

## 9. Psyche's Quest

Like Psyche, I once saw your face  
Heard your voice, felt your embrace  
Like her I now seek everywhere  
But none can help me find your place

All I am is waiting for you  
All I am is waiting for you  
And all you are is waiting for me  
You are waiting for me  
You are waiting for me  
Tell me where...

Will I find you in a lover's heart?  
Do you come to those who live apart?  
Are you in the shadow of the cave?  
By the rocking cradle? In the new-dug grave?

I've called your name at every door  
On every road, by every shore  
Beneath the sand, below the tide  
Beyond the sun, beyond the sky



Psyche's Fourth Task



I was raised an atheist, but experiences in my 20's and 30's led me to believe in the existence of the Divine. Then, for many years, my experiences stopped, and I wondered if I had simply imagined them. This period of doubt and loneliness was a very difficult time in my life: I had felt the embrace of god, only to be abandoned. It seemed as though I was re-living the myth of Psyche...endlessly seeking her golden Eros.

Psyche (Greek: 'soul') is a mortal woman who is given in marriage to the god Eros. She loves Eros, and is blissfully happy, but she is forbidden to look on him: he must come to her only in darkness. But her curiosity is insatiable and she lights a lamp while he sleeps. When she sees his beauty, she is overcome and her hand trembles, and a drop of oil falls on him. Eros awakens and departs forever.

The goddess Venus then sets Psyche a series of almost impossible tasks. If she accomplishes them, she will be reunited with Eros. The fourth and last task is a journey to the underworld, to bring back for Venus, in a box, a dose of the beauty of Proserpina, queen of the underworld. I won't tell you how the story ends, but I will say that one of the most beautiful books I've ever read is *Till we Have Faces* – a re-telling of the myth of Psyche by C.S. Lewis.

Psyche brings back beauty from the underworld. How right this is! For in our descent into the psyche, it is always through finding beauty – in art, in philosophy, in daily life – that we find our way out. No matter what underworld roads we travel, what painful trials we are put to, if we can transform our despair into beauty by revealing the depths of our soul's experience, we triumph.

