



The End Of the Earth

Austin W. Torney

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*Among the lights
that dance
in the sky,*

*A haven waits out
there, for you and I,*

*A world where
flowers bloom
and fountains spray,*

*A paradise
called Earth to glorify.*

The Best of All Worlds

*Earth's a garden, an oasis in space,
A planet of boundless beauty and grace.*

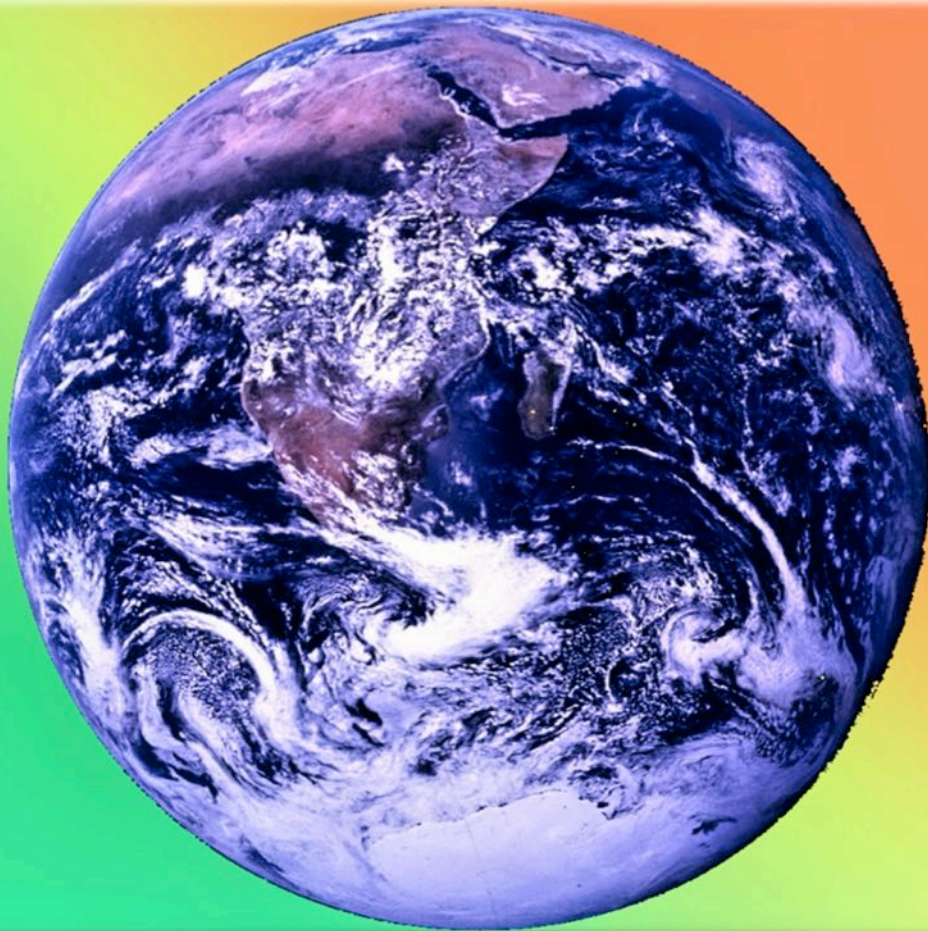
*We might search, in vain,
all the heavens' space,*

*For the equal of
the Earth's sacred place,*

*Never finding it,
or even a trace.*

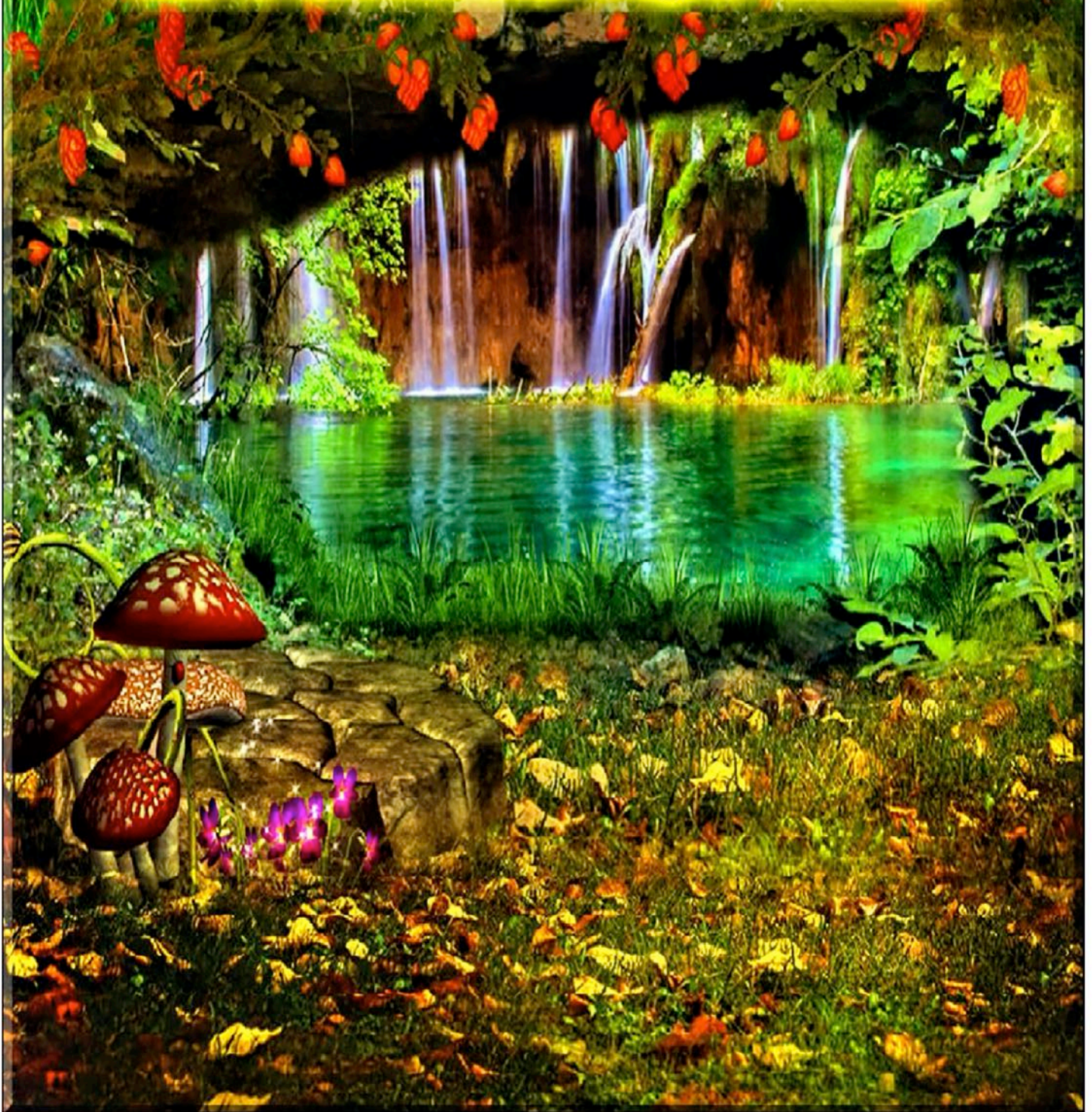


The End of the Earth—Doom 2012

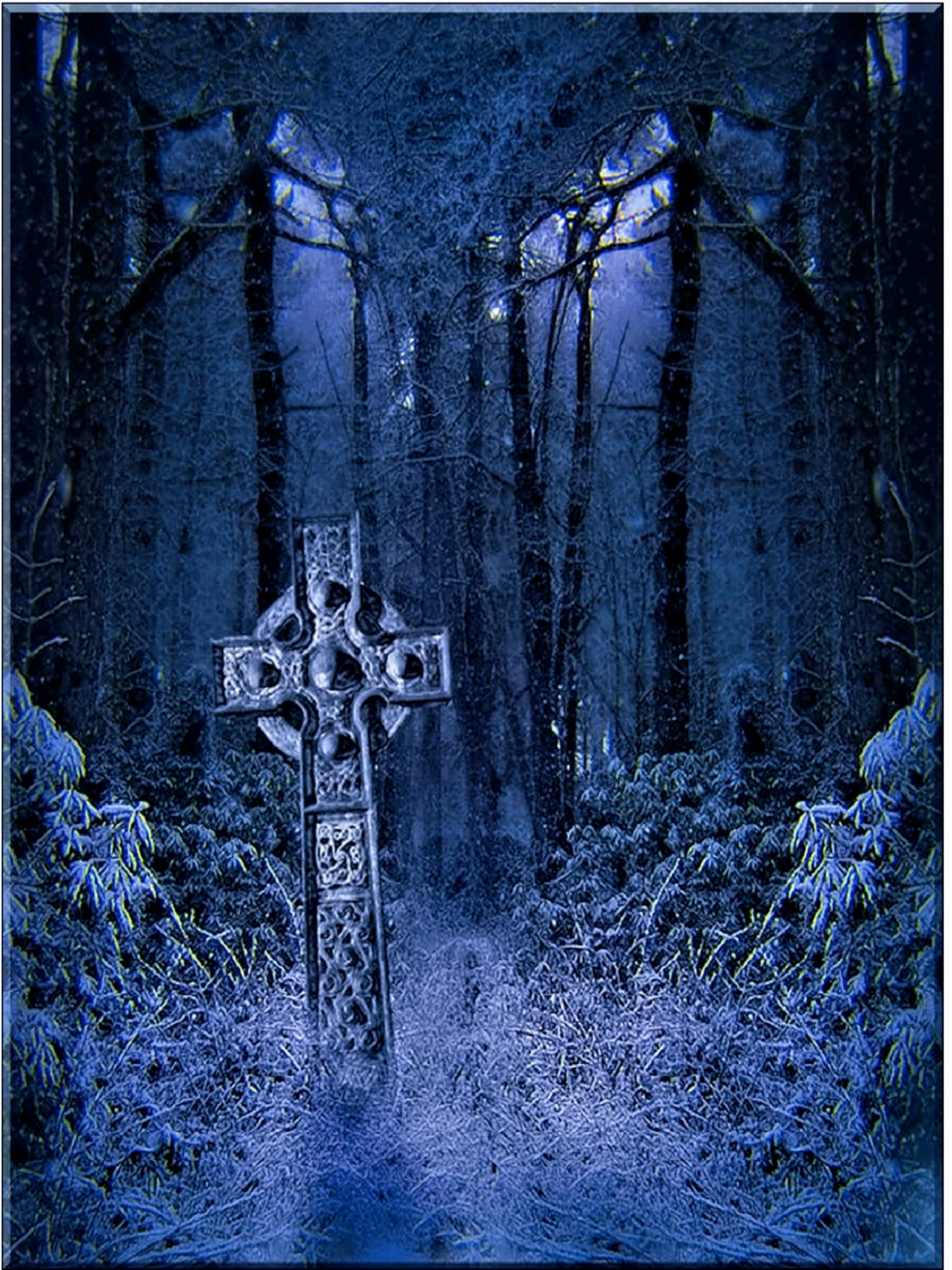


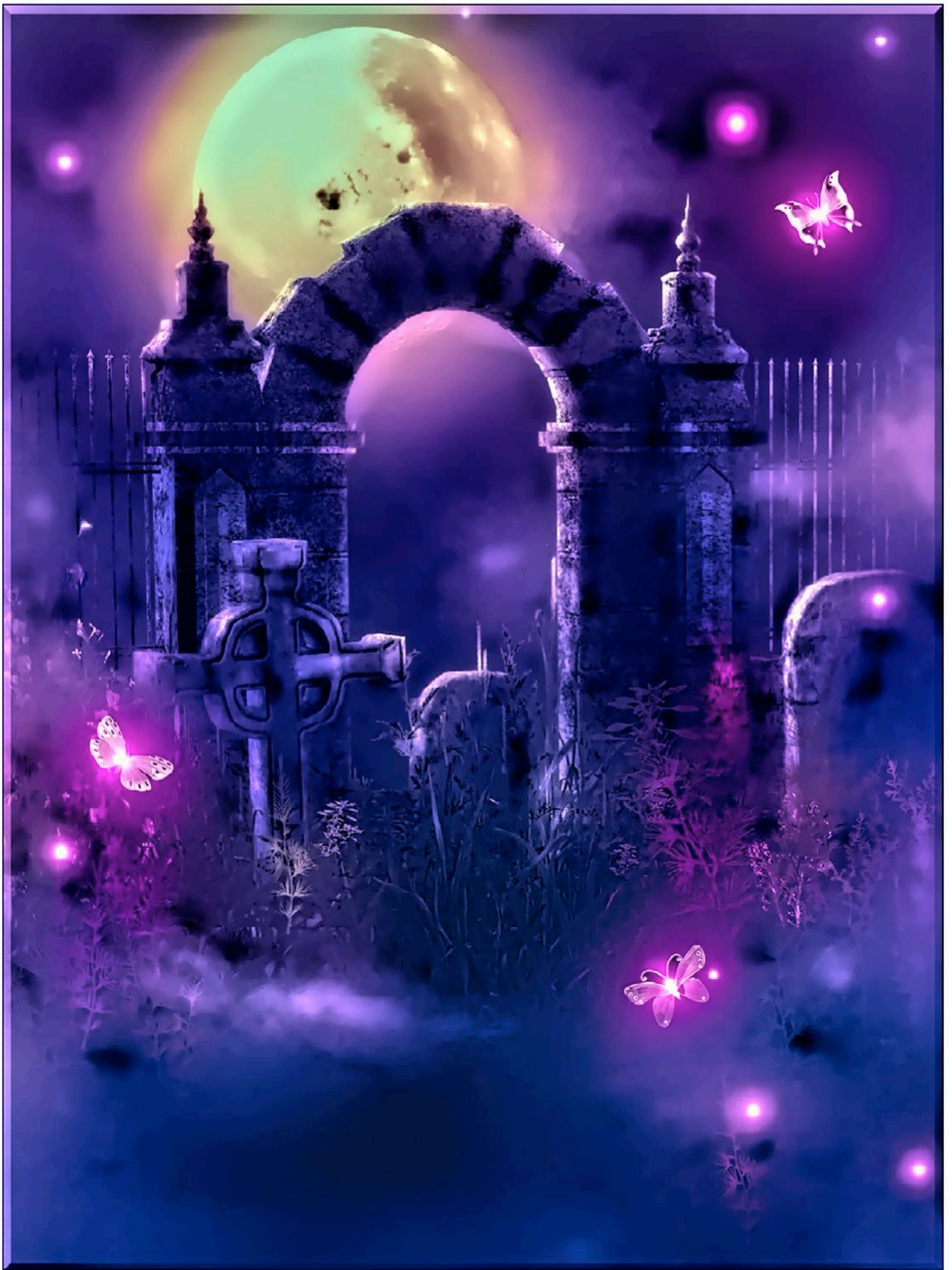


The Asphodel sustains the Dis dwellers,
Where they rest beyond that fatal river—
There the wretched shades drink forgetfulness,
And to oblivion sink without distress.







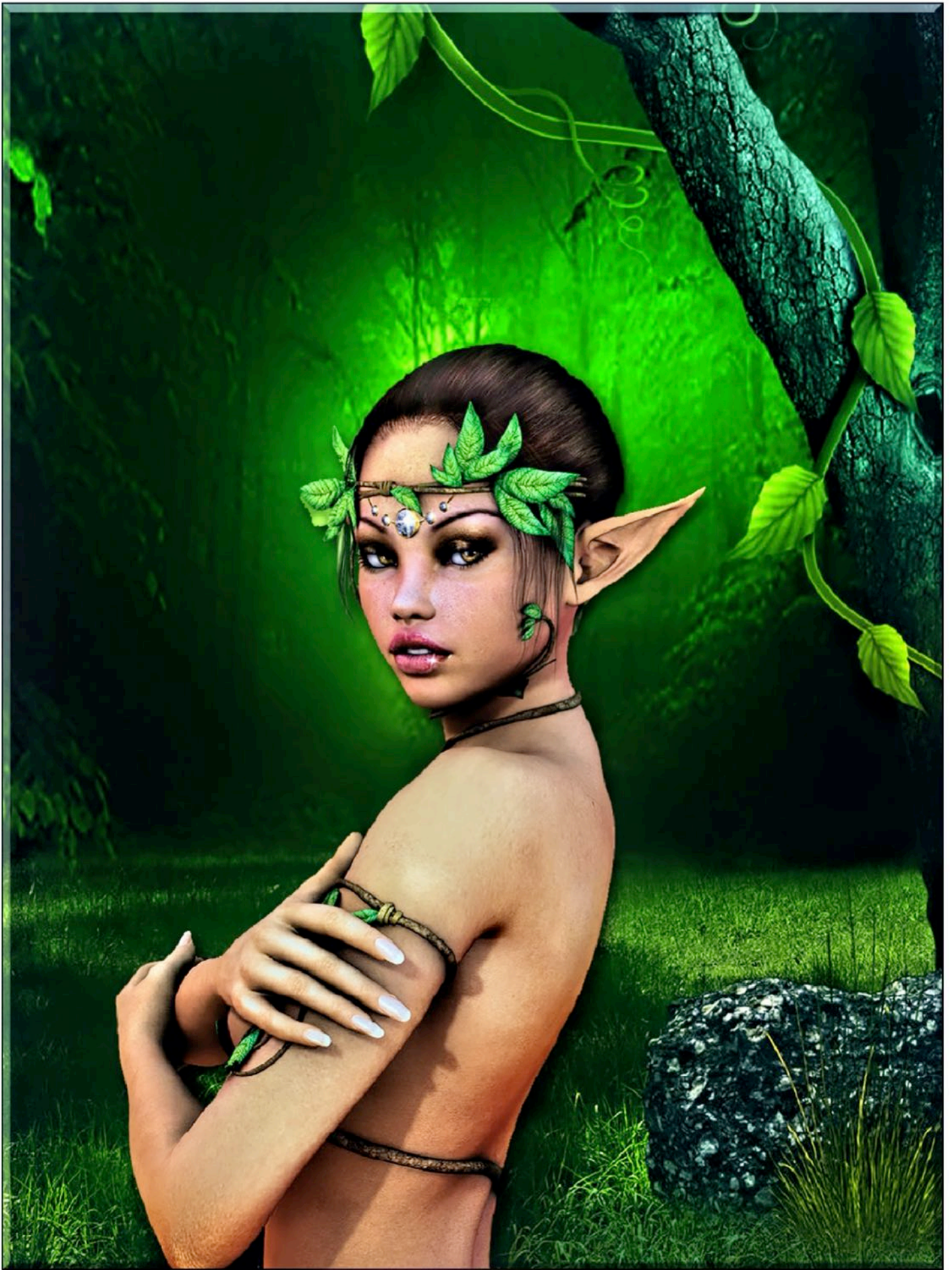


fireweed grows from Hell's sulfurous embers,
As does Purple Loosestrife—Dead men's fingers;
But wildflower air revives the Dead—and then
Those happy souls can thrive on Earth again.









Charon was withered, wan, and skeletal,
Although eternally grateful for his immortal life
And steady job of ferrying the dead across the river Styx
In their transition from life to death to forgetfulness.









As Earth was the only planet
he'd come across
With such promising higher life forms,
Charon had grown rather fond
of its inhabitants,
Even though he only saw
but the worst of them;
But, even from this he could extrapolate
To the qualities of the best.
Charon did his job well, professionally,
Although it was ever so dreary
With the endless darkness of wasted lives
And the grim and gloomy skies all around.



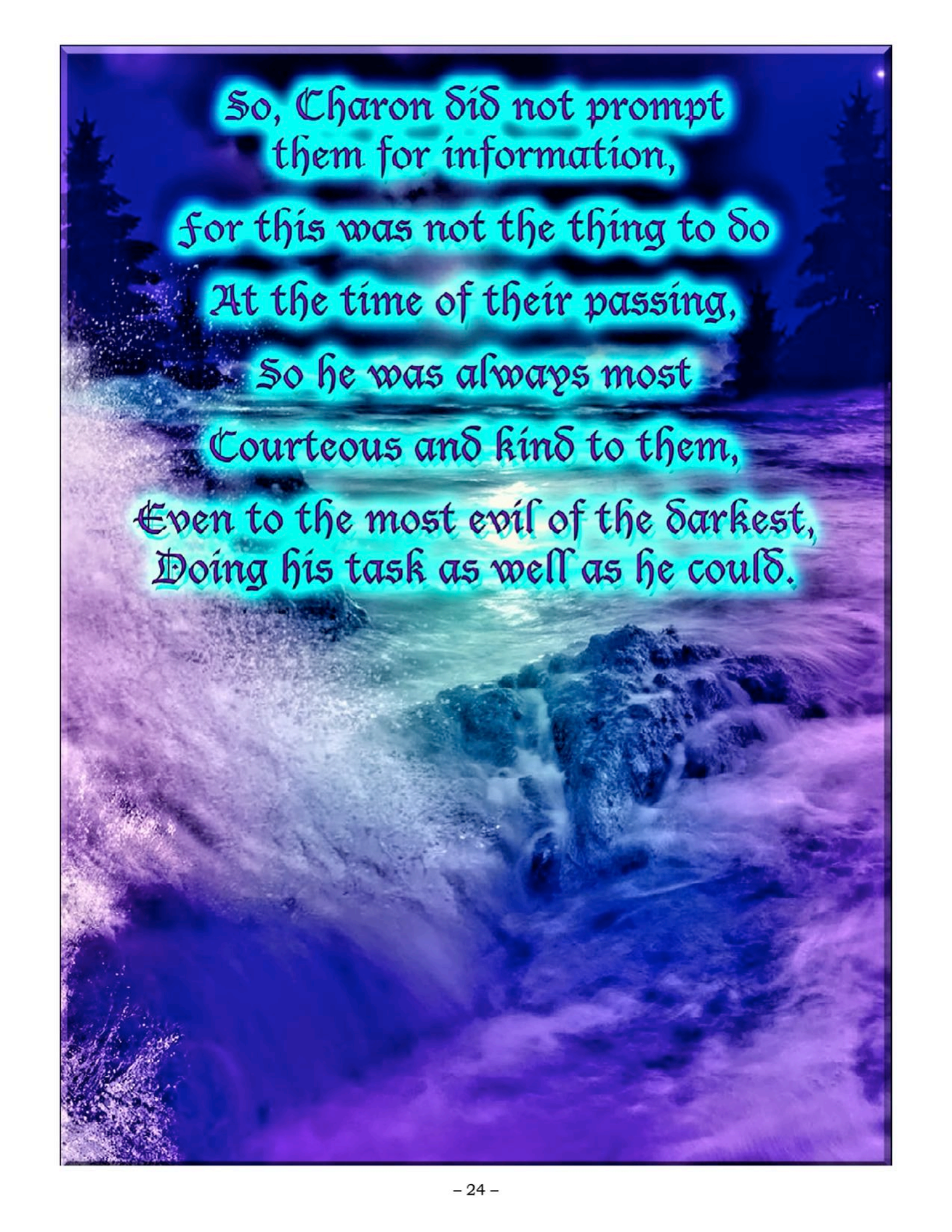
This land always had
That same gray and leaden feel.

He ferried on, though,
For his own life was precious to him.

The soon-to-be
really really dead never said much,
For what was there to tell
after an empty life
That had often turned
to deep regret.

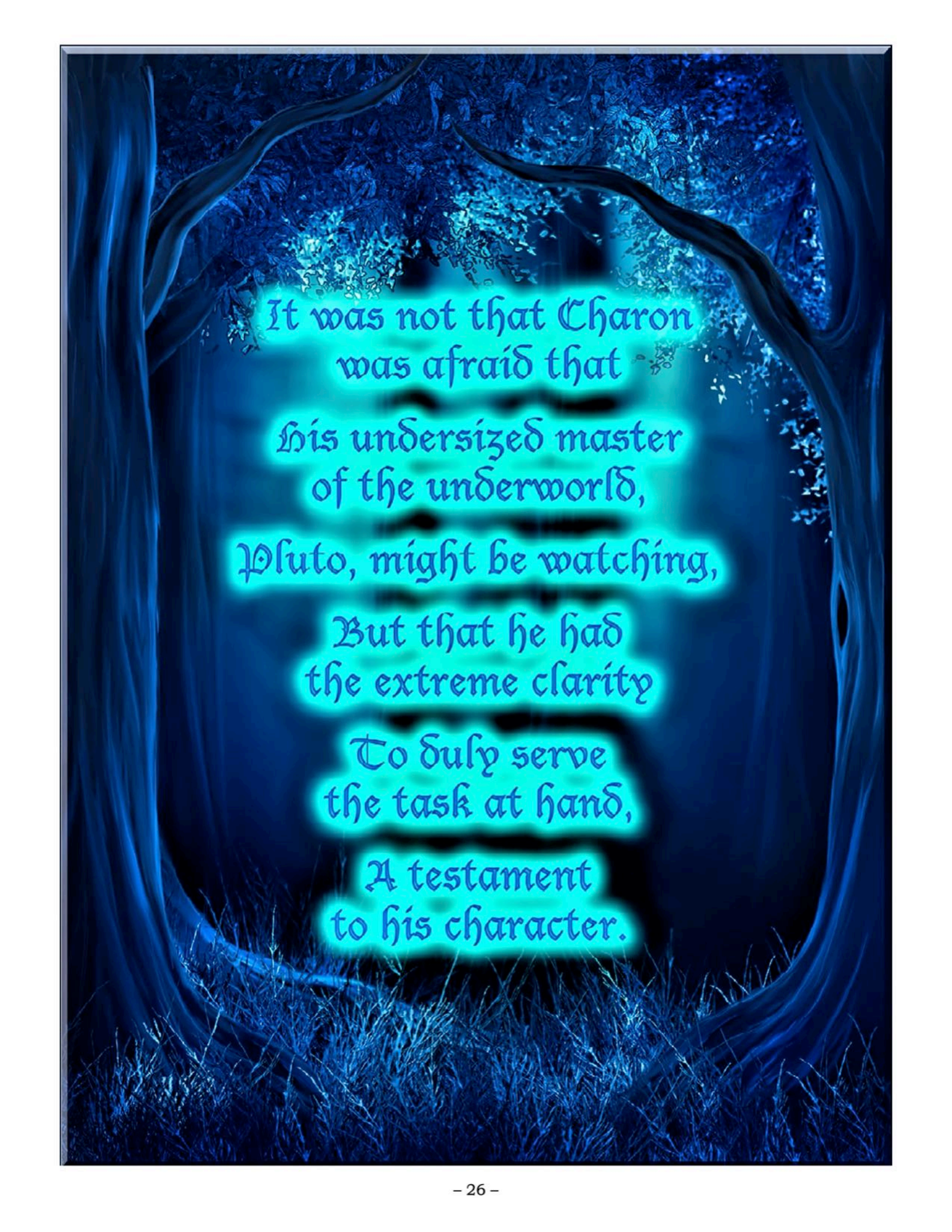






So, Charon did not prompt
them for information,
for this was not the thing to do
At the time of their passing,
So he was always most
Courteous and kind to them,
Even to the most evil of the darkest,
Doing his task as well as he could.





It was not that Charon
was afraid that
his undersized master
of the underworld,
Pluto, might be watching,
But that he had
the extreme clarity
To duly serve
the task at hand,
A testament
to his character.







Charon had been quite alarmed lately—

What with the numbers
of the hellish souls to be

Climbing into the millions
in such a short time,

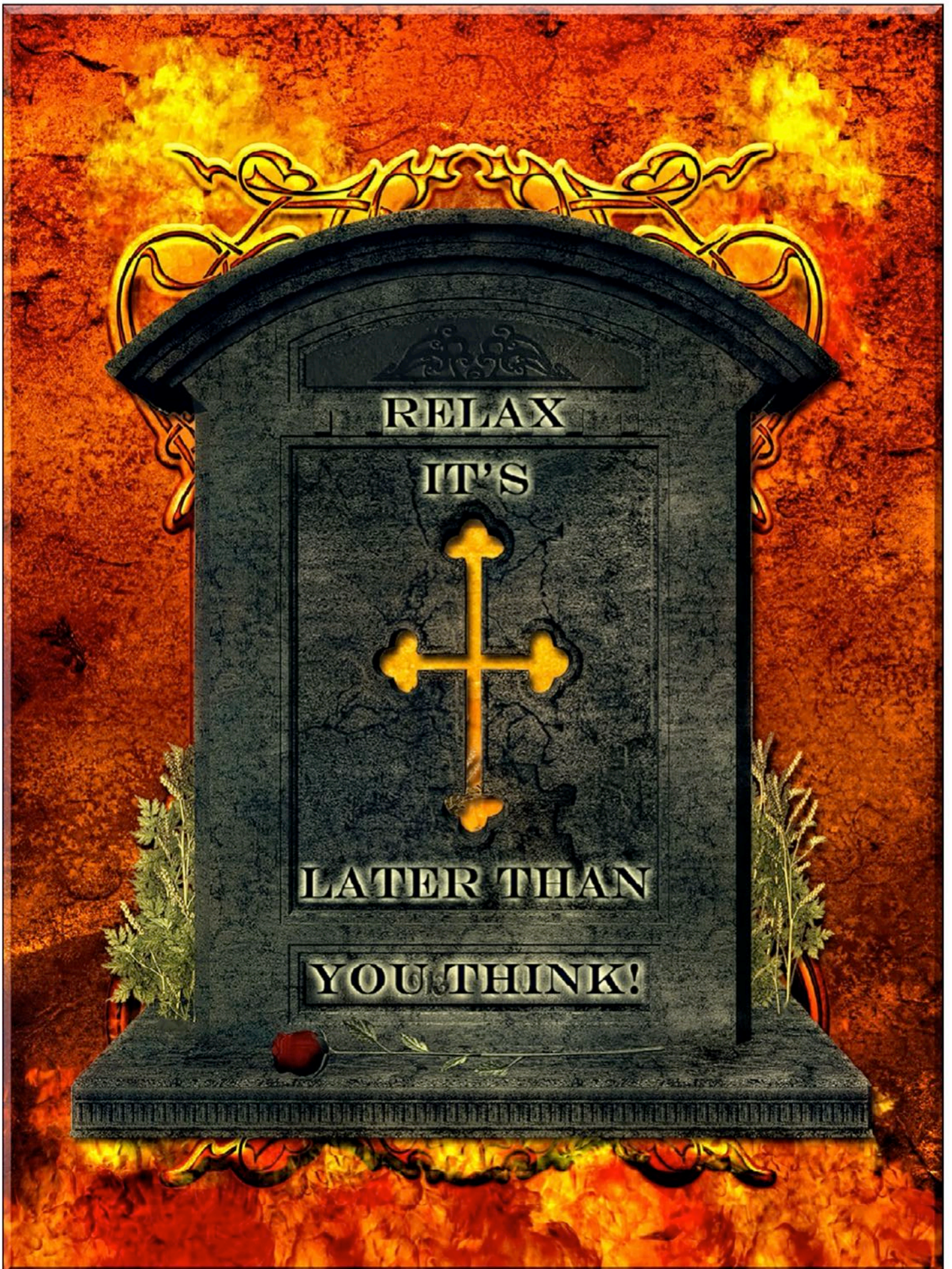
But, he had been through
this kind of rush before,

With the doomed and damned
of other planets

That had been consumed by their suns

Or had undergone other such catastrophes.





The Infernal Regions

Hellholes hurl thousand light-year jets of fear,

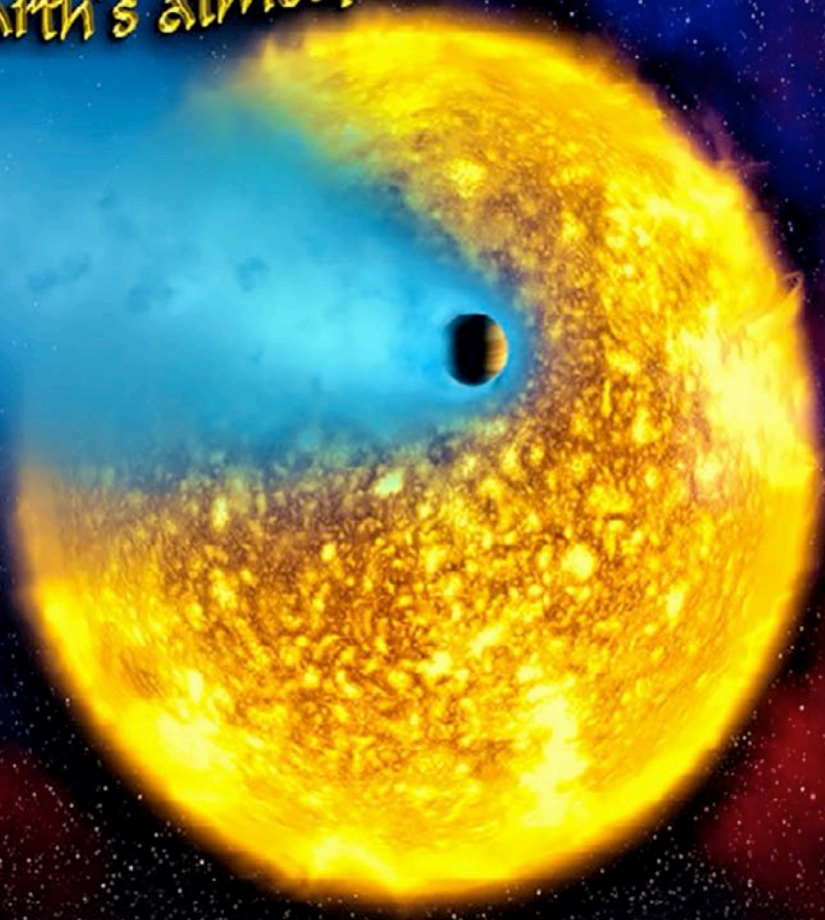
In Centaurus, cross'd the galactic sphere,

Supermassive darkling beasts devour all...

Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.

Finale

Beyond the pale, aft the last perfect day,
The Earth's atmosphere incinerates away.



Mercury/Venus now within the sun,
For the Crimson Giant is on his way.

He just used larger boats
And patiently took his time,
For he had all of Eternity.


Of course,
Charon could and did feel deep sadness,
But he didn't show it outwardly,
Even when the numbers from Earth
Increased a thousand-fold again.









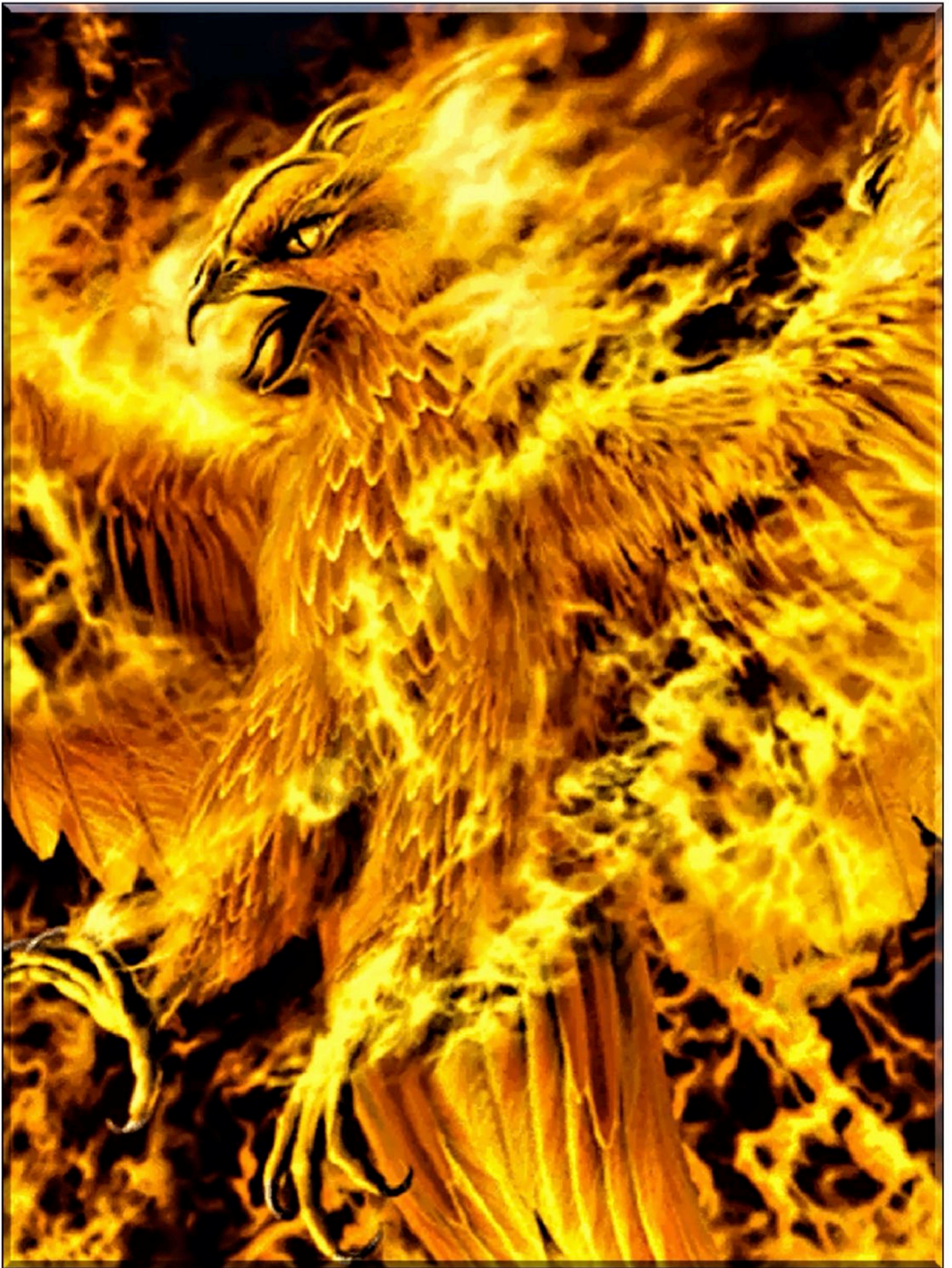


A few of the now billions
of Depressed Earthling souls
had enough energy left
to mumble a few words
And so he was able
to glean from them
The latest happenings
on Earth.



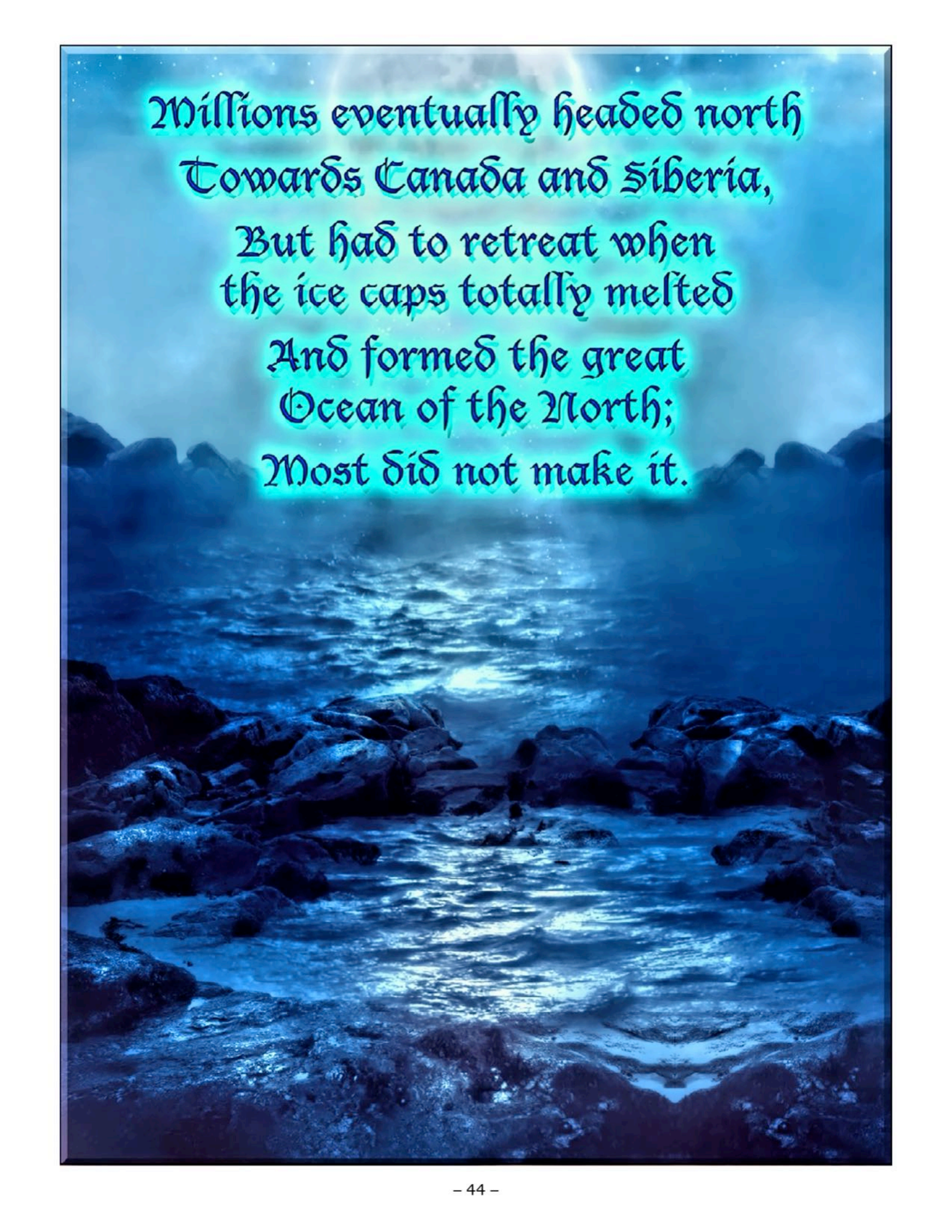
In 2012, the predicted exponential surge
Of melting ice from global warming
Had quickly inundated
all of the coastal cities,
Many of them large centers
Of population and commerce.
Everyone who could possibly make it
Had to retreat inland,
Creating the largest mass exodus in history.
As the heat rose to unbearable levels,
Many had begun living in their basements
As the Earth's infrastructure
Began its eventual collapse.





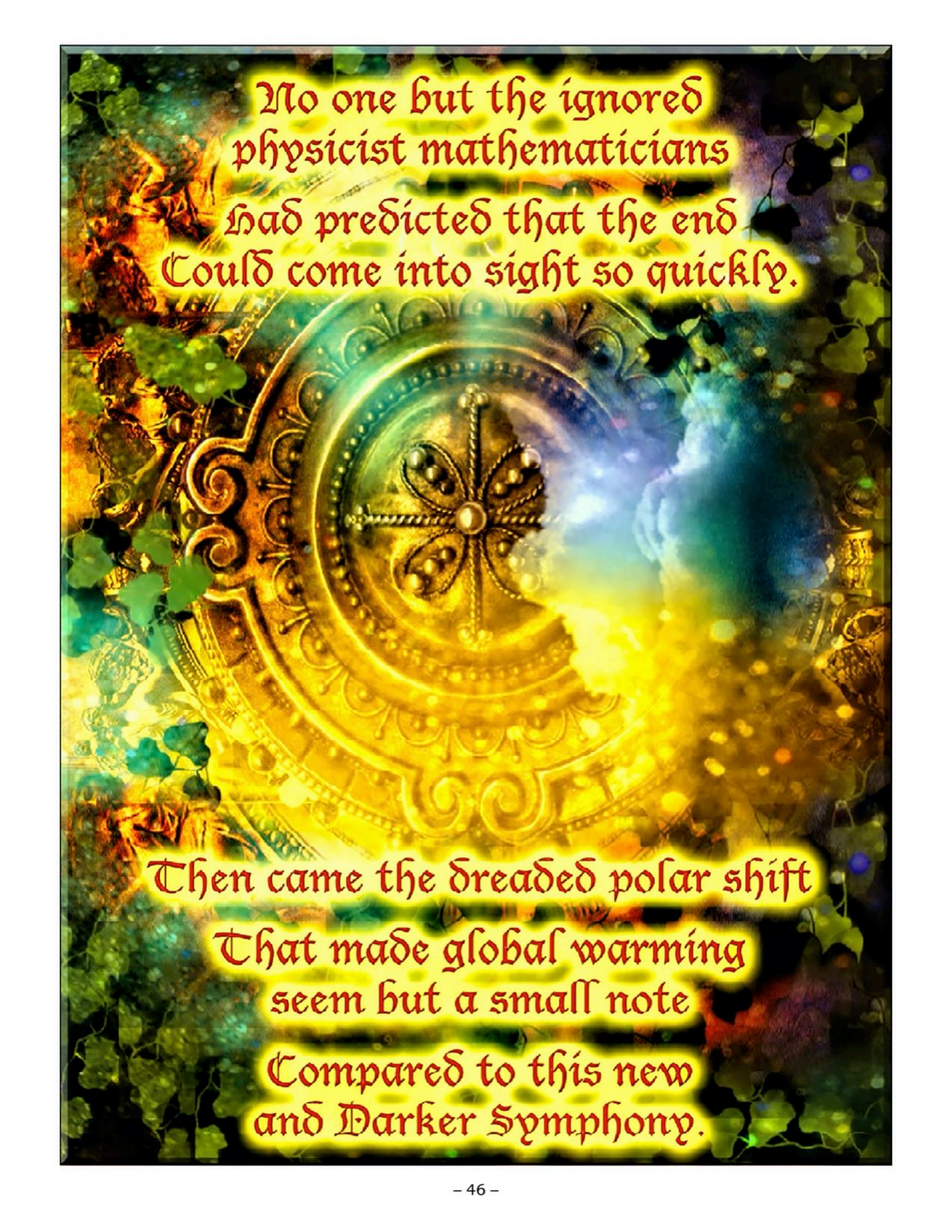






Millions eventually headed north
Towards Canada and Siberia,
But had to retreat when
the ice caps totally melted
And formed the great
Ocean of the North;
Most did not make it.





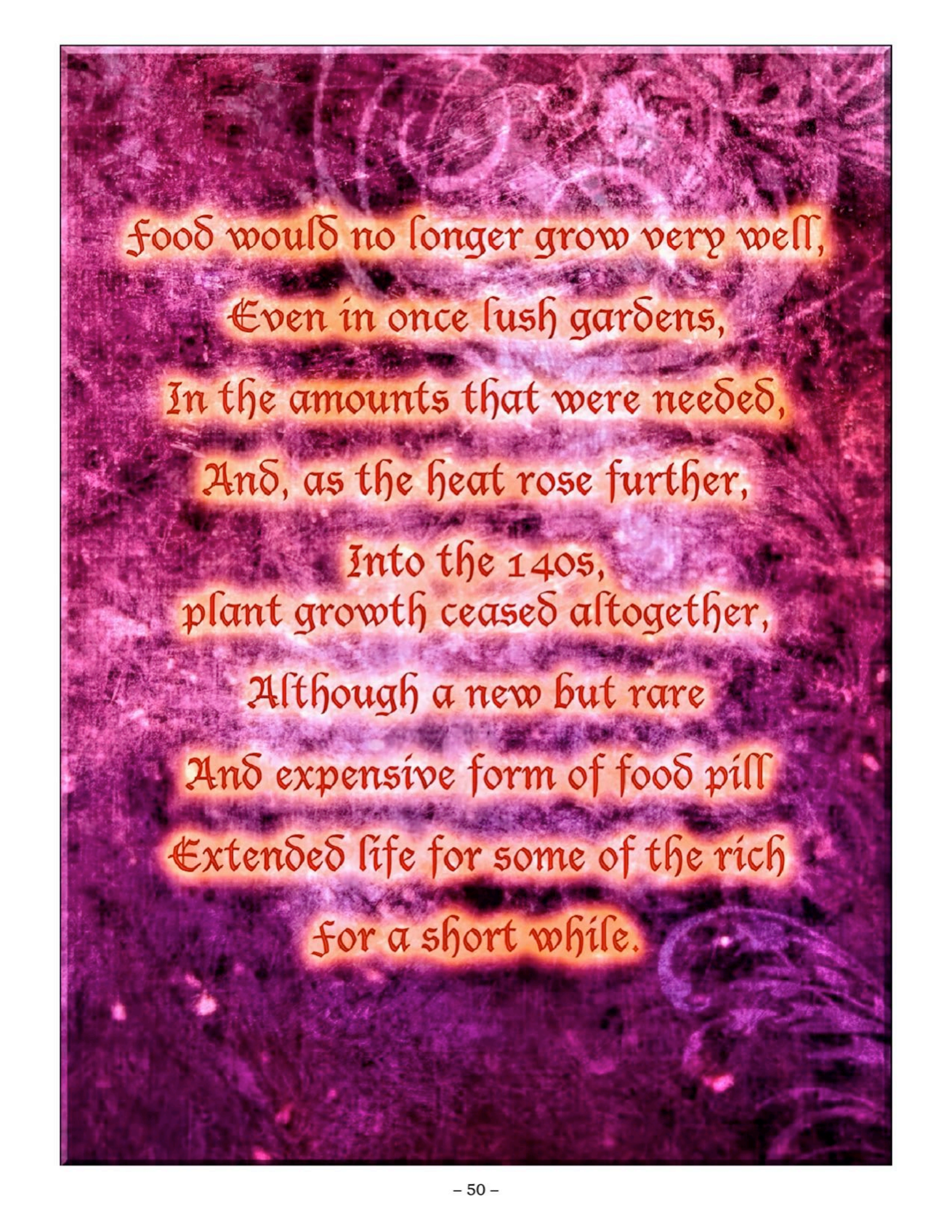
No one but the ignored
physicist mathematicians
had predicted that the end
could come into sight so quickly.

Then came the dreaded polar shift
That made global warming
seem but a small note
Compared to this new
and Darker Symphony.



The Earth was thrashed with storms
The likes of which it had never seen;
Electricity was completely out
all over the world,
But for a few nuclear
powered areas that didn't last.
No one could drive very far,
Even on their last tank of gas,
for the roads had melted,
Along with the tires of the vehicles,
And, if the vehicles stopped,
They'd find themselves mired
In the meltdown of the asphalt.





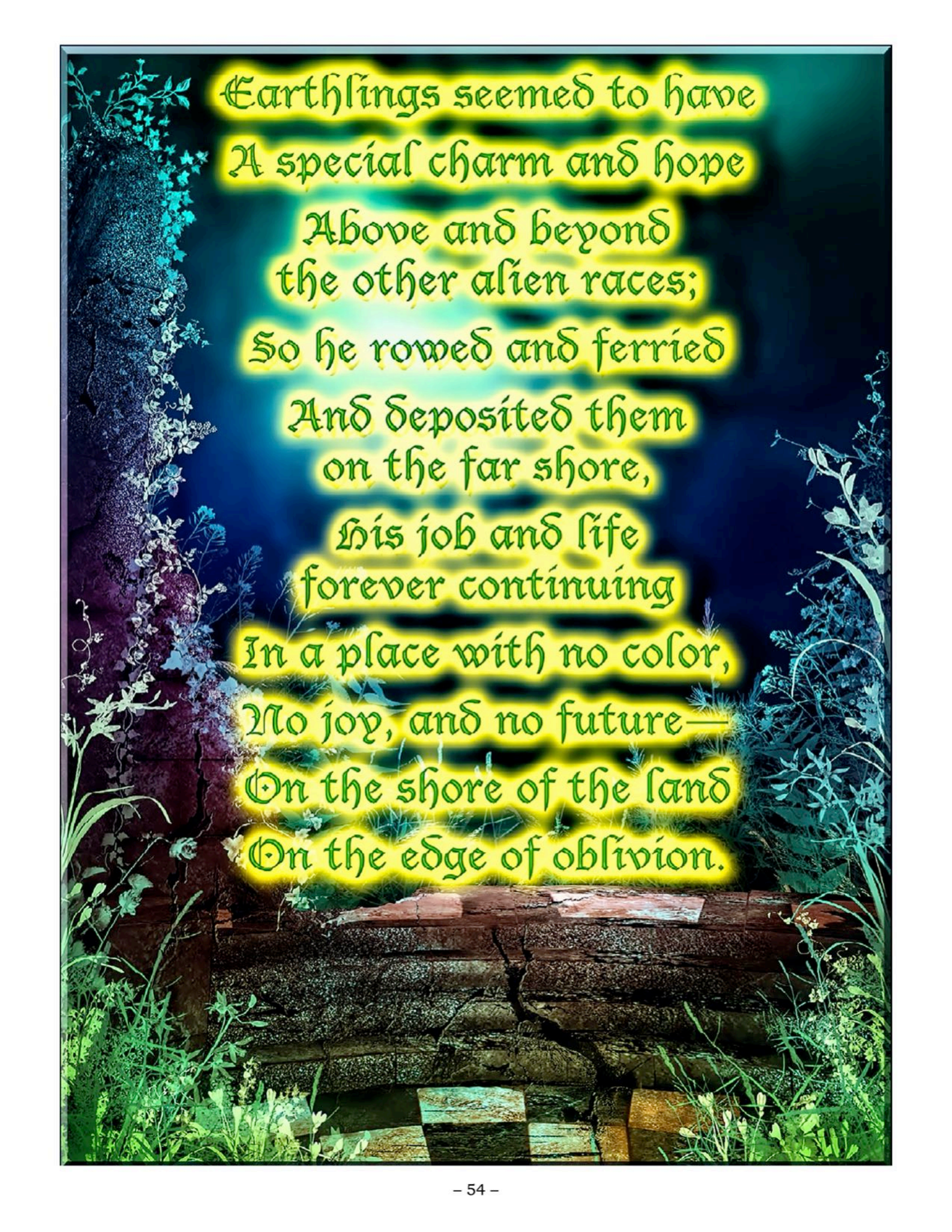
food would no longer grow very well,
Even in once lush gardens,
In the amounts that were needed,
And, as the heat rose further,
Into the 140s,
plant growth ceased altogether,
Although a new but rare
And expensive form of food pill
Extended life for some of the rich
for a short while.



Charon, had, of course,
Seen much of this kind of thing before
From the many other solar systems
And galaxies on which life had formed.

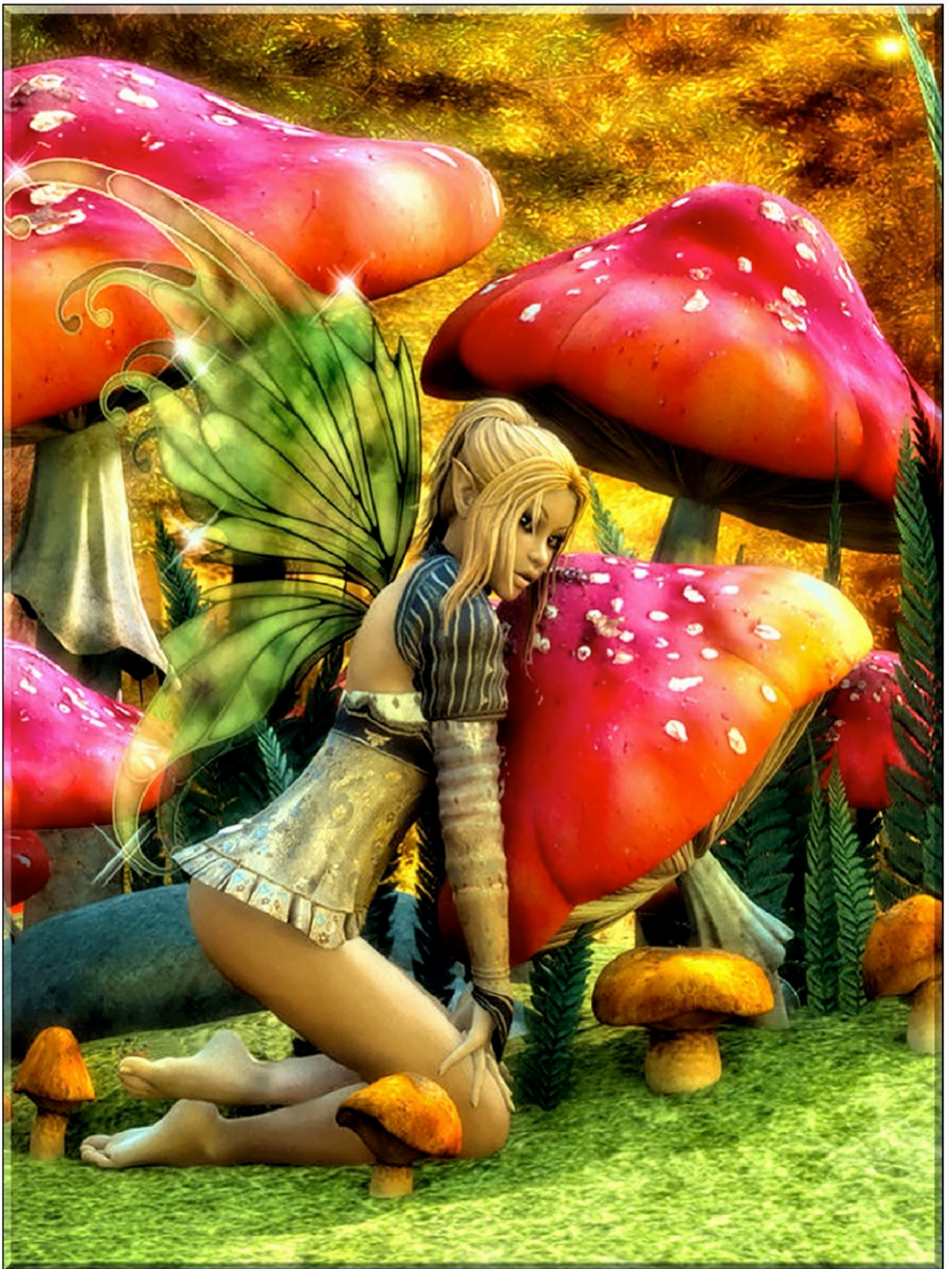


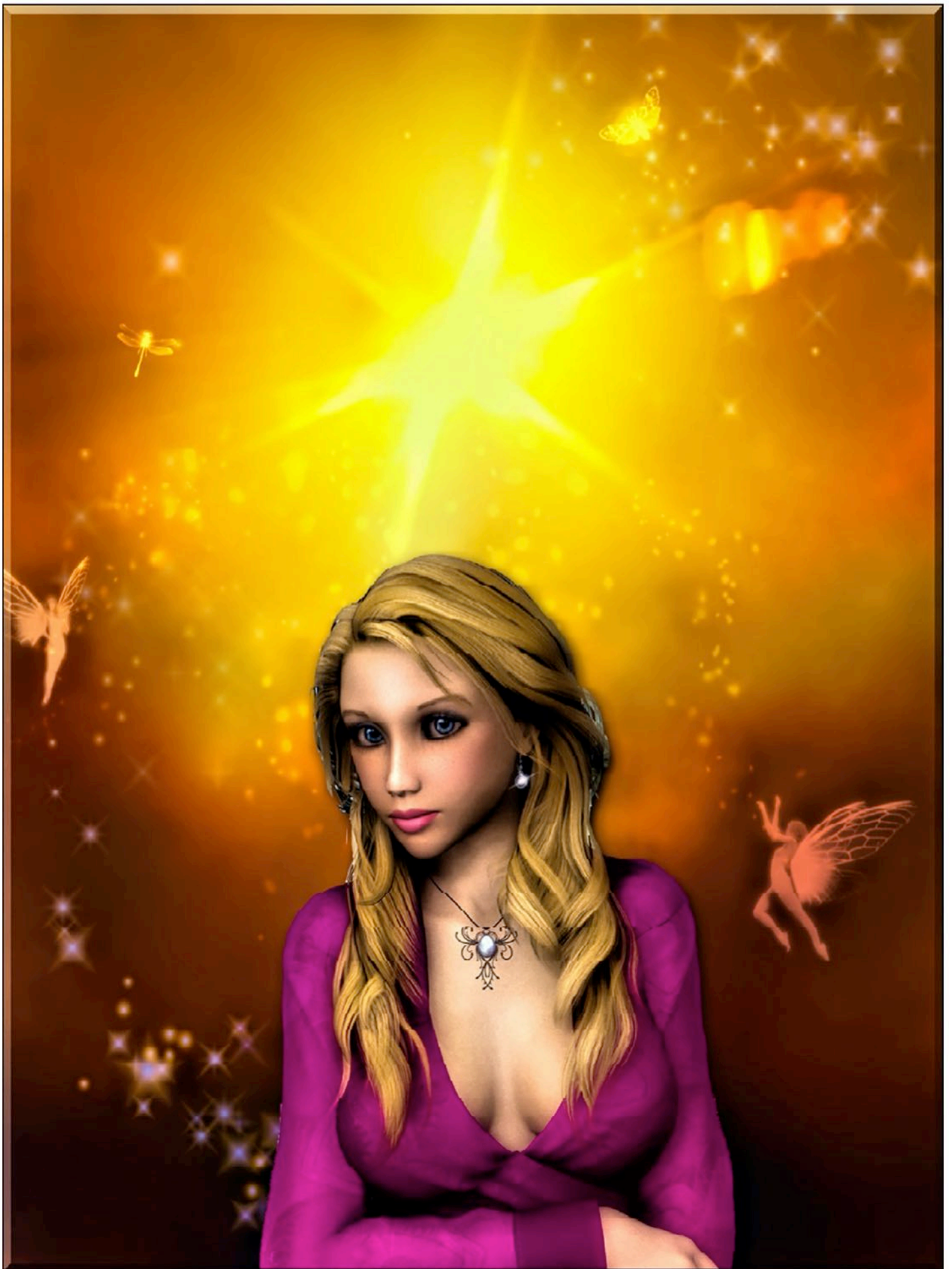





Earthlings seemed to have
A special charm and hope
Above and beyond
the other alien races;
So he rowed and ferried
And deposited them
on the far shore,
His job and life
forever continuing
In a place with no color,
No joy, and no future—
On the shore of the sand
On the edge of oblivion.









Charon had depths of compassion,
But many passengers might
Many thought him stoic,
Although they were mostly
Beyond the capability.



A sign on the opposite shore said:

Abandon hope
All ye
who enter here

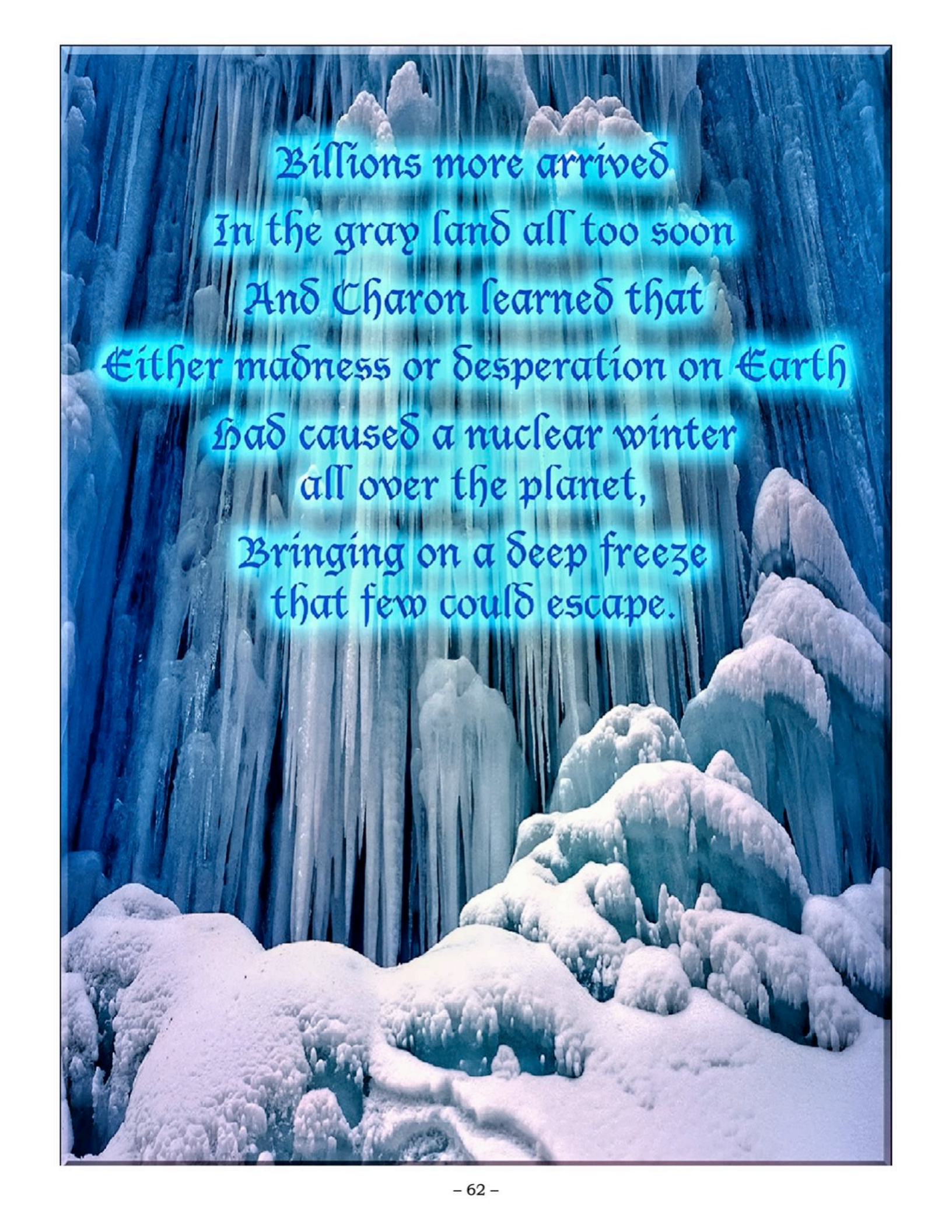




ABANDON HOPE,

ALL YE

WHO ENTER HERE

A photograph of a frozen waterfall with snow-covered rocks in the foreground. The waterfall is composed of numerous vertical icicles hanging from the top, creating a dense curtain of ice. The rocks in the foreground are covered in a thick layer of snow and are partially obscured by the icicles. The overall scene is a winter wonderland.

Billions more arrived
In the gray sand all too soon
And Charon learned that
Either madness or desperation on Earth
Had caused a nuclear winter
all over the planet,
Bringing on a deep freeze
that few could escape.









Perhaps they were trying
To combat the ultimate heat,
Which would have been
But a cool breeze in hell.

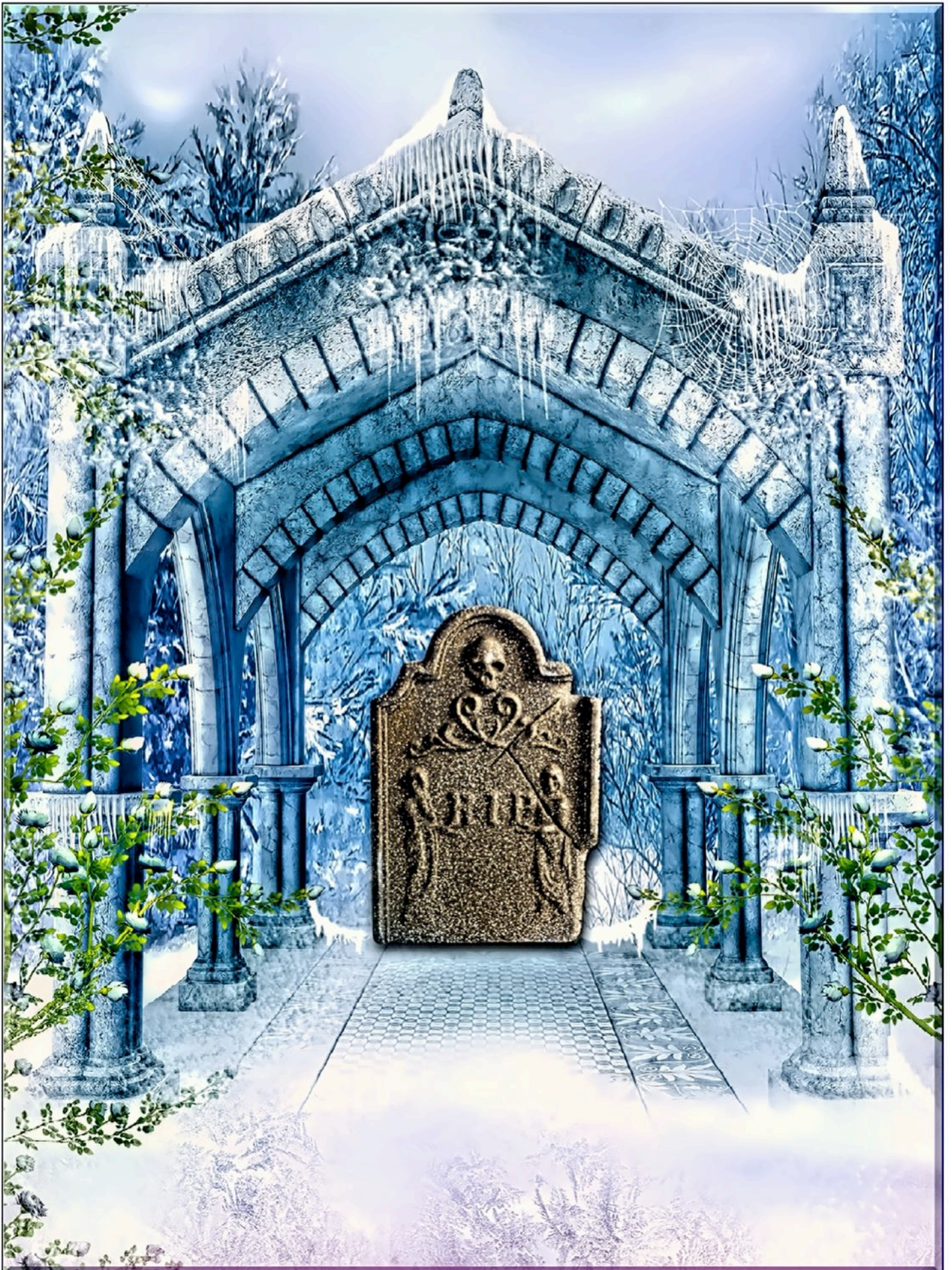
The polar shift had greatly
Added to the deep freeze.



A few of Charon's still speaking
But chilled customers
Even expressed a longing
For the legendary warmth of Hades.

Charon, stalwart and reliable,
rowed on steadily,
Ever steeling himself
to the misery.

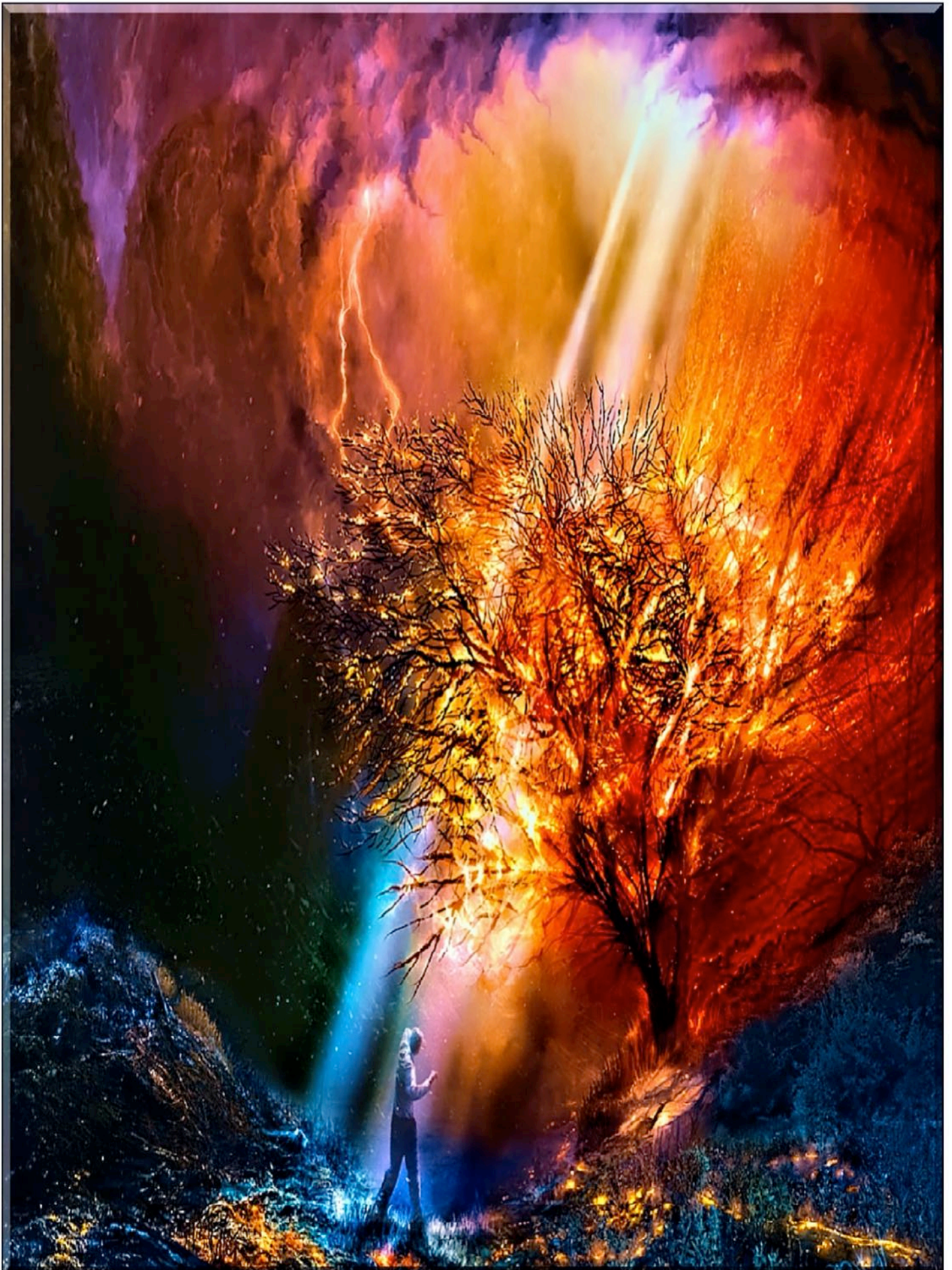
Finally the masses
slowed and dwindled
To a few dribs and drabs
over a few years
And then there was no one
for several years.

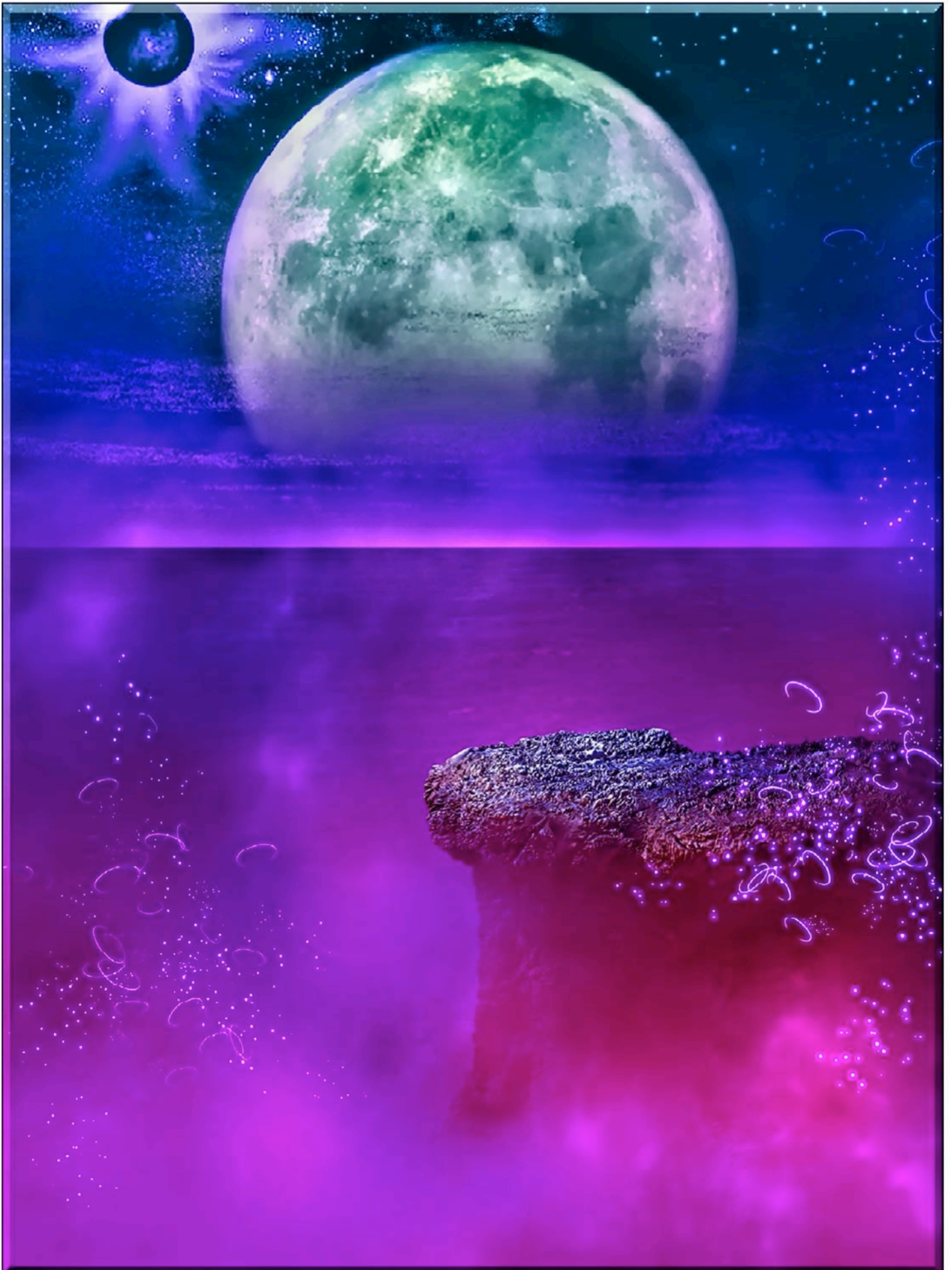


A lone man appeared on
the shore near the ferry dock
And Charon readily
approached the man,
Something he had
never done before.









They had a long and hearty talk,
for the man was animated
And not at all like any
of the other wretched souls





"How is it," inquired Charon,
"That you are full of life and seem to be a good man
But have been sent here?"

"I am not a bad person in any way," the man replied.

"Actually, I just spent some time in Heaven.

I found out there that my sweetheart

Was sent here to you,
For she was a suicide

And so was destined here;







However, I had promised
To be with her forever,
So I chose this place
Over Heaven out of my love for her."







"Extraordinary," exclaimed Charon.

"I knew the Earth had
A few good men and women—
I've not seen very many clues
Of that elsewhere in the universe.

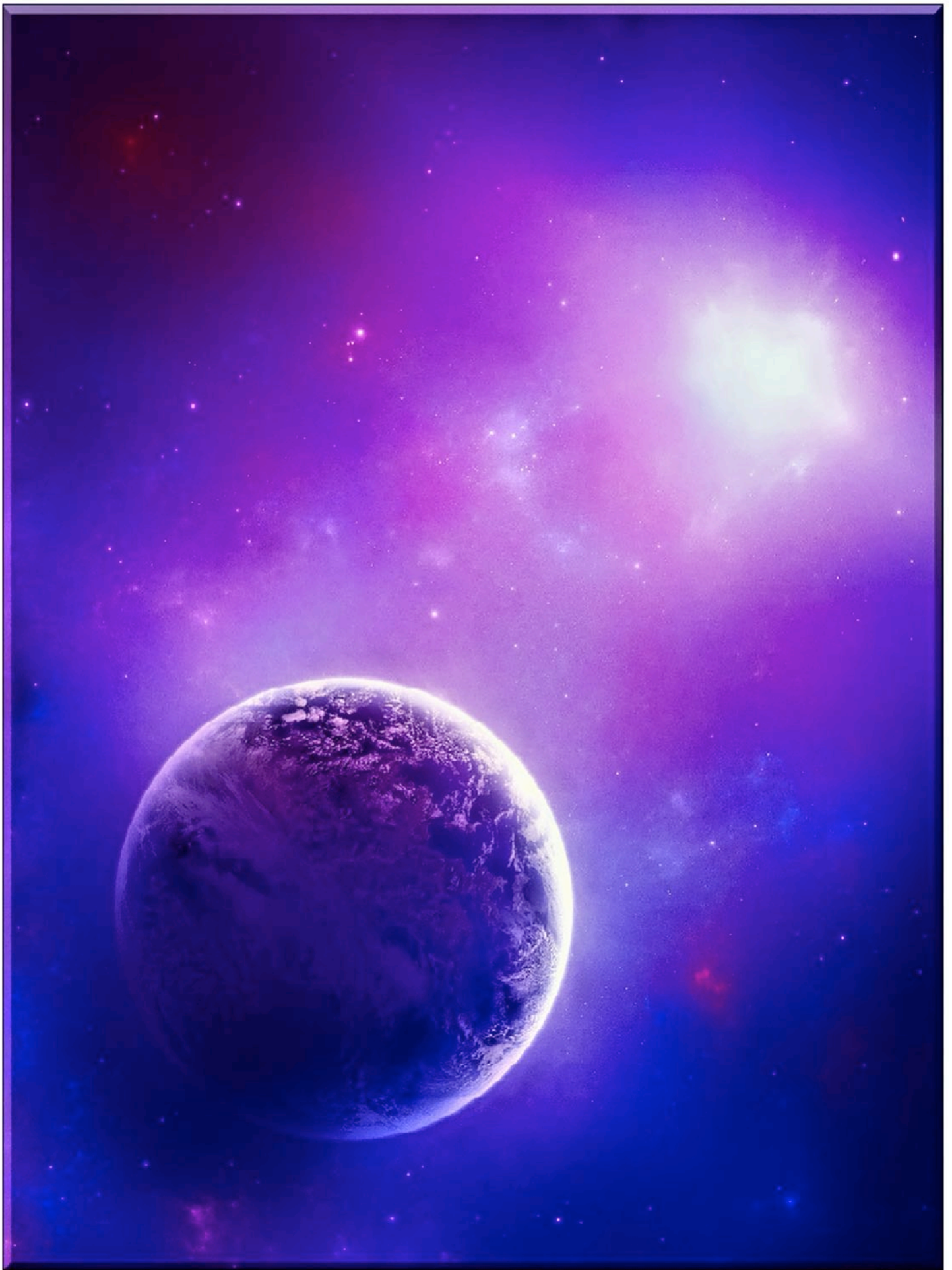
Did you colonize space—
Will your species continue and flourish
After your Earth bids farewell?"



"I'm afraid not," replied the man,
For too many needless wars intervened
And this greatly delayed our space program."

"A shame," said Charon,
But is there any hope left on Earth,
I mean, are there any others still about?"





"I am the last,"
the man answered slowly.





The first tear of Charon's long life
Rolled down his cheek;
Nothing had ever made him cry before:
Nothing had ever made him weep.





I am the Last.

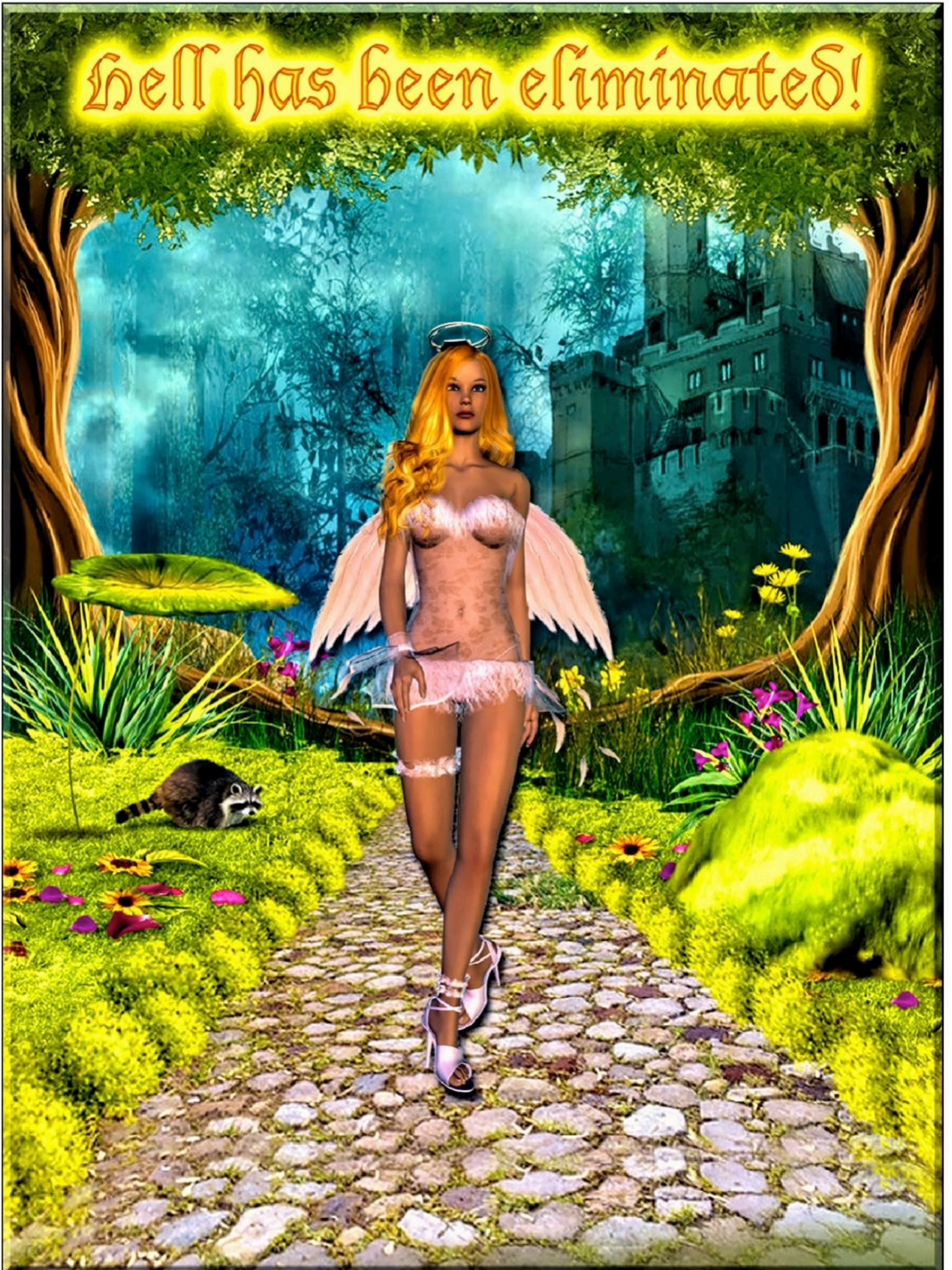


(Expanded from Lord Dunsany's brief sketch)





Hell has been eliminated!

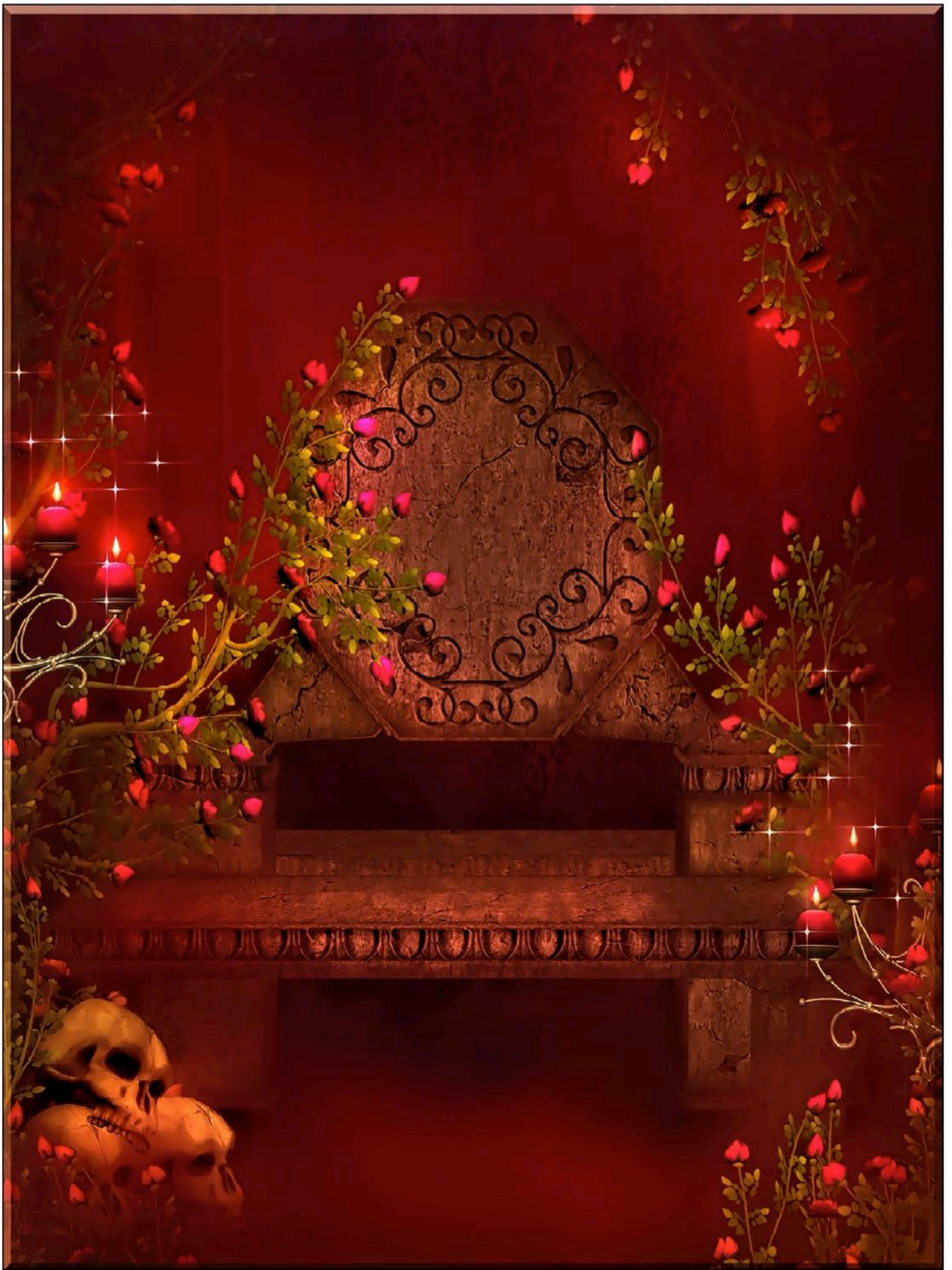






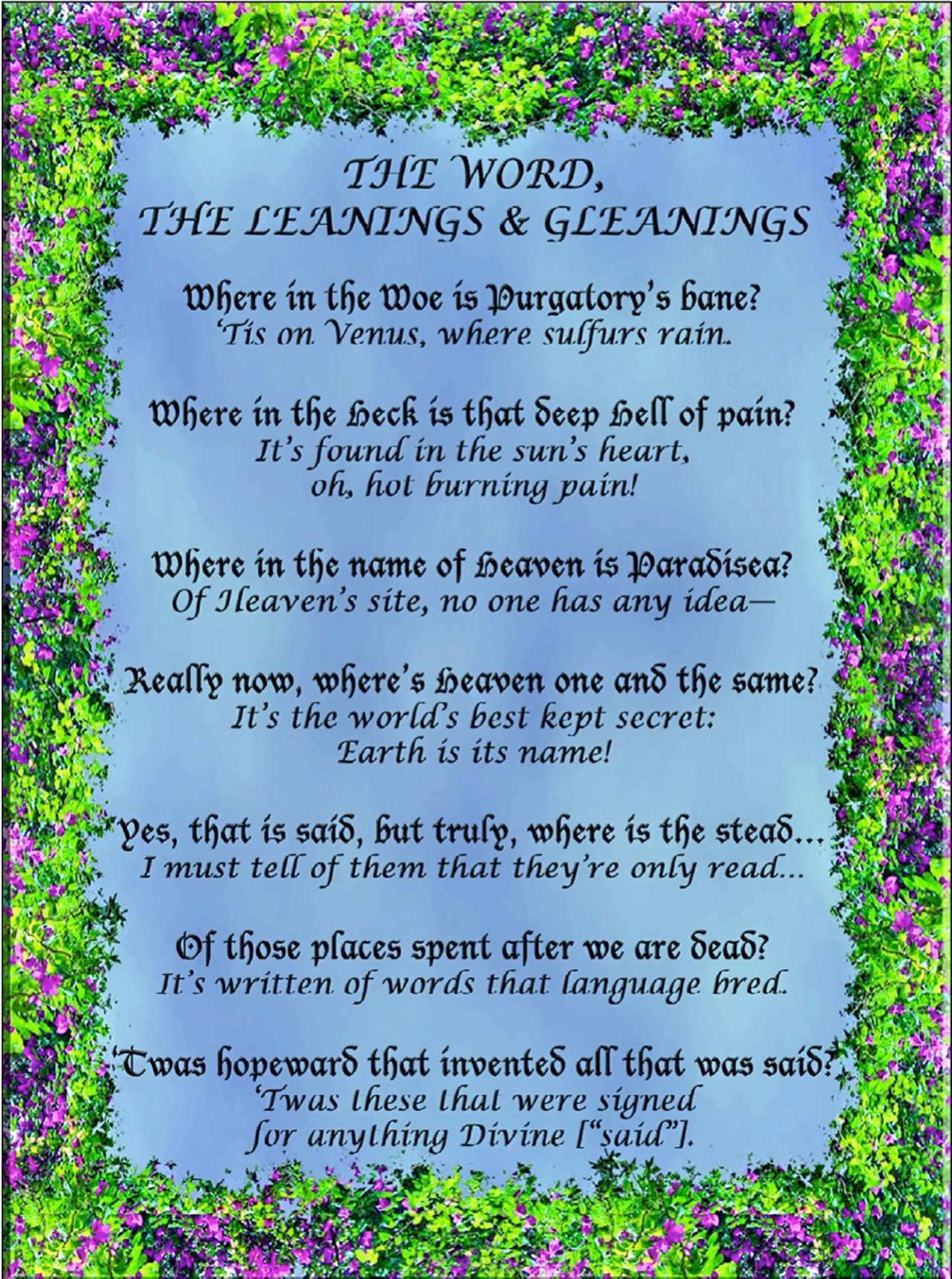












*THE WORD,
THE LEANINGS & GLEANINGS*

Where in the Woe is Purgatory's bane?
'Tis on Venus, where sulfurs rain.

Where in the Heck is that Deep Hell of pain?
*It's found in the sun's heart,
oh, hot burning pain!*

Where in the name of Heaven is Paradisea?
Of Heaven's site, no one has any idea—

Really now, where's Heaven one and the same?
*It's the world's best kept secret:
Earth is its name!*

Yes, that is said, but truly, where is the stead...
I must tell of them that they're only read...

Of those places spent after we are dead?
It's written of words that language bred.

'Twas hopeward that invented all that was said?
*'Twas these that were signed
for anything Divine ["said"].*



*There's no Devil to blame for their great zest—
This mix of good and 'bad' makes them best!
The human nature that lets them survive,
Also makes them feel very much alive.*



A. MONSIEUR LE COMTE MARCEL DE LABOUE SECRETAIRE GENERAL DE L'ACADEMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS
UN HOMMAGE DE PROFONDE RECONNAISSANCE DE FERDINAND CHUSUBROTTE A GUSTAVE MOREAU 1891







Sunset

*Fleeting Time vanishes, e'vr the winged prize
That flies in a perpetual sunrise,
With the breath of eternity on its lips—
Time's Origin is All that never dies.*

