

## EURYDICE

*Annelies de Mol – Creative Writing Group Clio*

My hands are clammy, they shake. My head feels heavy on my neck; I cannot hold it up any longer. I see shapes, they vanish, I feel...darkness. It is as if I'm stuck in a realm that gives short incentives to remember, shows blinks of images, faces, names and then takes it all away again. It drains me of my spirit. No sensations, no emotion, no energy. My mind is completely numb. Soft peaceful darkness, forgetfulness

...

When I open my eyes I am in the underworld. I am as insubstantial as my fellow maidens walking in a forest. It is peaceful here. Vaguely I remember a sharp pain. Two strong arms holding me, a voice calling my name: "Eurydice! Eurydice!", entreating me to stay even though he must have known that I could not. I remember that I was happy then. But I had to go, I didn't want to leave, but I was given no choice, I had to leave the mortal world behind me. And now here I am, walking in the shades, a shade myself. But I am at peace at least.

Then one day he comes. He presents the golden bow to Queen Persephone and asks the Underworld King if he can have me back. He makes a nice plea about it too, I think, I cannot feel it as they do.

"Wasn't it love that brought you together? Love?" He cries. "Even in this dark abyss below the light earth you've heard of it, love! Love is what brought me here and love is what will keep me here if it is necessary, if you do not grant me my wish. I am desperate without my love. My life is bereft of reason without my love. Please grant me my wish!" He does not want to die.

Being the musician he is, he accompanies his plea with a sweet melody and all us shades are in awe as much as we can be. His lyre pleads his case. Tears. Tears on the high Queen's face and trembling hands. Tears in the eyes of the furies; a first for that. A sob from Charon's throat. A moan from Sisyphus sitting idly on his rock whose load he cannot carry anymore. Nothing else seems to matter in this dark place but his sweet melody and his honest love. Even the three old Fates stop spinning for just a little while and starting again they accidentally snap a life in two.

I do not feel it. I remember that I used to when we were still dancing in the forests up above, but it does not seem to matter anymore. Love has lost its substance. And maybe one day he will join me here, for all the peaceful eternity, that would be my wish if I still had any.

But his wish is granted. He can leave this insensible plain and take me too. I am to follow him and he is not to look back until I have passed through the outer gates. He bows deeply for the shady King. He gently kisses the still trembling hands of the stolen Queen. And without one glance at his true love he starts along the path. I am to follow him.

...

The light gets brighter. I can see him up ahead, a dark figure surrounded by a halo of light, leading the way. I stumble over some rocks. My ankle hurts, it has started to burn where the snake bit me. It was healed down below, but the moment we re-crossed the river Stix it started itching and burning and with every step we take towards the light it starts burning sharper. I am no longer used to the pains of life.

Painful step after painful step I follow, dutiful. Wishing step after step that he might look back and I be free of this bond. I have lived my life, I wish no second. But he leads me on and on and on and as the light is starting to shine brighter and the air starts to feel warm about me I begin to hope that he might not look back.

The mouth of the cave is visible now. I can feel the sunlight shining in and almost feel it on my skin. I hear birds whispering the news: "Eurydice is back, she lives." And will I live? Or will I die again? I can smell the forest. My ankle stings but it does not matter so much now that I feel the warmth returning to me again. My fingers start to tingle, I am almost fully alive again, I can almost grasp it. I reach. I am to live again... to die.

And as I cross the river Stix, yet again, I speak my dying wish: "Let the wild beasts tear him limb from limb so he can feel the pain he caused me!"