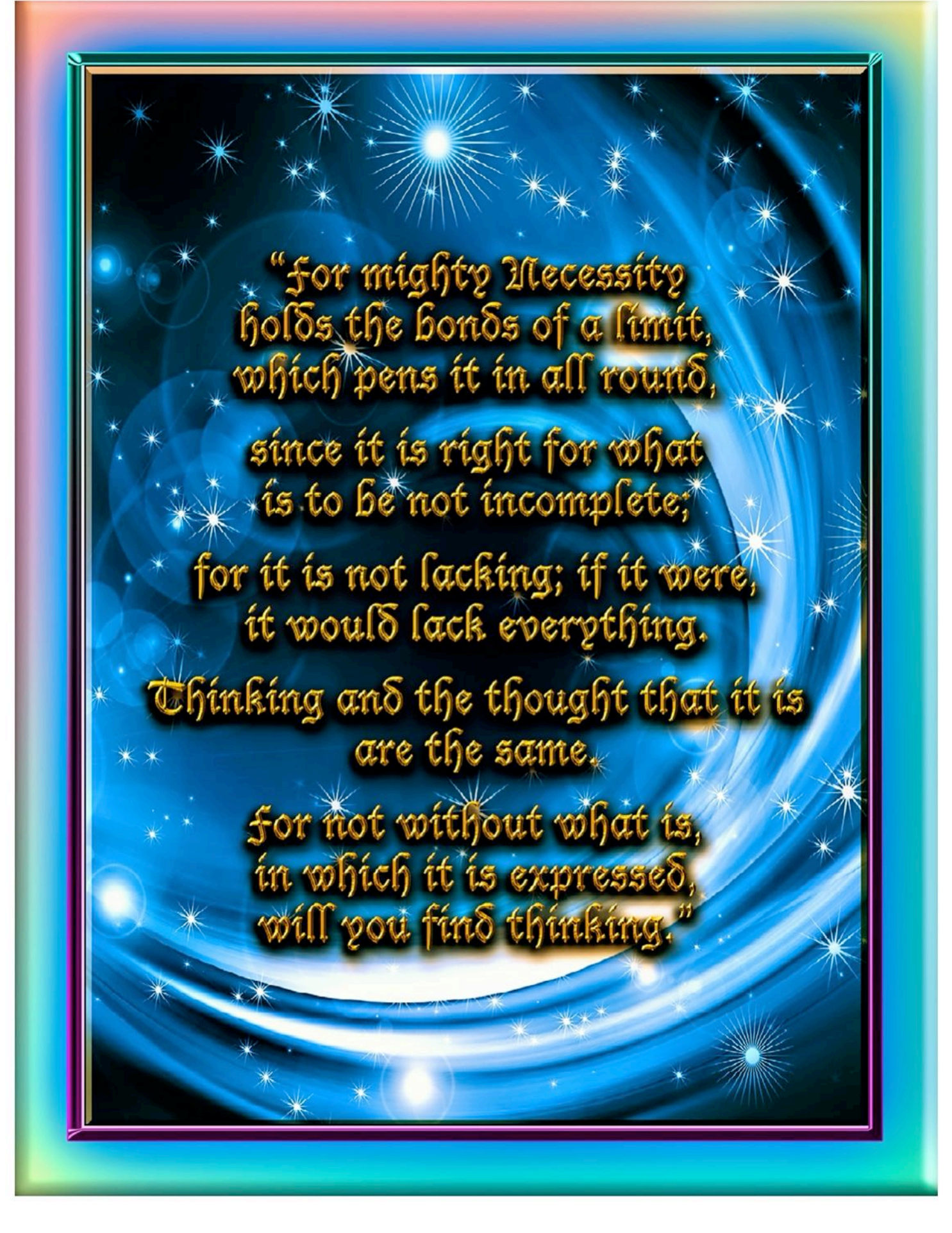
A woman with red hair, wearing a voluminous, multi-layered gown in shades of purple, lavender, and white, lies on her back on a dark, jagged rock. Her eyes are closed, and her expression is peaceful. The background is a vibrant, surreal sky with deep blues, purples, and oranges, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is ethereal and somber.

**“But unchanging in
the limits of great bonds,
it is, without start or finish,
since coming to be and destruction**

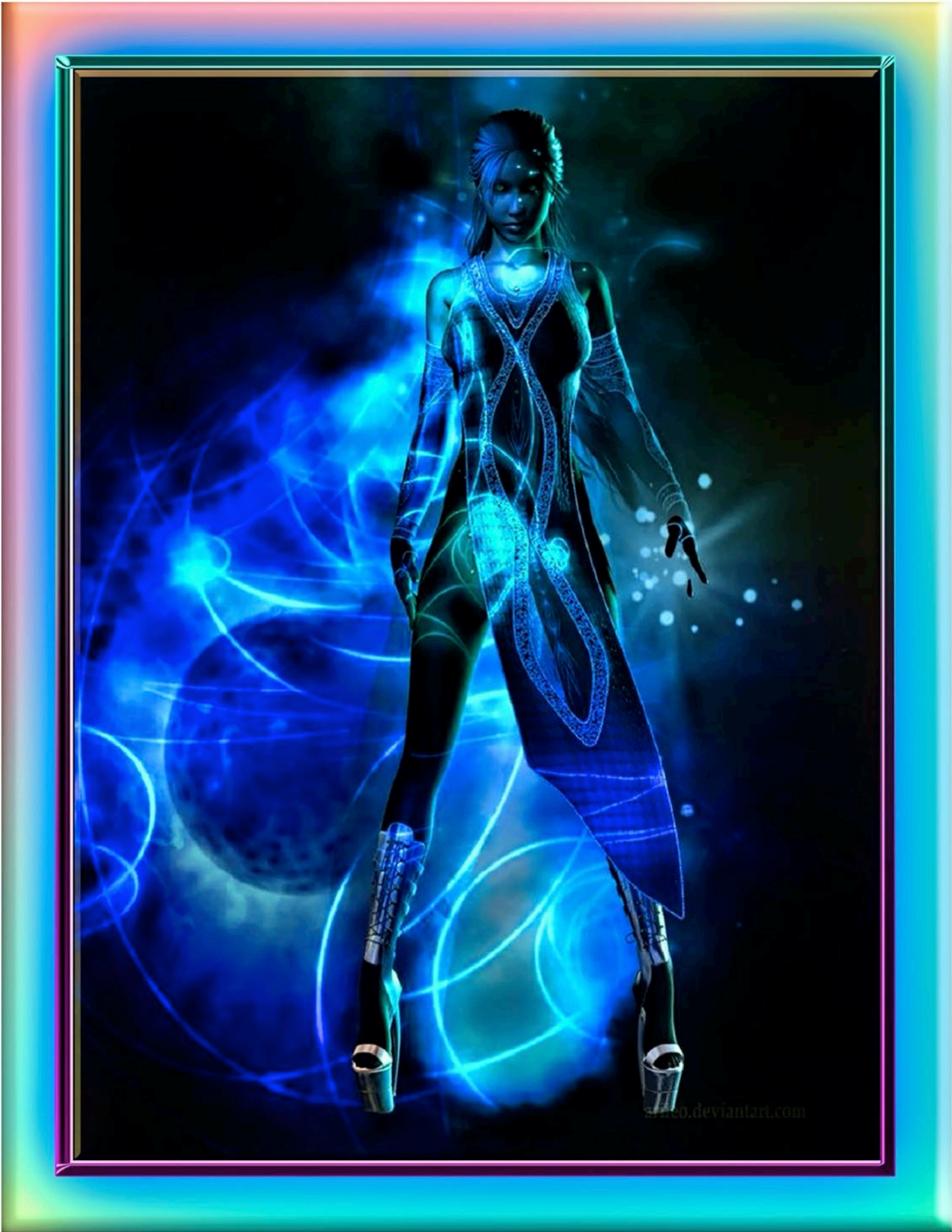
**were banished far away
and true conviction drove them off.**


**Remaining the same and by itself it lies
and so stays there fixed.”**





“For mighty Necessity
holds the bonds of a limit,
which pens it in all round,
since it is right for what
is to be not incomplete;
for it is not lacking; if it were,
it would lack everything.
Thinking and the thought that it is
are the same.
For not without what is,
in which it is expressed,
will you find thinking.”





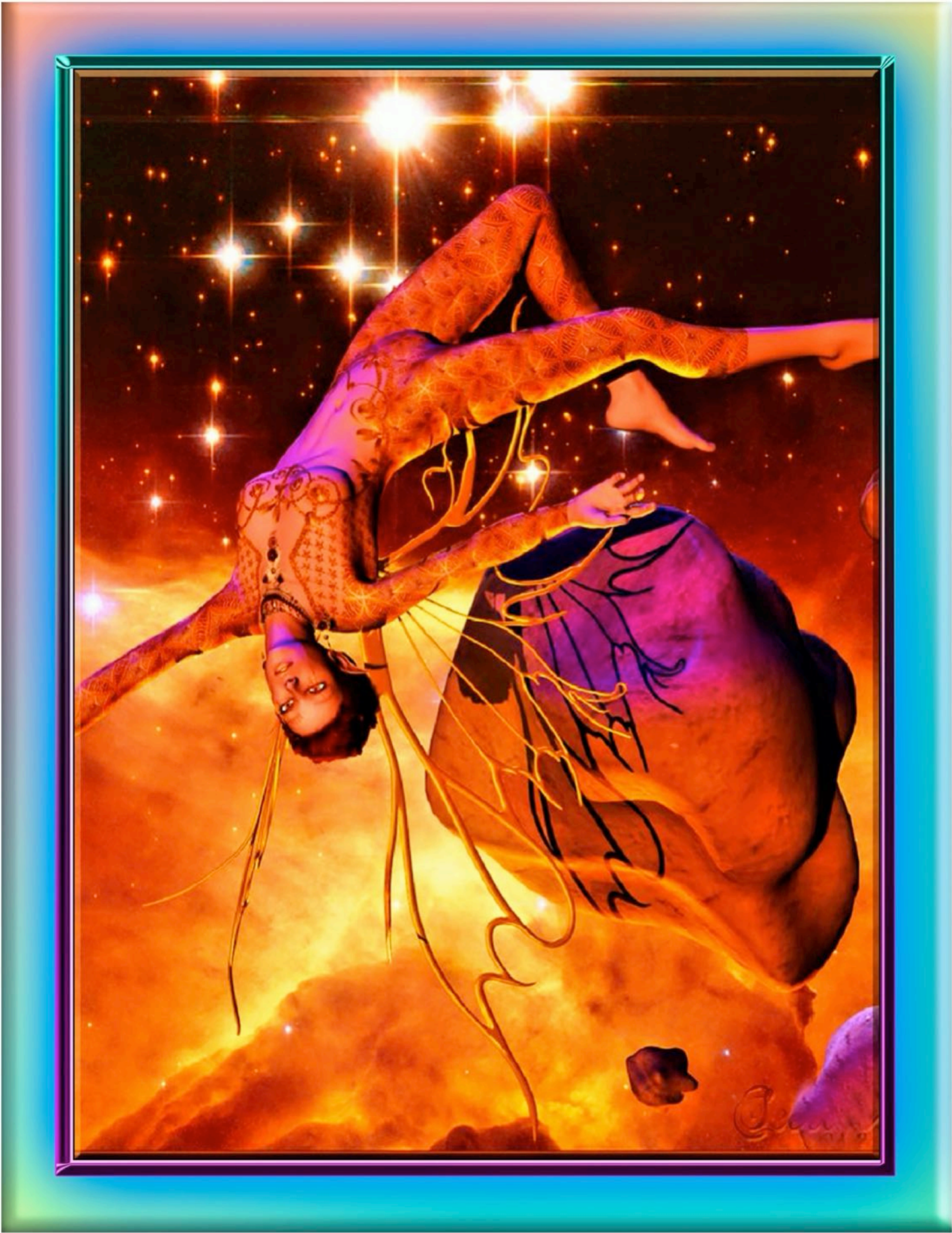
**“For nothing other, besides Being,
either is or will be,**

**Since Destiny fettered it
To be whole and immovable;**

**Therefore, all that mortals
posited convinced
that it is true will be mere name,**

**Coming into being and perishing,
to be and not to be,**

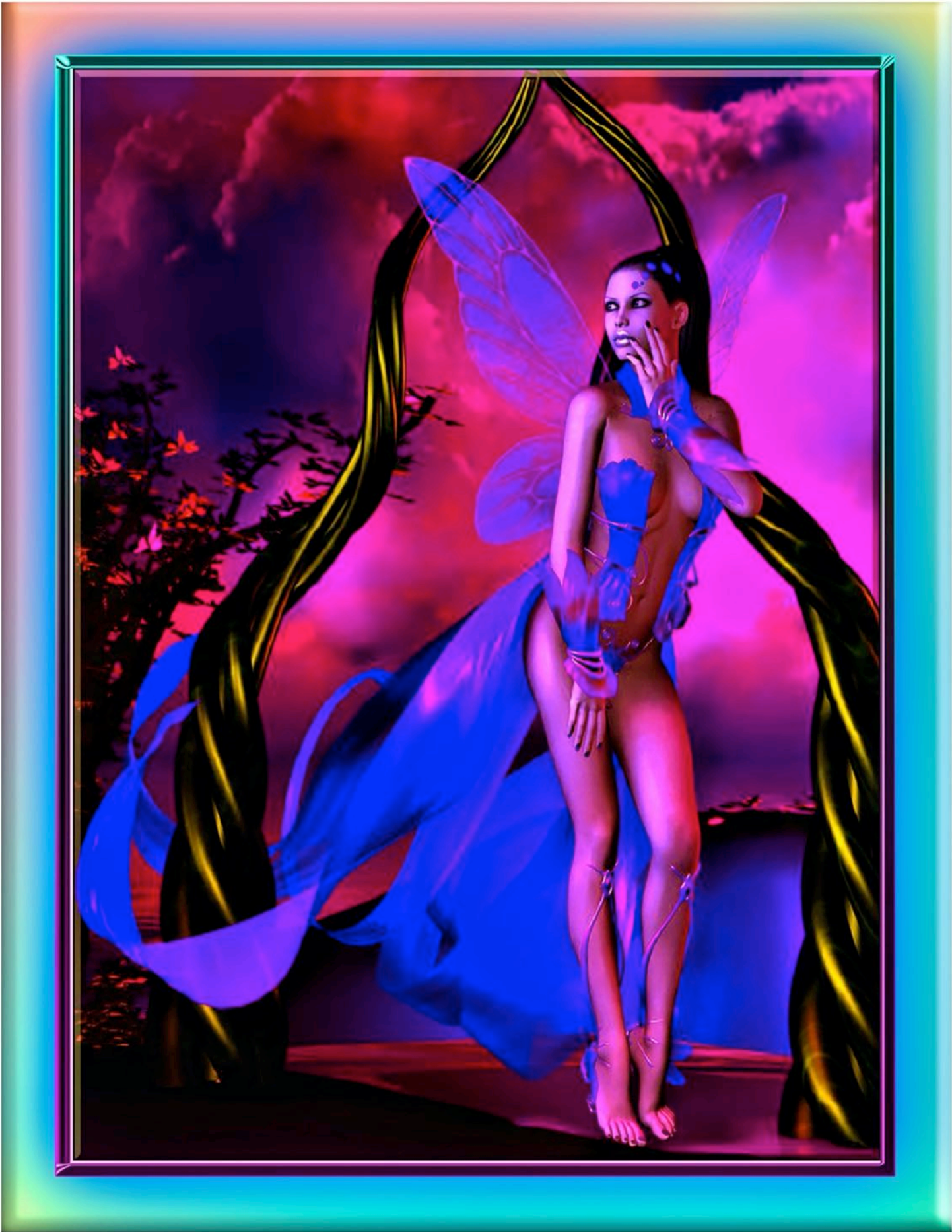
**and to change place
and alter bright color.”**

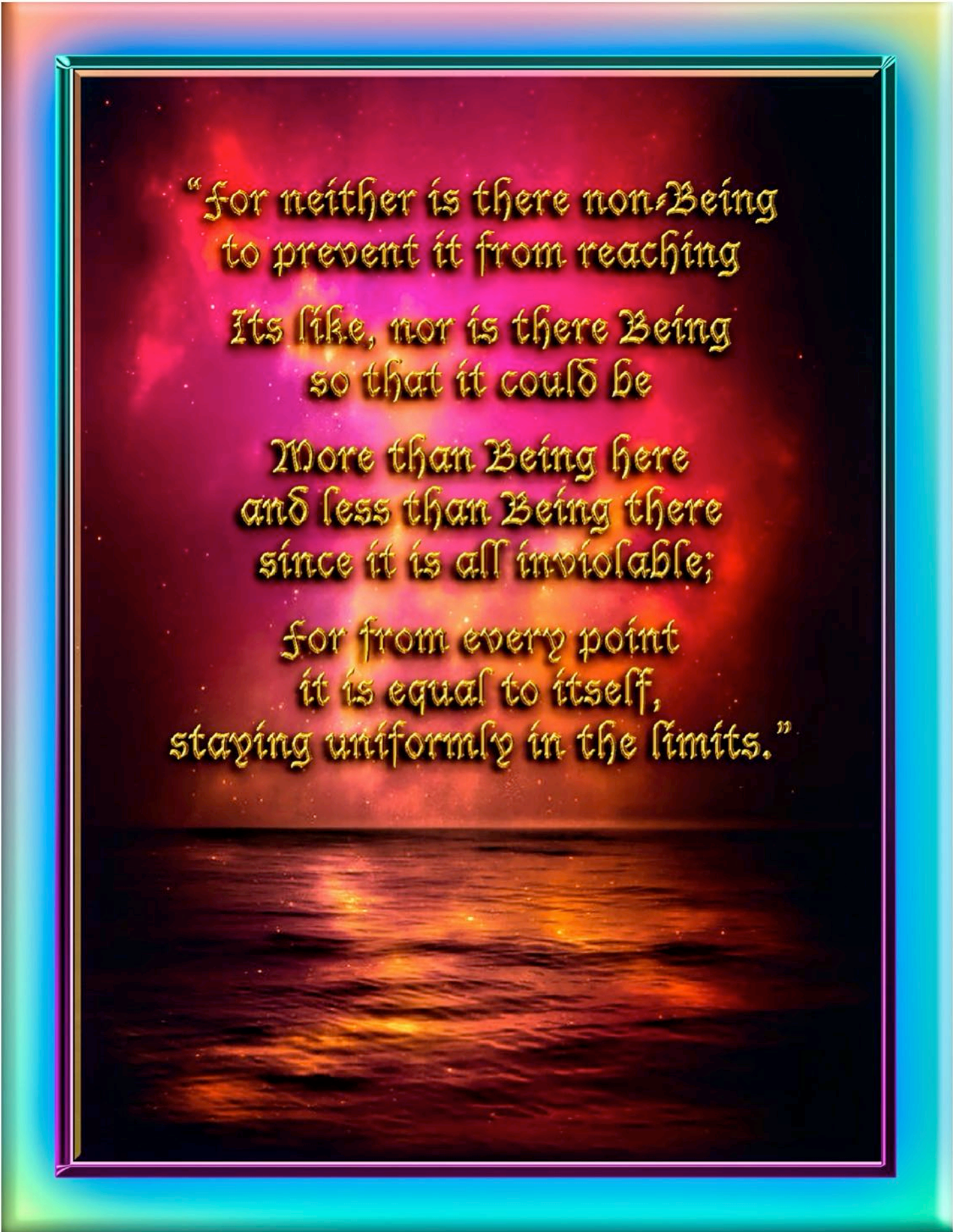




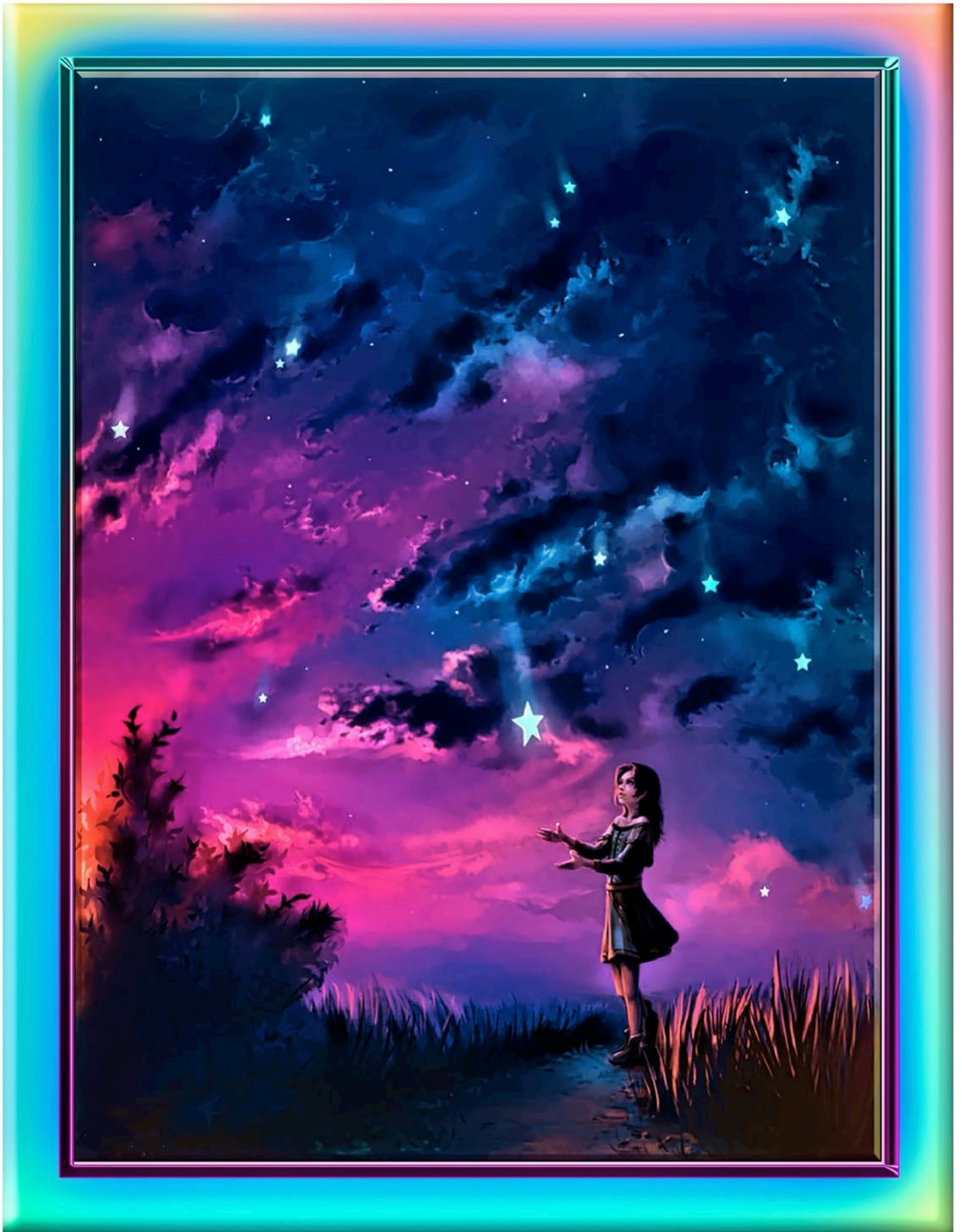
“But since there is a furthest limit,
it is complete
on all sides, like the bulk
of a well-rounded ball,

evenly balanced in every way
from the middle;
for it must be not at all greater
or smaller here than there.”





“for neither is there non-Being
to prevent it from reaching
Its like, nor is there Being
so that it could be
More than Being here
and less than Being there
since it is all inviolable;
for from every point
it is equal to itself,
staying uniformly in the limits.”



“Here I end my trustworthy
account and thought
Concerning truth. From now on
learn the beliefs of mortals,
Listening to the Deceptive order
of my words;
for they decided to name two forms,
A unity of which is not necessary
in which they have gone astray
And they divided form contrariwise
and established characters
Apart from one another.”



“For the one the ethereal flame of fire,
Gentle and very light,
everywhere identical with itself
But not identical with the other;
but that one too by itself
Contrariwise obscure night,
dense in body and heavy.



I tell you all the likely arrangement
In order that the wisdom of mortals
may never outstrip you.”















