



*The Stars were fixed no matter how many times they cycled.*

*I was there in the center of it all. I searched for a meaning in what was only the whims of nature.*

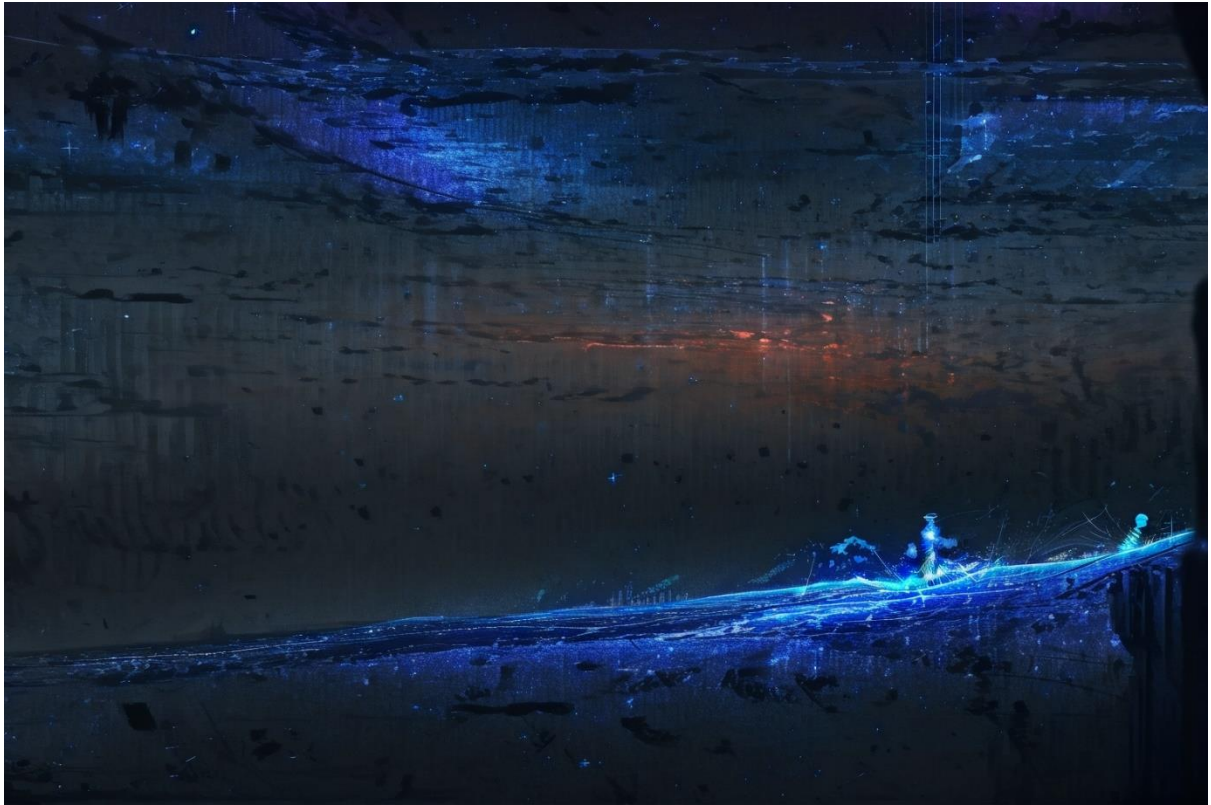
*But for the aspiring vagrant such little thoughts were the reason why our legs carried us over the ruined world whence we had fallen into.*



*I roamed the expanses beyond comprehension. Surrounding me were the living cosmos that brought about my existence. I walked forward because it was the only direction I knew.*



*What was sense in this place like this? What was meaning to a vagrant star that treads between the twilight?*



*Even the cadavers of fallen Stars served a purpose. The blue flower that sprouted as I wandered the endless deserts knew what it was.*

*But I...*



*... Could not describe the sensations in that moment.*

*I believe it was sorrow.*



*Fragments of the past come back to me time and time again. I remember when the Stars fell in the outer rims. The bastions of civilization beyond the walls of the City during a time when Stars still filled the desolate skies.*



*The advent of the Stars and Glimmers heralded the end and the beginning of everything. Gifts born from our cadavers caused humanity to implode on itself.*



*Nests of life became calderas where rivers from The Source flooded as though something irreplaceable had given way. Yet humanity and creatures alike lapped from the rivers that had washed away their homes, searching for something.*

*How I envied that they could.*



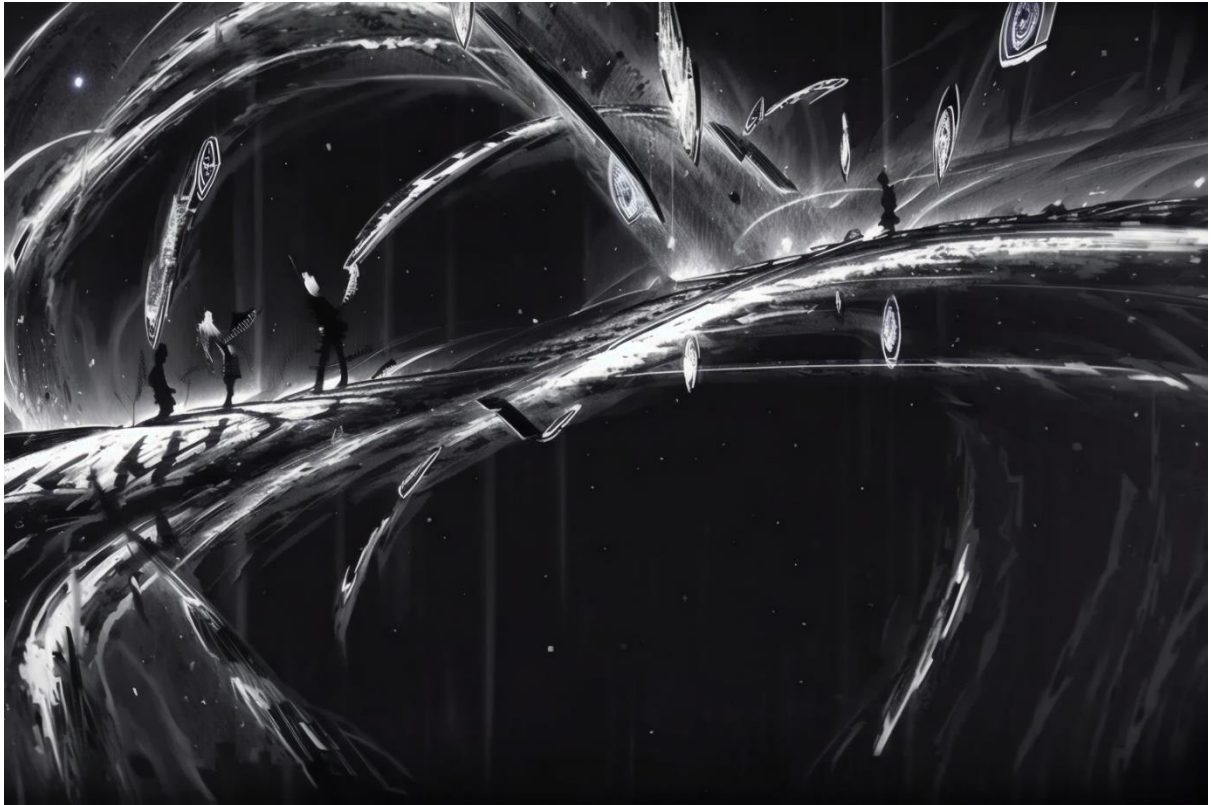
*At the borders I stood at a place that was neither the end nor the beginning.*



*A purgatory unraveled before me.*



*A place where raw thoughts existed.*



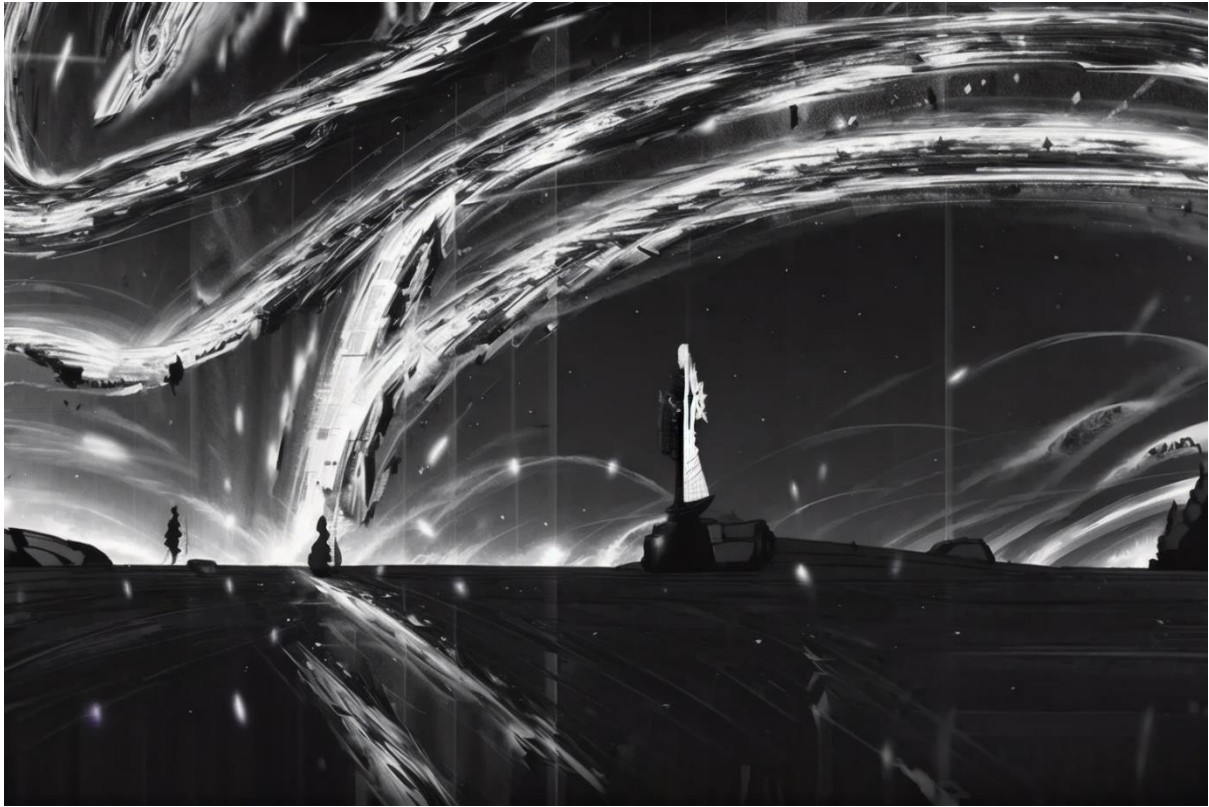
*Where neither I nor the Stars and Glimmers saw eye to eye for we wandered aimlessly, guided by nonsensical compasses.*



*Stars were what guided humanity.*



*But what guided us?*



*I stood at the crossroads of purgatory. My memories date to a time when we still roamed alongside humans. But how far back is lost to me. I only remember how lost I was. The paths I took, and...*



*... How utterly lonely I was.*

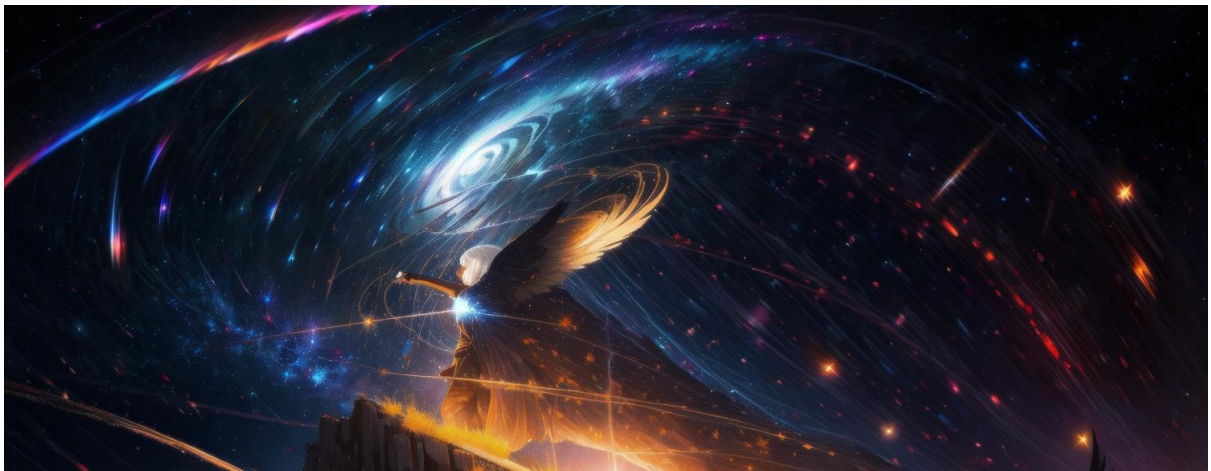
*I remember the emotions that swelled. The rage that brought me to shatter the silence that drowned me.*



*The meaning of existence was lost to me. I never knew it at the time but the emotions that commanded me caused the very fabric of the world to change.*



*I broke through the mold by arbitrating the forces that defined existence.*



*Yet such a power held no meaning to I who had no star to command me like a compass.*



*So I roamed the expanse.*



*Searching for my meaning.*



*My form twisting and turning as the ebbs of consciousness and thoughts shaped me in this realm beyond.*



*Rivers ran endlessly from a point of no origin. And I eventually came to a place where I rested for perhaps eons.*



*I wondered within my cocoon:*

*“Why do people look up to Stars?”*



*"Because they're something we want to reach. Hello!"*

*The voice of a child greeted was what such a Star.*

*I remember the innocence. The fearlessness. The idiocy for a human to approach a Star.*

*A hunger swelled within.*

*But I could not move from my place.*

*I pictured that child as something strange. Though they did not have wings I imagined them as such.*

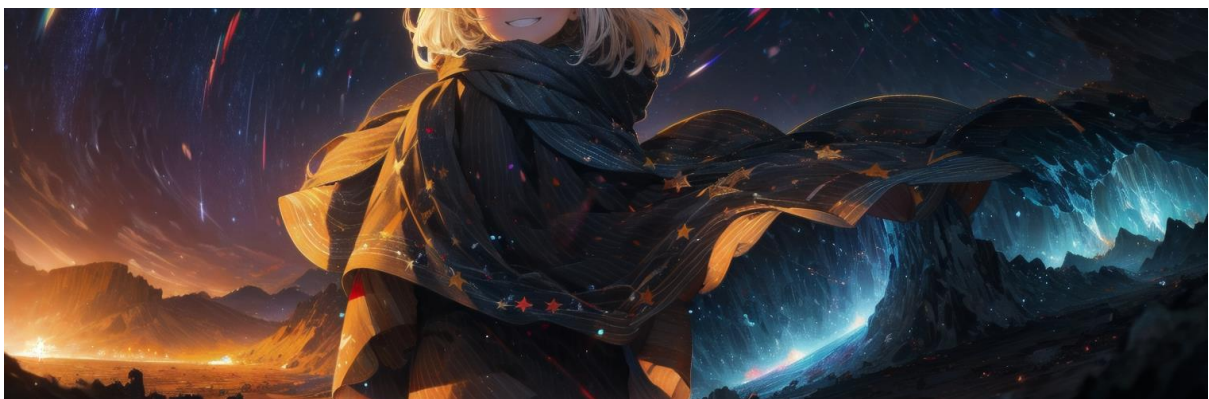


*Perhaps I saw them as a dove that had willingly walked into the nest of a spider.*

*But I did not pounce.*

*“It doesn’t look comfortable in there. Are you ok? I have something I can give you if you’re hungry.”*

*That was how I met ‘Her’.*



*Another vagrant that was far from a Star.*

*But they were my...*

...

The Arbiter stroked the flat of the blade in her arms like a lute. It was cradled close to her body as she gazed up into the starless ceiling of her Floor of Judgement moments before she sealed her eyes.



Then, she brought them back down to stare longingly at her blade – the False Price of Paradise.

“... I await the day of my Awakening. Until we meet again.”